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

Views and Opinions.

Christianity and Medicine.

I SAID last week that the chief significance of the address by Lord Dawson of Penn in Liverpool Cathedral lies in the use that would be made of it to rehabilitate religion. It must be remembered that the Christian Church has no genuine interest in science, medical or other, and also that wherever Christianity has touched medical science—which Lord Dawson had been selected to represent—the results have been disastrous. So far as Christianity had anything to say about disease—bodily or mental—it naturally followed the New Testament, holding that it had a supernatural cure. Christianity was in direct opposition to the teaching of Hippocrates, Galen and others, which held that all disease was of natural origin and was to be dealt with on natural lines. Had the Greek teaching been followed instead of the demonism of Jesus Christ the history of science for over a thousand years would have been very different from what it was.

I have not now the space to go over, in even the barest outline, the story of Christian opposition to sane medical science on behalf of the official theory of demonism. For those who wish to trace this history I recommend the first four chapters in the second volume of A. D. White's classic history of the *Warfare of Science with Theology*, to which no reply has ever been attempted. And for those who desire a short but excellent sketch of the nature of Greek medicine there is a small volume by Henry Osborne Taylor, published a few years ago, on *Greek Biology and Medicine*. The evil that Christianity did to medical science was profound. The gross and ignorant theories current among savages and the lower strata of the ancient world were given the rank of an official philosophy by the Christian Church. Cures by faith, by the traffic in saintly relics, the ill-treatment of lunatics in the attempt to drive out Jesuine devils, continued for many centuries. Nor must it be for-

gotten that, in addition to the many superstitions that still flourish in every country in the world, and which make possible such semi-fraudulent and wholly foolish cults as Christian Science, the Prayer Book of the Church of England still gives its priests power to cast out demons, and roundly asserts that whatever disease afflicts man is certainly God's visitation. The opposition of Christianity to medical science was crystallized in the saying "Of three doctors, two Atheists."

* * *

Religion and Science.

To return to Lord Dawson's treatment of religion and science. Nothing was said here that was new, but it was general enough and sufficiently confused to be of use to religion. He might have been expressing merely a platitudinous truth when he led off by saying that "religion and science represent two aspects of experience," since that may either mean much or nothing. It is, at any rate, true of everything that comes within the scope of human thought. But even as a platitude its value is counterbalanced by the confusion that this religion belongs to an inner world. "It rests upon, first experience and, later, conviction; its concern is life in its fulness. Science belongs to the outer world of the senses and the intellect. It rests upon external observation, and later external corroboration."

The cobbler would have done better to have stuck to his last, and to have realized that an exhibition of wisdom and skill in one direction is no guarantee against unwisdom and clumsiness in others. How does religion belong to an inner world in any sense different from that indicated by science? Can Lord Dawson, or anyone else, think of a religious belief that has not as much ultimate reference to an external world as any scientific generalization? What is the belief in God, but a conclusion reached from man's experience of the external world? What is any religious belief but this? When Jesus said that epilepsy and insanity were due to an indwelling demon was he not basing the conclusion upon experience of the world? Surely Lord Dawson is not so pre-scientific in things outside medicine as to believe that man formed ideas of God and a soul and of the utility of prayer, as the nigger made his wooden god, out of his own head.

If, as is certain, religious ideas arose out of man's experience of the world around him, how does this process differ from that in which science arose? It also came out of man's experience of the world—first experience, then conviction. Why the world of the senses and of the intellect belongs to the "outer world" is a bit of a puzzle, and shows what nonsense an eminent man can talk when he forsakes science for religion. I admit that a real distinction is drawn between science and religion in saying that science rests upon observation and external corroboration while

religion dispenses with this form of verification. Religion claims to find proof of the truth of its beliefs in the feelings aroused by conclusions that are now universally rejected. It is as though a man having carried about a potato for the cure of rheumatism, continues to believe in its curative properties, despite evidence to the contrary, because the belief agreed with his feelings.

The truth, ignored by Lord Dawson, is that all religious beliefs commence as particular interpretations of experience. Whether a particular interpretation is concerned with the mental or with the physical world makes no difference to the truth of this statement. How otherwise can any belief arise? The wildest kind of belief must have its beginnings in an experience of some kind. The question at issue all the time is whether the interpretation is susceptible of "corroboration." I wonder what Lord Dawson would say to a patient who said that his carbuncle was due to attending a cinema on Sunday? Probably he would point out that while the experience of the cinema and of the carbuncle were both real, the error was entirely one of wrong interpretation of their association. And if the patient persisted in his peculiar illusion, I suspect Lord Dawson would say the case was out of his province—and it belonged to an alienist. If anyone ought to take it as an axiom that body and mind are not two but one, not mutually independent inner and outer worlds, but a unity with two aspects, it is a doctor. And I am quite certain that in his practice Lord Dawson never thinks of them otherwise. But then his practice does not normally lie within the mind-confusing walls of a cathedral.

* * *

Cap and Bells.

Where religion is concerned folly calls to folly, and the nonsense of Lord Dawson was aptly annotated by the stupidity of a *Times* leader in the same issue in which the report of Lord Dawson's speech appeared. This article leads off with "It becomes more and more difficult to comprehend the old belief that there is some fundamental antagonism between religion and science." And the sole reason for not thinking there is appears to be that some scientific men say there is not, not upon grounds furnished by their own branch of science, but because, they have lacked the thoroughness to outgrow their early beliefs, or because they have thrown out some half-compliment to religion. Becoming still more reckless the *Times* announces that:—

It is only when medicine or surgery has been applied to the prevention of disease that it acquires real importance; and this importance ought to be measured—can only be measured—in terms of man's relationship with his neighbours and so with the spiritual world.

What man's relation with the spiritual world has to do with the prevention of disease among human beings is "wropt" in mystery, but any conglomeration of words does where the "spiritual world" is concerned. It is quite interesting, however, to know that the work of cancer research committees, and the labours of those who are seeking a cure for tuberculosis, can only be measured by the extent to which they establish man's relation to the spiritual world. This reminds one of a decree of the medieval Church, at a time when the practice of Jewish doctors was threatening the profits arising from the miracle cures, that it was better to die with a Christian priest than to be saved by a Jewish doctor.

After this we are not surprised to learn that Darwin's philosophy failed because he was only "concerned with the bodies of animals." If we knew the writers's name we would send him a copy of the

Descent of Man, so that he might kick himself for making such a statement. Perhaps the writer has some qualms of conscience, over such gems as I have cited as shown in his ensuing remark that:—

The highest exercise of reason may be the conviction that reason cannot be exercised.

The whole of the article (February 6) is a fine illustration of the truth that here at least sound reason is not exercised. I must leave it to those who know the writer to say whether in his case it could not be exercised.

* * *

Woe to the Victors!

When the Romans gained a great and final victory the senate awarded the conquering general a triumph. He marched into Rome carrying in his train the conquered chiefs and kings, prisoners bearing gold and silver ornaments and other specimens of the wealth of the captured country. Long ago science set forth to conquer superstition, and one of the most important of the actions fought in the general war was the battle of science to defeat such superstitions concerning the nature of disease as are found enshrined in the old Bible, the New Testament, the Christian Church, in all the sacred books, and religious systems of the world, and in the popular superstitions of the people. The Christian Church fought in defence of its superstitious teaching with regard to the nature and the cure of disease as long as it could. It took its stand upon the endorsement of savage beliefs given by Jesus Christ. He had told them in speech and action that disease came from God or the Devil. He had told them that "in my name" deadly things should be drunk and they should not harm, he had shown them that by the mere touch of his robe leprosy might be cured. The Church could not forsake its master. It did what it could to kill scientific medicine, and fought hard against its rebirth. Days of prayer were efficacious to remove epidemics, and the touch of the relics of a saint would cure a disease. Christianity did what it could, it does what it can, to keep the spirit of superstition alive.

But science gained new and ever increasing conquests. From one department after another superstitious beliefs were driven out. The heavens that once declared the glory of God now declare the glory of Galileo, Newton, Laplace and Herschell. The earth once formed in the hollow of the hand of God now witnesses to the power of thermal and chemical forces. The physician, tracking disease to its lair finds, not a God, but a germ; and essays not prayer but prevention.

Why then do we find men deservedly famous in their own spheres, deliberately and gratuitously making themselves ridiculous in another? Whatever be the motive they must needs feel further humiliated to find themselves made a text for the laudatory absurdities of a leader-writer. Like the ancient Romans we have our "Triumphs." But unlike the Romans, the conqueror is now led in chains and forced to sing the praises of those whom he has vanquished.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

HOW TO READ.

Bacon is right, as he generally is, when he bids us read not to contradict and refute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and to consider. After all, the thing that matters most, both for happiness and for duty, is that we should strive habitually to live with wise thoughts and right feelings. Literature helps us more than other studies to this blessed companionship of wise thoughts and right feelings, and so I command it to your interest and care.

John (Lord) Morley.

Cramping the Children.

"The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity."
Disraeli.

