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

## Views and Opinions.

### Anti-Semitism.

NOTHING more contemptible than Anti-Semitism crawls the earth. An unintelligent flag-wagging nationalism is poor enough. That kind of thing was well described by Dr. Johnson as the last refuge of a scoundrel; but it may at least claim the shelter of something that it is possible to describe in terms of decency. Nationalism may be expanded and educated until it combines love of local associations with due regard for others and so tends to a larger and healthier humanitarianism. But you cannot civilize or humanize a passion such as Anti-Semitism. It stands for the very dregs of an ignorant nationalism inspired by the worst form of religious intolerance. In sober fact a country makes itself a Jewish question as it makes itself slum questions and crime questions, and in each case punishes the individual victims for what are mainly collective offences. For very many generations Christian malignity made scapegoats of the Jew. It segregated him in Ghettos; it bled him; it disfranchised him; it denied him education; it saddled him with the responsibility for national disease, it treated him as one outside the pale of human consideration. The Jew is the age-long victim of Christian malignity, the victim of a religious war; and he stands to-day a living instance of the fundamental futility of persecution and an example of the Nemesis that, sooner or later, is its aftermath.

### Persecution and the Jew.

Without persecution the Jew would have long since disappeared. Wherever persecution is lifted the Jew does, as a matter of fact, tend to disappear. He is kept in being only by the influx from countries where Jew-baiting still exists. Give the Jew absolute political and social equality and in a few generations he would, as a Jew, die out. The "miracle" of the persistence of the Jew is a consequence of the savagery of Christian persecution.

For centuries the Jew was prevented holding land or engaging in those occupations which presuppose settled life and security of tenure. So he turned his attention to finance and to those professional occupations in which a man carries his tools in his brain. He was persecuted in the name of religion, and because of his own religion became more fanatically religious than ever. Intolerance in the persecutor bred intolerance in the victim. He was being martyred for his religion; it became something worth being martyred for. The philosophic Christian might have said with Heine that in this game of persecution the Jew began it. He gave the Christian his God, and so took toll in advance for all the wrongs the Christian was to inflict upon him. He helped to perpetuate the narrowest and most intolerant form of biblical religion, and so robbed the world of the more refined and more gracious religious beliefs of civilized Greece and Rome.

Above all, the persecution to which the Jew was exposed, so far as it was not able swiftly and adequately to eliminate him, secured the survival of a type capable of persistence. When existence becomes a battle of wits the result is the survival of the shrewdest brain. And here the Christian was fighting with a two-edged weapon. The Jew, to live, had to be, on the average, mentally keener than his Christian persecutor. So Christianity weeded out the less mentally agile among the Jews. But the Church hated intellectual independence and its persecuting spirit did what it could to weed out the more mentally alert among Christians. It was an excellent arrangement which tended to preserve the greatest number of Jewish sharps and the greatest number of Christian flats. The Jew developed the qualities necessary for him to survive in the face of a physically superior enemy. The Christian had to face the Jew that his own malignance had created. The battle of the two types, with its social consequences is well brought out in Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," where all that is bad in both Jew and Christian is manifested in connexion with their respective religions.

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### Germany and the Jews.

The "Jewish question" is again brought to the front by the outbreak of Fascist savagery in Germany. Germany, suffering under the treaty of Versailles, with a militaristic party fed largely by the action of the Allies since 1918, has vitalized and "rationalized" the most ignorant form of nationalism and called to its service the more ruffianly elements among the German people. The Jew is here something of a cover, but it is a cover that serves its purpose well enough. But even so we should not charge the unbridled savagery of Hitler and his gunmen to the whole of the German people. Just as during the war I protested against thinking of the whole of the German population as one person ani-

mated by the same thoughts and feelings, so now I protest against the ascription to the whole of the German people of the horrible barbarities that the press has recorded. It is the work of bodies of sadistic Germans, delighting in torture and brutality. An armed gang furnished with the excuses of nationalism and religion may easily, for a time, hold the better elements of a nation in check.

There is no need to detail here the terrible crimes of Hitler and his gangs. These will be familiar to all through the daily press which have given them full publicity. If they had appeared in the yellow press only we might discount the tales. But the most responsible papers in Britain have told us through the mouths of their most trusted representatives what they have seen. Papers and parties and persons have been rigorously suppressed, thousands of men and women have been sent to prison or otherwise disposed of for being even suspected of not being Fascist in sympathy. Having disposed of one set of opponents the Hitlerites have turned on the Jews. The offence here is not any statutory crime, not even the breaking of a local bye-law. The only offence is that they are Jews, or the descendants of Jews, or even converted Jews. For this offence men and women (sometimes husband and wife have been tied together) have been beaten till their bodies are one mass of bleeding flesh. Jewish shops have been closed, bands of ruffians roam the streets assaulting Jews and Jewesses at their pleasure, Jews have been paraded in the streets bearing placards notifying that they have committed the crime of appealing to the police for protection. The prisons are choked, but room has been made for Jewish prisoners by releasing criminals who were there so that they might join the Nazi storm troops.

And this is not being done under the old and stupid cry that the Jews are the kings of finance and are better at the game than their Christian competitors. The boycott and the ruffianism applies to all Jews. All German-Jews who belong to the professional classes—doctors, lawyers, judges, authors, journalists, teachers, musicians, curators of museums, librarians—are to be dismissed their posts which are to be filled by Germans who are not Jews. Even the statue of Wagner at Munich has been defaced because his second wife was a Jewess. The Jews are to be disfranchised and reduced to the level of "tolerated foreigners" who will pay twice the taxation of the true German. The only Jew in Germany whose status is not to be touched is Jesus Christ.

This is not all. In elementary schools only one per cent of the Jewish children are to be allowed to attend. There will certainly follow, if Fascism endures, similar restrictions in the higher educational centres. It is like Czarist Russia at its worst when Jewish girls who wished to study at the principal Russian Universities were compelled to take out a ticket as a prostitute in order to do so, and then had to see the police to avoid punishment for not practicing their alleged profession. Nothing equal to the ignorance and the brutalities of the Hitlerites has been seen since the Middle Ages, and for the latter one might now plead the barbaric character of the times. The present persecution is sheer mob-law, but mobs who clearly work under orders, for the men in power in Germany seem able to restrain and set going the outrages whenever they feel inclined. When the Versailles treaty was made public I pointed out the stupid criminality of expecting that a slave state could be maintained in the centre of Europe without inflicting irreparable injury on the whole world. Is it not equally absurd to imagine that a State of the kind planned by the Hitlerites can stand against the power of world opinion to-day? Civilization is in-

deed a failure if it lacks the strength to end the organized brutality of the existing German Government.

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#### How to Destroy the Jew.

It has been pointed out in several of our leading papers that a large part of the culture of Germany is due to the influence of Jews, and that an equally large part of the cultural life of Germany is to-day administered by Jews, as are some of its leading and financial institutions. Assuming that Hitlerism succeeds, what is to be the result? Some centuries ago the Spaniards incited by a Church with all the ferocity that Hitler possesses, but with far more intelligence than he displays, drove out the Mohammedans and the Jews. The result was the ruin of Spain, a disaster from which Spain has never completely recovered. You cannot cut down the intelligence of a nation without suffering for it. There is no need to dwell upon what Jews have given to Germany in literature, in philosophy, in science, in commerce and in art; there is something more than a mere arithmetical calculation of this kind involved. It involves the systematic creation of a large pariah class in the midst of a country and no nation can do that without paying a terrible price in the end. It involves placing a premium upon stupidity, brutality and intolerance, and these are luxuries that are always purchased at too great a price. And in the end the effort is bound to fail, as Spain failed, as Russia failed, as the Christian Church failed in the very height of its power.

By all means let the world work for the destruction of Judaism. I have worked for that as I have worked for the destruction of all religion. But let us remember that the Jew does not stand for a nation but for a creed. There is no such thing as a Jewish type, there is no such thing as a Jewish nation. There are only types of Jews, and there are Jews living in different nations. There are German Jews, Dutch Jews, Spanish Jews, British Jews, there are Jews of all sorts and characters, differing from each other as the nations of the earth differ from each other, and having only those things in common which have been forced upon them, or are still forced upon them, by Christian bigotry. The way to the extermination of the Jew is complete liberty, social and political, among the people with whom he is living. Encourage him by persecution to believe in his religion as something of great value and he will cling to it with the greater tenacity. And the man who does most for the disappearance of Judaism will be he who breaks every barrier between the Jew and his neighbours.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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#### MAN.

In an attempt to form an estimate  
Of Man, judgment can only be his own;  
His vanity will lead him to condone  
His many faults—his virtues overstate.  
He walks erect. This gives him freer use  
Of those two limbs which terminate in hands.  
Wonders have come of these, and he commands  
Most lower forms of life, but his abuse  
Of these, increases with each passing year.  
Emotion sways him; if Reason were his guide,  
Those supermen, who ever have decried  
His frailty, would respect him. Creeds appear  
A mockery, which enslaved him hitherto.  
But he has spoiled too much to start anew.

Anon.

## Jew Baiting Redivivus.

"We need to have more respect for the thinkers."  
Dr. Norwood.

"Truth can never be confirmed enough,  
Though doubt did ever sleep."—Shakespeare.

