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

Views and Opinions.

Blessings in Disguise.

Two items of news lie before me. One is from the *Joyful News*, a Christian paper of the lurid evangelical type, in which a Rev. J. Bryce informs the world that "ministers are not man-made, they are chosen, called, consecrated, appointed and anointed by the Spirit." The other item concerns a professional footballer, to wit, James Jackson, who recently preached at a Liverpool prayer factory, and informed the world that "while missionaries are being sent to foreign lands there are children in our midst who are growing up with absolutely no idea of what the inside of a church is like." These two items might be classified under the head of "Ancient and Modern." Or even as genuinely joyful news. For Mr. Bryce represents the original thing, and if he is right we cannot blame the common man for the existence of parsons. As the insurance societies say in the case of an earthquake, or as the courts say in the case of sudden death, or death through a tree being blown down and killing someone, or a devastating epidemic, they are "Acts of God." The parson is not man-made, and the whole human race can plead "Not guilty." That is the original theory. The priest was called to his job by God, he had powers that others did not have, such as laying on of hands, giving the right interpretation of God's word, and also the power of sending certain people to hell and getting others out of purgatory. That theory certainly removed a heavy responsibility from other people, and perhaps that is why it was once so generally adopted. Looking at what the clergy are and what they have always been, seeing—to put it very mildly and in the kindest manner—that the clergy have never been wiser than others, or better than others, or in any way superior to others, it was politic to make God responsible for their being where they are, bearing in mind what they are. In a way, from the layman's point of view, the theory that God was responsible for the existence of the clergy is a case of hoisting them with their own

petard. They had always advised men to place their burdens on the Lord. So when the laymen looked at the clergy they probably thought, as the insurance companies say in the case of earthquakes, "Oh Lord, these be thy work," and washed their hands of further responsibility.

* * *

The Beauty of Advertising.

If the priest is to retain privileges and pelf he must keep within reaching distance of his people. The man who keeps close to you may be actuated by affection for you—or for your watch. And the original exclusiveness of the Christian pulpit has weakened in the face of modern conditions. It has become less and less of a close preserve. The question of the validity of Holy Orders is still a subject that High Churchmen and Roman Catholics discuss with laughable solemnity, but it appears to be only a question of time, despite the explicit bar placed on women in the New Testament, for women to occupy most of the Christian pulpits. So far as laymen are concerned, it has for long been the custom to permit certain prominent persons to read the lessons, and among Nonconformists there has for a long time existed the practice of permitting anyone sufficiently well known to advertise the chapel by occasionally occupying the pulpit. Well-known cricketers, boxers, journalists and others have been invited to preach, while the resident parson sat in the background hoping that some of those who had come to chapel, in much the same temper that people visit the Zoo to see a new specimen of animal that had been imported, might become at least casual attendants afterwards.

Mr. Jackson, the footballer, was probably invited for the reason just given. There are crowds of people who might go to listen to a noted footballer preach, just as crowds rush to see Charlie Chaplin, the Prince of Wales or the Rev. Harold Davidson. If Mr. Jackson had poisoned his mother, and had been acquitted, or if he had a dozen wives, or about six dozen children, or had won the chief prize in the Irish Sweepstake, or had walked on his knees from Paris to Moscow he would have been equally welcome to scores of churches or chapels in this country. The first business of a parson is to fill his church. How he fills it is a matter of quite secondary consideration. "Stunts" have been present in all religions. According to the New Testament even Jesus attracted most attention by the miracle-working stunts he did. Kill all showmanship in the Churches and in a generation or two they would all be deserted. The cry of the modern preacher is "Give us stunts, O! Lord or we perish!"

* * *

Children and their Friends.

Of the two items of news with which I began the one referring to Mr. Jackson interested me the most. Its wording was so suggestive. The title of his ad-

dress was "What of our Sunday?" This was not quite accurate because it was not *his* Sunday but other peoples' Sunday with which he was concerned. No one wishes to interfere with Mr. Jackson's Sunday, but we imagine that Mr. Jackson does wish to interfere with the Sunday of other people. Mr. Jackson does not wish to play football on Sunday, so he is anxious that the authorities shall prohibit other people playing football on Sunday. It has been said by those who when they speak of England only have in mind a certain class of people, that an Englishman's notion of enjoyment is to go out and kill something. That is a libel on the majority of English people. But it is no libel upon the Puritan to say that his only notion of real enjoyment is to prevent others doing anything they find pleasure in the doing. He is happily miserable only when he is forbidding something he has no desire for.

But the sentence that in my opinion almost justified calling Mr. Jackson to the pulpit was the one in which he said that while missionaries were being sent abroad there were children in this country who had no idea of what the inside of a church was like. That put the missionary question in quite a new light. It pulled me up with a jerk. I remembered that years ago I had published an indictment of the foreign missionary movement as one of the most colossal mixtures of foolishness and knavery in the country. I based what I said on a careful analysis of the balance sheets and annual reports of the different societies, and indeed framed the indictment on the basis of their own statements. But if Mr. Jackson is right there is a very strong *per contra* which I had completely overlooked. There are children at home who do not know what the inside of a church is like because those who might have seen to their going to church were away carrying the gospel to the heathen. They have been allowed to develop freely and fully because those who might have checked their growth were a long way off. I feel that every one of those children owe these missionaries a debt which they should never forget and can never repay. They should contribute regularly to sending more parsons abroad—so long as there are any in the country to send. Who can tell what these happy ones might have been had they been acquainted with the inside of a Church from their earliest years upward? And who can tell what some of the people we know might have become had they had the good fortune of those mentioned by Mr. Jackson? Why, even "Jimmy" Douglas, had he escaped his early religious training, might have grown up a passably intelligent and useful member of society instead of becoming the laughable futile character we meet in the columns of the *Daily Express*.

* * *

An Unrecognised Blessing.

The more I ponder over Mr. Jackson's deliverance the more illuminating it becomes. It casts light on so many questions. First, it means the rejection of the widely held belief that in taking our religion to the uncivilized people of the earth we were only putting into practice the ordinary commercial rule of finding markets abroad for things which commanded only a decreasing sale at home, or that we were following the profitable trade practice of dumping shoddy products on a public whose taste lacked discrimination. If Mr. Jackson is correct, every missionary who goes abroad stands, not it is true as a friend of the natives to whom he goes, but as a real friend of the children in the home country. But for his going abroad many of these children might have been attending Sunday school or church regularly, and have grown up hard-and-fast, incurable Christians. The missionary is thus one who goes abroad in the interest of the young who

remain at home. He weakens the religious pressure on the home population, and so contributes his quota to the growth of a better race. Foreign missionaries do for human culture exactly what foreign trade does for home industries. I am so impressed by Mr. Jackson's discovery that I think a movement ought to be inaugurated for sending all our parsons abroad, beginning with the Archbishop of Canterbury and ending with James Douglas.

We shall also have to revise our wording of the thoroughly British theory of the "White man's Burden," which announced our conviction that when we took possession of the lands inhabited by the coloured races we did it under the conviction that we were called upon to shoulder a burden in the interests of human development. But it would seem that in taking our missionaries off our hands it is the coloured man who is shouldering the white man's burden. He is protecting the white man's children from bearing at least the full assault of religion on the home front. Altogether I think Mr. Jackson's explanation of what foreign missions do and how they do it is the most interesting and illuminating I have yet met. I am both surprised and delighted. It proves there may be a soul of goodness in things evil. Dirt was defined by a schoolboy as matter in the wrong place. Mr. Jackson proves that the missionary is only a nuisance in the wrong place. At home he is a vexation to the spirit and a threat to the young. Abroad—well, he is out of the way, and any harm he does is to the coloured people who act as safety valves for us. I shall for the future have a more kindly thought for foreign missionaries than I have had hitherto.

One other thought is suggested by Mr. Jackson's discovery of the use of missionaries. All the children are not protected by a number of parsons being sent abroad. The majority are still open to attack. And no provision is made for the protection of adults. This state of affairs should be remedied. Why not send all the parsons abroad? They need not be sent all over the world. They could be sent to an island, where they could carry on all their ceremonies and perform all their incantations. This would not only protect the whole of the home population, it would serve a very useful anthropological purpose. Consider what it would mean if in addition to finding the physical remains of the men of the Stone Age we could find an exact account of all they thought and felt. We know a great deal of their habits, but their thoughts, their actual beliefs, the way they looked at the world, is still largely a matter of conjecture. But if the clergy were all transported to some island, and kept there, what a godsend that would be to the anthropologist of, say the thirtieth century! He would be able to visit them and study them at first hand. It would be a sort of theological Whipsnade in which the scientist of the future could study the parson in his natural habitat. No one who has a genuine love for science would begrudge the expense of such an experiment. Scientists lament the passing of certain primitive tribes and of certain species of animals. Something ought to be done to preserve the parson as we have known him. Exposed to the play of civilization he is certain to disappear. From the anthropological point I think he is worthy of preservation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

I have ever held it as a maxim never to do that through another which it was possible for me to execute myself.

Montesquieu.

Almost everyone flatters himself that he and his are exceptionable.—A. Karr.

Hell with the Lid Off.

"The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haul the wretch in order."—*Burns*.

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

The clergy are more shy concerning the subject of hell and eternal flames than musical comedy stars are timid regarding their age. Sometimes, the cat gets its head out of the bag, and the tabooed topic was discussed at the Conference of Modern Churchmen at Bristol recently. According to the newspapers, a woman delegate was responsible. She wanted to know why hell had been seized upon with such avidity by Christian priests and laity alike throughout the ages.

With the pertinacity of a landlady addressing a lodger in arrears, this delegate pointed out that it was the Christ of the Gospels who was reported to have spoken of unquenchable fire, and also of the righteous lying in Abraham's bosom.

