

THE FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN ▪
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Views and Opinions.

The Futility of Force.

THERE is in the present position of Germany a lesson that will repay the learning, if our military and political geniuses are capable of learning anything, but if the lesson is not to be learned by them, then it may be by others. To begin with the chief lesson of the war was obviously that of the futility of war and of the danger of armaments. It should have killed for ever the theory that the way to guard the interests of the world and to secure peace is to prepare for war. It was preparations for war that brought the war into being. The war ought also to have done something to kill the idea that there is such a thing as a purely defensive army. Every army is an instrument of attack. Two nations simply cannot each maintain an army with no other aim than defence. Each must at least believe that the other fellow may attack. And no nation would provide the cost of large armies and expensive ships unless it believed that war was more or less likely to occur. People are not quite so stupid as to stand the expense of huge armaments unless it is believed they will one day be used. More, those who wish to build up armaments are forced to encourage the belief that war is more than possible, that it is probable, and to look round for a likely "enemy" to serve as a text on which to hang a sermon. The only condition on which nations, bitten with this idea of "defence," will agree even to diminish their armaments is that other nations will do so to a corresponding extent. Then when war comes they will all be in the same relative positions. It is not peace they have in mind, but cost. The kingdom of heaven is to be achieved by a calculated economy.

Chains as Charms.

Look at the position of Germany. I saw one day a lady taking a walk with a very large dog. The dog was at the end of a long leash, and it was obviously pulling its keeper along the road. The lady would have said, had she been asked, that she was taking

the dog for a walk. But the dog also might have informed some canine acquaintance that he was taking the lady for a stroll. It is true that the lady had hold of one end of the leash, but it is equally true that the dog had a very firm hold of the other end. Each was attached to the other, and whether it was that the dog held the lady or the lady held the dog depended upon which end of the combination one started from. Neither could let go the other. Each was the prisoner of the other. They were companions in captivity.

Look at Germany! The treaty of Versailles was designed to prevent Germany ever again being in a position to disturb the peace of the world. In a world where every country had filled its people's minds with the belief that war was bound to come some day, and therefore everyone had to get ready for it, one nation was saddled with the responsibility for a world-war. And when a "glorious victory" had been gained, the German Army was almost disbanded, big weapons of attack were denied her, and she was to be placed in a state of subservience, so that although the conquerors might have a war amongst themselves, Germany should not be able to come in as an equal. The Allies, like the lady with the dog, had Germany at the end of a chain. But it escaped their wisdom that Germany also had the Allies at the end of the same chain. If Germany could not let go its end, the Allies could not let go their end. They were companions in captivity. The dog at one end pulled and tugged and actually dictated a great deal of the conduct of the holder of the other end. And the holder of the other end had to pile up instruments of correction for fear the dog would get unruly. Whether the Germans held the Allies or the Allies held the Germans would have seemed a very moot question to an intelligent visitor from another planet.

* * *

Hitler and the Allies.

So, again, look at Germany! And look at it through the medium of the newspapers of, say May 17 and 18. On the 17th the papers announced in displayed type that the world awaited with the greatest eagerness the speech of Adolph Hitler. It was said that the fate of the Disarmament Conference, the fate of the Economic Conference, the Peace of Europe depended on what he would say. On the 18th the papers said, with more glaring headlines, that his speech had been listened to with profound relief. The welfare of the world was dependent upon the action of Germany, and Germany not as represented by the best type of the German people, but by a gang of men whose conduct had recently outraged the conscience of the civilized world. The people who had chained Germany could not have been insensible to the fact that, as things stood, Hitler could count far more successfully on stabilizing his internal reign of terror without a large army than with one. The existence of the latter would be contested by the Allies.

But by organizing and stabilizing his internal terror Hitler could hope to force a revision of the Treaty of Versailles, and exert pressure upon Austria and other neighbouring States. If Germany had from the outset been treated differently the world would to-day have been in a different state, and Hitlerism could never have existed. But the Allies had determined to keep the dog on a chain, and the chain had the fatal quality of having two ends. Every time the dog growled the holders of one end of the chain jumped. The plan of keeping Germany in a state of subjection had resulted in making Germany the virtual dictator of European peace or war. In actual fact, and so far as peace or war are concerned, Germany is to-day more powerful than it was when the Kaiser shook his mailed fist and called the good old German God to his assistance. It is the nemesis that has overtaken the blind and self-seeking stupidities that have the control of affairs. The conduct of the holder of the chain is determined by the dog at the other end.

* * *

Failure of Force.

None but a fool would ever have considered it possible to hold seventy millions of people in the centre of Europe in a state of subjection. For three centuries the British people tried to hold about four millions of Irishmen in subjection, and in the end found the attempt wearisome and impossible of realization. Czarist Russia with all its brutality and massacres could not keep Poland for ever in subjection. Austria had the same failure with Italy. In India a little man in a loin cloth is able successfully to defy the armed power of Britain and to force it to terms. The lessons were, and are, before the world to read. But the priests are not the only Bourbons of the world of thought; there are our militarists who will never learn that force is the most inconclusive and the most ruinous of arguments, and there are our politicians who, in the language of Hamlet, would "circumvent God."

To men of sense it was plain from 1914 onward, that there were only two courses which promised anything like success. One was the complete extermination of Germans—men, women, and children. The other was to learn how to live with them on terms of equality and mutual respect, asking them to do nothing we were not prepared to do ourselves, and to give nothing we were not ready to give ourselves. But it was decided to say "never again" in such language that it made the "again" more certain than it was before 1914. We ignored one end of the chain because we had the dog on the other. We forgot that warder and prisoner are two sides of the same job, the offices are complementary. We imagined that we had reduced Germany to a state of impotence, and the only impotence we had in mind was the impotence of one mass of brute force as opposed to a greater mass of brute force. Actually the Allies strengthened Germany to such an extent that at the end of fourteen years she has become the virtual dictator of the policy of Europe, and one of the most powerful instruments in the determination of its fate. We feel inclined to ask whether our statesmen and our militarists are proud of the consequences of their efforts?