"Men may fight and lose the battle, and yet that which they fought for may come to pass."—*W. Morris.*

"Men are not great because they happen to fill great offices."—*John Bright.*

OUR elementary schools have improved beyond all recognition during the past two generations. The educational programme is far wider than it used to be, and the teachers better equipped for their work. Yet grievous wrong is still done to the hundreds of thousands of children in the schools by the inclusion in the curriculum of Bible teaching. More harm is done by theological threats and bribes, for these have reference, for the most part, not to conduct, but to belief in Hebrew and Christian legends. Indeed, the Thirty-nine articles of the State-supported religion of this country lay stress on doctrine, not ethics or the practice of a virtuous life. Curiously, the numerous Free Churches follow the same bad example. John Wesley, the founder of the largest of the Nonconformist bodies, declared Atheism to be the greatest of all transgressions; and the melancholy series of Spurgeon's sermons, published weekly for forty years, was largely concerned with the threat of eternal punishment for backsliders. There is still among religious circles a foolish pride in ignorance which finds, or professes to find, the roots of our national virtues in the most debased forms of Oriental superstition.

The clergy and their catspaws insist that this Christian Bible is the beginning and end of earthly wisdom, and say, or shout, that national degeneration must follow inevitably the removal of this fetish-book from the schools. Yet priests themselves are sometimes forced to admit that there are great and obvious difficulties that face both the school-teacher and the child when they read this sacred volume. The Rev. W. J. S. Weir has given an illustration of these difficulties which is worth quoting:—

"And did God drown the horses too?" asked a boy of his teacher in a London school. The teacher had been recounting the story of the crossing of the Red Sea and the Egyptian pursuit. "Yes," answered the teacher reluctantly. She had told me she was not prepared to start theological hares she could not well hunt home. "Well," continued her pupil relentlessly, "I call it rotten of Him, the horses had done nothing wrong, anyhow."

Strangely enough, the difficulties arising out of Bible teaching for the children of the present-day would seem to be concerned with matters of morality as often as with matters of fact. The quoted example is a remarkably frank admission to come from a clergyman, but the question of the use of this particular Bible in schools is not to be so lightly dismissed.

There are many and grave reasons why this book should have no official place in the school lessons. Its educational teaching is quite hopelessly out of date, and comes to us in a most questionable form. What do our kindergarten teachers, for instance, make of such Biblical advice as "a rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding"; "Thou shalt beat him with a rod"; "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying?" Such God-given instruction may receive blessings, but they remain the quintessence of barbarism, and their application merits the attention of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, an organization which is itself a most ironic comment on our boasted Christian civilization.

This is by no means all. Large portions of this Christian Bible are really unfit for children. If it were an ordinary volume instead of a fetish-book, it

would be pilloried as immoral, and excluded, not only from schools, but every home in the country from John-o-Groats to Land's End. For in its so-called sacred pages may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of all manners of vice and frightfulness, written with all the love of detail peculiar to Eastern writers. The florid, heated rhetoric of the Old Testament leaves little to the imagination, and the least lettered reader can appreciate its glowing periods. Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography stops, and the ordinary sex-novel is a model of purity and restraint compared with the Christian Bible. No modern novelist would dare to imitate such writing, for he would be prosecuted and his books destroyed by order of the Courts. Yet the clergy of this country force this fetish-book into the hands of hundreds of thousands of little children, knowing full well that no one dare read parts of it to a mixed audience of adult men and women.

Are children to be taught of things which man, at his lowest, would be ashamed? Are little ones to be taught lies in the name of religion? For that is what it all amounts to. The story of "Adam" and "Eve," and the talking serpent in the "Garden of Eden" is simply a legend, and a relic of serpent-worship. Yet children in the twentieth century are being taught that this ridiculous yarn is true, that this act of petty larceny was the cause of death, and that all mankind remain under a curse in consequence. British children are taught that over fifty thousand men were ordered to be slaughtered by "God" for merely looking into a sacred box called the Ark of the Covenant. Little ones are taught that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost. There are hundreds of pages of repellent stories of meanness and murder, of blessings on liars and tricksters, and of sheer, unadulterated Oriental invention. The Biblical atmosphere throughout is that of the Arabian Nights and just as truthful. In the sacred pages a snake talks, a whale has a bed-sitting room in his stomach, a pigeon acts as a co-respondent, and a donkey makes speeches. Witchcraft is still insisted on as being true long after it has been discarded by every nation with the slightest pretence to civilization. Some of the over-praised "Psalms" are a further proof that ancient theological ideas are, fortunately, not our ideas, and that they are entirely out of harmony with modern humanistic ideas.

In short, the Holy Bible has long been out of date, and is utterly unsuited for the instruction of children.

The book is inconsistent with modern ideas and ascertained knowledge, and, sooner or later, it will have to be relegated to the library shelves where rest the other so-called sacred scriptures of the world. For children must be freed at all cost from the absurdities, immoralities, and barbarities of uncivilized times as perpetuated by this teaching.

There should be no room in the twentieth century for the hand of the priest on the steering wheel of national education, and the rising generation should be rescued from the clutches of the clerical caste. The question must be settled if Democracy is to survive. It would be absurd to admit that the problem is one which the political wisdom of this country is incapable of solving. We are not so bankrupt of intellectual resources as that. It will be a good thing if the disestablishment and disendowment of the State Church is made a plank in the Democratic platform once more. Then the secularizing of education will be brought appreciably nearer realization, and our own witch-doctors have to seek more honest employment.

Joining the Kirk.

If the fathers of mid-Victorian Presbyterianism are conscious of the laxity with which people are now admitted to the membership of the kirk they must be turning in their graves. Well, that doesn't sound quite correct; because the conscious part of them, *i.e.*, their spirits, are now in glory reposing with God in Heaven, so what can their dust in the earth know about mundane changes? Pray, courteous reader, regard the expression "turning in their graves," as highly metaphorical—though what is intended to be conveyed is that the old kirk leaders if they *do* know of the changed conditions with regard to admission to kirk membership are certain to be shocked, appalled, consternated, and in despair about the future of the kirk in puir auld Scotland.

For the fact is that nowadays to be a kirk member you do not need to part with all your doubts; you may, by gracious ecclesiastical permission, retain a "reasonable" amount of scepticism—or even agnosticism.

When a young man goes to his minister and says he wishes to become a kirk member, the reverend gentleman lays a kindly hand upon his shoulder when the lad intimates any intellectual difficulty and impressively observes, "My dear fellow, all that is required of you is that you in your heart long to respond to the call of Christ as your Saviour, and that you have determined to follow and serve him through life." So the young man sells all that he has (if he has it) and gives the proceeds to the poor, takes up his cross and ever after follows Jesus? *I don't think.*

In a while, he begins to realize that there are several implications in the form of profession of faith presented by his minister which he had overlooked or at least the full import and effect of which he had not appreciated. Complete and whole-hearted surrender? What does that involve and entail? With early enthusiasm the young man, heart-full, drinks from the cup of his first Communion, and heartfully sings the old Psalms that his ancestors chanted at conventicles when they were being hunted by the Claverhouse Dragoons. What an inspiration!

But time passes and the clamant and pressing problems of the life that now is absorb all his energy, ingenuity and thought. These are not the days of the Covenanters. The whole scene is changed. The life he had looked for at the time when with a light and happy heart he decided to join the kirk has *not* eventuated. Things don't seem to fit in and dovetail together. He finds himself very much in the position of the simple young man who in marrying a certain shrewd girl, found that he had also married her whole family. In pledging himself to Jesus Christ he is in an almost identical position; for eventually he finds he has also pledged himself to Christ's father and mother, and an elusive old uncle known as the Holy Ghost. He begins to feel considerable sympathy with Joseph—Mary's one time earthly husband. For Mary—once the simple guileless innocent maid—has now blossomed out into an imperious dame—some Christians even prostrating themselves before her as Queen of Heaven and Queen of Angels. No wonder she had got swelled head and has adopted an insolent mien! And the man who joined the kirk, moreover, finds himself saddled with hosts of cherubs and seraphs, and the task of steering a course through life that will secure him at last in the favour of that gruff old doorkeeper, Peter the traitor, who redeemed himself by crocodile tears. It is altogether a trying business.

Well, these are some of the emotional and intellectual trials of the Church member; but there are other worries connected with his associations with

Supernaturalism. God's representatives on earth must be kept, kirks must be maintained, bibles, psalm books, hymn books, anthem books must be bought. The heathen must have the Gospel preached unto them, and missionaries must be paid. The Jews must be made Christians and their conversion costs money. The Church magazine must be kept up, and only money can secure that, for in these times only money talks. Visiting church sisters must be maintained—the organist and choirmaster must be paid—if you want to be considered "class," you have some paid singers in the choir. Lay evangelists for Home mission work must live. Also, the Church member soon finds out that he is the milch cow of many outside "philanthropic" and "charitable" and semi-religious organizations. The Salvation Army officer in uniform knocks with assurance at his door. Beggars for Scouts, Guides and Boys Brigades cheerfully dun the believer. The Church member buys tickets for concerts, conversaciones, soirees, church lectures, and subscribes for presentations to departing and arriving ministers and office bearers. The Sunday school superintendent makes periodical calls for funds to buy card texts, maps of Palestine, prize books, etc. And on top of all this the church member may without an hour's warning lose his job or be plunged into bankruptcy. Even though—honest fellow—he has done his best to follow Jesus "all the way!"