This roused the Rev. G. G. Coulton, of Cambridge, who, like all Christian priests, regards himself as an expert on flames. His explanation was, to say the least, highly ingenious even for an expert. He suggested that the early Christians had such a hell of a time that they wished their opponents to have a dose of the same medicine, only more so. The wish was papa to the thought. Preachers, he added, catered for this feeling, and pushed the temperature of the alleged Infernal Regions from zero to twenty thousand degrees in their sermons. Dr. Coulton also suggested that the Roman Church had its share of forgers and liars.

Like the Heathen Chinee of Bret Harte, Dr. Coulton is childlike and bland, but the subject of hell-fire is not to be so easily dismissed, even by a professional Christian. The early Christians, doubtless, had their troubles, but their sufferings were small in comparison with the persecution of the Jews at the hands of Christians, a persecution which has existed for near twenty centuries, and is still going on in various parts of Europe to-day, yet the Hebrew faith knows nothing of hell and everlasting flames.

Christian priests have found it very profitable to invest death with terrors, and they have never hesitated to heap horror upon horror's head. "Prepare for death, flee from the wrath to come," have been their cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," shout the evangelists, with throats of leather. By such appeals to fear and imagination these priests have terrorized their congregations. The clergy knew their own dirty business only too well. Sam Johnson was by no means a fool, but he was tormented by the fear of death. The gentle William Cowper was driven mad by the horrors of the Christian Religion. These are only two examples, but they will serve.

Since the dawn of the Christian era the fear of death has been heightened by these stories of a flaming hell industriously propagated by the clergy. Freethinkers who imagine that one of the oldest and most disgusting religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind because the clergy appear to be giving the old savage ideas faint support in their public utterances will do well to beware of clerical camouflage.

Priests quibble concerning eternal damnation and everlasting punishment whilst debating with their Freethought opponents, but there is plenty of sulphur when they address their congregations and their Sunday-school scholars. Wherever the clergy retain their power they still preach a hell of literal fire and

brimstone. In America, uncultured evangelists flame the fires of hell over a continent. In Ireland, priests make the very gunmen shiver in their boots. Indeed, the Romish Church everywhere has never damped one solitary spark of its fiery damnation. High Churchmen, who form sixty per cent of the English State Church, hold fast to brimstone, and the Salvation Army, which caters for the bed-rock, includes Hades in its trade-mark, "Blood and Fire." Such frightfulness is worthy of the followers of an antiquated creed, who, outraging the spirit of the present age, pray for rain, and for individual members of a plutocratic Royal Family, christen battleships and bless the standards of murder.

After all, Christian priests need not pretend that their own faith is the only pebble on the beach. Take down the Sacred Books of the East from the library shelf. How small, mean, and contemptible such a creed as Christianity appears in comparison with a great Pagan religion such as Buddhism. Were Gotama Buddha to reappear upon the earth, and see great nations professing belief in hell, devils, eternal torture, and praying to plaster images, he would wonder what blight had fallen upon the human intellect after the lapse of twenty-five centuries. Listen, for a moment, to what the wise, old Pagan said, as rendered by Edwin Arnold in *The Light of Asia*.

"Pray not! the darkness will not lighten. Ask
Nought from the silence for it cannot speak.
Vex not your mournful minds with pious pains.
Ah! brothers, sisters, seek
Nought from the helpless gods by gift and hymn,
Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruit and cakes.
Within yourselves deliverance must be sought
Each man his prison makes."

How is it that the average man and woman knows little of his own religion and nothing of the many other religions of the world. Over £100,000,000 is spent annually by the State on education in this country. If you asked Mr. Everyman what he knew of the Zend Avesta, he would, in all probability, think you were referring to a new patent food or parlour game. Thanks to the priestly control of education, the only two clear impressions left on the mind of the ordinary scholar are "Fear God, and Honour the King," which, being translated into plain English, means the continuance of Priestcraft and Kingcraft for yet another generation. Just as a countryman will retain his native speech almost unimpaired during many years residence in another far-distant place, so the unfortunate scholars retain to the last the religious and political prejudices they imbibe with their education. Even should some afterwards rebel, and see through the dogmas they have been taught, the spirit of them remains imbedded in their feelings.

The very existence of Priestcraft is bound up with the subordination of the working class. The higher ecclesiastics sit in the House of Lords, and identify themselves with the aristocracy. It is the priestly abacadabra which places the halo on the head of the monarch. Priests will never dispense with the lever of fear in moulding the plastic minds of the youth of the nation. Our young men and women who should storm the bastions of heaven and clutch the very stars, are forced, in this twentieth century, to carry the burden of a decayed Feudalism.

MIMNERMUS.

No sword bites so fiercely as an evil tongue.

Sir P. Sidney.

Whatever may be known about the heart of man may be found in Shakespeare's plays.—*Goethe*.

John Locke's God.

(Concluded from page 596.)

REMEMBERING the manner in which, as I showed in my previous article, Locke proved the eternity of "something," it is amusing to read the following observations of his. "As in all other cases where we use words without having clear and distinct ideas, we talk like children; who, being questioned what such a thing is which they know not, readily give this satisfactory answer—that it is something; which in truth signifies no more, when so used, either by children or men, but that they know not what; and that the thing they pretend to know and talk of, is what they have no distinct idea of at all, and so are perfectly ignorant of it." Thus his main argument for God's existence is, in his own words, merely a confession of ignorance.

In Book I, chapter iv., Locke proves that the idea of God is not innate, on the grounds that if it were, it would be universally assented to, and arguments to prove God would be unnecessary. The existence of one Atheist destroys the universality of assent. "The complaints of Atheism made from the pulpit," he declares, "are not without reason. And though only some profligate wretches own it too barefacedly now; yet, perhaps, we should hear more than we do of it from others, did not the fear of the magistrate's sword, or their neighbour's censure, tie up people's tongues." If it is realized that the word "profligate" did not simply mean "without principle," but formerly also "beaten" or "conquered," this apparent note of censure takes on a different hue. And when we read with what gusto Locke cites the names of foreign races who have no idea of God—the Siamese, Chinese, Soldanians (Soudanese?)—we have reason to suspect that his sympathies were not all in the direction he leads his clerical critics to suppose. He concludes this part of the argument with the words "Men must think and know for themselves."

Throughout the essay Locke insists upon the validity of reason as against any other method of reaching truth. "Reason," he says, "as distinguished from faith, is the discovery of the certainty or probability of propositions arrived at by deduction from ideas obtained by the use of our natural faculties of sensation or reflection." "Faith is the assent to any proposition not made out by the deductions of reason, upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication. This way of discovering truths to men we call 'revelation.'" But, as a complete knock on the head for those who might claim the superiority of faith or revelation over reason, Locke has the following comments.

"However faith be opposed to reason . . . he that believes, without having any reason for believing, may be in love with his own fancies; but neither seeks truth as he ought, nor pays the obedience due to his Maker." "I say that no man inspired by God can, by any revelation, communicate to others any new simple ideas which they had not before from sensation and reflection." "Revelation cannot be admitted against the clear evidence of reason." "Traditional revelation much less."

But the cream of his views on this subject is to be found in the following: "Immediate revelation being a much easier way for men to establish their opinions and regulate their conduct than the tedious and not always successful labour of strict reasoning, it is no wonder that some have been very apt to pretend to revelation, and to persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions, especially in those of them which they cannot account for by the ordinary methods of know-

ledge and principles of reason. Hence we see that in all ages men whose conceit of themselves has raised them into an opinion of a greater familiarity with God than is afforded to others, have often flattered themselves with a persuasion of an immediate intercourse with the Deity, and frequent communications from the Divine Spirit. God, I own, cannot be denied to be able to enlighten the understanding by a ray darted into the mind . . . This they understand he has promised to do; and who then has so good a title to expect it as those who are his peculiar people, chosen by him, and depending on him? Their minds being thus prepared, whatever groundless opinion comes to settle itself strongly upon their fancies, is an illumination from the Spirit of God, and presently of divine authority: and whatsoever odd action they find in themselves a strong inclination to do, that impulse is concluded to be a call or direction from heaven and must be obeyed."

In view of the fact that "immediate revelation" is always the last stronghold of God-believers, who realize that the God-idea is indefensible upon any other grounds, I suggest that this justly sarcastic passage is clear proof that, whatever ideas of God Locke may have had, they were in no sense Christian, or even religious. In further evidence that Locke's God was a subtle camouflage erected for purposes of self-protection, I will adduce his own statement of the only way in which any idea of God can be invented at all.

In Book II, chapter xxiii., writing of "the idea of God," he says: "If we examine the idea we have of the incomprehensible Supreme Being, we shall find that . . . the complex ideas we have both of God and separate spirits are made up of the simple ideas we receive from reflection: e.g., having, from what we experiment (*i.e.*, experience) in ourselves, got the ideas of existence and duration, of knowledge and power, of pleasure and happiness, and of several other qualities and powers which it is better to have than to be without; when we frame an idea the most suitable we can to the Supreme Being, we enlarge every one of these with our idea of infinity; and so, putting them together, make our complex idea of God."

There is here no question but that "God" is a complex idea built up in the mind by the process of carrying to infinity all the "qualities and powers which it is better to have than to be without." Of all the qualities and powers which it is better to be without than to have, there is no whisper—though we saw that previously Locke's infinite "something" was claimed to be the source of all powers and all being. Neither is there any mention anywhere of a "Devil"—to whom such unpleasant qualities and powers might have been assigned. For Locke was logical enough to realize that the introduction of a "Devil" into any argument would inevitably lead him into one of two flat contradictions. Either the source of *all* being and power must be the source of the Devil; and therefore "God" could not only be composed of the qualities and powers which it is better to have than to be without. Or, the Devil must have some power and being of which God was not the source and therefore God could not be the source of *all* power and being. It follows that, unless Locke was a bigger dunce than anyone believes him to have been, he was never at any time under the illusion that the God of religion was anything more than an invention of the human mind which corresponded to nothing in reality. "One may observe, in all languages," he says, "certain words that, if they be examined, will be found, in their first original and their appropriated use, not to stand for any clear and distinct ideas. These, for the most part, the several sects of philosophy and religion have introduced."