The recrudescence of Jew-baiting in Germany is extraordinary, for it shows that so much of the boasted Teutonic culture and even civilization is only skin-deep, the merest veneer. A generation ago the "pogroms" in Russia and Eastern Europe were a scandal to humanity, and earned for old Czarist Russia and some adjacent states most unenviable reputation. But modern Germany, one of the best educated countries of the world, was thought to be high above such prejudice and barbarism.

This blatant Anti-Semitism is a bad legacy from the dark Ages of Faith. Christianity has persecuted the Jewish people with constant and relentless malice for many centuries; has hounded them into loathsome Ghettos and fastened upon them an ignominious gaberdine. They were not even allowed to use their own names, and, in many cases, were forced into apostasy in order to get bread. These terrible happenings are imperishable parts of European history, and the horrors of malignant persecution are, unhappily, not a thing of the past, but continue in this twentieth century to mock our progress.

Jews, more than any other people, have most excellent reasons for estimating the true value of Christian charity, and the hypocrisy of Christian love. One very glaring case rent France from end to end over thirty years ago, and roused the attention of the civilized world. In the Dreyfus *affaire* the poor Captain said, pathetically, "My only crime is that of being born a Jew." "Suffering is the badge of all their tribe," wrote the immortal Shakespeare of the Jewish people. And it is the Jew, conscious of the yoke of centuries, who realizes most the awful hypocrisy of the Christian Churches. Pretending to love their enemies, they treated their unfortunate Jewish neighbours worse than dogs.

It was not a Pope, nor an Archbishop, nor a Christian prelate, nor a common priest, but a playwright who indicted this hypocritical Christianity at the Bar of Humanity. When Jews were hounded in all the Ghettos of Europe like wild animals, it wanted some courage for Shakespeare to voice the claims of justice before a Christian audience in the rowdy, bigoted days of Queen Elizabeth:—

If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility—revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?—why, revenge. The villainy you teach me I will execute; and it shall go hard, but I will better the instruction.

Note also the humanistic thoughts put into the mouth of Portia. When Europe was a shambles of religious fanaticism, and all forms of heresy repressed by horrible torture and cruel death, Shakespeare makes Portia say:—

"Ay, but I fear you speak upon the rack,  
Where men enforced do speak anything."

The great poet's genius is like a pure, white flame, which, seen amid the bigotry and bitterness of Sixteenth Century Europe, is a beacon of hope.

In Christian circles to-day the Jewish people are looked upon with hardly less benevolent regard than Chinese or Japanese. The Christian "Missions to Jews" has ever been a comedy compared with which "Charley's Aunt" is a tragedy. Although enormous sums of money are spent annually it is not a danger to Judaism, and is never likely to be. There may be Jews, here and there, who have become apostates from wholly conscientious motives, but few

people have met such persons. Some of these converts become missionaries in turn. It is an easier method of earning money than by using a tailor's iron, although less honest.

When the body of the Jew was taken and tortured and burnt alive in order to save his soul, those who perpetrated the savagery were, at least, straightforward in their brutal objects. They acted as other savages had acted to them, and as, we fear, many religious folk would act to-day to those who differ from them. In the light of history it is strange that any self-respecting Jew should change his own faith for the Christian Religion. Jewish theology is simple in comparison with Christian theology. One God is more credible, or less incredible, than a divine syndicate of three with a terrible devil and God's mamma on the board of directors.

Christians, during many centuries, have never dealt fairly with the Jewish people. They stole most of their religion from them, shed their blood like rivers, ravished their women, and ostracized and oppressed them. To their honour the Jewish people do not dissemble their love. There is a Society in England for the conversion of the Jewish population to Christianity. It has an income of about fifty thousand pounds a year, and the number of its converts appears to be so small that every one of them, on the average, costs the society a third of a year's income.

We do not know whether we like the present German Government least when it is encouraging Anti-Semitism or when it is denying loudly all association with it. There is nothing in all the persecutions of history like that of the Jewish people by Christians, and the wild men of the Nazis have condemned their own movement by adopting and imitating the passion and violence of the Dark Ages. They have made Germany the residuary legatee of the barbarity of the bad old times, and they have smirched the fair fame of the countrymen of Goethe and Wagner. They have dragged European civilization in the mud.

"Men are we, and must grieve when even the shade  
Of that which once was great is passed away."

MIMNERMUS.

## Religion and Mysticism.

"ALTHOUGH it would be idle to pretend that the object of this study is not that of advancing a plea for Religion, it remains true that that plea is made more by implication than otherwise. My primary concern has been to show that in the end the purely humanistic attitude to the world breaks down, and that in so breaking down it points beyond itself to the superior validity of the religious experience."

So writes Mr. Lawrence Hyde, author of *The Learned Knife*, in the introduction to his latest book, *The Prospects of Humanism*. The explicit terms in which Mr. Hyde worded his aims led me to hope for something of interest. But I am becoming inured to disappointment in my quest for some intelligent writer in defence of religion. Nothing has so forcibly convinced me of the poverty-stricken state to which religion has come than the irrelevant and anæmic nature of the arguments used by those of its protagonists who are hailed by the press as lucid or powerful defenders of the faith. The thunders of yester-year have died away into silence. Nowadays we are compelled to strain our ears to hear the whisperings of "pleas by implication." And even these can scarce be distinguished amid the forests of luxuriant verbiage which surround them.

A glance at the table of contents at the beginning of Mr. Hyde's book warned me to be prepared for the

worst. "Thought and Being," "Passion and Vision," "Science and Inspiration," "Esoteric and Exoteric," "Calculation and Spontaneity," "Contemplation and Catharsis"—such were a few of the headings which met my gaze. As one who has read more religious and philosophic works than he cares to think about, the reader may take it from me—if he has not already discovered the fact for himself—that the lavish display of abstract terms is an infallible indication of cloudy nonsense. Writers of philosophic humbug and religious obscurantism both seem to derive immense inspiration and comfort from the use of terms whose one merit is their indeterminate vagueness. Undeterred by these evil omens, however, I ploughed steadily through the book till I had read two thirds of it. Then came this passage. "The great mass of more highly educated men and women . . . in declining to associate themselves with existing religious organizations of a traditional type are, I am convinced, following a perfectly right instinct. For any individual who is truly possessed of the modern consciousness no other course is possible. The religion of the Churches is a dead religion; on that point one must remain firm."

I must confess that this passage gave me quite a hearty laugh. It was the only really bright spot in an otherwise futile and dull work. And the comedy was this. Ostensibly Mr. Hyde has been making an earnest speech to the ship's crew in an effort to persuade them to promote Old Man Jonah to the post of captain—or, if not that, then at least to let him stay on the bridge. Then suddenly and without apparent reason, he turns round and firmly shoves the old boy overboard into the Whale's mouth! That the incongruity of this particular passage should ever have tickled Mr. Hyde is hardly to be expected. Religion, for religious persons, cannot have a humorous side. And as for expecting them to know what they actually mean by the word when they use it, that would be too much of a good thing. Mr. Hyde's own answer to the question "What do you mean by religion?" would probably be after the style of Mr. Harry Tate's famous reply: "Well, it is; and it isn't."

Proof of this lies in the words which follow on from the quotation just given. Mr. Hyde continues: "What I want to emphasize is the fact that it is little use for modern educated people to pretend that they can get along without any religion beyond the vague idealism of the cultured . . . Until some new Religion takes shape . . . they will remain, if they have been spiritually quickened, profoundly unhappy at heart." Mr. Hyde throws the religion of the Churches overboard and will have no truck with religious organizations of the traditional type, yet he coolly informs us that we cannot get along without some sort of new religion! It is reasoning of this sort which makes one doubt the sanity of those who give expression to it. On what grounds, it would be interesting to learn, does Mr. Hyde imagine that his own religious ideas (or anyone else's) can be anything more or less than the remnants of traditional or church religion? On what grounds does he believe that, without an abuse of language, any new point of view could possibly be called a "religion" if it had no connexion whatever with traditional or church religion? And lastly, on what grounds other than on purely traditional religious grounds, does he assert that profound happiness is impossible for those who have been completely emancipated from religious influences?

The facts are, of course, that Religion has always been associated with, and has for centuries never been dissociated from, both Tradition and the Churches. To try and change the meaning of the word, or to

talk of abandoning the old religions in favour of some new form, is like trying to save oneself from a sinking ship by diving off one side, swimming round, and then boarding it again on the other. As for Mr. Hyde's belief that idealism must be vague, or that it is impossible to be really happy, without some sort of religion, I fear that this is simply another instance of the wish being father to the thought—and of the wish being a good son of traditional religious prejudice. All that need be said about either belief is that it is not true. Atheism, which is frank in its repudiation of and opposition to all religious beliefs and influences, is neither vague in its idealism nor impotent as a force for happiness of the most profound sort.

Lest I be accused of not doing justice to Mr. Hyde's own interpretation of the word "religion," let him speak for himself. "The distinctive character of the religious attitude lies in the individual's profound realization of his dependence upon a Higher Power," he writes. And a few words further on he specifically calls this "higher power" God. What is this if not pure traditional religion? Yet Mr. Hyde confesses that he is "well aware that to treat the problem of Humanism from this point of view would be a profitless proceeding. Conviction in a matter of this order cannot be the fruit of argument and disputation; the decisive factor can only be a profound type of interior experience." In other words, recognizing that in any attempt to defend religion on ordinary grounds he has no leg to stand on, he attempts to evade the difficulty by claiming special validity for some sort of extraordinary experience which he declares to be "religious." The ruse is an old one. The rabbit of Religion is carefully smuggled away under cover of the multicoloured bouquet of Mysticism.