And then he gets intellectual clarity by reading a book by a Freethinker, and he bestirs himself to think freely, originally and independently for himself. As he reads and ponders the more, the more he understands the hollow mockery, the falsehood and the unreality and hypocrisy of supernaturalism. The power of God! The love of Jesus Christ! The only power that matters is MONEY. By it the ignorant and fearful are kept in subjection. Without it, Christianity, and incidentally the Presbyterian Kirk, would fall to pieces like a house of cards! No wonder Humanism is winning.

IGNOTUS.

"Powder and Shot."

THE *Catholic Herald* (January 21, 1933) is responsible for the most despicable piece of "yellow" journalism it has been our ill-fortune to have read for a considerable time. It stands as an example of how the Roman Catholic Church has been making history for nearly two thousand years in its vain endeavour to obliterate its own base iniquities:—

Trotsky, after the suicide of his daughter in Berlin has refused to see visitors and is in complete seclusion. But by no means in poverty. He saw to that. These tragic ends are frequent among those who abandon all faith in God and the Moral Law. Why not? They are but as the other beasts that perish, and if man when dead is indeed done with would life, as a rule, be worth living? Other suicides of well-known Socialists have also taken place. Eleanor Marx, a daughter of the notorious Karl Marx, the founder of modern Socialism, an apostate Jew, also committed suicide. She was united to a man named Aveling, also a notorious Socialist, and he too committed suicide, opening a vein in his arm, and watching his life blood flow out.

One would think from the above imputations that it was the rule rather than the exception that Atheists should end their days in suicidal fashion. In any case such a judgment, if deserved, should come not from those who support an institution which violates man's elementary rights, but from those who have proved that they possess the highly-prized attri-

bute for dispensing Justice with complete impartiality.

The *Catholic Herald* says such "tragic ends are frequent among those who abandon all faith in God and the Moral Laws of Papacy." Yet only three specific cases are found worth mentioning in a period of thirty years in an attempt to prove the point. It would be interesting to learn how many persons suffering from religious mania have, in the same number of years, taken their lives in a moment of temporary insanity. That there are large numbers of people who suffer from that disease in the asylums under restraint is undoubtedly true, although we have not seen recent figures. But in 1878, according to the *British Medical Journal*, one in thirty-seven reported cases were attributed to that type of insanity. The Board of Lunacy appears to be reticent in this connexion in recent years. One has to refer to its reports for the years 1906 to 1911, where one learns an average of twenty-six clergymen of the Church of England and twenty-six ministers of other denominations were certified in each year; the proportion being 10.3 to 10,000 as against the 4.96 per 10,000 for the general population. If we are to believe contemporary writers' descriptions of the conditions in which large sections of the Catholic populations in many countries have lived and are still living, our only wonder is that there are not more suicides among them. Our supposition is, either that the Hell portrayed by Catholic teaching is a sufficient deterrent whatever may be the temptation for Catholics to commit suicide; or else the Catholic Church has so debased the mental qualities of its adherents that loathsome conditions of life are the earthly price which the upholders of the "Faith" agree to pay for their places in Paradise.

If it is a sin to wish to change the unhappy circumstances in which the poor, the ignorant and the deliberately debased are to be found, then Karl Marx and Trotsky and their daughters are guilty. But whatever mistakes they and their followers have made; whatever the price paid by the resisters of the Russian Revolution in human blood; they are negligible when compared with the blood-baths in which the polyglot hordes of the earth have wallowed for centuries to vindicate and advance the Roman Catholic and other religions. Moreover the former are excused—if excuse be necessary—when we consider that the whole aim of these Socialists was to sweep in a day from the Augean stables the accumulated filth of a polluted social system that had received the toleration and "moral sanction" of the Roman Church for centuries.

The *Catholic World* says: "They are but as the other beasts that perish, and if man when dead is indeed done with, would life, as a rule be worth living?" May we point out to that paper that there is as much evidence to show that man does not survive after death as there is to show that he does. Which, in a word, is exactly none at all. If, indeed, we had certain knowledge on this point, the chances are that man would have the greatest incentive to prolong his life as long as possible in this world with which he is most familiar. But let us for a moment consider those who honestly believe that they are not done with in an active sense when they are dead. Is life for them, as a rule, worth living? Let Upton Sinclair reply:—

In a lonely part of the Rocky Mountains lies a group of enormously valuable coal-mines owned by the Rockfellers and other Protestant exploiters. The men who work these mines, some twelve or fifteen thousand in number, came from all nations of Europe and Asia, and their fate is that of the average wage-slave . . . Here is the way the Italian miners live, as described in a doctor's report:—

Houses up the canyon, so-called, of which eight are habitable, and forty-six simply awful; they are disreputably disgraceful. I have had to move a mother in labour from one part of the shack to another to keep dry.

And here is testimony of the Rev. Eugene S. Gaddis, former superintendent of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company:

The C.F. and I. Company now own and rent hovels, shacks and dug-outs that are unfit for the habitation of human beings and are little removed from the pig-sty make of dwellings. Frequently the population is so congested that whole families are crowded into one room; eight persons in one small room was reported during one year . . . And when these wage-slaves, goaded beyond endurance, went on strike, in the words of the Commission's report:—

Five strikers, one boy, and thirteen women and children in the striker's tent colony were shot to death by militiamen and guards employed by the coal companies, or suffocated and burned to death when these militiamen and guards set fire to the tents in which they made their homes . . .

And now comes the all-important question. What of the Catholic Church and these evils? The majority of these mine-slaves are Catholics, it is this Church which is charged with their protection. There are priests in every town, and in nearly every camp. And do we find them lifting their voices in behalf of the miners, protesting against the starving and torturing of forty thousand human beings? Do we find Catholic papers printing accounts of the Ludlow massacre? Do we find Catholic journalists on the scene reporting it, Catholic lawyers defending the strikers, Catholic novelists writing books about their troubles? We do not!" (*The Profits of Religion*, p. 138 ff.)

Instead we have the *Catholic Herald* vilifying the very people who attempted the latterly mentioned actions.

So much for these "beasts that perish"; but what of the beasts that live?

The most devout sections of the Catholic populations are usually the most ignorant, the most uncleanly, the most unruly and a constant obstruction to progress. We recall the fact that the sectarian disputes in Liverpool last year cost the authorities, or rather the ratepayers, more than £200 to settle the claims for damages to property which they involved.

In conclusion the *Catholic Herald* takes the opportunity to damn the character of Aveling by recounting a story that exposed his proneness to appropriate what did not belong to him. Aveling's shortcomings were too well known for his contemporaries to have easily overlooked them, and many of them, although they were Atheists, even found it possible to tolerate his "wickedness" knowing full well that he had other compensating characteristics. The *Catholic Herald*, however, can not be thought to have had any such charitable inclinations. We think we are right in assuming that it is an attempt to discredit Aveling in order to show what wicked immoral creatures Socialists invariably are. But the *Catholic Herald* has overlooked an important implication in its attitude if it wishes to avoid retaliation. That is, that the Catholic priesthood and laity have not an impeccable record. Have they forgotten that Gaudry, a native of Montreal, is on trial still for blasphemy? And have they forgotten that his trial is a result of having surprised the parish priest in amorous relationship with his wife with the result that all the corrupt influences of the Catholic Church were brought to bear against Gaudry resulting even in his confinement in a mad-house? On that matter the *Catholic Herald* is silent.

Professor Levy and the Problem of Personality.

ONE of the commonest in use is the word "I." Yet while for the convenience of language we treat the ego as a detached being, we should not lose sight of the fact that scientifically speaking "there does not exist a separate and completely isolated entity 'I.'" (Levy, *Universe of Science*). "What we call 'I' is inseparable from the moving piece of matter which will still bear our name when it has crumbled to dust." (*Ibid*). We give a name to the collective parts that seem to endure, but we do precisely the same with inanimate objects.

Take, for instance, a cigarette. A mass of stranded tobacco rolled up and enclosed in a cylinder of paper—for brief, a cigarette. It changes its appearance. Its length is reduced, ash drops from the end, a diffused smoke meanders in the atmosphere, and under our very eyes the cigarette has undergone considerable change. The reader, too, has changed while reading the last sentence, and over a period of seventy years the change would be more pronounced. But his name remains constant, and will endure after his death. Should he delude himself with the idea that there does correspond something substantial and permanent which persists throughout time?

For Levy, the individual, each and every "I," exists *inside*, and as a *product of*, the universe, and the problem is, he says, to find how the world processes percolate down to individuals.

Instead of the "I" being a detached receptacle into which flow impressions from the outer world, it is part and parcel of it. "The universe and its history," he says, "cannot be regarded as composed entirely within my experience, or our experiences, of it . . . That is not the prime stuff," but *resultant effects* of the composition of forces (cf. *Materialism Re-Stated*, chapter on Personality).

For his information as to how the ego can evolve (*i.e.*, "how the world processes percolate down to individuals") Levy consults his biologist friends, and finds that "there is scarcely a product of the human factory, as the body indeed is, that cannot be reproduced in the laboratory. More and more the functioning of the detailed parts of the interior of the body, its chemistry and its dynamics, is being explained by the same methods that have been so conspicuously successful with large and small mechanisms." Like any other object, however, he adds, man is not necessarily describable wholly by the actual body materials.