In conclusion I will quote a passage which occurs towards the end of his essay, and which I commend to the serious consideration of all, especially those who are not in the habit of giving their opinions a critical dusting by the periodical study of their opponent's views. I quote verbatim—even the remarks in brackets are Locke's own.

"There is nothing more ordinary than children's receiving into their minds propositions (especially about matters of religion) from their parents, nurses, or those about them; which, being insinuated into their unwary as well as unbiassed understandings, and fastened by degrees, are at least (equally, whether true or false) riveted there, by long custom and education, beyond all possibility of being pulled out again. For, men, when they are grown up, reflecting upon their opinions, and finding those of this sort to be as ancient as their memories, not having observed their early insinuation, nor by what means they got them, they are apt to reverence them as sacred things, and not to suffer them to be profaned, touched or questioned: they look on them as the *urim* and *thummim* set up in their minds immediately by God himself, to be the great and unerring deciders of truth and falsehood, and the judges to which they are to appeal in all manner of controversies."

"The opinion of his principles (let them be what they will) being once established in any one's mind, it is easy to be imagined what reception any proposition shall find, how clearly soever proved, that shall invalidate their authority, or at all thwart with these internal oracles: whereas, the grossest absurdities and improbabilities, being but agreeable to such principles, go down glibly, and are easily digested. The great obstinacy that is to be found in man firmly believing quite contrary opinions, though many times equally absurd, in the various religions of mankind, are as evident a proof as they are an unavoidable consequence of this way of reasoning from received traditional principles."

Anyone who can believe that Locke was not an Atheist at heart, for all his seeming orthodoxy, would have to discard more than ninety-nine per cent of his famous *Essay* and leave nothing but the self-contradictory "proof" of God's existence to which I have referred. Even then he would be hard put to it to show what sort of a god Locke really conceived of—if any.

C. S. FRASER.

Man and Science.

It is surprising and somewhat refreshing in this mechanical age to hear a man of science, in a review of mechanical progress during the last hundred years, asking "Whither all this tremendous procession tends? What after all is its goal? What is its probable influence upon the future of the human race?"

Yet such questions come from no less a man than Sir Alfred Ewing, who is chairman of the British Association for the advancement of Science. Sir Alfred could not have chosen a more appropriate time or place to express these views than when addressing members of the Association itself at York recently. I quote the following from the Chairman's speech:—

"In the present-day thinkers' attitude towards what is called mechanical progress we are conscious of a changed spirit. Admiration is tempered by criticism; complacency has given way to doubt; doubt is passing into alarm. There is a sense of perplexity and frustration, as in one who has gone a long way and finds he has taken the wrong turning. To go back is impossible; how shall he proceed?"

"It leaves us with no alternative," continues Sir Alfred, "but to ask ourselves whither all this tremendous procession tends?" What, after all, is its goal? What is its probable influence upon the future of the human race?" The chairman went on to say that "Beyond question many of the gifts of science are benefits to man, but we are acutely aware that the engineer's gifts have been and may be grievously abused. In some there is potential tragedy as well as present burden. Man was ethically unprepared for so great a bounty."

These remarks, while received with mixed feelings by the general body of scientists, will do much to put science in an even stronger position than before, for there are many people who have deplored its shortcomings and imagined that they went unperceived by those who championed the cause. Sir Alfred Ewing has conclusively told those who estimate the uses of science only in so far as it can supply a complete pattern of life to look elsewhere—that it has no such Utopian pretensions.

There can be no doubt that science is the instrument that has shaken the faith of a vast body in accepted religious belief and, because of this, it has become a popular idea that it is endeavouring to supply an alternative faith. It should surely be realized that science, in itself, has no feeling. It is merely the desire for knowledge, and it cares not whether it sheds its light on objects that are beautiful or repulsive. Science shows great interest in giving us wonderful homes to live in with labour-saving devices, wireless and electric cookers. We become a little flattered and we say, "Isn't science wonderful?" The next week it comes along with another little improvement which it had not shown us before and our homes are blown sky-high.

Sir Alfred Ewing's opinion that we are "Unprepared for so great a bounty," opens up a very big question. Why is it that we are unable to ensure our vast scientific knowledge being used for the betterment of the human race instead of letting it run like a haphazard stream irrigating the soil in one place and destroying the crops in another?

There are those who give the answer that, while intellectually we have advanced at an amazing rate during the last hundred years, emotionally we are still in an infantile state. That while science has been busy destroying our faith in orthodox religion, it has given us nothing in its place. They further point out that, though our intellects are rapidly advancing, the convictions which they bring us to go into battle are unbacked by any emotional stir. That, in addition, we seem to have lost all sense of "drive" to see things carried through to a satisfactory conclusion. These people are closely akin to the mystics—they are not against the advancement of scientific knowledge, but they firmly believe that it can only be an accessory, like all other fruits of the intellect, to our real guiding influence—the emotions. Nor are these critics in favour of a return to orthodox religion but rather for the living of a fuller emotional life. Only this, it is said, will supply us with a real faith that will abolish our present indecision and fire us with a real desire for what is right. That is the argument, but does it bear examination?

It is useless to deny the great influence our feelings have on the course of our lives, but can we say that they are a sure guide for the progress of the race? They are really our heritage from bygone ages, and they have changed very little from man's earliest struggles toward civilization. To argue that our emotions are only in their primitive state through their lack of development, and that we should make up our minds to educate them, is surely tantamount to saying that they are not to be trusted except under the sobering and educational influence of

our intellects. Again are there not signs everywhere that we are leading too full an emotional life? Everything we do and say seems in some way influenced by them. The lack of co-operation of one human being with another and one country with another—as brought home only too plainly to us by the last war, and the raising of tariff barriers since—do not all these evils spring from the primary emotional instinct, that of fear and self-preservation? Do not our crowded police and divorce courts speak of our feelings running rampant? Cannot our greed for money really be traced back to man's earliest history when his jealous pride of possession exemplified itself in dishonesty and even bloodshed?

It is surely nearer the mark to say that we are unprepared for the bounty of science because we are still leading too strong an emotional life, that it is hampering our intellectual conclusions at every turn and preventing us from reaping the full reward of our labours. While the germ of hatred and mistrust remain embedded in our natures all the peace treaties in the world will not see an end of war. While our greed for money is allowed to occupy so prominent a place in our minds, production and distribution of the necessities of this life can never be so effected as to permanently alleviate our economic ills.

It is my belief that our emotions should not remain pent up as disgraceful prisoners as some people would have them. It is manifest that their inspiration is the very life-blood of progress. If we were to imprison them we should, in stamping out hatred, cast aside love. In ridding ourselves of despair we should become unacquainted with joy. But it seems best that our emotions should be censored and thrust through the purifying channels of our intellect which must be left to select and develop what is useful and endeavour to suppress what is not.

The big rubbish-heap which our intellectual workers must now concentrate on cutting a way through, for they will probably never remove it, is the collected hatreds, jealousies, superstition and greed which have jaundiced our outlook from time immemorial. If they succeed it will be a triumph for ordered thought, for intellectual progress, but it will be emotion again which will lag behind, after intellect with a sigh of relief goes to seek pastures new, staring with wide, innocent eyes admiring the improvement.

PETER REED.

Conversion.

THERE is a great deal more concern at present about the conversion of holdings in Government stocks than about the conversion of unbelievers. Yet here and there are to be heard voices that seem echoes of Victorian days when the *Christian Herald* was warning people of the imminent end of the world—when Spurgeon was proclaiming the necessity of fleeing from the wrath to come and pointing out the way of escape from Hell Fire—when Moody and Sankey were prosecuting their prosperous mission to the lost souls of Britain. In the *Scots Observer* a writer has trodden upon several orthodox corns by using some depreciatory remarks about Moody and Sankey. Alas for the fundamentalists of to-day Moody and Sankey are about as remote now as the early crusaders! Though the world moves on there are certain human vegetables that never grow beyond a rudimentary state in which they cherish the discredited beliefs promulgated by the crass supernaturalism of sixty years since.

And still we have Christian agencies in the form of "Missions," whose objective is the conversion of

Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucians and persons of beliefs other than Christianity, conveniently lumped together in expressive Christian phraseology as "benighted heathen." Now, qualified observers have adduced evidence to show that the percentage of intelligent believers in faiths other than Christianity who are "converted" to Christianity is exceedingly small and fractional—no more than, if as many as, the number of Christians converted to other faiths. And in the majority of such conversions—either way—they are the result of self-interest, personal inclination or convenience. A convinced believer in a particular faith—a real zealot and fanatic—is not so easily dislodged from something whose powerful tentacles are entwined round his deeper thoughts and feelings. The power of his conviction necessarily makes him suppose that those who do not share his belief may yet be converted to it. But, of course, that attitude of mind is reciprocal. When Greek meets Greek then comes the tug of war. Each maintains that his faith is the only true one—and his particular Church is the repository of it. How is the one to succeed in converting the other?

Convince a man against his will
He holds the same opinion still.

And after all, these sacred and deeply cherished convictions are merely personal opinions. A Revelation is a revelation only to him to whom it has been made. Each of the religions of the world is accepted by its particular adherents on second-hand, third, fourth and even fortieth-hand evidence—a very shaky support; but Rice Christians there have been, are and will be. The loaves and fishes count for much, as well as the menace of boycott and social ostracism. And to those who do not or cannot think for themselves, mere antiquity is accepted in place of real evidence.