Under the captions "Visible and Invisible," and "Essential and Transcendental," Mr. Hyde tries to explain his ideas about this profound, interior, religious and specially valid type of experience. Alas! to anyone unfamiliar with the hocus-pocus of religious apologetics, the explanation is just windy words. To those familiar with such terminology Mr. Hyde makes sly excuses. First he deprecates the use of the words "mystic" and "mystical," and then he adds: "to have abandoned the terminology actually employed, would have been to complicate the issues to an undue degree." This is clever—but not quite clever enough. The issues would not have been complicated but simplified. The use of intelligible, rather than religious, terms would make Mr. Hyde's "profound experience" look very much like small beer—and he knows it! But by using such masquerades as "mystic," "supernatural," "metaphysical," and "transcendental," he bluffs the gullible public and conceals the fact of his own muddle-headedness. For, after all, what are these terms but mere euphemisms for common-or-garden ignorance. They explain absolutely nothing; they add not one jot to our knowledge; they simply cloud the discussion in the traditional, question-begging jargon of a credulous and superstitious past.

"It is true," writes Mr. Hyde, "that men and women undergo a distinctive type of experience, mean, of seeing the object as divine." No one doubts it. But what many do doubt is that the description here given would be the same as that given by persons who had not previously had the poison of religion injected into their systems. In other words there is nothing specifically "divine" or "supernatural" in these experiences except to those who have been brought up to use that kind of useless phraseology. But this makes no difference to Mr.

Hyde who, in accordance with the usual religious methods, insists upon having it both ways. If experiences of this sort are had by persons who declare them not to be religious in nature, then these persons are spiritually blind; or if they be interpreted in non-religious terms, then the interpretation is inadequate! "Why should we be satisfied," he writes, with Mr. Murry's mere *assertion* that the experience of the supernatural is delusive? Is it not equally reasonable to maintain that his attempt to reduce it to purely aesthetic terms is an indication that his own insight is defective? . . . It is simply one man against another."

Hardly that, Mr. Hyde. The real situation is this: either the "mystic" experiences are *not* capable of being explained in intelligible speech, in which case the value of them as evidence for religion or anything else must be nil; or else they *are* capable of explanation, in which case the question obviously is— which version, the religious or the secular, is the more intelligible. Mr. Hyde himself, when talking of pink snakes, agrees that "the distinction still remains between a realistic and a phantastic conception of that which appears to consciousness." Yet he makes no effort to show wherein the experience of pink snakes is more phantastic or less realistic than the experience of seeing objects as divine. Whether one sort of experience is more pleasant than another has really nothing to do with the question of its value as evidence for the supernatural. He fails to observe that the true reason why he does not regard the experience of pink snakes as "divine" is because his own religious ideas are not associated with snakes—and not because pink snakes are less realistic or more phantastic than "mystic" experiences. Were Mr. Hyde to belong to some primitive race, the chances are that pink snakes would be every bit as "divine" as any other experience which he claims to be "religious."

C. S. FRASER.

### "Powder and Shot."

ON Monday, May 1, the militant section of the British Labour Movement is demonstrating in the proper spirit of Labour Day by calling the working class, both employed and unemployed, out on to the streets despite the fact that May 1 is a week-day.

On Sunday, April 30 the Industrial Christian Fellowship will celebrate in their own little way in a great many churches in Britain, Industrial Sunday, which is their version of the spirit which should underly the relations of workers with their employers.

On Sunday, May 7, the Trades Union Congress will carry out the *official* observation of the most historical day in the working-class calendar six days after it falls due. The occasion will be used, no doubt, as happened on February 5 at the mass demonstration of trade unionists against unemployment, to make propaganda for the very Christian Labour Party.

It is not our business to examine in the columns of a Secularist Journal the purely party-political motives which lead the Trades Union Congress to adopt the view that it is neither practicable nor just to call the workers out of the factories, the mines and the workshops on a weekday, simply in order to show the employing class that their employees can exhibit a shred of independence when occasion demands it. But we can and do ask how it is that the greater part of the British Labour Movement has thought it more fitting for the churches to observe a closer approximation than itself to the official Labour Day.

We find our answer in the recently published manifestoes of the Industrial Christian Fellowship. One

of these manifestos bears the signatures of seventeen of the thirty-one members of the Trades Union Congress General Council in association with those of the Prime Minister and of prominent leaders of the Labour Party. For such is the unifying force of the Churches that at their bidding lambs of the Labour Party and the Trade Unions, like the Rt. Hon. George Lansbury and Mr. Will Thorne, associate with the Prime Minister, about whom their Party could say nothing too foul in the October Election of 1931, and his lion-like friends Sir Josiah Stamp, Sir Herbert Austin, Sir William Morris and Sir Harry Macgowan.

When we ask what it is that has this miraculous power of composing the alien interests which the aforesaid gentlemen represent, we find that it is nothing less than the potent charm of Christ's own teaching of over 1900 years propagation which is just beginning to work in earnest. Or more precisely, it is the continuation of the drugging process which has been subtly applied to the Labour Movement by the clericals throughout the century to silence the challenging cries to Christendom of the exploited.

But we deny that the Christian teaching which inspired the majority of nineteenth century clerics to damn every attempt at social reform in one of the blackest periods of English history, and before that tolerated and profited from all the horrors of the Slave Trade, can be one to recommend itself to those people who suffer to the full the social evils of the present day. We remind our friends of the Trade Unions and Labour Party that in 1819, for instance, a Conference of Methodist Ministers at Bristol adopted the following manifesto:—

We deeply sympathize with those of you, dear Brethren, who, from the pressure of the times, and the suspension of an active commerce, are, in common with thousands of your countrymen, involved in various and deep afflictions. We offer up our prayers to God for you in this dark season of your distress, "that you may not be tempted above what you are able to bear" . . . As many of you to whom this measure of national suffering has been appointed reside in places where attempts are making by "unreasonable and wicked men," to render the privations of the poor the instruments of their own designs against the peace and the Government of our beloved country, we are affectionately anxious to guard all of you against being led astray from your civil and religious duties by their dangerous artifices. . . . Remember that you belong to a Religious Society which has, from the beginning, explicitly recognized as high and essential parts of Christian duty, to *Fear God and honour the King; to submit to magistrates for conscience sake, and not to speak evil of dignities.*

It is not remarkable to find Cobbett writing of such people that:—

. . . the bitterest foes of freedom in England have been, and are, the Methodists. Amongst the people of the North they have served as spies and blood-money men . . . Rail they do, like Cropper and Bott Smith, against the West Indian slave-holders; but not a word do you ever hear from them against the slave-holders in Lancashire and in Ireland. On the contrary, they are continually telling the people here that they ought to thank the Lord for the blessing they enjoy; that they ought to thank the Lord, not for a bellyful and a warm back, but for that abundant grace of which they are the bearers, and for which they charge them only one penny per week each.

Hence when the *Daily Herald* writes of the uniting of the Methodist Churches:—

The union will be the occasion of much rejoicing amongst the "people called Methodists" of warm congratulations from those who are not of them, realize the great and honourable role which they have

played in the religious and social history of Great Britain.

We think that this paper has either ceased to reflect Labour opinion in this country or else it indicates how utterly demoralized the British Labour Movement has become at the hands of the Churches. There may even be good enough reason to suspect that it is a composition of both which explains the attitude of the *Daily Herald*.

There is perhaps a little comfort to be found in the fact that the manifestos of the Industrial Christian Fellowship with its seventeen signatures of members of the T.U.C. General Council, and its sixty-five signatures of General Secretaries and Presidents, bears only forty-one signatures of Branch Secretaries of Trade Unions, and none at all of the rank and file. If the manifesto is compiled on a P.R. basis, and we assume that the I.C.F. have made their appeal as representative as possible, so that they could not possibly be accused of mere window-dressing, it does show us that even if the rank and file are foolish enough to allow their leaders to be sandbagged by the clerical hierarchies, they themselves have the wit to stand clear.

There was a time, however, when the leaders of the Trade Union Movement marched somewhere in the direction pointed out by the rank and file under a slogan of "Curse your charity—we want our rights." It was mainly the voice of the rank and file which expressed what was for years an admirable part of the Labour Party and Trade Union programmes, that the children of the workers should have "education free and secular, from the primary school to the university." The same rank and file too viewed with abhorrence the organized "slumming" of the well-intentioned upper classes, the soup kitchens, old doctored boots, and cast-off clothing, etc., with which the members of an immoral society eased their consciences. The Churches who were most expert in this work by reason of their long experience in cleaning-up the messes made in the past by society, received the widespread condemnation of great numbers of organized and unorganized workers. It was the pence, the brains and the grit of these workers which consolidated each step of the growing Labour Movement. Nevertheless they could not have seen that whilst the head of their Movement grew larger the Churches were consuming it from the tail upwards. To-day when the situation of the workers demands vigorous activity from their organization to protect what has been won in the past, they find that the canker of inaction which fastened on the tail of the British Labour Movement has penetrated to its very heart and brain. These manifestos of the Industrial Christian Fellowship provide the Trade Unionists of Great Britain with a good deal to think about and a considerable amount to worry about.

G.F.G.