No hope, then, lies for the protagonist of the "free-will" doctrine. As stated by Eddington, "a mental decision starts one of two alternative sets of impulses along the nerves. At some brain centre the course of behaviour of certain atoms is directly determined for them by the mental decision."

"I do not know," comments Levy, "where Professor Eddington got these extraordinary facts. I have not been able to trace them in any published record of physiological work, and none of my biological friends seems to have heard of them." "What little has already been done suffices at any rate to show that the personal conviction of free will has little to do with the matter"; if individuals of their own free will choose deliberately to do things that are in fact predictable in advance "there is primary evidence that the personal intuition of free will can exist side by side with" Determinism.

What, then, becomes of Religion? "Whatever personal comfort and solace it may provide," Levy opines, "a structure of moral and religious beliefs erected initially as beyond criticism . . . has no

affinity with science." Yet outside science, he remarks, "there is said to be an Absolute Purpose in the universe." "Such assertions . . . are subject to no experimental criterion of truth," and "the backyards of science are littered with (such) discarded principles."

Although "it has taken several centuries of history," he writes, "for the scientific movement to be emancipated from just these cramping human assumptions . . . the writings of many scientists show, alas, that the emancipation has not yet been completed." What a pity Eddington did not heed his biologist friends.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Acid Drops.

There is a providence that doth hedge a king, and the Royal Family. How else could things happen? For example, the other day the papers announced, by divine inspiration, that the Prince of Wales intended paying a strictly private visit to the tube railway. He would go unannounced, and travel as a private passenger. He went, but Providence was on guard, and the day after his visit pictures of him sitting in a carriage and standing in the cab of the engine duly appeared. Providence was no more to be circumvented in the case of a member of the Royal Family than it is in the case of a film star. It did its bit by inspiring a camera-man to be on the spot.

Another instance of the relation between Providence and princes. A day after the visit of the Prince to the tube he supervised the trial of a film of his life. He ordered cuts to be made, says the *Daily Express*, "with the voice of an experienced film director." Not with the judgment of an experienced film director, mark, but with the voice of one. We are inclined to complain at Providence for this miraculous transformation to suit the occasion. There can be too much miracle, as there can be too much anything else. And we have understood that usually both the voice and the language of the average film director is anything but admirable. But perhaps on this occasion it was not Providence but the *Express* that was in error.

A Report by the Bishops on the relations between the Church and the medical profession has just appeared. The "appointment of clerical healers" is not recommended. More, the Bishops say, following in this case in Dr. Barnes' footsteps, that "the revival of exorcism is to be strongly deprecated." They say "they do not know of any evidence to show that possession by evil spirits is a cause of mental disease, and the suggestion that it is so caused is likely to do, and does, much harm to the patient." Before anyone applauds this surrender he must ask himself whether it goes far enough. Jesus undoubtedly believed in possession, and it is claimed that he cast out devils. He himself, arguing with the Pharisees, did not deny that other people also engaged in this business, but said that whereas they cast out devils "by Beelzebub," he cast them out "by the Spirit of God." (Matt xii. 27.)

The Bishops, if they mean what they say, must add to their report an instruction to the clergy to tell their people that they must not take any notice of New Testament teaching on the subject of demoniacal possession. Jesus was wrong, and so were the Bishops, until public opinion and knowledge, in this, as in so many other matters, forced them to make a belated retraction of what has been, and still is, a part of Christian teaching. It is easy, and such good policy when dealing with an indifferent and thoughtless community, to be wise after the event. Preachers—and politicians—are experts at it.

We learn, from the *Tablet*, that the Governor of Malta, General Sir David Campbell, received the arch-priests and priests of that island at the Palace on Candlemas Day. They presented "the usual offering" of altar candles. Addressing the assembled clerics the Governor requested their assistance "in nipping in the bud that sinister Communist propaganda which struck at the very roots, not only of the Church, but of all ordered society." The *Tablet* expresses "lively pleasure" at these words. They serve to show, not for the first time so far as Malta is concerned, how some of His Majesty's representatives regard their obligation in that capacity to abstain from partisan and provocative speech and action. We are not surprised to hear (from Sir David) that relations between the Church and the Government were never more cordial than at present!

At Newport (Mon.) four men, arrested on a charge of circulating seditious literature, were committed for trial. Bail, and an application for defence under the Poor Prisoners regulations were both refused. A good deal of the matter objected to and put in evidence against the defendants consisted of criticisms of the Persian Oil policy of this Government which do not, as reported, much differ from Parliamentary references to that subject. This Government is callously indifferent to the best traditions of English justice, not to speak of personal and public liberty. Nor is this case the only one recently reported which attests that fact.

The other day an Albanian lady was found poisoned in London and removed to a hospital where she died. A secret inquest was held. The Press was refused admission and information. It was suggested that the lady was of high station, and that "diplomatic considerations" justified the course taken. The Coroner stated that he was not in a position to give any information as to what transpired at the inquest. There was also reported a case (concerning income tax) before Mr. Justice Finlay, in which the names of the parties were not disclosed. The Attorney-General said that "an order had been made to that effect, but he did not quite appreciate what jurisdiction there was to make it or how it came to be made!"

Cases like these leave a very unpleasant taste behind them. Mr. Macdonald and his grotesque and docile majority are the worst combination of impotence and opportunism that this country has seen for many a long day. Every attempt to protect liberty, at home or abroad is thwarted—as was the demand for information about the Kenya natives and their land a few days ago. It is rapidly becoming dangerous to criticize the Government, and the danger is not less real because clever artists, like Low, can hold its authors up to such ridicule as must make us—or our Premier—the laughing stock of the world.

We are constantly reading Christian accounts of the present state of the world and the Church which confirm, and repeat, what this journal has been saying for long past. Thus in a volume entitled *The Service of Christ*, just published, the Rev. Dr. David Christie says: "The issue between Fundamentalism and Modernism, even the issue between Protestantism and Romanism will dwindle before the major issue which will be between the believer and the unbeliever, between Christ and anti-Christ." We can agree with this, and also with this writer's tip to the clergy and ministers that, in this contest, "they will need all the learning they possess and all the education they can acquire." We wish we were more confident of their powers of (educational) acquisition.

Father Martindale, the other day, said that "in this country there are thousands who have never heard the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, except in a profane manner." The Churches, the parsons, and the schools, have all utterly failed in their "message." This may be true. A very pathetic confession of failure after 2,000 years of the glorious gospel.

Another Jesuit, Father Woodlock, is just as mournful. "The trouble to-day," he is reported to have said, "was not that people did not believe in Christianity, but that they did not know anything about it." In spite of the thousands of churches, parsons and schools, the "people" know nothing about Christianity! We would guarantee to teach a class of the "people" the truth about Christianity in an hour, and a class of priests in ten minutes. Father Woodlock considered that there would be only two "religions" in thirty years, the Catholic and a united Protestant Church, and they would both fight "paganism." We have an idea that paganism will win.

A *Universe* writer calls attention to that "awful" word "Papist" and incidentally mentions that a street in Liverpool used to be described as tenanted by "Thieves, Drunkards, Prostitutes, Murderers and Roman Catholics." Just so, but both Roman Catholics and Protestants when ever they get the chance add "Atheists" instead of Christians to the other picturesque terms in spite of the fact that if one were to take a symposium among thieves, drunkards, prostitutes and murderers, one would find them almost always subscribing to Christianity in some form and shrinking with horror from such a dreadful term as "Atheist." How many genuine Atheists are there in our prisons to-day?

How true it is that the Anglican and Roman sects of Christianity will unite against a common enemy—no matter how much they hate each other in reality—is shown by their joint efforts against Birth Control. In Ealing, the Borough Council has proposed to give free advice on this subject at their clinics and "genuine" Christians are horrified. A meeting was held in protest and the Bishop of St. Albans in a strongly-worded speech, gave "reasons" why he disagreed with the birth controllers. Mr. G. K. Chesterton sided with an Anglican Bishop this time, and gave as one of his "reasons" why Birth Control was such a horrible doctrine that originally it was "a reactionary capitalist attack on social reform"!

Capitalism may have a lot of sins to its credit, but one would never have suspected that Capitalists would advise the poor to limit themselves when, as is, of course, always pointed out, the very structure of capitalism depends on an unlimited supply of hungry workers forced to work for this very reason at starvation wages. It is extraordinary how a sense of humour deserts the very religious person when he is "fighting" for his religion.

Father Hill enthusiastically pointed out that "if all the babies that should have been born were alive to-day, there would be no unemployment in the world." Alas, that such a marvellous economist and organizer should not be on the council of the world's greatest statesmen, for they would certainly plump for such an easy method of dealing with the terrible question of work for all.

Finally, Roman Catholic doctors, male and female, inveighed against the horrible practice, though one would dearly have liked to know how many children they were individually responsible for. We can, however, confidently predict that birth control like unbelief, has come to stay. Not all the stupid Mrs. Partingtons in the world can sweep back the rising tides.