* * *

Vanity of "Victory."

Decidedly there is a lesson to learn from Germany. By methods of sheer terrorism Hitler and his party have gained power. The methods adopted have done much to justify the very worst that was said during the war concerning Prussianism. Never has a party in modern times gained control of a country by

methods more discreditable than that adopted by Hitler and his gunmen. They have studied Chicago with profit. They have appealed to the most extreme ignorance and to the most abysmal bigotry, and as a result the Allies have now to grant Germany a measure of equality which will enable the Hitler party to pose as the saviours of national dignity. We have been depending upon the "mailed fist" to keep Germany in a state of subjection, and the result is now before the world. It is an example of the force of weakness as opposed to the weakness of force.

The "great war" demonstrated the absolute impossibility of war, or of even armed forces under modern conditions settling satisfactorily any single social or political problem. If it removed an immediate trouble it inevitably paved the way for others of a graver character. A nation will not rest content under a defeat by force, while the nation that has won a "victory" by force can think of nothing other than force as a method or retaining "peace." Germany with an army would have actually been less of a danger to the peace of the world than it is "disarmed." The armed forces of Europe can do nothing that will lead to a desirable peace with a people who will not rest content with its position. The idea that it could be otherwise has resulted in the great Powers hanging upon the words of a man like Hitler, and thus enabling him to decide what their actions shall be. It is the lady and the dog over again. Of course if the dog is *very* bad some measure of control may be necessary, but our policy should at least aim at being able to hold one end of the chain without giving the dog increased power of inflicting injury.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Bonfire and the Banned.

"We do not smite a nation, but a pest."

Eden Phillpotts.

"One half of Christendom worships a Jew, and the other half a Jewess."—*Disraeli.*

In the bad, old Ages of Faith heretics were burned and heretical books suffered a like fate. Authors, not wishing to be butchered to make a Christian holiday, had to write warily. François Rabelais, for example, was forced to conceal his scepticism under a mask of ribaldry, but the heresy was there. Even Shakespeare writing at a much later period, had to put his most audacious ideas in the mouths of clowns or jesters so as to prevent his plays coming under ecclesiastical suspicion. Kit Marlowe, it will be recalled, was indicted for blasphemy, and only his untimely death in a brawl prevented his being brought to trial.

The priests never, from humanitarian motives, stopped burning men and women, but simply because the sceptics became too numerous. Imprisonment was then resorted to, but books were still cast to the fire. The last heretics to be burned alive suffered at Smithfield, London, and at Lichfield, in the reign of James the First. But imprisonments for blasphemy continued until the end of the nineteenth century, and the ferocious Act of Parliament still disgraces the Statute Book of a country reputed to be in the van of civilization. During this period very large quantities of advanced literature were destroyed by order of the Law Courts, and burning books are still smouldering here and there.

One was flaming recently when twenty thousand books were committed to the flames by Nazis at the University of Berlin. Not since the Middle Ages has there been such a public burning of advanced books in Europe. The condemned books were brought in

motor lorries to the Square by the Opera House, and set alight by scores of men carrying torches. This robbery by bonfire of the culture of the German people is the latest word of despotism, and such an outrage deserves comment in no uncertain terms.

These Nazi despots imagine that the best way of combating opinions they dislike is by destroying books, and by ill-treating, imprisoning, and even killing their opponents. Time will prove them to be mistaken. In the dark Ages, books were actually manuscripts, and such works may have perished utterly in the fires. But modern books are in printed characters, and that makes all the difference. In Britain, Paine's *Age of Reason* was prosecuted and destroyed time after time for whole generations. Brave Thomas Paterson, realizing that a thousand copies of Paine's work would be destroyed by Order of the Court, embodied the whole of the book's contents in his speech for the defence, so as to ensure further publicity. As he walked from the dock to durance vile, he gave instructions to his friends in court to set about printing a fresh edition. Matilda Rolfe, Carlile, and scores of others, went to prison; thousands of books went to the bonfire. But as fast as the book was destroyed it was reprinted, with the result that Paine's *Age of Reason* was one of the best sellers of the nineteenth century. The book has never been out of print for over a hundred years, and it is still selling. Not all the bigotry and fanaticism of Christendom can bring that great multitude of books to the bonfire. The printing-press has beaten Priestcraft.

For centuries, myriads of men and women were tortured and murdered simply because they questioned the abracadabra of the priests. Countless thousands of old women, the most helpless of their sex, were done to death foully as witches, because, forsooth, the Christian Bible countenanced witchcraft, which Selden tells us, gravely, "never had an existence." But these Nazi numbskulls want no help from any council of ecclesiastics to help them to the knowledge of what is heresy and what is orthodoxy. These Huns are judge, jury, inquisitor, and executioner. They are ready to burn at sight anything written or printed that seems to conflict with their own ignorance. To what end, indeed? They destroy Freethought books where the majority of the "intellectuals" are sceptics; they burn Karl Marx's "Capital" at a time when half the world is Socialistic. They reduce Pacifist books to dust when everyone, except agents for armament firms, freely admit the horrors of war. They lead a pogrom against the Jewish people because they assert they are foreigners, and Hitler himself is not a German. What are these decadents doing masquerading in the name of Germany, which, in its days of her splendour, stood for fairer ideals and cleaner ambitions?