#### CONSCIENCE.

Men speak of conscience as an inward guide  
Intelligence possessing, to decide  
What's right, what's wrong, what's false and what is true;  
What they ought not, and what they ought to do.  
He has done right, 'tis said, who has obeyed it,  
Yet conscience is but what mankind has made it;  
'Tis educated with us, and we find  
Its teachings but the echo of the mind.  
"Do as your conscience teaches you to do"  
This is a maxim oft adhered to;  
A better one would be; "Do as you ought"  
For conscience only teaches what it's taught.

CARLOSS.

#### The "Town's Meeting" Farce.

HAVING seen an announcement in one of the local papers that a vote on the question of Sunday opening of cinemas in Wembley was to be taken at the Gwalia Hall, on March 27, I went to the Hall shortly after 8 p.m. The place was crowded to the doors; I just managed to squeeze myself into a corner amongst some scores of people for whom there were no seats; and in the course of ninety minutes I learned one or two things which might be worth passing on to Freethinkers through the medium of your columns.

First, I found that it is easy to be misled by the sketchy nature of such announcements as the one I saw calling attention to the affair at the Gwalia Hall. My belief was that I was going there to register a vote for or against the opening of cinemas on Sunday. I found, on the contrary, that I was attending a meeting to discuss and decide the question of whether or not the electors of Wembley should have an opportunity of polling on this matter.

It was immediately evident that the Church and Chapel elements were strongly represented; and in their speeches opposing the resolution they played skilfully and assiduously the old game of "Red Herrings." One and all of them spoke on the assumption that the function of the meeting was to decide for or against Sunday cinemas. All the customary arguments were put forward—statements of prejudice would be a more apt description—about the preservation of our beautiful seventh day of rest, and so on; and they played their little game so successfully that no speaker for the resolution seemed to think of challenging the basic assumption or of doing anything other than reply directly to the comments of the opposition. It would have been gratifying to hear the Secularist point of view put forward very ably by several speakers for the motion, if it had been followed up by a clear exposition of the proper function of the meeting.

As a public speaker I personally am the world's worst, and anyway I could not have "caught the Chairman's eye" situated where I was; but the occasion required a speech somewhat on the following lines:

"The discussion so far has dealt with the pros and cons of Sunday cinemas, but this meeting is not called to discuss or decide that question at all. All that this meeting has power to do is to decide whether the electors of Wembley shall have a voice in the matter. We who favour the resolution realize that this meeting of a mere handful, less than one per cent of the electors, is not and cannot be fairly representative of the electors of Wembley as a whole. We realize that this is a matter which affects the interests of the electors of Wembley as a whole, and we are always told that we live in a democratic country, not in a Hitlerite or Fascist country. We claim, therefore, that the electors of Wembley as a whole are entitled to decide this question for themselves. Those who are opposing the motion are in effect saying to the electors of Wembley, "Get away, you small boys; we are going to decide this for you. You must not be allowed to have any say in this matter. We not only know better than you what is good for you, but we know so much better than you that we say you shall not be permitted to vote on the question at all." In a word, those who oppose the resolution are attempting to gag and to disfranchise the electors of Wembley on a matter which directly affects the interests of the whole electorate. Are you going to permit that? Are you going to disfranchise your fellow-citizens on this question?"

On the show of hands the motion was defeated in the proportion, I estimate, of about three votes to two. The majority obviously were Church and Chapel-goers, but even in these ranks some decent people are to be found. "There are white sheep in every flock." Probably the Red Herring game misled them just as much as it misled the supporters of the motion, and there is at least the odd chance that an appeal on the lines indicated above might have swung enough of them over to the side of common-sense to have carried the motion.

Anyway there are lessons here for Freethinkers. It is not necessary to insult their intelligence by pointing the moral.

CROAKER.

## Acid Drops.

Mob law appears to be growing. Apart from the outbreak of sadistic ruffianism in Germany, the clergy in Ireland have been busy rousing Catholic feeling against the Communists and Labourists in Dublin. As a consequence attempts have been made to burn down buildings and maltreat their occupants by a mob singing church hymns. Very little on the subject has appeared in English papers, but a Dublin reader sends us a batch of cuttings which describe the outrages. The Free State appears to have done what it could to prevent disorder, but it has to reckon with the Roman Church, and it has given way so much to it that it may find it difficult to call a halt.

At the annual dinner of the Parliamentary Lay Preachers, special references were made to the "moral aspect" of all political questions, and the consequent need for the organized alignment of the representatives of the several Churches in the House of Commons to ensure that the religious aspect of such questions should not be obscured. This sounds very inspiring. But all it means is that the parsons' lackeys in Parliament must be watchful to prevent anything which the Churches object to—anything which does or may hinder the trade of the professional Christian. It is almost needless to say that the parsons never experience any difficulty in finding a "moral aspect" on which to base objections. And what the Parliamentary Lay Preachers have to do is to merely repeat in Parliament what their masters tell them. How glorious it is to be a parson's Parliamentary Lackey!

It has been stated that last year 960,000,000 persons paid for admission to the Cinema to the extent of £43,000,000. Whereupon a Methodist paper enquires what proportion of the whole is expended in wages. "We fancy the total, though considerable, is small in comparison with the numbers which a similar sum spent in the staple manufactures would employ. The ever-increasing tendency to divert money from productive to unproductive expenditure, is one of the causes for the present depression of industry." The objection sounds remarkably like the famous one of the kettle which reproached the pot for being black. The Churches take millions of pounds annually from the citizens of this country—which is a diversion of money from productive to unproductive expenditure. Just think of the numbers which a similar sum spent in the staple manufactures would employ! Then there are also quite a few thousands of pounds sent abroad for the benefit of the "heathen" and their immortal souls. How much more productively the money might be utilized for the benefit of English people here.

We are glad to see that attention is being paid to the powers and pretensions of clerks to justices. There was some straight speaking on this matter in the House of Commons recently in a debate on the Summary Jurisdiction (Appeals) Bill. Here is a typical case given by one Member, Mr. Lovat Fraser (March 3). "I happened to be defending a farmer on a charge of watering his milk. I was instructed by some farmers society. The farmer was duly tried, and, in face of the most cogent evidence to the contrary, he was convicted. I was so shocked that I took the opportunity some little time after of speaking to one of the magistrates who had given the decision, and expressed astonishment at it. His reply was, "Mr. Fraser, everyone of the magistrates wanted to acquit the farmer, but, for some reason or other, the clerk wanted to convict him, and he stood with his back to the door and would not allow us to leave until we had convicted." Now we say nothing about the merits of this case, for the clerk may have been right as to them, and the farmers may have been moved rather by local feeling than by evidence. We know nothing on these points. But that the paid servant of the Court should be in a position to act as this man acted, and to issue, as some of them do, threats to persons who might come before the Bench as to their conduct is an outrage.

Mr. Philip Inman has done such good work for Hospitals that it may seem invidious to criticize his writings in which, for other ends, he makes use of that service. He deals with "Human Documents," in *John Bull*, and, to take a recent article before us (March 25) in a way that shows that he is among those who think that belief in God is at least as good as solace in loss, trouble or pain, as anything that can be done by doctors, nurses, or human care and sympathy. For instance, he tells of "a girl of fourteen who, for some months had to look after an invalid mother," who subsequently died. Mr. Inman saw her shortly after and "expected to find her crying," but instead "she looked supremely happy." And this was the child's explanation. "When I used to look after Mummie I used to get very frightened that I wouldn't do it properly. Now I know it's all right, because God's doing it." Mr. Inman's comment is, "Any grief I have ever felt seemed trivial in the face of a faith like this." There is more of the same thing in this article and the conclusion of it all is that religion robs death of its fear and sorrow. The exact opposite is the truth. In so far as death is feared, and results in other than the perfectly natural sorrow for human loss, it is because it has been invested with terror by the falsehood of faith.

There is a sad state of things going on in the Roman Catholic Church which hampers the triumphal march of God's own elect. It is, according to Fr. Pargiter C.S.S.R., that "Catholic boys neglected Catholic girls, and by so doing forced them into mixed marriages. Thus when a Catholic boy wishes to marry a non-Catholic girl, he was deserving of no sympathy." We agree that it is simply awful the way in which Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants, English and French and German boys and girls fall in love with each other despite their respective religions. Our quarrel is with nature, that is, God Almighty. He will make girls—of all religions and climes—attractive and that is, to the perverted religious mind, a terrible sin. We suggest all Catholic girls and boys to be completely segregated from the outside world, and only shown to each other at stated times. With the support of Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Belloc this plan should prove absolutely successful and remove Fr. Pargiter's sad dilemma.

From the Things Said corner of a newspaper we learn from Sir Norman Angell that:—

There is a religious obligation to be intelligent. There is, however, no such thing as a *religious* obligation to be intelligent in the Christian creed; otherwise the history of that creed would be very different. Neither is there such a thing as a *religious* obligation to be intelligent in any of the affairs of life; nor is there any ordinary obligation. The most one may affirm is that there are many advantages to being intelligent. The one disadvantage—from a certain standpoint—is that being intelligent in no wise fits one for Heaven.

In a democratic community the half-educated decide, says Dean Inge. On the other hand, in a theocratic community the position of affairs is not much of an improvement, the quasi-civilized decide—as every Church Congress serves to remind us.

The Salvation Army, and parsons who organize "mission" meetings at seaside resorts or at places where Sabbath breakers do congregate, might be interested in a dictum of the Secretary of the National Union of Commercial Travellers—"Business is not got by making yourself a nuisance." This is a tip which our pious friends would do well to ponder over.