The audacity of clergymen is limitless. One of them, the Rev. J. Whitton, has just written a book appealing to his fellows to accept the supremacy of the Pope. He jibes at "modernist" clergymen, and enquires how they can eat the bread of a religion in which they do not believe. This is too much for the *Christian World*, which asks, pertinently enough, what about those who only use the Church of England as a source of supplies en route for Rome? We might add another question. Why should a paper still be called the *Christian World*,

which advocates such an emasculated form of what was always supposed to be the Christian religion that its own contributors of half-a-century ago, or even less, would not recognize it as the same thing?

Referring to the forthcoming Oxford Movement Centenary, The Bishop of Winchester mentions those Anglo-Catholics who, "with a strange warp of conscience" remain "in the Church of England as its commissioned officers, while apparently rejecting its distinctive position." If his Lordship believes this, and he says, many good churchmen are "perplexed" at it, there is a short way out. The Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Disorders, as long ago as 1906, made a list of teachings and practices which they said were alien to the Establishment, and called on the Bishops to suppress them. All that has followed has been the "masterly inactivity of the Bishops," until the Anglo-Catholics are too strong to tackle. On the matter of conscience, is there any more "warp" in their position than in that of, say, Dr. Barnes? To insist at this time of day on defining "the position of the Church of England" would be to split it from top to bottom. Hence all such talk about "conscience," when no action is intended, is sheer bunkum, and will not frighten—or deceive—anyone.

A Presbyterian Minister, the Rev. H. W. Stubbs of Wolverhampton, has discovered that much money comes to the churches "not from spiritual conviction or thoughtful provision," but from habit. He wants, therefore, "to lift this money matter to the realm of worship." This seems a dangerous proposal, for if these habitual subscribers took to seriously asking what they were paying for they might cease to pay. Another unhappy suggestion made by Mr. Stubbs is that the Church will get more out of women—they are the majority of its members—by championing the cause of their economic independence of their husbands. This will, he thinks, be glorious for the wives. "When a woman gives to the Church in her own name and in her own right, some new thing is born in her"—metaphorically speaking, of course. The "spiritual emancipation of women" can best be accomplished—if they pay up. The title of this strange piece is *Money, Marriage and the Offertory*, and we hope the Christian husbands who read the *British Weekly* (in which it is published) will like it. They earn the money, they provide for the wives—and the Church, not getting much change out of the men, wants them financially to "emancipate" their wives and daughters—in the interests of the Offertory!

The active intervention of the Deity in the affairs of men is no longer emphasized as it once was. It is, however, an essential ingredient of belief in a Deity, especially in belief in a benevolent one. What advantage has the believer over the unbeliever if the former cannot count upon the aid and protection of God? Now-a-days he does not appear to count on it. For example, there was recently an explosion at a Vicarage near Wigan. The Vicar had a valuable collection of china which was smashed to pieces. God could have saved it, and, even if it be irreverent to think of His intervention in such a matter, he could have saved the Vicar, his family and servants from harm. They were not injured; but, instead of thanking God, they "considered it wise to evacuate the house," and found shelter in a neighbouring Vicarage—which does not happen to be built over an old colliery working. They had neither gratitude nor faith.

A ghastly case is before the Grand Jury of Linden (Texas). It concerns the slaying of a crippled child, aged three, by her brother and two self-styled "divine healers." Evidence was given of "prayer, singing, shouting and other rites" to "drive out the devil" from the child. One of the accused "healers" said "I thought God sent me to heal the child, but the Devil killed her through me, but after she was dead God told me I was deceived, that it was the Devil." The poor child, who suffered from infantile paralysis, died of

suffocation by choking, and it was alleged that the father held the child while the "healer" under pretence of curing her, or driving out the devil, choked her to death. While this was going on the mother was in the kitchen "praying for the cure of her child." And there are still people who complain, when we call these horrible superstitions by their right name, and attribute them to their real cause, namely religion. Only belief in God could produce, only belief in gods ever has produced, these hideous and cruel acts of men.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE defence of deity is not to be left entirely in the hands of Sir Henry Tyler; other champions have arisen, and in the House of Commons. The Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Act having been brought forward, Mr. Newdegate, who is nothing if not veracious, says he has been taken by surprise, and hoped the Attorney-General would exonerate himself from the imputation of having introduced the Bill under terror of Mr. Bradlaugh's very weak mob. Mr. Newdegate seems to be Jahveh's whip: he may be very pious, but he is also excessively narrow-minded; does he imagine that the British nation is to be guided by his political and theological views; a deity who is so hard up as to trust his defence to Mr. Newdegate is not worth taking any notice of?

The next of Jahveh's elect is Mr. Alderman Fowler, who gets up and howls most lustily that it is simply a Bill to allow Atheists to sit in Parliament. Dear me, how very extraordinary, good Sir Oracle, we scarcely needed the information; but the worthy alderman is, I presume, not prepared with any logical conclusion why Atheists should not be represented in the House; although he is perfectly aware that it is Northampton who has elected Mr. Bradlaugh, not British Atheists. It is also, according to him, a Bill for the national renunciation of God. But this is simply false, and even if it were true, it would not be one jot too soon to be rid of such a God as Jahveh. If Alderman Fowler is so fond of such a God as Jahveh and his works, why does he not elect to leave the affairs of the nation wholly in his hands? The spirit of the age has left Jahveh and Fowler hopelessly in the rear.

Mr. Warton follows with his usual venom, which, after all, is quite as harmless as he is; the wonder is that he does not have a fit at the very thought of Bradlaugh sitting in the House. He informs us that there is nothing in our history more disgraceful than this yielding to mob law, or that Government, contrary to the wishes and rules of the House, should bow their heads and prefer Bradlaugh to God.

The charge of mob law is simply a wild raving; as to its being contrary to the wishes and rules of the House, this will be better known after the Bill is passed or rejected.

And talking such rubbish as preferring Bradlaugh to God is much more likely to make sensible people laugh than cry; indeed the honourable members themselves could not refrain from laughter at Mr. Warton's denunciation.

It is quite a case of common sense and reform *versus* idiocy, bigotry and fanaticism. Mr. Warton takes the latter view; verily one would think he had been tipped by Jahveh to anathematise Bradlaugh. One consolation there is that all the howlings of the Fourth Party will not keep the Government from passing such a much-needed reform as an Affirmation Bill.

Mr. Onslow, Mr. Beresford Hope, and Lord H. Lennox, also took the side of the Lord. It would be interesting to know how much they are to get for the job.

What a splendid Cabinet these gentlemen would make, together with Lord R. Churchill and Sir Henry Tyler. Old Jahveh would be fairly rammed down the throats of every citizen. I presume they would refer to Moses for legislation, to David and Solomon for ideal royalty, to Hosea, Isaiah, and Ezekiel for sermons and speeches, and to Jesus for logic.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. H. COPELAND.—Neither the *Freethinker* nor the N.S.S. represents any political party. To believe in self-government means, obviously, to believe in the people who are governed settling the form of Government that is to exist. There is no law preventing your holding a Secular Sunday school for children of any age.

J. DAVIES.—As you will see in another column the Port Talbot debate will take place on March 9. Mr. Cohen was unable to get down on February 23.

J. HAMPSON.—Letters returned. It is good to make a protest even though no immediate result is forthcoming. The protest is apt to bear fruit in the future.

N. FREEMAN.—Crowded out of this issue. Next week.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 26) Mr. Cohen will speak twice in the Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley. The afternoon subject, at 2.45, will be "The Menace of Mass Opinion," the evening one at 7.0, "The Psychology of Belief." Admission will be free, but there will be a silver collection. On Sunday next Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Miner's Hall, Barnsley.

Mr. Cohen had a busy time last week-end. On Friday he lectured in the Beechcroft Hall to a crowded meeting. Many were forced to stand. There were many requests that the visit would be repeated. On Saturday evening Mr. Cohen was present at a Dinner of the Liverpool Branch, which is intended to become an annual function. There were a large number present, including visitors from Manchester, Derby, St. Helens, Cumberland, Port Sunlight, and other places. The President of the Branch took the chair, and delivered a very excellent review of the work of the Branch. Other speeches were made by Dr. Carmichael, Mr. Egerton Stafford, Mr. Ready, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Cohen. The musical part of the programme was provided by Mr. Maurice Faust (Violin), Mr. Ralph Collis kept his audience amused with his humorous performance, Miss Alice Lancaster gave some very tuneful songs, charmingly sung, and Arthur Erskine made one almost believe in spirits by the way he manipulated cards, swallowed razor blades, and otherwise mystified the onlookers. Our old friend Mr. Lancaster was at the piano, which he forsook only for the purpose of giving a song. Altogether a pleasant evening.

On Sunday Mr. Cohen lectured at the Picton Hall, and the large building was again quite full. The lecture was obviously highly appreciated, and a number of questions followed. Mr. Shortt occupied the chair with marked efficiency.

Tickets for the Social to be held on Saturday, April 1, in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, are now on sale. A thoroughly enjoyable evening, with light refreshments included for 2s. 6d., should be readily acceptable to all Freethinkers in the London area. As is usual on such occasions a number of saints may be expected from the provinces. Tickets may be had from the offices of the N.S.S., 62 Farringdon Street, or from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Leicester Freethinkers are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak to-day (Sunday) on behalf of the Leicester Secular Society, in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30 p.m., on "Spiritualism v. Common Sense." The local saints should see that their Spiritualist friends are present on that occasion.