A man's book is a part of the man himself. Did these blonde beasts, watching the flames licking hungrily the pages of Haeckel or Marx, visualise, in their over-heated imaginations, the writhing shapes of those heretics, the authors of those books? It is well that both these men are dead, and that they are not German citizens, for, like the great Dante they would be eating "the bitter bread of banishment," even if no worse fate befell them. Heresies change in the course of the Centuries, and the Radicals of one age are the Conservatives of a later one. The "Pantagruel" of Rabelais is not by any means like Karl Marx's ponderous tome on "Capital." But these Nazis must be very like the creatures who tore Hypatia to pieces; not unlike the crowds which gloated over the burning of Bruno and Servetus.

Such savage survivals must make men think furiously. So curious is the dilemma, that one recalls

the grave words of Herbert Spencer, written when the old philosopher was nearing his eightieth year:—

There is a bad time coming, and civilized mankind will, morally, be uncivilized before civilization can advance again.

Let there be no mistake upon one point. There is far more degeneration than regeneration in the Nazi Gospel of Hate. A scientist might even find more than a trace of *Psychopathia Sexualis* in all this blood-lust, mob-violence, and fury. Take, for example, the May Day Festival of these Nazis at Berlin. Hundreds of thousands sang a hymn, "God who maketh iron to grow," the words of which are as silly as "Yes! we have no bananas," but not so humane. For the "iron" referred to in this hymn of hate is nothing more nor less than the metal of the munition factories, the raw material for wholesale murder. Their pastor (and master) Herr Hitler invoked his own god to consider the Nazis his own chosen people, and used more similar nonsense, in the best traditions of the *furor Teutonicus*, which Kaiser Wilhelm was so fond of parading. The Kaiser's own god was a celestial non-commissioned officer, who replied, "Yes! All-Highest," to Wilhelm's every suggestion, and Herr Hitler's pet deity is also fashioned with an inferiority complex. Men have worshipped strange things in their time from cats to crocodiles, and we humbly suggest that the Nazi leader reverts to crocodile worship. These reptiles have so much in common with the Nazi ideals. They possess single-track minds, are very greedy, and can shed tears without sensibility. These high-minded Nazis, if they cannot find any crocodiles in the Unter den Linden might annex one, in the name of the State, from the nearest Zoological Gardens or travelling circus. A good-sized crocodile, alive or dead would make a better divinity than a little tin-soldier on wheels. The crocodile-deity would be, emphatically, more awe-inspiring. Nazis are such simple savages, and out-of-place in a civilized community.

MIMNERMUS.

Masterpieces of Freethought.

XIV.

THE BIBLE AND ITS EVIDENCES.

By ROBERT COOPER.

I.

If the great figure of Charles Bradlaugh dominated English Freethought during the latter part of the nineteenth century, it must not be forgotten that he owed not a little to his predecessors. Richard Carlile and Robert Taylor both strongly influenced him—indeed it was almost impossible not to be influenced by the bold and provocative views of Taylor and the fighting spirit of the indomitable and unconquered Carlile.

But in addition we are apt to forget Charles Southwell and Robert Cooper, both of whom fought for Freethought just before Bradlaugh with his powerful oratory, his genius for organization, his untiring energy and capacity for work, brought him the loyalty and devotion of Freethinkers from all parts of the country. I may deal with Southwell some other day, but want something like justice done to the memory of Cooper who did a lion's share of the work as long as he could, and who wrote in *The Bible and its Evidences*, a minor masterpiece which, with some judicious editing could be used with profit by many of us to-day. Robert Cooper was born in 1819, near

Manchester. Strangely enough his family were Freethinkers. His precocity is shown by the fact that at seventeen years of age he held a public discussion with the Rev. J. Bromley. One of his lectures, when published, sold to the extent of twelve thousand copies. His pamphlet *The Holy Scriptures Analysed*, was published in 1832, and it still remains a valuable work from the Freethought point of view.

The Bible is a big book, and while there are men who have spent years studying it, and who are capable of accurately quoting from its pages texts illustrating any particular subject, life is too short for a great many of us to do the same, and any book giving in handy form the texts we want, has performed a great service. Cooper's little work is just the kind of thing one wants when discussing the Bible with a Fundamentalist. He vaguely suspects that the Bible can prove almost anything, but he never likes that fact to be rammed home to him in quite the way this *Analysis* will do. It has been superseded by Foote's fuller and more varied *Bible Handbook*, but I should like to see *The Holy Scriptures Analysed* once again obtainable.

It was denounced by the Bishop of Exeter, and Cooper lost a job he had had for over ten years. He claimed the right freely to examine the Bible, the great fetish book of Christianity and in his preface he says, "My humble but decided opinion is, that the Bible is nothing more than a mere imposition palmed upon mankind by the Christian priesthood, for the purpose of deluding or enslaving them, leading them from the open and cheering paths of knowledge and improvement into the nauseous and gloomy quagmires of ignorance and superstition." Cooper was particularly anxious not to hurt believers' feelings but to expose error and imposture, and wrote a "Vindication" for the second edition. He repudiated the allegation that his work was *blasphemous* (it is mostly in the actual words of the Bible) and claimed it to vindicate the character of the "Divinity"; but of course he was never forgiven for "showing up" God's Holy Word. It would be safe to say few modern apologists would be prepared to defend the 450 odd extracts from the Bible which are given in full by Cooper, except by protesting they were never, for the most part, meant literally; but in his day, the worship of the Book was something we moderns can hardly understand.

After this Cooper published quite a number of pamphlets, and in 1850 he came to London and became the editor of the *London Investigator*, one of the many Freethought journals of the day.

The work of Paine, Carlile, Taylor, Southwell, Hetherington and Watson was a long time bearing fruit. There were Freethinkers all over the country, but very little real organization. It was not easy in those days to avow oneself an out-and-out unbeliever. Privately or in some of the working men's institutions which were being formed in various parts of England, some bold spirit might venture to dispute the authenticity of the Bible or even hint that the existence of God had never been actually proven, but he would do it at the risk of getting the sack or of being ostracized. Socialist lectures by followers of Robert Owen were delivered to the more thoughtful of working-men audiences, but they were considered just as much heretics as avowed Freethinkers like George Jacob Holyoake, whose six months' imprisonment for "blasphemy" was looked upon as divinely ordained and well deserved.