From the *Methodist Recorder*:—

Two earthquakes have wrought devastation during the last few days on either side of the Pacific Ocean. There are those who, less than a fortnight ago were pointing to the stricken villages of Northern Japan as evidence of Divine judgment upon the Japanese people for having disturbed the world's peace. If such explanation had any foundation in truth, it would be difficult to account for last Saturday's disaster in California, where, though the loss of life is less than in Hokkaido, many thousands

of persons have been injured and much property destroyed. Happily, however, the working of Providence is not directed by human prejudices; . . .

Unhappily, however, the working of Providence—assuming as our contemporary does that Providence is responsible for the two disasters—is directed by inhuman prejudices, or perhaps we ought to say, by a very peculiar and inhuman sense of humour.

The Bishop of Truro says that "One of the saddest things in England is an empty church or an empty chapel." But sadder still are empty heads, and one cannot have it both ways.

What wonderful finds these Christians make sometimes! A "special representative" of the *Church Times* discussing Communistic activities against religion seems suddenly to have discovered "a printed handbook on the Bible that is largely used by street orators and hecklers at religious meetings." Bless his innocent heart—it has been before the public for over forty years and, let him believe it or not, it really will stand the test of his childish criticism. This gallant Christian, who at least ought to have mentioned that the book in question is Foote's *Bible Handbook*, takes a few of the Bible contradictions and tries to show his readers that in reality they are absolutely harmonious. He ought to know that quite a number of massive tomes have been written to show that there are no contradictions in the Bible, but they have convinced nobody who can think. The contradictions are too palpable and immovable.

The joke is, however, that something like this must have dawned even upon his simple mind for towards the end he sadly confesses that "there are, of course, more complicated difficulties set out in the book that really need the explanation of linguists and scholars!" That is, the *Bible Handbook* exposes the arrant nonsense that the *Church Times* stands for in such a way that, in spite of thousands of Christian apologetic works, an Anglo-Catholic pathetically begs for help from "linguists and scholars." Incidentally, he states that the book "deals largely with the Old Testament." We can assure him it pulverizes the New Testament just as well.

There will be joy in heaven all this month, as Bishop Manning in St. Martin's Church in New York, has just confirmed 180 negroes. This may not have been particularly worth mentioning had it happened anywhere else—but New York! What about the "colour bar?" Will these dear—if dark—saints be allowed to meet their equally dear—but white—brothers in Christ anywhere and everywhere? Or is this talk about "all are one in Jesus" mere bunk? Will some genuine American Christian (white) answer please?

There can be no discussion about President Roosevelt of the United States as to whether he is a Christian like his more famous namesake. Theodore of that ilk managed, in writing of Thomas Paine, to get in three lies in three words, so we cast no doubt whatever about his orthodoxy. President Franklin Roosevelt, however, "spent the final hour of his time as a private citizen in a church at prayer, and also to read his sermon-like inaugural address." The *Church Times* finds this very heartening as he is also an Anglican. There can be no question then that he is a Christian unlike Lincoln, Washington and Jefferson, possibly the three greatest of American Presidents. How difficult still is the path of unorthodoxy!

The death (or should we say the "passing over" or "transition"?) of Mr. William Hope the eminent spirit photographer, brought in the usual eulogies from ardent Spiritualists in their journals, and the usual "exposures" in our daily papers. During the most successful part of his career, he was thoroughly exposed as a clever trickster, but this made no difference to his faithful, if credulous, followers. Now one of the writers who is

"exposing" him says that the "spirits" were invariably made from ordinary photographs first. How clever to find that out! As we have pointed out over and over again, "spirit" photography is pure unadulterated fraud, and the fact that an "investigator" (generally somebody without any equipment whatever for investigation) can't discover "how it's done" means nothing at all. Any spirit photographer will trick almost any "investigator" nearly every time.

Talking about blind, silly credulity we sometimes wonder to whom we should give the palm, a genuine Roman Catholic or a whole-hearted Spiritualist. It is, for example, "officially announced that the exposition of the Holy Shroud will last from September 24 to October 15." This "holy shroud" is supposed to be the one Jesus was wrapped in—without, of course, a scrap of evidence of any kind except faith. Yet thousands of otherwise sensible people will soon be grovelling in front of it in the most abject and disgusting manner. "What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty!"

In a survey of fifty years ago, the *Universe* admits that "conditions in this country are far better now than then. Drunkenness, wife-beating, manslaughter and murder were far more common." Yet religious inhibitions, revivals, missions, belief, faith, credulity and everything which goes to make up Christianity was also far stronger then than now. Strange that conditions should have been so bad! The fact is, the heaven of Freethought has silently worked a "miracle" in social progress. What will be left of religion in another fifty years?

A great and wonderful treat is being prepared for British wireless fans. On the eve of the Holy Year (the only reason why it's called a Holy Year is because the Pope said it) they will be able to hear, on a short broadcast, "the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's." Such an event surely should be commemorated in the history of the world. Why not ask the Lord to send a few angels to go through the Holy Door and delight listeners with a little Holy Talk as well? We pass our suggestion on to the *Tablet*.

A clergyman (Rev. H. H. Bartrum, Rector of Lathbury) was, it appears, formerly a Director of a company that has gone into liquidation, and which had secured rights to ship 120,000 rifles and 7,000 machine guns to a minor State. Christian pacifists will no doubt find in this story support for the Gospel assertion that "those who take the sword shall perish by the sword." It is unfortunate that the same Gospel commands him "who hath not a sword" to "sell his garment and buy one." Doubtless this reverend gentleman would have devoted his dividends, had there been any, to the propagation of the blessings of peace.

### Fifty Years Ago.

ONE word has been used in the comments upon the recent blasphemy trial against which an indignant protest must be entered. This is the word—"indecent." The Christians have used it with a double meaning. Whilst "indecent" means originally unbecoming, it has also the secondary meaning of "obscene." Our attacks upon Christianity are clearly unbecoming in the sight of Christians. But, not even in their blurred, unhappy vision can those attacks be called obscene. Yet by the dexterous use of an ambiguous word the enemy have tried to convey to the unthinking public mind the impression that the *Freethinker* is a publication of the same nature as the Bible. It is the duty of all Freethinkers to tell everyone with whom they come in contact that not a trace of the obscenity that disgraces the pages of the Christian's book is to be found in the papers or pamphlets of Freethought.

The "*Freethinker*," April 8, 1883.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. T. BRIGHTON.—Am writing you about Mr. Trelease. Deeply regret to hear of his death.

W. KENT.—Thanks. We had read the article.

F.L. (Otley).—If you can *prove* that "no Rationalist can do any other than believe in God," why not send us the proof. It would be more convincing than your letter.

A.D. (Marylebone).—Lisle's book (1877) long out of print.

A. K. SIGLER.—Paper sent to address for five weeks as requested. Thanks.

J.M.A.—See "Acid Drops."

S. STEVENSON.—Mr. Cohen will not recommence lecturing until September. It is not a holiday, he will be busy enough with other work, and this year will be busier than in recent years.

H. IRVING.—Thanks, but we fancy we saw the issue you indicate.

R.M.—Pleased you so much enjoyed the Social on Saturday last. It seemed a very happy party.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

A debate has been arranged between Mr. Cohen and a well-known Swansea clergyman, the Rev. H. J. Flowers, on the subject of "Is the Christian Conception of God Reasonable?" The discussion will take place in the Central Hall, Swansea, on April 13. Tickets are one shilling, and we understand the tickets are being sold in sufficient quantities to warrant the belief that the hall, a very large one, will be crowded. The chair will be taken at 7.30 by Mr. Ithel Davies, B.A.

Some weeks ago we published a letter from Miss E. Moore asking for the names of young Freethinkers who would care to enter into correspondence with young Freethinkers in Germany and Czechoslovakia. Miss Moore informs us that she received in answer to her letter more than one hundred replies. The object is an admirable one, and we are pleased to learn that Miss Moore's letter met with so ready a response.

Under the heading of "An Atheist's Centenary," the *Glasgow Herald* published a brief notice of Mr. Cohen's recent lecture in Glasgow on Charles Bradlaugh. The *Glasgow Forward* also devotes about three parts of a column to the lecture. We hope that the Bradlaugh Centenary will have the effect of drawing public attention to the Freethought propaganda that is being carried on in this country. Bradlaugh would have wished no better use to be made of his name.

The National Secular Society's Conference will this year be held in London, and being Bradlaugh year we should have more than the usual number of delegates from the provinces. We hope this will be the case, and that, in spite of the bad times, there will be a record muster of members. Meanwhile we remind all concerned that motions for the Agenda should be in the Secretary's hands not later than April 22. The right to send in resolutions belongs to private members as well as to Branches. The resolutions include nominations for the Society's officials from the President downward.

A meeting will be held to-day (April 9) in the Co-operative Hall, Whitehall Road, Gateshead-on-Tyne, at 6.30. The speakers will be Messrs. J. T. Brighton, Alan Flanders and F. Bradford. We hope the gathering will be completely successful.

We are asked to announce that the Annual General Meeting of the Manchester Branch will be held at the Clarion Cafe, Market Street, at 3 o'clock, on Saturday, April 8. This is very scant notice, but it is inserted as soon as received.

## A THIRTEENTH CENTURY PARODY.

The following thirteenth century parody shows with what complete justification the Catholic Church still adheres to its traditional interpretation of the Gospel of Christ:—

Here beginneth (the parody runs) the Gospel according to the Silver Marks . . . It came to pass that a certain poor clerk came to the Court of the Lord Pope, and cried out saying:—

"Have mercy on me, ye gatekeepers of the Pope, for the hand of poverty hath touched me. I am poor and hungry; I pray you to help my misery."