The West London Branch reports good meetings in Hyde Park, where the band of enthusiastic speakers which Mr. B. A. Le Maine has gathered together plod away regardless of the enemy and the weather. He and Messrs. Bryant, Hyatt, Saphin, Howell-Smith, Tuson and Wood, as our columns show, from week to week, stick at it in conditions which are peculiar to Hyde Park, and a severe test both of temper and endurance in speakers. The *Freethinker* sales outside the Park Gates are also not managed without much tact and perseverance.

A discussion has been arranged at Port Talbot between Mr. Cohen and the Rev. D. Richards, M.A., of Birmingham University, on "Is the Christian Conception of Life the Best Answer to World Problems?" The debate will take place at Port Talbot on Thursday, March 9. The chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

A four-handed debate will take place in the I.L.P. Hall, Partick, Glasgow, on February 28, at 7.30. The speakers will be the Revs. David McGivern and A. Symmons on the one side and Messrs. R. White and R. Buntin on the other. The subject is "Secularism versus Christianity."

We print elsewhere a letter from the Bishop of Ripon, in which he says that he has learned not to expect fair thinking where "free-thinking" is concerned, and complains that those who read our paragraph in the issue dated February 12, would suspect that the headmasters from whom we quote were ardent Christians, as keen as he is in making Religion a reality in education as in life. We are afraid the Bishop does not read the *Freethinker* regularly, or that if he does, he does not read it with whatever intelligence God has been pleased to burden him. Otherwise we might have been spared the impertinence of his reference to "free-thinking," and he would have been saved misunderstanding the paragraph in our issue for February 12, which followed one in that for February 5.

The Bishop must be blessed with a great capacity for misunderstanding not to have seen that the obvious foundation of the paragraphs in question was our recognition of the aim of the Conference to make Christianity—not mere religion, as the Bishop artfully asserts—a part of the education of every child, and to do this at the expense of the whole of the ratepayers. Our objection to the Bishop's attitude is that he wishes the Government to practically force religion upon all, and to make all, whether they agree with Christianity or not, pay for it. It is to be noted that the Bishop does not dispute that the statements quoted are accurate, he only complains that they will lead people to believe that the Headmasters present were not Christians. But, if we are not asking too much, may we ask the Bishop to reflect that our criticism was based upon the fact that they were Christians, and that they had let the cat out of the bag with regard to Lord Irwin's ridiculous statement that public opinion was moving away from the secular solution. We fancy the Bishop should have complained to these same Christian Head-masters for telling the truth at a Christian gathering.

Elsewhere in this issue we print a letter asking for the names and addresses of young people of both sexes who would care to correspond with young Freethinkers on the Continent. We should like to see a ready response. From many points of view good might result in bringing into more intimate relations the Freethinking members of the rising generation. Freethought is international in spirit, and it should be international in action. We wish Miss Moore every success in the labour she has undertaken.

The *Church Times* offers a very disingenuous answer to our question as to how it can know the contents of the *Freethinker* without reading it. It gets from a Press Cutting Agency all references to the *Church Times* in this, and we suppose, in other journals. It was not on this fact that we mentioned the *Church Times*, but on its allegation as to the nature of the contents of the *Freethinker* as a whole that we wrote. In the light of their explanation we can understand the ignorance of the *Church Times* of its contemporaries, but how such ignorance can be reconciled with journalistic or ordinary honour we fail to understand.

An innocent truth can never stand in need of a guilty lie.—*Massinger*.

Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

II.—AUGUSTINE BIRRELL ON BRADLAUGH'S SLANDERERS.

MR. AUGUSTINE BIRRELL, in his Essay on Bradlaugh (*Collected Essays and Addresses*, 1922), says: "The ruffians who in times past slandered the moral character of Bradlaugh will not probably read his *Life*, nor, if they did, would they repent of their baseness. The willingness to believe everything evil of an adversary is incurable, springing as it does from a habit of mind. . . . Now that Mr. Bradlaugh is dead no purpose is served by repeating false accusations. . . . but the next Atheist who crops up must not expect any more generous treatment than Bradlaugh received from that particularly odious class of persons of whom it has been wittily said that so great is their zeal for religion that they never have time to say their prayers."

Of the Oaths debates and Mr. Bradlaugh's opponents in them, Mr. Birrell says: "The debates on Bradlaugh's oath-taking went on for four years, and will make melancholy reading for posterity." . . . "Of the self-styled champions of Christianity who then rode into the lists," he writes, they "are well calculated to make Piety hide her head for very shame. Rowdy noblemen, intemperate country gentlemen, cynical but worldly sceptics who maintain religion as another fence round their property, unbending Nonconformists whose God is respectability and whose goal is a baronetcy, contrive, with a score or two of bigots, to make a carnival of folly, a veritable devil's dance of blasphemy." . . .

"Bradlaugh's attitude towards the Christian religion was a perfectly fair one, and ought not to have brought down upon him any abuse whatever. There are more ways than one of dealing with religion. It may be approached as a mystery, or as a series of events supported by testimony. If the evidence is trustworthy, if the witnesses are irreproachable, if they submit successfully to examination and cross-examination, then, however remarkable or out of the way the facts to which they depose, they are entitled to be believed."

"This is a mode of treatment with which we are all familiar, whether applied to the Bible or to the authority of the Church. Nobody is expected to believe in the authority of the Church until satisfied by the exercise of reason that the Church in question possesses the "notes" of a true Church. This was the aspect of the question which engaged Bradlaugh's attention. He was critical, legal. He took objections, insisted on discrepancies, cross-examined as to credibility, and came to the conclusion that the case for the supernatural had not been made out. And this he did not after the first class fashion in the study or in octavo volumes, but in the street. His audiences were not Mr. Mudie's subscribers, but men and women working for weekly wages. The coarseness of his language, the offensiveness of his imagery, have been grossly exaggerated. . . . It was not what Bradlaugh said, but the people he said it to, that drew upon him the censure of the magistrate, and (unkindest of all), the condemnation of the House of Commons."

"Bradlaugh," concludes Mr. Birrell, "was a brave man whose life well deserves an honourable place among the biographies of those Radicals who have suffered in the cause of Freethought, and into whose labours others have entered."

A.C.W.

Religion: A Failure.

A LARGE percentage of Christians possess an almost unlimited capacity for believing in the success of religion, even when they are engaged in presenting an outline of its failure. In this category we may place Mr. Hugh Redwood who, in the *News-Chronicle* (January 27, 1933) sets out to explain "Why Religion is a Best Seller."

Taking his statement that, according to publishers reports, religion was a best seller for 1932, as correct, one is at a loss to understand why a religious person should expect anything else in a religious country. Yet some surprise is expressed by Mr. Redwood on the report that two volumes on religion have reached an average sale of 4,000 copies per week.

Now, if England were populated mainly by Atheists, and the sale of religious books were attaining the rank of best sellers, there would be reason for surprise. On the other hand concern on the part of religionists would be justified, if they found that two or three definitely Atheistic books had proved to be of the best seller class in any given year. This would not prove that everybody was becoming Atheistic but it would indicate a trend of enquiry in a direction opposite to that of age-long religious education.

The increase in the combined sales of anti-religious works, whether definitely Atheistic or of the mildly Agnostic type, during the last few years, has surprised, and even shocked, many a religionist. This was to be expected; but for Mr. Redwood to parade religious books as best sellers by way of proving religion to be on the increase when most buyers of such books are already religious, is to reveal the poverty of religious argument.

If people who have been brought up religious really want religion, as Mr. Redwood believes, why not expect them to buy religious books? Why make a fuss about a result that was intended and expected?

It is true "God" should be able to give each individual as much of the right kind of religion to last a life-time; but so far he has failed on a large scale. The reason is not far to seek. If he did his work properly there would be no need for religious "best sellers."

According to Mr. Redwood, thousands of people "make no secret of the fact that they are spiritually starving." Consequently, they have to be fed by the religious books which they buy so eagerly; and good solid cash is provided for religious writers who might otherwise have to starve their material bodies, and thus the design argument is completed.

Mr. Redwood is very much interested in the young people. He tells us they write quite two-thirds of the letters which he receives, and they "are predominant among those who buy religious books."

This is as it should be. Religion belongs to the childhood of the human race; and to the childhood of the individual. Unfortunately, most people remain children, as far as religion is concerned, and are unable, as a consequence, to assimilate a scientific conception of the universe. If they would only grow up much more rapidly it would be fatal to the religious "best sellers"

Speaking of these young people, Mr. Redwood says, "It is the sheerest folly to say they don't want religion." As if wanting something, whether material or mental, proved it to be absolutely essential to life.