To say this is not to exclude the possibility of sincerity in individual cases. There are ignorant, illiterate and semi-literate believers in religion, whose sincerity, zeal and fanaticism are demonstrable. They are not apostates or renegades who have succumbed to the temptings of avarice or self-interest. But they are none the less the victims of their mental limitations. On the other hand you may meet with educated, literate and well-read people who for their own personal advancement have renounced their original faith for another. These are reptilian apostates and renegades of a particularly loathsome type.

Who can fathom the secret processes of the human mind? The Freethinker repudiates the desolating doctrine that "every man has his price." But who can deny that within the Christian Churches social divisions and class distinctions are as marked and definite as they are without? Clericalism is just a profession like any other in which appointments are canvassed for; glowing testimonials produced; wires pulled; and the "good word" of "influential" individuals invoked. Promotion is touted for by assertive and ambitious young clerics. Some of them for the purpose of "getting on" will desert the Church of their fathers for some other denomination which offers prospects of a fatter living and a more conspicuous position. We see living illustrations of the fact in our midst at the present time.

No wonder that so many picture the Christian God as a prosperous, potbellied, bourgeois capitalist who secures the adherence of his oily worshippers by threats! He is the real power behind all the deluding sentimentality paraded as the Love of God. And his love is first of all for himself and the comfortable pietists who prostrate themselves before him once a week.

Conversion to *that*! What a thought!

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops

A correspondent sends us an account of an incident which well illustrates the charity and public spirit of the Church. A portion of the beautiful coast line around Tintagel was recently in danger of falling into the hands of speculative builders. One section of this land was given by the owner, a lady, to the National Trust. The other section was owned by the Church. There was no offer of handing this over to the public, but at the last moment it was saved from sale by a public subscription. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners duly sold the land to the public for as much as the builders had offered. Yet there are people who question the public spirit of the Church!

The task of a Methodist preacher, we are told, is to persuade men to yield themselves to Christ, and to win them he must convince them of sin. In other words, he has to work on similar lines to those adopted by the vendors of patent medicines and other cure-alls. The first move is to get people to believe they are suffering from the disease described by the quack. The next step is to induce them to believe that the quack's patent nostrum will cure them. The final move, so far as the preacher is concerned, is to convince the "saved" that they are always liable to have a relapse, and therefore they must continuously be imbibing his wonderful tonic, in order to prevent that. After this, one wonders why the job of a Christian medicine-man is regarded as an "honourable calling."

Should the Church "stunt?" The question is interesting some readers of the *Daily Express*, one of whom argues that the Church should, because Christ was the first Christian "stuntist." He doesn't put it quite like that, but says, "Surely a reason for the miracles of Christ was to attract attention to his teachings." This, of course, settles the matter, by giving religious "stuntism" a respectable origin! Furthermore, it enables Christ to become the Great Exemplar for a much wider public, namely, all that crave after notoriety, including circuses, newspapers, politicians, and cinema actresses, etc.

But, perhaps, the question really means, "Should the Church adopt modern sensational methods of attracting attention?" Most certainly! Is not the Church in sore distress? After all, necessity knows no scruples, and the means can easily be justified by the end. The only drawback to religious "stuntism" is that it advertises more than the Church. It reveals to all and sundry that the Church and religion is in a bad plight.

Denunciations of the wicked post-war generation are so common in pulpit and press that we need not be surprised that Bernard Shaw's new play re-echoes them. We note that a sound and sane dramatic critic, Mr. Baughan, points out Shaw's short views on this matter. We agree with Mr. Baughan that the war has merely uncovered the nakedness of truth, and this nakedness "does not make us afraid of ourselves or of life." Those who deplore the wreck of pre-war conditions do not realize that "the ruins of the old world are already being re-built and that a spirit of greater honesty of thought has gone to the rebuilding." There is more idealism in facing facts than in all the theologies and moralities that dodge them.

Liverpool's contending Christians are an expensive luxury to that city. At a recent meeting of the City Council the Watch Committee proposal that £219 19s. 9d. be offered in settlement of thirty-four claims for damage in connexion with recent sectarian disturbances was considered. Several other claims await settlement. The Battle of the Boyne must have been found engraved on the broken heart of many a Liverpool Chief Constable.

Admitting that Catholic schools are overcrowded and "hampered in remedying the matter by regulations that have nothing to do with education," Dr. Downey, Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool made the astonishing statement that "it was possible that *our* schools justified their cost from a commercial point of view, *but he doubted it.*" "Our" here means the nation's schools. If *they* do not justify what they cost, how much less do the sectarian schools, many of them overcrowded and insanitary, and as bad for the health as they may be good for the "faith" of the scholars?

A disgusted lady writes to the *Baptist Times* to say that at a meeting of the Group Movement the "leader," sitting on the edge of the table, said: "Let's have a spot of prayer!" As we have mentioned before the Group Movement is addressed to the "educated" classes.

She thought she saw an Oxford man

A leader of the Group,
She looked again and saw it was

A "comic" in a troupe;
"If many folk see this," she said
"We'll all be in the soup!"

Men and women vergers in the Province of York have formed "an organization to watch their interests." A verger shows people to their seats in church, or carries a staff before the Bishop. Such arduous and responsible duties may well leave no time to an individual verger to look after his (or her) own interests. Those they serve must be a stingy lot, and ungracious withal, for a Mr. Buck (Senior Verger at Leeds Parish Church) said they must "win respect from everybody with whom they came in contact." People rarely respect services which cost them nothing—even in the form of showing them to their seats in Church. Why they cannot find their seats unaided we cannot say. Sunday is notoriously often "the morning after."

The parents of a boy of twelve were invited to a parochial function. The boy was also invited and wanted to go. His parents thought he would be out too late. So a quiet time was suggested to find out God's will after which the boy said: "I feel God wants me to stay at home." It was Dr. Parker who said, "Train up a child in the way he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it—*won't he?*" This precious story is actually printed in the *Church of England Newspaper*, under the heading "Modern Romance in Parochial Life—in South London!"

It is appalling to think that Church of England Chaplains in Northern and Central Europe have their salaries in jeopardy by the fall in the pound. Some of these gentry come on the Foreign Office vote, and a Church Aid Society exists as a kind of register office where parsons who want to spend their holidays at Davos or Baden-Baden may be enabled to combine business with pleasure. Why, if the Church of England is "Catholic," these chaplains should invade the parishes of their Roman "brethren" in continental countries is hard to understand. But, of course, anyone asking for the "Catholic" Chapel at a British Embassy or Legation abroad would never be sent to the gentleman in the pay of the English taxpayer. Surely in these hard times nobody can be expected to shed a single tear over the pecuniary woes of these fatuous and superfluous clerical visitors to (generally) most agreeable foreign resorts.

Bishop Barnes, who seems to have got on the nerves of the Roman Catholics, will make them more nervy than ever with his latest pronouncements. He has had the audacity to attack the Lourdes miracles quite in the style of a *Freethinker* writer. Father Martindale is extremely angry and no doubt Mr. Chesterton, Mr. Belloe and Father Knox will enter the arena in an attempt to flatten the doughy Bishop out with mere words. But mere words won't do. Cures and genuine cures are needed, and cancer, consumption, diabetes and many

other fatal diseases have never been cured at Lourdes. Still the Bishop forgets that the credulity and superstition which dominate Roman Catholics and make them believe in Lourdes and relics and other nonsense are directly inspired by Christianity. Lourdes and what it stands for will never be abolished so long as "true" Christianity is preached.

Dean Inge doesn't like "Catholicism" either. The *Church Times* is very indignant with him, especially when he said recently that "the strongest weapon in the armoury of Catholicism is bluff," and "if the scientific spirit continues to dominate our civilization, it is clearly inconceivable that Catholicism will regain its power and influence, for sacrosanct authority is the death of science." The Anglo-Catholic organ is hard put to it for a reply—unless it thinks calling these statements "bad taste" or "nonsense" is a reply. But every intelligent man knows Catholicism and science are as poles apart. And we have an idea that even the Editor of the *Church Times*, if he had some continuous and severe internal pains would rather consult a physician and follow scientific advice than consult a priest and grovel in front of relics.

Every effort seems to be made to rope in the Boy Scout Movement into religion. The Cardiff Scouts recently held a "Scout's Own Service," and the *Church Times* is quite indignant that a Nonconformist layman addressed them—no clergy having been invited. To make matters worse, the Roman Catholic Scouts had a service of their own with a real archbishop, and anything more unsatisfactory for the Anglo-Catholic clergy than this could not be imagined. The *Church Times* insists that "the Movement as far as it affects the Church will only be put on a satisfactory basis through the joint action of a number of parish priests." No doubt, but one never hears a word as to the wishes of the scouts themselves. We would bet a *Scout's Handbook* to a Bible that most scouts would prefer a jolly ramble to listening to the dreary drivel of a preacher of any denomination.

Eight hundred scientists cheered the Pope at a Physiological Congress held in the Vatican the other day—the Pope, it is recorded, showing tremendous interest in science and research work. Our only comment is that we are left wondering whether Roman Catholicism has swallowed the scientists or whether the scientists have swallowed Roman Catholicism. In either case violent indigestion is bound to ensue.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Nottingham has been warning parents against a "two-fold grievous sin." This is sending Roman Catholic children to non-Roman Catholic schools. It is not only terribly dangerous but a sin and a scandal. The question of educating the poor mites has nothing to do with it. It is far better for a Roman Catholic child to be badly educated or even not educated at all than run the risk of hell-fire in imbibing some education in an ordinary school. We quite agree. A little education on the usual lines might make the children think, and thinking might make them see the truth about the holy Roman Catholic religion. And everybody knows what that would result in.