Thus most of the Freethought journals of the period had either a short existence or were badly in need of funds and support, and Cooper never managed to

make his own pay. Yet it was full of excellent matter and fine and bold criticism. Cooper was unfortunately not in very good health, and he was forced to retire from the editorship leaving the paper in the hands of "Anthony Collins," and later, of Bradlaugh. It is interesting to note "Anthony Collins," which was the pseudonym of W. H. Johnson, who was connected with Freethought for over fifty years. Forgotten now, no man of his day took a more active part in the movement except Bradlaugh—and strangely enough, he also was a lawyer's clerk.

To come back to Cooper, he published in 1845 a clever elaboration of his *Holy Scriptures Analysed*, and called it *The Infidel's Text Book*. It was compiled from thirteen lectures on the Bible.

John M. Robertson did not mention Cooper in his *Short History of Freethought*, but in the larger one dealing with *Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*, he says of the *Infidel's Text Book* that it

reflects the temper naturally generated by persecution in young combatants, who, aspersively dubbed infidels, defiantly bear the flag. It is, as the author claims, a systematic attack on the Bible all along the line, drawing on a considerable knowledge of eighteenth century criticism, remorselessly applied; and for a good many years it was a popular militant handbook, till in 1858 he re-modelled it into a treatise on the *Bible and its Evidences*.

This well sums up Cooper's *Infidel's Text Book*, and that it must have been in good use is evidenced from the fact that few copies seem to have survived. I have never seen one, so I cannot tell how much Cooper improved upon its plan in his later work. But for clarity of thought, arrangement of matter, easy style and the irresistible force of its conclusions, *The Bible and its Evidences* will bear comparison with almost any work whatever on the Scriptures, written from a militant Freethought point of view. It far surpasses *The Age of Reason* as a criticism of the Bible—though, of course, Paine had a style which will keep his work alive for many generations yet to come. Still, Cooper's examination of the Bible as a "holy" book, his discussion of the Hebrew language, the authenticity of Old and New Testaments, the testimony of the Fathers, the miracles, the prophecies and many other matters connected with the Bible; drawing as he did, not merely upon the old deistic arguments, but upon the admission of many of his Christian contemporaries, read as fresh and as relevant now, as they must have done when the book was first published. Cooper did not mince matters. He went straight to his point; and many of his conclusions are now the common places of the so-called "Higher" Criticism.

II. CUTNER.

(To be concluded.)

ERRORS DIE HARD.

Old conceptions are preserved to us in the very structure of language; the mass of mankind still preserves its childish imaginations; and everyone of us has repeated on a small scale the history of the race. We start as infants with fetish worship; we consider our nursery to be the centre of the universe; and learn but slowly and with difficulty to conform our imaginative constructions to scientific truths. It is no wonder, then, if a belief, even of cultivated minds, is often a heterogeneous mixture of elements representing various stages of thought; whilst in differing social strata we may find specimens of opinions derived from every age of mankind.

Sir Leslie Stephen.

"Powder and Shot."

"Freethinker, you are a rascal defying God. Like a skunk you befoul your neighbours who think other than you." (A priest in the *Oppelner Kurier*.)

The above is the common belief of a host of Christians who believe religion to be an insurance against crime. Take for instance the case of the Dublin magistrate who recently had before him a Catholic boy attending a Protestant school and who was charged with stealing half a pound of tea. According to the report in the *Universe* (April 28, 1933) :—

The magistrate questioned the teacher as to the boys' religious instruction, and the teacher explained that he had asked a priest of the parish if he could provide a room and a teacher to give Catholic instruction, and the priest replied that if he did so he would be acknowledging the rightfulness of mixed religious education. Thereupon the magistrate asked the schoolmaster: "Is it not your duty as a schoolmaster to see that a pupil who is not receiving religious instruction in your school gets it somewhere else? This boy is attending your school, and has not received any religious instruction, the result being that he has become a thief."

In another recent case a magistrate ordered some juvenile delinquents to attend church or Sunday school every Sunday, because evidently he held the same view that the teaching they received there would deter them from further wrongdoing.

It is no new thing for Christians to assert with all the malice of which they are capable that the absence of religion causes people to throw aside all moral restraint, thus creating the conditions for crime. Hence from this they conclude that an increase in crime is due to the growth of Atheism, which view has seriously been put forward by more than one clerical journal. But for over fifty years investigators and statisticians have been collecting criminal statistics and whose evidence may come as a very rude shock to the pious belief of those who put their trust in religion as being an antidote to crime. In Germany for instance the State has provided criminal statistics from the year 1882, whilst since 1921 considerable data relating to criminal biology has been amassed and investigated. The German criminal statistics afford more detailed information than has ever been available before as to the frequency of crimes like murder, manslaughter, robbery, etc., according to age groups and sex. They have been compiled from the records of the German courts of justice, where the officials are usually most devout Christians, and whose authority therefore, we can hardly impeach. Professor G. Aschaffenburg, a criminologist of Cologne University, a man of very "excellent Christian principles," has published the following particulars in his book *Das Verbrechen und seine Bekämpfung* (Third edition, 1923). According to him the number of people sentenced for crime out of each 100,000 of each religious community was in the period 1882 to 1891 :—

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Catholics | ... | ... | 1,153 |
| Evangelicals | ... | ... | 963 |
| Dissenters and Jews | ... | ... | 784 |

In the next decade the figures were as follows :—

| | | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Catholics | ... | ... | 1,361 |
| Evangelicals | ... | ... | 1,122 |
| Dissenters and Jews | ... | ... | 1,030 |

We can judge without much difficulty how painful it must have been for the religious communities to have to realize that the criminality of the Church population was indisputably 30 to 40 per cent higher than that of the dissenting population. But the leaders of these communities soon sought to have whatever pain was caused them reduced even if the

facts could not be disproved. They went to the Ministry of Justice in Berlin and begged that "in the interests of religious peace," the publication of these figures should cease. Their request was granted, and since 1902 the German criminal statistics have failed to record to what religious denomination criminals belong. For such discomfoting information as does exist the Christian Aschaffenburg has quite a glib explanation.