Many a child wants to visit fairy-land and play with the fairies, but even Mr. Redwood would hardly claim such wants to be proof of the existence of fairies or the reputed land in which they live. These things exist in imagination; and so do the "objects" of re-

ligion—whether God, Christ, love of God, love of Christ, or the desire for another life, and the danger of religion lies in the fact that it claims all these to be real in the sense in which man, love of man, and this life are real. The suggestion that young people want religion in the sense in which they want—that is need—food is false. They need it because they have been wrongly trained, just as a victim to opium-eating needs opium because he has trained himself wrongly in the satisfying of his sense-life. Yet no clear-thinking individual would suggest opium is essential to good living, even if a few thousands of Englishmen declared they had a "want" for the drug as for nothing else.

Mr. Redwood has no doubt forgotten that thousands of young people "want" the cinema or the dog-track two or three times a week, and how they will stress their belief that they must have such forms of recreation and entertainment.

The gem of Mr. Redwood's article is a passage in which he reveals the fatuity of religious thought. "The world is hungry for God as never before. But not the God of wrangling theologians, not the God of jealous, inimical sects, certainly not the God of churches which pay the stipends of ministers with revenues drawn from slum property. It seeks a God of infinite understanding, a God whom despairing men can take at His word, a God who can lead us out of our present chaos, a God who will wipe the slate clean and give us all a new start."

This passage need not be analysed too closely here; but it is interesting to note that the religious writer can nearly always find men and women hungry for God. This is curious when we have been so often told that God has been giving himself to the world, in one form or another, for so many thousands of years. One of the chief rites of religion, including Christianity, is the eating of the body and drinking of the blood of God in the form of Sacrament, and as this takes place at frequent intervals, the feast should be satisfying to any normal individual. Evidently the craving outdoes even God's capacity for multiplying Himself as He multiplied the loaves and fishes.

Mr. Redwood's claim that people do not want the Gods whom he credits to various men and sects, but do want the one whom he vaguely describes as a being who is going to settle up all our present troubles and put us on the right way, individually and as a nation, is but an illustration of anthropomorphic god-making.

Why are there so many different gods? Evidently, because the "wrangling theologians," the "jealous sects," the "Churches with slum property revenues," want their respective god. While Mr. Redwood wants his particular god, he has no evidence that all the people who write to him will be satisfied with his god. Nobody of a religious turn of mind seems to realize that if God is God he should be taken for what he is, and not represented as something different to fit in with the imaginings of the believer. The very fact that God is so many differently-conceived beings, even to members of a Christian community, should, awaken the reflection that god-making is one of man's mental habits.

Why, if religion is all Mr. Redwood desires us to believe, are there so many despairing men and women waiting to be led out of the present chaos, by "a God of infinite understanding" who ought long ago to have taken measures to make the despair and the chaos impossible?

Mr. Redwood has stressed the failure of religion in his attempt to hold it forth as essential to human welfare.

In the *News-Chronicle* for January 30, there is a re-

view of a book, *What Would be the Character of a New War.**

The book is obviously not one which deals with the prospect of a war between backward or savage peoples, such as one might expect if war were taboo to the minds of more advanced nations. It discusses the character of such a war as may befall Christian Europe. This fact should make even religious people reflect upon the value or otherwise of the religious training which Europe has enjoyed for so long.

Judging by the review, the prostitution of scientific knowledge to the destruction of human beings and their civilization is to be more accomplished than ever, and it is to be carried out by mainly Christian peoples. "If there is another European War it will not be a war to end war, but a war to end civilization."

What a confession to make, in a Christian community, and to fellow-Christians who have talked so much of the brotherhood of man, and the love of God. In the meantime the teachings of the churches will be of no avail to make such a war impossible, and if and when it comes the leaders of the Christian religion will talk in platitudes about the mysterious workings of the Divine Father.

The complete way in which barbaric destruction, both of life and property, is to be carried out may be gathered from the following quotation. "The probable weight of the bombs dropped from the air in a single day during the next war will be 'equal to the weight of all the bombs which were dropped on London during the last war.'" Again, a Russian authority estimates that "a modern city with about half a million inhabitants . . . could, if unprotected, be turned into a field of corpses by a squadron of forty or fifty aeroplanes."

Now it is possible for a Christian to argue that once the principle of sacrifice has been introduced into the world as a means to salvation there is no reason why it should not be used in an extensive manner. Perhaps, in the next war, God Almighty will work on the grand-scale method, and sacrifice millions of Christian brothers and sisters, along with others, for the purpose of bringing about the final redemption of the world, and lasting peace, with good-will towards all men.

Would it not be worth while to try running the world without religion for a few years? But religionists dare not risk that experiment.

To-day it is possible to find many Christians who reject the older methods of expressing love, such as a straight-forward fight on the battle-field; the use of the thumb-screw; the rack; slow strangulation, etc. Would they approve of the use of the modern love-message of the form of mustard gas?

A quotation, in which some of the effects of mustard gas are given, will help the reader to form some idea of what is in store for him, in the event of Christian Europe going to war again. "It clings undiscovered to all living tissue, including the resistant outer skin, and after from six to thirteen hours the first symptoms begin to appear. By this time it is generally too late to help. The symptoms consist of necrosis of all living substances attacked by the mustard gas, such as the outer skin, the mucous membrane, the eyelids, the conjunctiva and the cornea of the eye, the bronchial tubes, the lungs, etc. This is the characteristic feature of mustard gas, and can best be compared with the effects of burns. Even one part of mustard gas in five million of air can cause disease."

Other methods of destruction, such as the use of bacteria and the electric wave, are dealt with in the

work under review, but, if a concise and complete summary of all the ghastly details of a new war were posted in the doorway of every church, in every Christian country, next to nothing would be done to prevent another war.

When the first bugle sounds for the next war religion, including Christianity, will stand out once more, as so often in the past, as the world's greatest failure.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

A Seventeenth Century Devil.

THE history of the Devil mentioned in the title is contained in an old pamphlet in the British Museum Library here transcribed:—

[TITLE.] Wonderful news from Buckinghamshire, or a Perfect Relation. How a young Maid hath been for twelve years and upwards possess'd with the Devil; and continues so to this very day in a Lamentable Condition. With an Account of Several Discourses with the said Evil Spirit and her Answers; attested by Eye-Witnesses; and other strange circumstances from time to time relating thereunto. Published for the Awaking and Convincing of Atheists and Modern Sadducees, who dream that there is neither Angel nor Spirit. Licensed according to Order. London. Printed for D.M., 1677.

[TEXT.]—I shall forbear to mention the Name or Habitation of this unhappy Maid, whose strange afflictions this sheet undertakes to give a true and impartial account of. She is descended of honest parents of good repute, and by them carefully educated in the Principles of Christianity; nor was there a young maid of a more lovely innocent beauty, sweet carriage of virtuous disposition; or one that might have expected fairer preferment in Marriage than she: So that as there is no room for the censures of the uncharitable, so neither any place for the Surmises of the incredulous, it being impossible she or any of her relations could imagine any advantage to themselves by counter feeling or pretending a possession; which on the contrary brings them duely trouble loss, vexation and inconveniences, and that for a dozen years together. The beginning of the affliction was thus:

In the year 1664 there happened to be some difference between this maid's father and a certain woman who had an evil name, but whether causelessly or not I shall not here determine, nor assert any dubious opinions in any kind, only relate the principle.

Circumstances that have occurred, being matters of Fact, to which as well as myself or scores of other people were Eye and Ear witnesses; and so we leave everyone to judge as they shall see cause, touching the maid's being possess'd or not, and the evil instruments that are suspected to have been accessory thereunto, when they have duly weighed the whole discourse. This is certain, soon after the aforesaid difference this maid being then about sixteen or seventeen years of age, was taken with strange fits, and something would rise up in her throat like two great bunches about the bigness of an egg, and a strange voice was frequently heard within her, speaking blasphemous words not fit here to be repeated: And if the hearers and by-standers did reply to such voice, by asking any questions that pleased him, he would answer and discourse with them; and that with a voice as different from hers as any two voices I verily believe in the world, she having a smooth easy pleasant voice, and that being very rough, guttural, and coming as it were from the abdomen or hollow of her belly, but yet intelligible; and though I am not ignorant of a certain sort of jugglers of old called in the Latine *Ventriloquist*, yet no such Art or design could be imagined in the innocent creature, so the things he declared impossible (impossible many times for her to know) wipes off all suspicions of that kind: so that those about her generally concluded that she was really and exactly possess'd with the Devil, and took occasion to ask him *How he came*

* Inquiry organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Geneva. London: Gollancz, 55.

there: to which the Evil Spirit or Voice answered, *Here are two of us, and that they were sent thither of two women. The voice further said, that they were sent first to the maid's father; but when they came they found him at Prayer, and returned to those two women, and told them they could have no permission to enter unto him, whereupon they sent them to his Daughter, and that such a night as she sat by the fire they had entered unto her.* Now the family did remember that very night, she had, as she declared, a sudden pain that seized her, and ever since had continued in a bad condition, and after a little time the swellings and voice happen'd as aforesaid.

By which the whole neighbourhood and country round about were so alarmed at the strangeness of it, that multitudes of people went to see her, and returned full of wonder and amazement at what they had seen and heard: The report whereof coming to my ears, I did not at first believe it, but hearing it still confirmed, did at last go to see her myself, resolving to make my observations as warily and curiously as I could. They were, I believe, at that time forty or fifty spectators present, and no strict observation two or three hours. I was for my own part fully satisfied it was a possession, it being as I conceive utterly impossible that those things should be acted by her or any other person living, either by the force of nature or power of the most afflicting distemper.