It is amusing to find Mr. Belloc who criticizes any and every anti-Catholic who has the audacity to disagree with his credulous views about Roman Catholicism, waxing most indignant when he is himself criticized. Mr. Belloc never, if he can help it, allows anyone to reply to him—as Mr. Wells would be happy to testify. In the *Universe*, Mr. Belloc pens a lengthy protest against a reviewer in the *Church Quarterly* of the fourth volume of his *History of England*. The *Church Quarterly* would not print it, and Mr. Belloc felt bound "to expose the culprit." We are sure the culprit won't care. The only safe rule in controversy is *freedom of speech*, which, for everybody else except Roman Catholics, Mr. Belloc would rigorously suppress. It is good to find that in the Church, two can play at that game, and it's a game that causes Freethinkers much amusement.

Dr. Matthews, Dean of Exeter, in a sermon to the British Association denounced the "slap-dash pronouncements of scientists on religion," and objected to them assuming the role of "oracles" on "subjects they have not studied." We agree with him, but we do not mean what he meant. Science, according to another preacher on the same occasion, has "camp-followers, who believe unquestionably in the infallibility of scientific theory and deride theology!" Who are they? These clergymen, we need hardly say, expressed their thanks to "the writings of Jeans and Eddington"—Sir Oliver Lodge is abandoned in these days in favour of scientists who have not his unfortunate associations with ghosts. We wonder, however, whether the two scientists now taken under the clerical wing will feel quite comfortable in that refuge? Do they agree with their new champions that "there is no true knowledge but religious knowledge," and that "the things which we knew with the highest degree of certainty . . . lay for the most part beyond the reach of logical or scientific demonstration?"

Dr. Matthews himself provided an answer to this contention, for he argued that "the very existence of science bears witness to the nature of man." Of course it does. "What, after all," asks the Dean, "is the great body of scientific truth but the creation of the human mind?" If, then, there is a great body of scientific truth arrived at by the human mind, and if that truth is applied with increasing results to the practical problems of men, what becomes of the statement that "the things we knew with the highest degree of certainty lay beyond the reach of scientific or logical demonstration?" It is precisely the things we do *not know* with any degree of certainty, namely the evasive and elusive elements of the realm of theology, which lie beyond the reach of the human mind.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE Teetotal Movement (falsely called Temperance, which means use without abuse) has now a history of fifty years. It was going to destroy the drink traffic, and it still boasts that it will do so. But it never will. It is founded on the radically false Christian idea that preaching will do everything, and that you can grasp ends without using means. England drinks more now than it did fifty years ago. The Teetotal movement has made no impression. In 1831 there were 50,000 licensed houses in England and Wales, or one to every 260 of the population; now there are 150,000, or one for every 170. In 1831 the amount spent on drink averaged £3 per head; it now averages £4. In Scotland they have had a Sunday Closing Bill in operation for years, yet drunkenness is steadily on the increase. Sunday closing will do just as much good in England. These well-meaning but erring reformers have been trained in a wrong school. They have never been taught to look after the causes of effects. Just as God said "Let there be light" and there was light, so they think they may say, "Let drunkenness cease" and it will cease. But wagging the tongue and signing the pledge will do no good. The *material conditions* that surround the people must be altered before you can reasonably expect any change in them. Root out the slums of our cities, abolish the smoke nuisance, give us more oxygen in the air, more parks, more open spaces, broader streets, and plenty of trees; open the museums, art galleries, and libraries on Sunday, instead of shutting the public-house; provide wholesome refreshments at a reasonable cost for the working man and his family when they go out; establish clubs, institutes, and societies, where people may drink when they are thirsty and refrain when they are not; do all or any of these things, and you strike at the causes of drunkenness. Leave them undone, and all the preaching and pledging of another fifty years will only result in a further increase of our deplorable intemperance, with its ruined homes, its misery and vice, its workhouses, its asylums, and its gaols.

The "Freethinker," September 24, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. ROBINSON.—Pleased to hear from one who has been a member of the National Secular Society for fifty-four years. We hope to offer you many more anniversary greetings.
- B. L. BOWERS.—Received. May find space later.
- H. J. PARRISH.—Sorry we are unable to use.
- W. MANN.—Quite an excellent portrait to add to our picture gallery.
- W. WEARING.—We have not the report by us at the moment, but will look it up and compare.
- J. NEWTON.—We share your appreciation of the good work done by open-air speakers in Hyde Park and other parts of London. It is trying and tiring work, but of great value to the movement.
- A. J. DUNN AND CINE CERE.—The article by James Douglas is really too silly for comment. If it is a true expression of his mentality, it is the most idiotic performance we have seen for some time—even from the religious side. If it is written for the benefit of the *Express* the assumption of stupidity is really brilliant.
- G. LEWIS.—Thanks for "religious literature."
- The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.
- The Secular Society, Limited Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
- 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 connection 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.
- The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."
- 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.

The Liverpool Branch has arranged a very good programme for its winter season. Mr. Cohen opens the course with a lecture at the Picton Hall, on Sunday next, October 2. There will be a number of reserved seats at 1s. each, and those who intend coming from surrounding districts should write as soon as possible to Mr. S. R. A. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. On the last occasion of Mr. Cohen's visit quite a number of people had to be refused admission.

Some time back we asked for the help of any of our readers who had votes for the Royal Hospital and Home for Incurables. That appeal resulted in a number of votes being sent, but without securing election. Fortunately the votes are cumulative and are carried on until election is secured. We now repeat that appeal for the election which is to take place in November next. The candidate is Miss F. L. Brooks, aged forty-seven, who is completely disabled by rheumatism. The case is a worthy one, and votes may be sent either direct to Miss Brooks at 76 Hawthorne Road, Hornsey, N.E., or to the Hospital, Putney, to be placed to this candidate's credit. Banks and other big institutions usually have votes for disposal.

There have been plenty of instances during the past week which bear out what we have said of the newspaper press. Here are two. The *Sunday Express* published an article impressing upon people the desirability of drinking only British grown tea because the tannin in foreign tea was very injurious. Bertrand Russell has frequently protested against the use of his enforced title by newspaper writers, but the *Daily Herald*, in reviewing his last book repeatedly refers to him by his title. It sounds better, perhaps, to its very democratic readers. The papers evidently know their readers. If only the readers knew their papers, what a different state of things there might be.

Parsons are hard to please. A lady attending South Benfleet Church in a bathing costume took the precaution to wear a hat. It was, however, "a floppy sun hat," and the Vicar prudishly observed that "apparently she had no sense of decency" in wearing it. Who but a clergyman could say or think that?

The Study Circle organized last winter by the N.S.S. will renew its work on Monday, October 3, at 8.0 p.m., at 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Mr. A. D. McLaren asks us to announce that he particularly invites young entrants into our movement, and that during the coming winter he will deal at some length with methods of preparing speeches, note-taking, and other matters of general interest to them.

The Dean of Llandaff preaching to members of the Institute of Journalists, said "We are not an intelligent nation: indeed we dislike thinking. We accept our newspapers, or, at any rate, we accept their headlines, as oracular truths, because it saves us the trouble of thinking." The "we" and "us" show a candour unusual in Deans; but the journalists may well have regarded this view as hardly complimentary to them. "Headlines" as "oracular truths" sounds suspiciously like satire.

The West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged a course of four indoor meetings in the Public Assistance Station, West Ham Lane, Stratford, London, E.15. Mr. G. Whitehead opens the course to-day (Sunday) with a lecture on "Evolution from Microbe to Man." On successive Sunday evenings Messrs. Corrigan, McLaren and Rosetti will be the speakers. The lectures commence at 7.30. Local saints can make the course a great success by attending with a thoughtful Christian friend.

After speaking indoors to-day (Sunday) Mr. G. Whitehead will address meetings each evening from Monday to Thursday outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, London, E., at 8 p.m. The meetings will be held with the co-operation of the West Ham Branch N.S.S., and a deal of work is being put into the campaign.

A religious contributor to the *Times* writes on "The Blessings of Gratitude." Thus: "The Christian possesses deep grounds for thankfulness that, despite all appearances, and in face of all the ugly and painful things of life, wisdom and goodness are on the throne of the Universe." This is "grateful and comforting" to the leisurely readers of the *Times* who can ignore such signs of "wisdom and goodness" as poverty, injustice, enthroned cruelty, and incurable disease of mind and body. Less tranquil observers will wish they could have knowledge of these "deep grounds," which seem more likely to be the shallows of credulity and illusion.

"We cannot indefinitely postpone a social decision upon the "burden of the unfit," says an *Observer* note. The "burden"—that is the financial burden of mental illness and the prolific reproduction of mental defectives—is great no doubt. Is it not like this "Christian" nation that it takes notice of such grave matters only when they become a "burden" on its pocket? Nevertheless if notice is taken, the motive is a minor matter.

Much of this expenditure would be saved if less notice was taken of "Christian" objections to scientific treatment in this domain.

"It is not conscience, but self-deception to believe that ones own principles are infallible," says Canon Streeter. He should "tell that to the"—Pope.

The Gossip writer of the *Daily Herald* describes as "a disgraceful scene" the taking of flashlight photographs from the gallery of a London Church where the ex-Mayor of New York was at Mass. Disgraceful to whom?

We continue to get good reports of the meeting held by Mr. J. Clayton in Lancashire. These meetings are attracting attention, and generally they are quiet and orderly. But in one or two places lately there have been deliberate attempts to break up the meetings, usually without success. Mr. Clayton, we believe is good tempered and tactful on the platform, and these qualities tell in the long run.

For the Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch to-day (September 25), Mr. Allan Flanders will lecture, in the Bigg Market, at 7.0. Mr. Flanders is on a visit to Newcastle, and the local Secretary writes in high praise of him as a speaker, and many Freethinkers will probably desire to hear Mr. Flanders while he is in the district.