In his own words he stresses the point that "we only state to what religious community the criminal belongs, but we state nothing that would indicate whether his membership is more than a mere external fact, we do not estimate the strength of his belief." The good professor even goes so far as coolly to assert that "we can practically maintain that the commission of a serious crime is a proof of the doer's lost connection with his religion." He is, of course, perfectly free to say what he likes about the uncomfortable figures but unfortunately they do not appear to incline too happily towards his theory. This is even more apparent to an unbiased person who has access to other information besides. For instance, in 1924, Professor Bonger published his book *Geloof en Misdaad* (Belief and crime) which dealt with Dutch criminal statistics. He says that out of every 100,000 people of each religious community the following were sentenced for crimes :—

| | Protestants. | Catholics. | Jews. | Freethinkers. |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------------|-------|---------------|
| Petty Larceny | 40.0 | 54.8 | 25.5 | 9.5 |
| Robbery | 19.9 | 24.4 | 12.7 | 4.2 |
| Fraud | 8.6 | 9.3 | 13.1 | 1.9 |
| Assault | 74.4 | 93.2 | 43.2 | 20.1 |
| Murder and Manslaughter | .4 | .6 | .5 | .1 |
| Totals for all groups of criminals | 308.6 | 416.5 | 212.7 | 83.1 |

Thus if we take the average criminality of the three chief religious denominations together the figure stands three or four times as high as the figure of criminality among Freethinkers. The figures, too, are not without cause for humour, since if the Jews are not so prone to murder and robbery as Catholics and Protestants, they are at least outstanding under the category of "FRAUD."

What use would the Churches have made of the figures had the position been reversed? "Freethinker, you are a rascal," would be mild compared with the abuse they would undoubtedly have heaped upon those "children of the Devil." But tempted as we might be to say that religion, on the evidence of the figures before us, increases crime we do not do so. Why? Because in such matters we are more reasonable and exercise greater care in forming our conclusions. We are content to point out what is clearly demonstrated. Mere membership of a religious denomination or the possession of deep religious feelings is in itself no restraint upon anti-social activity. We are not alone in our view either for an outstanding German criminologist, Prof. Hans von Hentig, of Kiel University, is of the same opinion. He wrote in an article in the *Monatsschrift für Kriminalpsychologie und Strafrechtsreform*, 1929, p. 546 ff., that science can recognize no direct connexion between religion on the one side, and the different forms of anti-social action and subnormality such as mental disease, insanity, suicide, vagrancy and criminality on the other. But let us look a little further.

At the First International Religious Psychological Congress held in Vienna in the summer of 1931, several university theologians, scientists and psychologists of importance gave addresses. The President of Police in Vienna delivered a very interesting psychological lecture about the religiosity of crimi-

nals. He demonstrated that a criminal's religion acts "in no way as an effective moral restraint upon a criminal impulse, but that it is drawn into the sphere of criminal means and ends," so that "help is expected and solicited from the heavenly powers for the success of the criminal plan." From a wealth of individual material this gentleman was able clearly to indicate that a criminal's faith is nothing more than a "magic means for achieving his criminal aim." This testimony recalls to our mind other evidence in its support. It is well known, for example, how Mexican bandits will pray in church for the help of the Mother of God or to some favourite Saint for assistance before executing a planned murder or train hold-up. And murder acts "in the name of Jesus Christ" are not unusual. Other outstanding criminologists like Erich Wulffen (Dresden) have all demonstrated in their various ways that it is just this highly strung religiosity which is not only no restraint upon, but does actually impel to crime. Wulffen bases his conclusion especially on the fact that Confession and Absolution remove for people with criminal intent who are wrapped up in religion the last few scruples which they might otherwise have entertained about their crime.

We do not doubt that much more evidence could be brought in support of the contentions we have made, particularly evidence of a gruesome kind. But for reasons of space we will content ourselves with but one example of a sanguinary nature.

A fifty year old peasant woman living at Brabant, near Brussels, conceived a well thought out plan for murdering her husband. In 1906, with the assistance of two sons, aged fifteen and twenty-one, she murdered her husband in his bed, and with their help took his body to the railway to give the appearance that he had died by accident. The couple had fourteen children, and after the murder the woman gathered her family round the scene of the crime and said the Rosary. For, as the priest at the madhouse to which she was consigned said, "she was of a deep religious nature."

But at all events, the Dublin magistrate, whose remarks have prompted our reply has by implication in this last example a pretty problem to unravel if he still persists in his assertion that an absence of religious teaching gives rise to criminality.

G.F.G.

Acid Drops.

Slums are a blot on a civilized, not to mention a supposedly Christian, country. The Ministry of Health has just issued a Five Year Plan for their clearance, or rather, a circular to Local Authorities asking *them* to make plans for their clearance within that period. This circular promptly followed the ruthless and effective criticism of the Government's Housing Bill—which is utterly useless to deal with the real problem, especially in London. Moreover the Local Authorities suffer not only from lack of will, but also from lack of power to act, for there is no room in some of these crowded areas in which they can provide alternative accommodation, and they are powerless to act outside their own boundaries.