Then were they wroth, and said: "Friend, thy poverty perish with thee. Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou knowest not the odour of money. Verily, Verily, I say unto you, that thou shalt not enter into the joy of thy Lord until thou hast given the last farthing."

Then the poor man went out and sold his cloak and his coat and all that he had, and gave it to the cardinals and gatekeepers and chamberlains. But they said, "What is this among so many?" And they cast him out beyond the gate, and he wept bitterly, and could find none to comfort him.

Then there came to the court a rich clerk, fat and broad and heavy, who in his wrath had slain a man.

First he gave to the gatekeeper, then to the chamberlain, then to the cardinals, and they thought they were about to receive more.

But the Lord Pope, hearing that the cardinals and servants had many gifts from the clerk, fell sick unto death.

Then unto him the rich man sent an electuary of gold and silver, and straightway he was cured.

Then the Lord Pope called unto him the cardinals and servants, and said unto them: "Brethren, take heed that no one seduce you with empty words. I set you an example. Even as I take, so shall ye take." (*The Church and the New Age*, by H. Carter, p. 183.)

## Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

VIII.—THE "NATIONAL REFORMER"  
PROSECUTION.

THE first of the attacks on the *National Reformer* took place in 1868. Mr. Bradlaugh was called upon by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue to give sureties in the sum of £400 to remove "blasphemy and sedition from the columns of the *National Reformer*." He was also sued for the recovery of two penalties of £50 each, and £20 for each copy of that journal of May 3 and May 18 of that year issued to the public. The penalties asked for amounted to £250,000. The proceedings were taken under one of Lord Sidmouth's Six Acts of 1819, and the curious point arose during the proceedings that, had the *National Reformer* been 6d., no action could have been taken. When the case came on Bradlaugh entered four pleas in defence. The Court held that he could only plead one plea but, on appeal, Mr. Justice Willes ordered all the four pleas to be re-instated. At the trial before Baron Martin the jury were discharged. The next trial was held in the succeeding term before Baron Bramwell, and a verdict was given for the Crown for penalties amounting to £3,000,000. Nothing daunted Bradlaugh went to the Court of Appeal before Lord Chief Justice Kelly, and Barons Bramwell and Clensby, and a *rule nisi* was granted to him. But, in the meantime, a new Liberal Government had decided to repeal the Act under which the proceedings had been taken, and the Solicitor to the Treasury wrote to Bradlaugh offering to stay proceedings. But although Bradlaugh agreed, the Government never offered to pay his heavy costs. The Marquis of Lansdowne, in moving the second reading of the Repeal Bill, dropped a hint which seemed to indicate that the proceedings taken by the Inland Revenue Commissioners, under an Act which had become obsolete years before, were more of a personal attack on Mr. Bradlaugh than an attempt to enforce the law. The Act, said Lord Lansdowne, had been dormant for years, and had never been used except in cases where personal feelings were concerned. However, this may have been, Collett in his *History of the Taxes on Knowledge* refers to Bradlaugh's action in this case as being "the most valuable personal contribution ever made to secure the liberty of the press."

Another and a less known case, and one which had a different conclusion, and which exhibits the state of the justice at that time, occurred earlier, in 1861. On March 3 of that year Bradlaugh was arrested at Devenport, where he was announced to give a lecture. He had no sooner uttered the first words of his lecture, "Friends, I am to address you on the Bible," when he was arrested and detained in a cell all night, bail being refused. When he came before the Court in the morning the Magistrates dismissed the case. Bradlaugh determined to bring an action for wrongful imprisonment against Edwards, Superintendent of the Devonshire Police, and the case was tried at the ensuing Assizes at Exeter. The Plaintiff was awarded one farthing damages. This verdict was considered unsatisfactory and Bradlaugh moved for a new trial in the Court of Common Pleas. The application was refused. The Lord Chief Justice (Sir William Erle) laid it down that the defendant was justified in preventing a man "disseminating opinions of a pernicious description." Mr. Justice Byles thought that, by the law of the land, a man had a right to hold any opinions "provided he did not improperly publish them." We have travelled far since that time, although, to judge from some recent cases, not so far as might be thought.

A.C.W.

## Despicable Evangelistic Methods.

ANY person of average intelligence who takes the trouble to examine the propaganda of the various upstarts who employ their lungs of leather in proclaiming the necessity of personal salvation by faith in Christ is at once struck by the vulgarity, crudity and blatantness of such propaganda. Every now and again some semi-literate working-man with a powerful gift of the gab is hailed as a great evangelist and soul-winner. Wales and Scotland have been particularly prolific in the production of such wonderful preachers. A few years ago a Peterhead fisherman popularly known as "Jock Troup" was greeted as a marvellous exponent of the Grace of God. The writer had an opportunity of once hearing this physically powerful youth performing in the open air in a Scottish Town at a point where several public houses were in juxtaposition. Jock not only orated. He also sang with the aid of a banjo which he twanged by way of accompaniment to several of his own compositions. One lilt went thus (and Jock's strident tones were of course intended to reach the licence holders and their customers):—

There's no pubs there  
There's no pubs there  
Hallelujah, there's no pubs there!

These classic lines are reminiscent of a recent review in these columns of a book on *Poets in Paradise*, wherein it was suggested that there were pubs in Paradise as well as poets; and certainly an ideal state of existence is scarcely conceivable in which good poets are not to be found. And assuming the presence of the poets one sees that reasonable opportunities of lubrication would require to be afforded them. However, Jock Troup is evidently a poet who needs no stimulation from wine, whisky or beer. "Hallelujah" he cries, in a grammar of his own, "There's no pubs there!"

Well, well, well, no doubt what is one man's meat is another man's poison. The speculations and anticipations about a future life are legion. One irreverent and irresponsible fellow put it like this: "Heaven for Climate—Hell for Company." Perhaps there will be only water in Heaven. But there should be plenty wine, whisky and beer in the other place.

The Salvation Army (now a large business organization with no responsibility to account to any authority) has been most cunning in the introduction of several innovations in method. One of the most effective of these innovations is of course the uniformed and attractive Salvation Army lass typified in the popular "Belle of New York." The graceful banging of the tambourine and rattling of the money box has lured many a coin from the pockets of the susceptible. It may not be generally known however that the Army has instituted a plan whereby the lasses now visit city public houses with armfuls of the *War Cry*, and their money boxes at a late hour on Saturday nights when the public houses are at their busiest, and are then always sure to contain a number of men who are fairly well mellowed. Bibulosity and gallantry are frequently associated—anyhow in the atmosphere prevailing under such conditions an expansive feeling of chivalry is developed in the drinking males under the influence of the smiles of the fair young things, who are usually successful in getting rid of all their "literature," and of adding considerably to the weight of their boxes before they depart.

Evidently any method however questionable, however despicable, may be employed in the cause of supernaturalism which would more appropriately be designated as *infra-naturalism*!

IGNOTUS.

## The Christian Belief To-day.

WHENEVER I meet a Christian friend with whom I am on cordial terms, I ask him or her how they stand in regard to the Christian Creed to-day. They all seem to know that Dr. Barnes, the learned Bishop of Birmingham, knocked the bottom out of their creed by declaring the story of the alleged Fall of Man in Genesis was not true; that it was merely an allegory; and that, as a matter of fact, he, Dr. Barnes, as a scientific man, and Doctor of Science, was quite satisfied that man was an evolution from lower animal forms, and that his nearest relations on the biological side were the anthropoid apes. Well, that was a poser for even large-minded and liberal Christians. I pointed out to them that Dr. Barnes, to say the least, was very inconsistent to deny "the Fall of Man," and yet believe in some sort of atonement by the death of Jesus on the Cross, for the descendants of anthropoid apes who had never sinned against God, and in any case only did what the nature of their heredity and environment caused them to do. And so most of my intelligent Christian friends do not know exactly how they stand to-day. Of course, the simple-minded Christians go on believing as before, because they do not understand the questions involved in such a discussion.

But other Christians outside the English Church have also had their minds disturbed by these discussions. Those in authority have tried to pacify them. They point out that a number of very eminent persons have turned to Christ and have found consolation in the belief in him and his teachings. Many well known public men apparently have been caught in the net and been asked to testify to the wonderful character and teachings of the Gospels. Even the genial George Lansbury, M.P., a short time ago gave his testimony in a popular paper like *John Bull*. But what a paper to select for an exposition of the life and teachings of Jesus. Mixed up with the latest exposures of commercial frauds, bets on dog races, and other sensational enterprises, talk on the grandeur of the Life of Jesus, sounds strangely like some village bells—"Jangle, jangle, jangle out of tune." But if Dr. Barnes knocks the bottom out of the Christian Creed from the scientific point of view George Lansbury messes it up entirely from the religious point of view. He takes the ground that Joseph and Mary were a properly married couple, and Jesus was their natural offspring. But he does not seem to realize that by taking this course he destroys the supernatural character of Christianity altogether. For if Jesus was only a human being he could not have wrought any of the miracles recorded in the gospels. For example, Jesus the man could not have walked upon a rough sea; or still a tempest by rebuking the winds and the sea. (Matt. ix. 25 and 26.) Nor could he have turned devils out of two men and sent the devils into a whole herd of swine, who ran with the devils inside of them, down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters. (Matt. ix. 29-32.)