Criticism and the Bible

(Continued from page 604.)

ONLY in the eleventh century when the Hebrew tribes joined together and formed a kingdom, when the increasingly powerful Judah acquired the hegemony, and, under David, the Judaic popular monarchy arose, did Yahwe first become a national god and his cult a national religion. With the welding together of the hitherto disjointed tribal communities into a unified State, with the victory of centralization over separatism, the god of the nation and the religion of the nation took shape, and *it was the god of the leading ruling tribe which received the place of honour as the national god*—the Yahwe of Judah. Patronized by David and his greater son Solomon, there arose everywhere in the northern part of the kingdom, rich altars and cult-establishments of the great Yahwe, who had made of his people a mighty kingdom. Nor were the priests of the leading tribe, the Levites of Judah, behind in their efforts to promote the power of their own circle. Around the cult-establishments flocked a numerous Levitic priesthood, who, in their own economic interests as well as upon national grounds, carried on a vigorous propaganda for their old tribal god who had now been raised to the dignity of the tutelary god of the whole kingdom.

The more the might of Judah developed, the more did Yahwe win respect and recognition. Especially was this the case after David captured the Jebusite stronghold of Zion and made it the seat of the central government, and when, later, Solomon at prodigious expense built for Yahwe a grandiose temple in this place and made it the central seat of the national religion of Yahwe. *The centralization of religion followed upon political centralization.*

This most brilliant period of Hebrew history lasted, however, only for about a century. The pressure of Judah lay heavily upon the peoples of the North; and under the autocratic rule of Rehoboam (about 975 B.C., according to the usual reckoning) the kingdom split in two. The northern tribes, together with Benja-

min,¹⁴ separated from Judah, and formed a kingdom under the leadership of the tribe of Ephraim.

This split in the kingdom was fateful for the whole nation. The strong position which it had attained under David and Solomon, was lost. The external enemies which surrounded it became ever more threatening and intrusive; while the internal antagonisms and struggles sapped the strength which it more and more needed to defend itself against its external foes. Palestine became the arena of constant struggles and foreign invasions. In the far North, as in the country East of the Jordan, one piece of land after another was lost.

In this period of struggle and decline, the cult of Yahwe lost ground. The veneration of the old tribal gods which had for a time, under the new economic and political relations of prosperity and power, receded into the background, again victoriously emerged in the foreground, a revival which for political reasons was patronized and promoted by the monarchs of the northern kingdom. These monarchs were extremely sensitive to the fact that as long as the centre of the religion of the land remained in the capital of the hostile kingdom of Judah—Jerusalem—their own rule was to that extent weakened and jeopardised. *The religious split followed the political split.* In the Old Testament annals of the time, the political motive for the renaissance of the old religion, is very clearly set forth.

And Jeroboam (the new king of Samaria) said in his heart (thought to himself), now shall the kingdom return to the house of David.

If this people go to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.

Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan.¹⁵

One can well imagine what the priests of Judah thought of this conduct. Indeed, they are for the most part the authors of those *ex parte* chronicles of Northern Israel.

Still the cult of Yahwe, during the century of the united kingdom under the leadership and rule of Judah, had taken too deep root in the north of Israel to permit anyone to uproot it in Jeroboam's quite too simple fashion. The priests of Yahwe had everywhere dug themselves in too well, to let this new policy pass unchallenged. Thus, notwithstanding all sorts of intimidation and persecution, they held fast to their cult. Their own self-interests were strong. Nevertheless, Jeroboam and his party might even have overcome these interests, had the priests of Yahwe not found an ally much stronger than their own interests and prejudices in the forces which were developing deep down in the economic foundations of society, and which were making their devastating effects felt among the mass of the people.

Under the heavy blows of fate which immediately fell upon the northern kingdom, under the continual struggles within and without, the decay of trade, and the impoverishment of the peasantry, it appeared to those people who saw themselves sacrificed to the foreign invasions, that that past period when Samaria and Judah were still united and the external enemy trembled before the might of Israel, had been the

¹⁴That Benjamin inclined to the northern kingdom and not to Judah is to-day generally acknowledged in the circles of historical enquiry.

¹⁵ 1 Kings xii. 26-29.

golden age of Israel's history, the "good old days" of universal prosperity; and that illustrious time was associated with the worship of Yahwe as the national god. It was an easy task which the priests of Yahwe had, to point the moral of the collapse and to represent to the people that their misery and misfortune in contrast to the once resplendent power and prosperity of Israel, was the result of their falling away from the worship of the one true god, Yahwe.

There was another factor which favoured the cause of the priests of Yahwe. On the basis of the new economy of private property which gradually got the upper hand in the course of settled life in Palestine, the old ancestor-cult of the gentes assumed a more and more aristocratic character. When the Hebrews had first colonized Canaan, the conquered land was distributed and occupied on the bases of thousands, hundreds and tens. Each of the kinship groups received a definite landed possession. The smallest of these groups was the tanship, the "house of the father," which presented itself as a household and farming community under the management of the patriarch or father of the household. Sons and grandsons lived there with their wives and children, and cultivated in common the family estate. However, already in the ninth century and more especially in the following century, these patriarchal family estates fell rapidly into decay. The small-peasant private economy acquired greater and greater extension; and with it there developed at once marked differences in riches and possessions. Beside the large and small landed proprietors, there came into existence a class of landless freeman (the Dalim), and beside these again another class of landless people, but unfree (the Anijjim), consisting partly of debtors, who, owing to unpaid debts and rents, had fallen with their children into slavery or bondage. There is an incident which is described in the second Book of Kings, chapter iv. verse 1, relating to this debtor-bondage:—

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.

Still a few more details about the social conditions in the northern kingdom at the end of the eighth century B.C., may be in place.

There developed a costly luxury and parasitism among the ruling class. Its prodigality naturally swallowed up enormous sums. As the appetite grew by what it fed on, the powerful and prominent rulers and their statesmen soon began to utilize the most reprehensible means in order to be able to satisfy their were-wolf hunger for luxury. The royal officials, to whom the collection of the dues and taxes were entrusted, had a very wide and lucrative field at their disposal from which they did not neglect to reap the richest harvest of spoils. Even the propertiless were called upon to pay their respects to the tax-collectors in something more matter-of-fact than courtesies:—

For as much therefore as your treading is upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens of wheat.

the spoliators are threatened by Amos with reprisals.¹⁶ Other officials took advantage of their position to practice profiteering in corn by giving short weight and falsifying the currency. Amos stings them with bitter scorn about their feverish anxiety for the new moon to pass so that they can resume their corn-selling to the poor of the land, "making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit."¹⁷ Those who could not pay their

debts or taxes were put to pawn with brutal heartlessness. The same Amos says of this swarm of human locusts that "they lay themselves down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god."¹⁸ Finally, the whole judicial system became corrupted, and justice a travesty. Either the rich and powerful were themselves judges, or their relatives and friends sat on the bench. Consequently, the poor, the widows and orphans, were, as a rule, defenceless against the extortions of these despots, who foamed with rage when honest men appeared before the tribunal as advocates for the innocent. In Ephraim, against which the prophet Hosea thunders, matters were even worse. A new dynasty merely meant a change of robbers and oppressors, who, appreciating the speedy turn in the wheel of fortune, utilized every means to get rich in the shortest possible time.

Not only did the number of expropriated men continually increase, but those without land became at the same time without a gens. Removed from their native place they lost contact with their gens or mispacha and therefore their old rights to support and protection. The unfree became serving members of those families who acquired them as bondsmen and slaves: but the landless free men thronged into the towns and larger villages in order to seek a livelihood there as workers or traders. Even when they had succeeded there in acquiring the right of settlement, they were not admitted to membership in the gentes which ruled there and consequently had no share or voice in the government of the town. It is true to say that as early as the eighth century B.C., by far the greater part of the poorer population in the towns of Israel had ceased to belong to a gentile organization. *The gentiles were now synonymous with the gentry.* They were the rich, the men of the army, those landowners who according to the magnitude of their possessions were obliged to render military service.

The man without land and without gens, lost still another thing. *He lost his gentile god.* He ceased to participate in the ancestor-cult of his mispacha. He was literally "without a sacrifice and without an image and without an ephod and without teraphim." For the ancestor-god was inseparably bound up with the gens of his descendants, and therefore to be detached from his gens was to be detached from the cult of this god. We recall David's words to Saul, when he complained that to be sent away from his people was to be sent among "strange gods." There was now, however, not even the possibility of serving "strange gods," i.e., the gods of other gentes, since those gentes had become the exclusive corporations of the rich and powerful.

Nevertheless, the impoverished mass, without land and without a mispacha, found a god in Yahwe, who was not only the god of a gens, not only a god of the hated landowner, but of the whole people. The priests of Yahwe rose to the occasion and made the most of the social forces which were turning the religious tide in favour of their cult. The more the cult of the family and gentile gods developed into an aristocratic cult of the plutocracy, so much the more, as the speeches and manifestoes of the prophets clearly show, did the priests of Yahwe impress upon Yahwe the features of a democratic god, of a god of the needy, disinherited, and disenfranchised masses, and to whose old order they called upon the masses to return—to those customs and institutions which had prevailed before the "mighty ones consumed the people like cannibals," and "ground the poor like the millstone." It is quite intelligible that those priests and,

¹⁶ Amos v. 11.

¹⁷ Amos viii. 4-6.

¹⁸ Amos ii. 8.

above all, the Levites, should fight against the gentes, since the extinction of ancestor-worship meant at the same time an increase of their own authority and income. Especially the demand that the Sarim, the head of the Mispacha, should be deprived of his judicial functions and that the old legal ordinances of Yahwe should be revived, was thoroughly in line with their own interests, since this meant that the priests of Yahwe would alone be entitled to interpret those ordinances.