Although, therefore, it looks as if the Ministry of Health's circular is mere political window dressing, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York use it as a peg on which to appeal to the Churches to take part in what will give them the best opportunity, "next to worship," of proving their thankfulness to God for the—Oxford Movement! They do not say a word about the foul slums in Paddington and elsewhere from which the

Ecclesiastical Commissioners draw revenues. (In the case of the latter slums, the Commissioners only a few months ago said that they were "powerless" to interfere in conditions which are among the most disgraceful in the world). They must stand by the inalienable "rights" of the clerical property owners of whose "pious" exactions from poverty and sometimes from vice, they are such scrupulous custodians.

If, however, the Archbishops are as keen as they appear to be on clearing slums there is one thing they might do. They have, *via* the National Assembly and its measures, which mostly seem to get an automatic passage through this Parliament, contrived to get carried quite a lot of legislation for themselves. If they will promote a Bill to enable Local Authorities to deal with the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as they can deal with any other ground landlords of slum property, the troubles of Bethnal Green and Paddington, to name only two examples, will be on the way to solution. The Commissioners are Trustees, not owners, and it is in the former character that they are able to plead their inability to deal with what is a scandal to them and to the community. It is the merest hypocrisy to fulminate against the evils of slumdom and at the same time to take no action to clear the Church and the clergy from the odious responsibility of sharing in the proceeds of human degradation. We doubt if this suggestion will be considered for, implicit in it, is a reconsideration of the whole question of the revenues of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and Queen Anne's Bounty. We fear the care of those Bodies for the monies they hold in their charge far outweighs any care which the Archbishops may have about the sources from which some of it comes.

Since these paragraphs were written the Prince of Wales has joined in the "Clear the Slums" campaign. There is nothing the matter with his speech except its significant timing. When State and Church are in combination, and can be summoned to act in concord when a Government is "feeling a draught" over some default, like that in regard to Housing, we see how true and indeed obvious it is that authority, democratic authority not less than any other, can never be freely exercised while it is enchained in effete institutions. The Archbishops and the Prince, it may be noted, started to move in this housing business a day or two after Mr. Ramsey Macdonald had had an audience at Buckingham Palace. "The slums must go," is just the sort of "cry" by which to work up a "non-party" or "national" campaign of rescue for the waning prestige of a verbose Premier and his conglomeration of colleagues and supporters. Multitudes of people will rise to this bait!

Lord Melchett told a meeting the other day:—

It seems to me extremely difficult to see how Germany can continue to call itself a Christian country so long as it officially practices a form of discrimination which is certainly the most virulent experienced by the Jewish people, who know something of persecution for one thousand years.

The sentiment may be alright, but the history is deplorable. Bad as the German persecution of Jews is, there have been worse. Jew hunts are very common in Christian history, and Russia and other Christian countries can easily compete with Hitler and his gangmen in the matter of their treatment of the Jews. Hitler is not original in what has been done. He has shocked the conscience of the civilized world because the world is less Christian than it used to be.

Lord Melchett should bethink himself that but for Christianity the persecution of the Jews, as such, could hardly have existed. But it was in the name, and at the instigation of the Christian Church that the Jews were set aside as a marked people, forced to live in ghettos, to wear a distinctive dress, and were subject to bursts of persecution whenever the Christian leaders of a country found it to their interest to unleash popular passion against them. And the irony of the situation is that it

was the Jews' own book which set this spirit of persecution aflame. It was in the Jewish Bible, adopted as their own by Christians, that the command against inter-marriage was found, and is still enforced as far as it can be, by Jews. It was the Christian Jewish Bible which gave the command that those who taught people to worship strange gods should be stoned to death. It was the Bible which laid down the foundations of the persecution which has marked the Christian Church wherever it has existed. What Christians did was to add to the element of Bible persecution and intolerance a developed brutality in the shape of a doctrine of eternal torment, and to raise persecution to the rank of a virtue. When Lord Melchett says that a country which persecutes cannot call itself Christian, we would remind him of the New Testament which warns us against trying to cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub.

Writing on Russia, Mr. A. J. Cummings, the special correspondent of the *News-Chronicle*, says in the course of a very fair article, that in Russia:—

The spiritual needs of the people which religious faith supplies finds an outlet in a fervent devotion to national causes. What the Soviets, in their hatred of the anaesthesia of religion fail perhaps to realize is that a starving peasant deprived of this "anaesthetic" may be rather more difficult to handle than one who can hug his ikon and forget his present misery in hopeful dreams of a less disagreeable hereafter.

Well, we have had the same idea expressed by those who rejected all kinds of religious belief. But Mr. Cummings fails to see that what men should have is not something which makes them content with present miseries, but a teaching that nerves them to create more satisfactory conditions.

A shocking tragedy appears to have recently happened at Ely Cathedral. At a quarter to ten on Easter Sunday a visitor found the cathedral locked, barred and bolted—and wrote to a newspaper about it. Presumably, he (or she) was particularly anxious to do a bit of praying inside the "holy" building, probably from the notion that a prayer travels better up aloft from within than without. It shows a lamentable lack of resource that the visitor didn't think of whispering his little speech to God through the keyhole. Who can doubt that the doors would have burst open if only he had beseeched the Lord earnestly enough?

The *Methodist Recorder* says, "Get rid of the slums." And:—

It is often said that filthy conditions are the fault of the slum-dwellers. Mission workers and others point with joy to the change in the outward conditions which follow conversion. But the responsibility for letting slums continue is not lessened by that fact. Even if the power of God can enable a man to live in a poisonous atmosphere, society has no right to thrust him into it.

The "power of God" seems rather limited; it stops short where it ought to go on. It is supposed to give a man the capacity to resist the poison of slumdom, but does nothing to render the poison non-existent. But perhaps God thinks it is an aid to conversion and the mission workers' joy.