Nor could he have fed five thousand hungry people on five loaves and two small fishes, and after the people had had a sumptuous meal, take up twelve baskets full of fragments. (Mark vi. 41, 42, 43.)

Nor could Jesus the man make the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak and the blind to see. (Mark ix. 22-23.)

And finally the man Jesus could not have been crucified, and after being really dead and buried rise again. (Mark xv. 37; Mark xvi. 9.) No, George Lansbury may be a good politician, but he is obviously a very poor theologian. Well if this be so, what is the

use of such testimony? If Jesus was not the Son of God by the Virgin Mary—conceived by the Holy Ghost—then the whole of the Christian Creed is based upon a false assumption, and the sooner Christians of all denominations abandon it the better for mankind. It has obstructed human progress for hundreds of years and will continue to do so, so long as the slightest remnant of it lasts.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

## Christianity and War.

(Concluded from page 221.)

IF Christians were to admit that they preach peace, but go to war when forced to do, as do other men, they would bring their religion down to the natural level. The Divine Plan idea would be excluded; and explanation for failure in action as against the ideal in teaching would have to be sought in the imperfection of human nature.

This would be fatal to Christianity in all directions. If war is not part of a Divine Plan, what of other things in human experience? So the necessary mental attitude must be kept up on the war question or, with adjustment on this, a worse fate might befall Christianity on all other subjects.

With Christianity as a divine religion there should be no justification or explanation of war on the part of Christians available. That is, if divinity is better than humanity, as followers of Christ claim. War should simply be out of the question with the power of God working in and through the lives of Christian men and women, and making them capable of resisting all temptation to strike fellow men.

Yet Christians will persist in discussing the justifiability of war. Dr. Bruce writes: "Does Providence, then favour war? Yes and No! War may be justifiable, or it may be unjust. War may be necessary and beneficial where it is the means of a nation's progress, and the only condition of its escaping a tyranny that bars the way to progress." (p. 306.)

This is adopting a naturalistic position for the sake of avoiding a spiritual dilemma. Dr. Bruce, like other Christians wishes to retain his belief in "Providence," but finds such a belief hard to square with the fact of God's own children rending each other in carnage and destruction. He believes his God to be infinitely superior to man, and that he should be above using such appalling instruments as warfare. Yet wars frequently take place in God's world. Hence the question whether Providence favours war, followed by the answer, "Yes and No!" Which just means that the learned theologian knows nothing about the attitude of "Providence" to war and, consequently, he can proceed to say that war may or may not be justifiable, in relation to certain conditions, assured that the introduction of religious terms will have satisfied his readers, in most cases, of the profundity of his Christian beliefs.

War may be necessary and even beneficial to a certain tribe, or nation, in relation to given circumstances. It may be the only means of escaping tyranny at a certain period in the history of a people. It may be the means of opening "the way to progress, owing to lack of knowledge concerning other means," but all this is natural. When a Christian accepts this position, on being confronted with the problem of war and "Providence," he thereby hands in the case for Christianity as being unable to offer a better solution than that of any other religion or philosophy.

If this reduction of the question of war to one which must be dealt with on natural grounds, were conscious and honest on the part of Christians, it would be to the good of society.

War could then be seen in proper perspective without some mystifying "will of Providence" being introduced; and a more reasonable attempt to settle its value as a social factor, at the present time, could be made.

As it is, the Christian habit of trying to justify the ways of God, by explaining the ways of man, or the reverse, is likely to end in a position which makes folly of all endeavours to do away with war in a civilized society. The outcome is well stated by Dr. Bruce. "We are convinced that war, righteously engaged in, has been productive of many virtues, and that it has often raised nations in the moral scale. In the Counsels of Providence it has been used to further great and noble ends." (*Social Aspects of Christian Morality*, p. 325.)

The whole question of war, is hereby denuded of all sociological value. It is turned into one that is of little or no value to man. It leaves war as a means to an end, to be used by Providence.

If, in the Counsels of Providence, war is looked upon as an instrument for bringing about great and noble ends, why should the Christian desire to put an end to war, let alone try to do so? Who is he to fly in the face of Providence? It is his duty to accept war when it comes, and suffer or make others suffer as a means to the uplifting of "nations in the moral scale."

Should his conscience remain partly unregenerate and cause him to raise a doubt as to war being justifiable he has but to claim that it has been "righteously engaged in." Thus war is lifted by the Christian into the sphere of theology, whenever it is discussed, and in the main ceases to be a factor to be dealt with in relation to moral and social development. It is seen only as one of God's ways of producing many virtues in man's social life; and that way of viewing the matter is the negation of sociology in any scientific sense.

By falling back upon the belief that war is used in the "Counsels of Providence," the Christian can excuse any war as something for which he is in no way responsible, and so close the door of right investigation concerning the relation of war to human social development.

It has been the work of Christianity to cause confusion of thought on many subjects in the past, and there is no doubt that it is not helping in the direction of clear thinking, on the question of war, in the minds of the people at the present time. That war is useless as a means to progress in civilized societies at this stage of their evolution is a doctrine not likely to be preached from every Christian pulpit, with might and main, even now.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

#### "EQUITY."

(Even curates nowadays have better pay and more security than many actors.)—*Vide Press.*)

He thought he saw a clergyman  
All setting forth to pray;  
He looked again and saw it was  
An actor gone astray;  
If he should change his "gags" he said  
He might get still less pay.

A.H.

### The Line of Attack.

FOR most practical purposes Christians may be divided into two main groups. The smaller but more influential one—it includes most of the religious leaders and professional Christians—is well aware of the case against Christianity, and well aware that there is no convincing answer. It is not surprising therefore that members of this group can never be induced to debate religion. They suppress all discussion, they detest original thinking, they obstruct all progress. You will never convert them to Atheism, for they have forgotten how to be honest, even to themselves. Indeed one would not desire to convert them, for we have no wish for hypocrites on our side.

But the majority of Christians are quite honest; they are merely the victims of their leaders. They have been told so often that the Bible is a beautiful book that they really believe it; the moment they begin to read it they cease to think intelligently, they refuse to apply ordinary commonsense principles to the contents of this "divinely inspired" book, they lose all sense of perspective. They lapse into a state of ecstatic coma. It is not their fault; they have been trained to do it from earliest childhood. They read only those chapters of the Bible which their leaders indicate to them; outside the stock Sunday school passages they are appallingly ignorant. That is why they remain Christian.

Unfortunately, when an Atheist sets out to demonstrate to a Christian how muddled is the system of thinking upon which theism is based, the most common cause of his failure is, paradoxically enough, that the case against religion is too strong. The Atheist, himself thoroughly satisfied as to the logic of his own theory, invariably plunges straight into the attack, driving home with sledgehammer blows those innumerable questions for which he knows the opposition has no answer.

There lies the mistake. If you wish to convert you must lead; rarely can you drive. Remember, very few Christians understand an Atheist's way of thinking; many of them still honestly believe that all sceptics are servants of a mythical devil, reciting "blasphemies" at his dictation! Consequently they close their ears to our arguments. It is the only defence they can produce, but it is extremely difficult to penetrate.

Most Atheists, in recognizing the enormous strength of the attack, lose sight of the need to defend their philosophy. Yet it is the adequacy of its defence that justifies a creed. To cut holes in the opposition's beliefs is not enough; you must offer something more logical in their stead. I am not suggesting that we should apologise for our points of view; I personally am eager to seize every opportunity of dissociating myself from the superstitious obsessions that have taken so firm a grip upon the greater part of mankind. Nevertheless it is essential to make the other man see your viewpoint before you can convince him that, even though it be not absolute, ultimate truth, it is at any rate far more reasonable than his own hotchpotch creed.

There are occasions when defence is the best attack, and, in the form of an "Epistle to the Christians," I have in the following endeavoured to show the general methods by which I have gained not only a fair hearing but also several converts among my Christian acquaintances.

"My Dear Christian Friends,—And I say 'friends' advisedly, for I bear no animosity towards those whose ideas on religion differ from my own. It must have struck you that about four out of very five sceptics in Europe and America were brought up in a Christian environment. Consequently most of them are thoroughly familiar with the principles of Christianity; they have the advantage of knowing both sides of the problem; resulting in a broadened outlook and in increased debating power. Yet how few Christians have made an attempt to understand any philosophy besides their own. I feel sure that only a very small proportion have any clear conception of the nature of belief and disbelief.

"If, let us say, the Pope, Dr. Lang, and Dr. Scott Lidgett all announced that they had seen a vision of an angel who had told them that, in order to achieve salvation, it is necessary for every Christian to believe (a) that a certain very ordinary dachshund could, unaided, jump a

fifty foot wall; (b) that the room in which you are at present sitting is devoid of air; (c) that every man, woman, and child has a beard five feet long, then, in spite of your profound respect for one or all of the three reverend gentlemen in question, you would say that it was absurd, unbelievabe.

"That brings us to the crux of the problem. We are told that it is necessary to believe in order to be saved, yet the illustration given above must surely make it apparent that we do not choose what we believe. We are equipped with reasoning apparatus—not of our own choosing—which accepts or rejects each proposition as it arises. No matter how much we should like to believe in a certain creed our reason may refuse to allow us to do so. An Atheist therefore is one who cannot, not one who will not, believe in the existence of God. If he be the product of a Creator who gave him his brain he can scarcely be punished if that brain prevents him from following the instructions laid down by that Creator. If judgment must be passed upon anyone it is not difficult to allocate the blame. If an Atheist's reason forces him to reject your religion surely you will agree that you have no right to criticize him for it; rather is he entitled to your sympathetic hearing.