W. CRAIK.

(To be concluded.)

The Menace of Mysticism.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE'S *Religio Medici*, one of the few theological books that are works of art, obsolete in doctrine but rich in wit, has a passage which may serve as a jumping-off board for what follows. "There are a bundle of curiosities, not only in philosophy, but in divinity, proposed and discussed by men of most supposed abilities, which indeed are not worthy our vacant hours, much less our serious studies. Pieces only fit to be placed in Pantagruel's library, or bound up with Tartaretus's *De Modo Cacendi*." We have regretfully to confess our complete disagreement with Sir Thomas as to what are these curiosities that it is a waste of time to consider. He thought it was folly to consider "the general flood of Noah" for to him it seemed not "so great a miracle" as that "there is not one always"; and, in his opinion "the conclusions and fallible discourses of man upon the word of God" were of no account since that Work would prove "too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish but in the general flames, when all things shall confess their ashes."

Since the seventeenth century when these brave words were written "the teeth of time" have found both the God of the Bible and that book itself less difficult to tackle than this simile suggested they might be. In every department of divinity, or theology as we call it, there has been going on a process of attrition. The God idea itself in its anthropomorphic significance while still prevalent, is no longer defended by any theologian with a reputation to lose. In its passing the so-called science of theology has lost its *raison d'être*, for if God is no more, or is unknowable, elaborate speculations as to his nature, attributes and powers are futile. The advance of physical science has put into the category of theological curiosities the whole literature of the Christian religion of the past. Its thaumaturgical abracadabra have ceased to awe and terrify except where men are not illiterate slaves. Reverence for "sacred" things (and persons) is a rare thing outside premises devoted to them. The domination of devotion, religious devotion, is doomed. It will be in due course where it ought to be, among the curiosities aforesaid.

What is devotion? It is defined by an anthropologist as "the attitude of the worshipping soul towards God; or, more widely viewed, the self-dedication to a deity or to anyone invested in thought for a time with some of the qualities or claims of deity." This devotion, from its beginnings in fear, and in the desire to appease or propitiate "powers superior to man" [J. G. Frazer] has characterized all religions. It includes, in addition to what is commonly called prayer, mental or physical conditions of adoration, interior "recollection" and "spiritual" raptures, transports, ecstasies and visions. The crude orgies and rites of uncivilized tribes; the mortifications of Catholic saints; the terpsichorean gyrations of the "Holy Jumpers"; the trances of St. Teresa; the quietism of the German mystics, of Madame Guyon, and of the Puritan and Quaker "saints"; the eroticism of the Welsh revivals and the mock military recruiting stunts of the Salvation Army are all diversities of devotion.

There are innumerable proofs of how thin is the partition between religious and sexual or sensual emotion. Flagellation may be a mark of "sanctity" in a monastery, but its physical consequents and mental results are the same whether it is practised as a "mortification" or as a pleasure; indeed the whole machinery and teaching

of asceticism is calculated to produce an alternation of repression and expression, both states being accommodated with pious jargon to make them fit in the scheme of personal corporate "sanctification." Women in convent cells, supposed to be the brides of Jesus Christ, pray to him, singing to him in terms of extravagant endearment, and meditating upon his supposed love for them in order to feed their passion for him—such "spiritual exercises"—like those of Ignatius—have been described as "the gymnastics of eternity." It is not a seemly comparison for whereas the gymnast trains and exercises for physical fitness, the "religious exercises" are intended to reduce the physical health and virility so that the "spiritual" life may be more full and perfect. If this is not a monstrous perversion of all that is "true and of good report," where can such be found?

The search for spiritual "illumination" accounts for a large proportion of the psychical phenomena of the *Lives of the Saints* and of much of what is known as "devotional literature." One of the most austere and least sentimental of mystics, Michael de Molinos, author of *The Spiritual Guide* (1627-1693) considered that the ideal of interior devotion is inconsistent with physical agonies and with raptures and visions. He divides contemplative states into three: first "*Satiety*, when the soul is filled with God and conceives a hatred of all earthly things: second, *elevation* born of Divine love and its satiety; and third *security*, a condition which banishes all fear." The norm of devotion is contempt for man. Not only medieval monks and nuns, but puritan and quaker explorers of these states are in agreement. The ideal is, to quote one of the latter (Isaac Pennington, 1679) "To resign all things up to God, all outward things, all Relations, Ordinances, Gifts, Graces, Desires, Hopes, Heaven, Christ, everything. To have nothing left of self, nothing left to Self, but everything gone, let be so that I might perish for ever, I had rather have it so than have my own will fulfilled, I know my own will so well that I desire to have it crossed even in the things that nearest concern me; I would not be saved as I have a mind to be saved, I have such a taste of the excellency of a hidden will, that I would not have it crossed, no, not in the things that tend to my great prejudice: This may deserve the name of Resignation." There is another name for it which, perhaps, may be left to the reader's imagination.

In his introduction to *Light Life and Love* [selections from the German mystics of the Middle Ages i.e., Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbrock] Dean Inge observes that "the heretical mystical sects of the thirteenth century are very interesting as illustrating the chief dangers of mysticism." They led to that dread of "enthusiasm" which characterized the English Church in the eighteenth century. Of the orthodox mystical school, which includes most of the writers best known in these spheres, Dean Inge says "they were so overweighted with this pseudo-science, with its wire drawn distinctions and meaningless classifications that very few readers have now the patience to dig out their numerous beauties. They are, however, still the classics of mystical theology in the Roman Church, so far as that science has not degenerated into mere miracle mongering." As to modern mysticism, "meditation with images," and the type of American piety represented by the "New Thought" and "Mind Cure" fraternities which have also invaded these realms, Dean Inge says: "This modern mysticism is very much entangled with theories about the cure of bodily disease by suggestion, and it is fair to warn those who are unacquainted with the books of this sect that they will find much fantastic superstition mixed up with stimulating faith in the inner light as the voice of God." Dr. Inge thinks that we are in for a revival of mystical religion, and that "it will carry to the crowded town populations the glad tidings that the Kingdom of God is not here or there, but within the hearts of those who will seek for it within them. It will assuredly attract some to a life of solitary contemplation, while others, intellectually weaker or less serious, will follow the various theological and theological delusions which, from the days of Iamblichus downwards, have dogged the heels of mysticism."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

West African Journalism.

Most of the weeklies on the Coast are printed with a hand press. They abound in mistakes. Even so prominent a journal as *The Nigerian Daily Times*, which every European buys for the sake of access to Reuters' makes very bad *faux pas* from time to time.

When it is remarked that most compositors are necessarily selected from natives who have passed only Standard Three or Four, it will be realized how serious is the handicap of the self-respecting journalist who commits his copy to their tender mercies.

Nor are the Editors generally men of genuine culture. Not infrequently *Punch* finds scope for gentle gibe or generous jest in the slips of the pen that African men of letters find so easy to make. One Editor announced recently that he was the "soul" proprietor of his organ. The retort from Bouverie Street took the form of the heartiest of congratulations.

During the Great War I had reason, in one article for the most widely-circulated Lagos paper of the period, to refer to "the united Teutonic Peoples." This appeared as "the united Terrific Peoples"; and *Punch* ejaculated dryly: "The African compositor knew better what was apt and fitting than the English author."

As for remuneration—well, there is one Gold Coast journal in which it is the Editor's boast that a lyric from my pen has appeared every week for a period of over a dozen years. How appalling to face a truth of this kind!—that I have scribbled about a thousand poems during a decade, and in this vitiating tropical climate! But my remuneration is, and has always been, the modest cypher—with no numeral whatever before it!

There have even been occasions when I have appeared as "Our Special Correspondent" in one or other judicial cause, and have spent (at press rates of fifty words for a shilling) as much as a pound a day on telegrams to Nigeria's capital. My outlays for wires have been conscientiously refunded. But when I have sent in an account subsequently for a couple of guineas against the appearance in Court, day after day, in a case where I myself stood as creditor toward a concern which had proved to be both a swindle and a ramp, I have been told that my matter, conspicuously displayed and causing a very big leap in circulation of the journal, had been marked "No Fees." When I have pressed for an explanation, I have received a wandering and much-worded letter from the native proprietor of the journal, saying that he had always thought me a lover of the Black man, a philanthropist, and a "gentleman" of ample means and more than adequate leisure!

The inference is obvious. It is the advertisement and not the circulation that makes West African journalism pay its difficult way. The Editor certainly remunerates his staff, and makes an income, generally a quite modest income, for himself. But he has no margins for the payment of outside contributors.

The largest circulation in West Africa to-day is enjoyed by *Elder's West African Review*. This beautifully produced monthly magazine with headquarters at Liverpool, and a man of both culture and literary acumen in the Editorial chair, has a circulation not exceeding five thousand copies. Behind it are Elder Dempster & Co., Ltd., the famous shipowners, who pioneered transport to and from the West Coast. The magazine costs only sixpence.

The next in popularity is *West Africa*, a weekly journal now in a quite healthy young manhood of twenty-odd. At sixpence per week it is somewhat beyond the pockets of the African community. It is therefore seen only among the barrister and Government class. The European finds it good value for money because of its market reports, its notes on gramophone records and new Coast books, its articles on lighter matter and its sports pages. Yet its circulation has been challenged as being far below that of its comelier rival, *Elder's West African Review*, and its bias is markedly negrophile.

Coming then to Coast journals, *The Nigerian Daily Times* would and could have a threefold circulation had it better agency facilities throughout the provinces. It costs a penny, is of the format of the now extinct *Westminster Gazette*, and enjoys its greatest vogue in Lagos,

where coloured urchins vend it on the streets each morning.