Apropos of the Jubilee of the Boys Brigade movement, a writer explains that it was for providing boys with an outlet for the natural instinct of wanting to belong to a gang; and also it instilled into them at the same time "three simple manly virtues—self-respect, discipline, and reverence." That sounds very splendid. But the real motive was to capture adolescents for the Church, and to train them in the slavish virtues of the Christian religion. If the movement had had only the interests of the boys at heart, it would have trained them in good citizenship and independent thinking. Instead, it merely tried to turn the boys into good Christians—which is an aim far below the other.

Dr. Downey, the Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool says that "broadmindedness in religion often represents nebulosity of intellect." By "broadmindedness," the Bishop means, believing in Jesus as divine or not as you please, in the truth of miracles or not, in a Eucharistic Presence or not—and so on. We agree this is all pretty nebulous. The only reasonable way is to go the whole hog with the Roman Church and believe everything you are told irrespective of common-sense, evidence and truth, or come out and openly declare war on the whole of religion. Unfortunately the religious habit of mind favours nebulosity—which accounts for the emasculated modernism of our day. And can anything be more invertebrate than modernism?

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel celebrated its 232nd birthday the other week, and though things are not very bright in the Lord's vineyards, the S.P.G. is quite undaunted. Most of the report deals with the activities of native priests and lay preachers, and it is very inspiring to see how half a dozen natives here and a dozen natives there stand up at last for Christ. The exact number of converts is not given, but it is comforting to know that the income of £289,106 for 1932 is spent mostly in converting a few Hindus or Africans or Chinese—especially when everybody in this country is so prosperous and wealthy. By rigid economy here in England "in the sphere of propaganda work," we are told, the deficit amounts only to £41,634! The only fly in this beautiful ointment is that there are grave fears lest the income this year "will not be sufficient to cover payments of even guaranteed grants." But surely a few earnest prayers will overcome this difficulty?

A writer in a religious journal is perturbed at the inefficiency of religious teaching in public schools. He echoes Mr. Arnold Lunn that "it is more important for Tomkins to leave the school a Christian than a potential Blue," and thinks that "a boy or girl should not only know the historic events from which Christian dogmas derive, but should understand these dogmas and be able to defend them against their critics." There is nothing better we should like to see than Christians taught the history of their dogmas for nothing will help the dissolution of Christianity quicker than a thorough knowledge of its origins. But this is exactly what is *not* taught. As for being able to defend Christian dogmas, why is it that these religious writers are so anxious that other people—even boys and girls—should defend them? Why do they not come out in the open and do a little defending themselves?

The Irish Literary Censorship is having a hard struggle in its attempt to tell the Irish people what it should read or not. It tries its best to allow only the most innocuous books and journals through, and there are actually some undesirable persons who are laughing at its valiant efforts instead of helping to make the censorship more rigid. One reason why all is not quite so thorough as could be wished is that the Censorship Board issues a periodical list of banned books, but by the time the ban is promulgated "the banned books have been on sale for many weeks, even many months, and all the people likely to become purchasers have bought and read them already." Censorship cannot keep pace with curiosity.

If anybody imagines that Christianity is dying or that Freethought propaganda is no longer necessary he should read the debate in the House of Commons on the Matrimonial Causes Bill, the Bill which would permit divorce of a husband or wife who has been insane for five years. This measure was "counted out" in the House owing to the action of the Roman Catholic, Dr. W. J. O'Donovan, "who made sure that it was killed as far as this session is concerned." The apathy of all the parties in our "National" Government towards such a splendid piece of reform was more than lamentable.

Such a measure ought not to be left to the precarious chances of Parliamentary manœuvre, but should be initiated and carried through by the Government itself. But Governments, like parsons, often leave others to practise what they preach.

The real temper of the present Parliament is constantly being exhibited as that of an intolerant partisanship. For example, Mr. Grenfell, a Labour Member, asked the Minister of Education to issue a circular to local authorities to ensure that teachers in State-aided schools should not be penalized if they have a conscientious objection to taking part in the militarist displays of "Empire" Day. The answer was in the negative, it being the view of the Minister that the matter could safely be left to the discretion of the local (education) authorities. On its being pointed out that "teachers of exemplary character have been threatened with discharge" for the "crime" above-mentioned, there were "ministerial cries of 'Quite right, too.'" There has not been for generations (apart from legal penalties upon opinion) so much indirect and quasi-official interference with liberty, both of persons and of the public, as latterly. Officials and administrative bodies of a reactionary mind, who know that they will have the support of the Government when they exceed or strain their legitimate powers and rights, are encouraged to make the most of their opportunities, and it is clear, they are doing so.

The work of children's Courts is in general so admirable that we should like to have believed them to be free from the bias which is often exhibited in other quarters. Four boys, brought before the Children's Court at Leigh (Lancs.) charged with robberies, were bound over, together with their parents. According to the *Manchester Guardian*, they were ordered to be in the house by nine o'clock at night, and to attend church, chapel or Sunday school at least once every Sunday. Apart from the characteristically stupid notion that religion, inflicted as part of a penalty by a magistrate, is likely to promote devotion for it, this requirement, if it be lawful and regular—which we doubt—shows that so long as we have an established religion as a part of the machinery of the State, that religion can and will use the processes of law and administration to its own advantage. We have advanced (we suspect) so far that no magistrate, even in a Children's Court, would have required attendance at the Parish Church, or any other given Place of Worship; but the effect of the requirement illustrates not the liberality of the method, but the fact that it is not only the Establishment, but the Churches in general, which have the advantage of official patronage of religion. This is, to the great cost of an indifferent electorate, a *Christian nation*—at least officially.