Her father being of the same opinion, and willing to use all lawful means for his only child's recovery, having read that passage of our Saviour's—*That kind comes not out but by prayer and fasting*: he resolves to use that means, and to that purpose desired some ministers to keep a day with him on that occasion. Having sent for them, the Devil told him *he expected five men to come, but there should only four come.* This the girl could not know of herself: yet so it happened: for one by an unexpected accident was prevented from coming. These four desired the assistance of several Godly Ministers and Christians in the neighbourhood, who accordingly met, and kept several days in fasting and prayer; and according to the best judgment that could be made, one of the Evil Spirits then departed, as was supposed by some accidents I shall relate by and by. I myself was present several of these days: First she had two great bunches rose up in her throat, and then a voice followed, uttering abominable Blasphemies: upon which a Godly Minister present, and since deceased, being stirred up with great Zeal and Indignation, going to prayer, did earnestly beg of God, that He would plague and torment Satan for such his Blasphemies: upon which the Spirit made a most dreadful crying and bemoaning his condition and said *I will do so no more.* To which the minister replied, *Satan, that shall not save thy turn;* and continuing his prayer to God as before, the Devil again cried and roared most hideously; to the great amazement of all the people present; and from that time it was observed that there was but one bunch rose up in her throat, from whence it was conjectured that one of the Spirits was departed. However one continued his possession still, and after they had done prayer, and were about to refresh themselves, he showed strange tricks before them, tossing her up and down, and when she was going took away the aid of her legs on a sudden. When she sate in a great wicker-chair he would cause the chair to fall down backwards almost to the ground, and then lift it up again. One of the company bid her read in the Bible; the Devil said aloud *she shall not read*: It was answered, *she shall read Satan, for all thee, and read thy Condemnation too.* Whereupon he plaid more tricks by tossing her about, and drawing her face to one side as if it had been placed to look over her shoulder, and drawn in a very deformed manner: but at length she read part of the twentieth chapter of *Revelation*, though not without much opposition.

When she got upon the horse to ride home, it was a great while before she was able to get upon him, and was flung sometimes backwards, otherwise turned with her fall towards the horses tail, and handled very sadly; yet tis observed, that he hath not much power to hurt her: for she often declares that being now accustomed to his tricks, and consequently not so much affrighted, the

temptations he injects into her mind are far worse than all the mischief he does her body.

At another time I was with them, when in the time of prayer, he barked like a dog, bellowed like a bull, and roared after a wonderful frightful manner, and on a sudden would fling her up a great height, yet without hurt; whereupon she being placed in a low chair, a man sate upon the table-side, endeavouring to hold down her head, and myself and another stood on each side, pressing down her shoulders and thought it could not be imagined so weakly a creature could naturally have half the strength of any one of us, yet she was tossed up, do what we could, and at length the Spirit in a desperate rage cries out, *If I come out, I will kill you all, I will throw down the house and kill you all.* I answered, *Satan, come out and try.* He continued raging till they concluded prayer and then was pretty quiet.

There have since happened many things considerable; I was once in her company at a house, where I was wholly unacquainted, and for ought I know so was she; the people of the house gave us drink, and I drinking to her, she using to make me a curtsey, he took away the use of her legs and said she should not drink. But when he found we were resolved to force the cup of beer on her, he said, *There is a well in the yard, go and drown thyself,* when none of us that were strangers knew there was such a well.

He will often talk to some of the Family or those who come to see her, and many times utter blasphemous filthy words, to their great trouble! Sometimes tell strange stories to move laughter; sometimes he sullen and not speak a great while together, sometimes he jumps her up and down, and draws her body into a multitude of strange postures, too tedious here to be related.

But his temptations onward are far more mischievous, afflicting her minde with blasphemous thoughts. She continues still in this sad condition, though not so much taken notice of because the report is grown now more familiar; yet tis the great general hopes and belief of her friends, that God in his due time will deliver her from this bondage; to put the enemy to flight: In the meantime committing her to His Grace, which is able to quench all the fiery darts of Satan, let this warn us all to watch continually against the snares and temptations of the Evil One. And let none, like the Sadducees of old, scoff at this relation, for the matter of fact is certainly true: And such a scoffing spirit against truths of this kinde, is the undoubted forerunner of Atheism, and doth obliquely give the lye to Holy Scripture, and deny a most considerable part of our blessed Saviours miracles, which consisted in casting out Devils. From which horrid blasphemous impiety, which is no less than a being spiritually (though not corporeally) possessed with the Devil, the Lord Deliver us.

FINIS.

Three observations may be added (1) All these symptoms are well known as those of certain now recognized and often curable conditions. (2) Who would trust for any purpose to a God who, having the power to cast out Devils, permitted an innocent girl to undergo the tortures not only of her own complaint but of the ignorant attentions of curious Christians? (3) The symptoms, although now known not to be those of demoniacal possession, are said to be common among spiritualistic mediums.

A.H.

IN MEMORIAM.

JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

He passes, who did never bow the knee
To any man or god's idolatry;
He who despised the tricks of every trade,
Who never lied, and never was afraid;
A noble scholar and a faithful friend
Champion of right and reason to the end.

A.C.W.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

INTERNATIONAL FREETHOUGHT.

SIR,—I feel sure that you will find space in your paper to foster a scheme to bring young English Freethinkers to touch with Freethinkers of the same age in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia.

I have before me the names and addresses of about 100 young Freethinkers, practically all of whom are members of the Youth Sections of the International Freethinkers Union in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia. They are keenly anxious to be put in touch with young Freethinkers in this country, to find out what Freethinkers here are thinking and doing, and to learn what power religion has in England, etc. On the Continent people at a very early age take an interest in social and cultural questions. The list sent to me contains the names of members of both sexes, and their ages vary from eight to twenty-four. The majority, however, are between the age of fourteen and twenty. About 90 per cent of these Freethinker friends are prepared to write in English, so that the language difficulty which is usually such a hindrance to international understanding is no obstacle in this case. A few of the young people, however, can only correspond in either German or Ido.

I feel that English Freethinkers should give this scheme all the publicity they can. It helps not only to strengthen international ties in general, but strengthens the bonds between those who have at least one common aim—the advance of Freethought. What do Freethinkers in England know about events in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia? What does our daily press tell us of the advance of clericalism in Germany and many other countries? The so-called Labour Daily which, since it represents Trade Union and Socialist interests, ought to be in the forefront of England's Freethought campaign is no exception. We are obliged to seek other means of learning what is happening abroad, of learning, for instance, how it is that Catholicism has developed so strongly in Germany that even to "insult" a religious institution of that country is enough to cause the withdrawal from circulation of a paper over a long period.

The *Freethinker* contributes its share towards an understanding of the present situation internationally. And in so far as individual Freethinkers foster international connexions, they also contribute to the work which this paper and the N.S.S. behind it is doing. I think that if all Freethinkers will co-operate to make this and similar schemes a success, young people will be induced to come forward with a more intelligent interest and a better equipped mind to build on the foundations which have been firmly laid by their predecessors.

Will all who are willing to correspond with our foreign friends please notify me of their name, address and age, and state in what language, to which country and with the member of which sex they are prepared to correspond. All communications to be addressed to me at 2, Malden Crescent, Chalk Farm, London, N.W.1.

(Miss) E. MOORE.

RELIGION IN EDUCATION.

SIR.—One has learned not to expect fair thinking where "free" thinking in your sense is concerned; but, having seen the reference in your issue of February 12 to a Conference for which I was responsible, and which Lord Irwin addressed on "The Place of Religion in Education," I think it only right to let your readers know, what from the carefully manipulated extracts and tendacious comments no one would suspect, that the Headmasters from whose addresses you quote are ardent Christians, as keen as either Lord Irwin or myself on making Religion a reality in Education as well as in Life.

ARTHUR RIPON.

The Palace, Ripon.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, February 27, Discussion of—"Religion and Sex."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. R. B. Kerr (Editor *The New Generation*)—"H. G. Wells."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Arthur Linecar—"Is the Law an Ass?"

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 8.0, Tuesday, February 28, A. H. M. Robertson—"Materialism Reconsidered."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107, York Road, Camden Road, N.): 7.0, Debate. J. T. Waddell and T. F. Palmer—"Has Man an Immortal Soul?"

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Mitchell's Restaurant, High Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Freethought Martyrs."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, February 26, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead near Hamilton Square): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (Liverpool) President Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S.—"After Death, What?"

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): Bradford, 7.30, Mr. Jackman—"An Outline of Theosophy."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley): Mr. Chapman Cohen, President N.S.S. and Editor of the *Freethinker*. 2.45, "The Menace of Mass Opinion." 7.0, "The Psychology of Belief."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. A. Shaw—"The Case for Socialism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Spiritualism v. Common Sense."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, W. Ll. Owen (Liverpool)—"Atheism and Progress."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members' Meeting.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, A Lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Central Hall): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton. A Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, Mr. Alan Flanders.—Speakers' Class and Study Circle, I.L.P. Rooms, Foyle Street, each Monday at 8.0 p.m.

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