The journals that are confined to towns like Port Harcourt, Aba, and Onitsha in Nigeria; and to Freetown in Sierra Leone, Sekondi and Cape Coast Castle on the Gold Coast are all weeklies. They print anything from one hundred to two thousand copies per issue; and quite half their output becomes waste paper.

In the old days in Great Britain the "liner" (he was lucky to get a penny a line, in spite of the contemptuous phrase) had often the chagrin of seeing a whole day's output dumped into the W.P.B. by a disgruntled editor. Much the same thing happens on the Coast. The African is now becoming articulate—on paper. He yearns to see himself in print. Any enterprising newspaper proprietor out here could therefore fill his pages with nothing beyond Letters to the Editor. Intelligent Africans in all walks of life, but with little or no literary culture, are hungry for publicity of this kind. And they share, these literary aspirants after a parochial fame, all the penny-oliner's love of high-sounding words and flamboyant phrases. To drown is to "seek a watery grave," and a fire must always be "the scene of the conflagration." Shakespeare is always "The Bard of Avon" and Carlyle—"The Sage of Chelsea." Life becomes "the vital spark," and every church or chapel must inevitably be a "religious edifice." And in obituary notices (paid for at advertisement rates by the bereaved family), it is usual to say "has passed to that bourne from which no traveller returns."

West Africa has therefore a long way yet to go before it can claim a literary culture and tradition of its own.

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Southern Nigeria.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE "ROMAN CATHOLIC MENACE."

SIR,—My two critics, in the *Freethinker* (September 11) seem to cancel one another out. "C.S." assures me that fanaticism is just as rampant, at Liverpool, as ever. Mr. Burgess, on the other hand, thinks that I "protest too much" as to the impending danger.

What I said was that the fear and hatred of Popery that inspired Protestants fifty years ago has largely passed away. So it has. The great majority of the Protestants in this country wish to amalgamate all the Churches, including the Church of Rome, into one Church.

Liverpool is a case apart. There are more Irish in Liverpool than in any other city in England, and the Protestant Orangeman faces his Catholic fellow-countryman with the same fanaticism which he has imported from his native land.

Mr. Burgess contradicts my statement, that Liverpool Cathedral is finished, upon the extraordinary grounds that the "rubble from the old buildings has not yet been cleared away." What does that matter? The building is finished, it has been consecrated, and used for worship.

Mr. Burgess also sees nothing to trouble about in the increase of the Catholic Church, as the Catholics only number 2,720,000, in a population of 40,170,000. But recent history shows—notably in the cases of Turkey and Russia—that a small but well organized minority can obtain and govern unorganized millions.

Everyone laughed when Carry Nation went round smashing the saloons with a hatchet; but, in a few years time, Europe woke up one morning to the astounding fact that America had suddenly "gone dry." For which she is now paying a terrible price.

I may also remind Mr. Burgess that the Greeks and Romans despised Christianity as a degrading superstition; fit only for the ignorant denizens of the underworld from whence it arose. Yet it established itself, suppressed its rivals, and eventually caused the overthrow of the Empire, and, as Gibbon observes, the Christians numbered less than one in twenty of the population, the same proportion as the Catholics number to-day in England.

To say that Mr. Chesterton is not satisfied with the progress of Catholicism, is beside the point. Nobody is satisfied with his progress until he obtains what he is striving for, in the meanwhile he is making progress.

W. MANN.

SIR,—In your issue of September 3, a contributor says that Mr. Wells was denied a right of reply to my Articles in the *Universe*, criticizing with praise and blame his well written but ignorant popular "History." I cannot speak, of course, for the editor of the *Universe*, but I can testify to what took place to my own knowledge. Mr. Wells was offered ample opportunity for reply on the reasonable condition that he did not use offensive terms with regard to matters regarded as sacred by Catholics. Of this he made a grievance and refused to play. He took refuge in a pamphlet to which I replied (Mr. Belloc Still Objects: Sheed and Ward) and anyone who will read these two pamphlets together may judge of the controversy.

I may add that I was not allowed any right of reply at all to a grossly false attack upon my History, which appeared in the *Church Quarterly*.

H. BELLOC.

THE IRONY OF "SUNDAY" OBSERVANCE.

SIR,—Why is the Lord's Day Observance Society so named? It is not the Sabbath, nor the Sunday, but "the Lord's Day" with which it is concerned. The Sabbath is Saturday. Sunday, the Christian Sunday, with all the restrictions of the Levitical Sabbath attached to it, is an English and seventeenth century institution, not recognized in Christendom, Protestant or Catholic, except by English-speaking people. Roman Catholics do not observe the Lord's Day in the sense in which the Sabbatarians require it to be observed. Attendance at mass on Sunday is, indeed obligatory on pain of mortal sin; but the last mass anywhere is at twelve noon, and any recreation lawful on any other day is lawful for a Catholic who has heard mass on Sunday. The Lord's Day is without any explicit authority from the Bible. This exclusively Protestant organization is, in fact, advocating what can only be maintained (and that only as to the change from Saturday to Sunday) on the authority which it denies in the realm of belief, namely *tradition*. For the sole justification for that change is that the Catholic Church says [without Bible authority] that the disciples made the change (a) to commemorate Christ's resurrection, and (b) the descent of the Holy Ghost, both of which are reported to have occurred on "the first day of the week." The only day "sanctified" by God, according to the Bible, was the seventh day, "the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." Jesus himself, who claimed that he came "not to destroy the (Mosaic) law, but to fulfil it," was accustomed to go to the Synagogue on the Sabbath. (Luke iv. 16.) After his death his disciples "rested on the Sabbath day according to the commandment." (Luke xxiii. 56.) Whenever the Christians began to ignore the sacred character of the seventh day they not only changed the day, but the nature of its observance. It became a day of feasting and rejoicing, and was so kept until the Puritans made a hotch-potch of the Jewish Sabbath and the Christian Sunday.

Are we not entitled to ask the Lord's Day Observance Society, or its active Secretary, why, if it is concerned to enforce obedience to God's commandment about the Sabbath, it takes the liberty of applying it to another day than that divinely appointed? The Seventh Day Baptists and Adventists are, apparently, consistent in their Bibliolatry. But the "Lord's Day" observers, who sing of being "free from the law, oh happy condition," want to enforce *man's law* on Sunday on everyone, and *Moses' (or God's) restrictions* for Saturday on everyone on Sunday as well. They must be resisted by all logical persons, and especially by all who wish to keep God's commandment. The latter persons, ironically enough, are their chief, if not their only supporters.

CYNICUS.

No man is free who cannot command himself.

Pythagoras.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"A New Social Order."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.): 6.30, Business Meeting. 7.0, Debate. Non-members welcomed.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Public Assistance Station, West Ham Lane, Stratford, E.15): 7.30, Sunday, September 25, Mr. George Whitehead—"Evolution from Microbe to Man."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Bradlaugh Sunday?

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 25, Mr. I. Ebury. Monday, September 26, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Mr. I. Ebury. Thursday, September 29, Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Mr. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Sunday, September 25, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Wednesday, September 28, Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. I. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): Wednesday, September 21, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood, Thursday, September 22, at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and W. P. Campbell Everden. Friday, September 23, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, September 25, 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. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained outside the Park.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common): 7.30, Friday, September 23, Mr. A. D. McLaren. Sunday, September 25, Beresford Square, 8.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti. Monday, September 26, Lakedale Road, Plumstead, 8.0, Mr. Mead. Wednesday, September 28, "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 7.30, Mr. Read. Thursday, September 29, Beresford Square, 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (New Rooms, Front Street, above Temp. Co-op. Society): 7.30, Special Meeting. Monday, September 26. Business arrangements for Winter Session.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, September 25, Miss E. Utley—"My recent Visit to Russia."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—The Winter Session will commence on October 2, and will be opened by a lecture on "The Psychology of Belief," by Mr. Chapman Cohen, at the Picton Hall. Members and friends are requested to advertise this meeting as widely as possible.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET, 7.0, Sunday, September 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.30, Friday, September 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HAPTON, 7.0, Tuesday, September 27, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, September 25, Messrs. H. Little and D. Robinson. Tuesday, September 27, Edge Hill Lamp, 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and P. Sherwin. Thursday, September 29, corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Short. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH.—Outing to Alderley Edge. Sunday, September 25. Meet London Road Station 10.15. Train leaves 10.25. Longsight 10.30. Patts Wood 10.40. Arrive Alderley 11.30. Fare 1e. 9d. return from M.C. Please bring two meals.

NEWBIGGIN-BY-SEA: 6.30, Sunday, September 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.0, Sunday, September 25, Mr. Alan Flanders. Members urgently requested to attend.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, September 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PADIHAM, 3.30, Sunday, September 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.30, Saturday, September 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WATERFOOT (The Arcade): 7.30, Friday, September 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London.
E.C.4.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes super-natural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

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Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

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Name

Address

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19...

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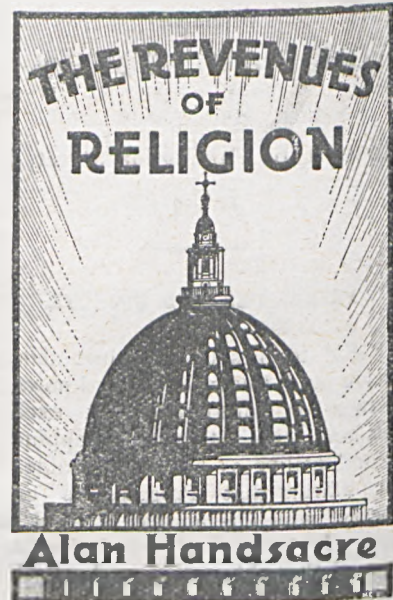
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