"Yet where is this toleration that every fair-minded man must allow? There is no man on earth more persistently maligned and persecuted than the sceptic. Let us turn to some of the unjust charges that are made against Atheists; I am confident that you will agree that they are unjust when you have analysed them. All serve to show how little the Atheist is understood by those who abuse him.

"Young once wrote: 'By night an Atheist half believes in God.' Only the Atheist himself can really appreciate the full richness of this joke, but I think that most Christians will admit that such a statement invites the inference that Young's own belief in God was closely associated with a childish fear of darkness.

"Here is another gem, this time from a Church Army speaker. 'Every Atheist has at one time or another been guilty of some immorality, and, knowing that God would punish him, he has preferred to deny God.' That is a favourite gag. God and morality are inseparable. Practically every sceptic in history has proved himself to be of the highest moral character. But let that pass; the real joke lies in the second half of the denunciation. If ever a man showed himself utterly lacking in imagination this speaker is he. If anyone believing in a god found that he had broken that god's law would he not try to placate that deity as much as possible? Certainly he would not enrage him still further by denying his existence.

"One could cite endless examples of this kind, but I will limit myself to one more—an extraordinary specimen, demonstrating the blindness and vulnerability of the attacker. A Christian once had the audacity to say that an Atheist was one who was so conceited, so consumed with a sense of his own importance, that he could not admit the existence of a superior Being. Examine the charge. The Atheist believes that when he has finished with this life, like all other animals, he fades away into nothingness. Is that egotism? The Christian cannot conceive the possibility of his almighty self coming to an end, consequently he tries to persuade himself that he will live for ever. Which is the more conceited?

"When I started this epistle, Mr. Christian, I had not the slightest intention of being aggressive, but if you have borne with me thus far, you will allow that I have some small excuse for hitting back.

"What do I believe? By what principles do I live? I will tell you.

"I do nothing to others that I would resent if it were done to me. My morality is not God-given; it is a sociological code, by which the human race may survive in peace and happiness. I believe that instead of striving to insure for ourselves some problematical future life we should try to make this life at least bearable for our fellowmen.

"In a Christian world there is room for war, slums, and starvation; in an intelligent world there is not."

'Is not our code better than the Christian code?'

"BEE."

## Ireland To-day.

FOR the last few months, the decree has gone out in Fleet Street that Ireland has news-value, and consequently the English public has been befogged and bewildered by such an outpouring of articles and essays, stories and paragraphs about Ireland, that one could not blame any sensible person for refusing to make up his mind on the merits of the various questions which are there in dispute. Consequently the views of one who spent two years in that country up to April last year, and returned for a short period in August last, may not be without interest.

First of all I would ask readers to realize that, despite all that has been said about "Ireland at the cross-roads," and such subjects in the press of this country, the political squabbles in Ireland are just as foolish, as futile and as useless as most of them are in this country. But in Ireland, thanks to the cloak of religion behind which all political prejudices hide themselves, this is not obvious to the ordinary man and woman.

It is now accepted by most thinking people that Ireland is a "priest-ridden" country, but it does not seem to occur to many that it is not merely the Roman Catholic priest who is the evil. The Presbyterian minister is just as bigoted (I had almost written "more bigoted") as his Roman Catholic confrere. And wireless listeners, with the example of Sir John Reith before them, need no telling of the perverse bigotry of the Presbyterian mind.

Partition of Ireland, in defiance of all natural and geographical laws, into two sections, each trying to act towards the other like a foreign country, is really at the bottom of all the present troubles—and partition is because the Protestants and the Catholics have resolutely declined to work with each other.

"Dirty Orangemen," say the Catholics. "To Hell with the Pope," politely reply the Protestants. Well might one say, with the sceptic of old, "How these Christians love one another."

But until politics and religion are divorced, which is to say until religion is destroyed utterly as a working force, with influence on the people's lives, there will always be an "Irish question." The bottom of all the troubles of that most troubled country is religion. Of that there can be no doubt, to a thinking mind. And that makes Irish affairs peculiarly interesting to a Freethinker.

Our parsons in England are always reminding us that the one hope is that we should turn to religion, and base our everyday lives on its teachings. Even Commander King-Hall, usually a sane and moderate man, made this claim during a talk to children in the Children's Hour, on the wireless the other day!

But when they do this again, we have only to point to Ireland. Admittedly our Governments since the war have got us into a pretty good mess, but it is not such an unholy mess as in the neighbouring island. And there it has been done in the name of religion. That is the lesson which Ireland has to teach us to-day.

JOHN ROWLAND.

## Correspondence.

### "INTELLECTUAL CRIME."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Is it possible for a Freethinker to be an Atheist?

Surely the definite position (as stated in Bradlaugh's *A Plea for Atheism*) restricts freedom more than a confession of ignorance.

How does Mrs. Janet Chance (whose pluck in writing *Intellectual Crime*, I admire immensely) manage two eggs from one hat, and, hasn't this labelling passion converted the word "agnostic" into a "red rag" to the "Freethinker"?

Do not Morley's few but thoughtful words "that women cannot be happy without a religion nor men either," point, for the truth-seeker, to the greatest religion (of Nature) that has yet been "revealed," through

its "bible," Spencer's "Synthetic Philosophy," the watchwards of this religion being, effort and benefit, justice and liberty.

Supernaturalisms are the primitive and savage religions, but I am as firmly convinced as Morley that the "negative" will have to be "converted" into a human enthusiasm or faith, before much real headway is made against (to quote Morley again) "the essential and profound immorality of the priestly profession."

By the way; has not Mrs. Janet Chance missed very many good points for her plucky effort, in coldly passing by her greatest supporter, the giant truthseeker, Herbert Spencer?

Even the latest State (B.B.C.) stunt (which, superimposed on the horror of State Education, indicates the "manufacture" of "some" democracy) adds evidence of the truth of Spencer's interpretations of Nature's principles of progress.

With the heartiest of good wishes for the *Freethinker* and its splendid work.

"HOPE."

[We have received other letters on this subject for which we regret we have no space for publication. But, as announced last week, we will take the first opportunity of dealing with the subject.—EDITOR.]

### N.S.S. Social at Caxton Hall.

THE Social organized by the Executive of the National Secular Society, and held in the Council Chamber of the Caxton Hall, on Saturday, April 1, was one of the most successful yet held. A large party assembled, and after an early shyness had worn off all settled down to hearty and healthy enjoyment, which lasted until the very end of the proceedings.

The Somerville Band provided excellent dance music, and the merry throng of dancers presented a pleasing spectacle of animation and colour.

Miss Somerville's violin solo, Miss Sothcott's songs, and Mr. Kit Keen's funny character sketches introduced variety, and were received with very evident appreciation by the whole party.

Our President, as usual, provided a characteristic "few words" item, concise, full of wit and wisdom, in which the serious side of the Society's work was presented in perfect harmony with the evening's enjoyment. The refreshment arrangements were again in the capable hands of Mrs. Venton and her party of voluntary workers. The attention to details, the tastefully arranged tables, the well filled dishes of tempting and varied eatables made an enjoyable break.

Mr. B. A. Le Maine was an efficient and genial M.C. The number of young people of both sexes present was an effective answer to those who imagine the Freethought Movement is lacking in youthful adherents.

At the end it was just one large happy party which joined hands and brought the evening to a close with the hearty singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MARCH 31, 1933.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Hornibrook, Rosetti (A. C.), Clifton, Wood, Le Maine, Silvester, Easterbrook (W. J. W.), Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Venton, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting read and accepted. The Financial Statement presented. New members were admitted to Liverpool, Swansea, Birkenhead, Plymouth, South Shields, Stockport, Ashington, Chester, Seaham Branches, and the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch of the Society to be called the Seaham Branch. Reports and other matters were received from Messrs. Brighton and Clayton, South London Advertising, Glasgow, Bethnal Green, Preston,

Swansea, N.E. Federation of N.S.S. Branches, International Federation of Freethinkers, Broadcasting Company, all of which were dealt with, and the Secretary instructed. The Chairman reported progress in the arrangements for the Charles Bradlaugh Centenary celebrations which the joint committee has in hand. Details in connexion with the Annual Conference were approved, and it was agreed that Mr. G. Whitehead be engaged to lecture during the summer on the same conditions as last year. The meeting then closed.

Next meeting of the Executive, April 28, 1933.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, April 10, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Fascism."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 7.0, Dr. B. L. Bernard—"The Money Changers."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Mitchell's Restaurant, High Road): 7.30, Mr. W. McCormack—"Freethought and the Drama."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, April 9, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, April 10, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, April 9, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tucson 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.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Modern Religion and Easter."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dramatic Performance by the Secular Players.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Board Room, Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool): 6.30—Annual General Meeting. Members only.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Clarion Cafe, Market Street, Manchester): 3.0, Saturday, April 8, Annual General Meeting.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-op. Hall, Whitehall Road, Gateshead): 6.30, Speakers—Mr. J. T. Brighton, Mr. Alan Flanders, Mr. F. Bradford. Subject—"Christianity the Enemy."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.30, Mr. H. M. Wood—"Slavery." Final Indoor Lecture notice of the season.

OUTDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, R. Buntin—A Lecture.

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