Christians will clutch at any straw now-a-days that will serve the turn of apologetics. The horrible record of their religion with regard to slavery is better known than it was a century ago. This fact may not be known to or recognized by a clerical writer to a daily paper who has dug up an extract from Wesley's *Journal* showing that that worthy, on November 29, 1758, "rode into Wandsworth and baptized two negroes belonging to Mr. Gilbert, a gentleman lately from Antigua." This, according to the rev. gentleman, "is an evidence that at any rate even in the middle of the eighteenth century baptized slaves were in England something of a novelty." Not at all, there were an abundance of them, English slaves not negroes.

An anonymous correspondent of the *Listener* proposes that an International Tribunal should look into the claims of the Church of Rome for "they are Rome's incentive for striving to gain control of this country and of the world." International Tribunals, to judge from those with which we have been latterly familiar, seem to recognize common interests more readily and often than conflicting ones, albeit it is the latter that are supposed to be their concern. In any case the claims of Rome, as stated by this gentleman, are also the claims of Christ-

ianity. Mr. Lloyd George (not to mention the Archbishop of York), has only recently asserted his belief that the Christian religion is the only way out of the world's distresses. Any Christian who honestly believes this, despite centuries of evidence to the contrary, must wish and work for Christianity "to gain control of this country and of the world." Fortunately neither wishing nor working is likely to accomplish that end. A real International Tribunal representing all the world would hardly be likely to find in favour of the religion of a minority of its inhabitants but, of course, this gentleman, like some politicians, means by an international tribunal one from which those who don't agree with him are excluded.

According to the Rev. T. W. Roff, a new and awful "type of girl has appeared on the stage during the last two years." As one "who has a boy of twenty," Mr. Roff is "afraid" when his son decides "to have an evening at the theatre." The youth may see "simply unspeakable" plays and revues which have "a blatant appeal to the very worst impulses." Mr. Roff doubts if the religious public "realizes what is going on on the stage"; but we think they are by no means so innocent. If it is true, as this parson asserts, that both the Home Secretary and the Lord Chamberlain "are anxious to do what they can to stem this evil," we can only suppose that those two functionaries do not agree with him with regard to the shows of which he complains—probably without having seen them. We will not enlarge on the reflection which the rev. gentleman makes on a Christian upbringing by his fears for his son. Doubtless this implication of his harangue would not occur to the pious at the Congregational Union meeting at which it was delivered.

The *Star* says that religious bodies are at last recognizing "the value of the slogan." An Essex Chapel "displays the following smart invitation to worshippers: 'Pray Come: Come Pray!'" We might suggest an addendum. "More Come; More Prey." It is at least as "smart" as the original.

Fifty Years Ago.

LARGE AND LITTLE MINDS.

ANOTHER week has passed, and we are still anxiously awaiting the result of the appeals to Sir William Harcourt that have been made by people so many in number, so various in position and attainments, of such high intellectual standing in many cases. It seems impossible that the petition (*for the release of Foote, Ramsay and Kemp*) of such a set of men as those whose names were published last week can be ignored by a member of a Liberal Government. The position of the question in relation to the two great political parties, whose watchwords are, according to one of them, respectively Freedom and Slavery, was shown in an interesting fashion by the behaviour of the newspapers in regard to the publication or non-publication of the list of remarkable names. The *Standard* omitted the list altogether. The *Daily Telegraph* made a judicious compromise by printing the names of the clerical gentlemen who had signed. The *Daily News* gave the list in full. The *Times*, always all things to all men, did the same. We must not be supposed here to be claiming a larger sympathy with our views on the part of Liberals than on that of Conservatives. Probably a larger number of men who hate our method of thought and of attack, sit—for the present—on the right of the Speaker than on the left. But the former belong to a party that has some traditions of liberty and is supposed to have some idea of tolerance, while the latter are members of an organization whose one aim is the denial of freedom to everybody without its ranks and to whom the conception of tolerance is an impossibility. Reflexions such as these make the situation the more mournful. The carrying out of a sentence so monstrous, so bitter, so undeserved, seemed incredible, whilst Liberal politicians were the advisers of Her Majesty. And yet it is twelve weeks since Justice North sent our three men to the felon's cell.

The "Freethinker," May 27, 1883

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

EIGHTH LIST OF DONATIONS.

AMOUNT previously acknowledged, £554 9s. 6d.; Mrs. G. L. and Miss Hypatia Hooper, £6; F. Edwin Monks, £5 5s.; G. Smith, £1 11s. 6d.; B. G. Ralph Brown, £1 1s.; C. Fernando, £1 1s.; C. T. Gorham, 10s. 6d.; Dr. D. Stewart, 10s. 6d.; G. Cook, 10s. 6d.; F. MacLachlan (2nd donation), 10s.; F. S. Marvin, 10s.; F. W. C. Gregory, 10s.; Ed. Truelove, 10s.; G. W. Grabham, 5s. 6d.; O. Underwood, 5s.; Sir W. J. Collins, K.C.V.O., 5s.; Miss A. Wilson, 5s.; John Hayes, 5s.; T. F. Greenall, 5s.; A. R. Butterfield, 4s.; A. S. Lewis, 2s.; F. W. Read, £1 1s.; A. Diver, 10s.; C. S. Knight, £5; J. Lane, £1; Mathematicus, 10s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. H. W. Side (in memory of R. E. Side), £1 1s.; Mrs. O. P. H. Brogan, 5s.; A. D. Hodgkinson, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Taylor, 2s. 6d.

Total to May 22 ... £584 8 6

All subscriptions to be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Bradlaugh Centenary Fund, Mr. F. C. C. Watts, 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. DUXBURY.—These answers to prayer turn up regularly. Some exhibit only credulity, but many are examples of most inartistic lying.

J. T. BRIGHION.—We were sorry to hear of Mr. Dufty's death. A notice appeared in our last issue.

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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/0.

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.

On Sunday, June 4 the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held in the Palm Court of the Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road. The morning and afternoon meetings, at 10.30 and 2.30, are open to members only, who will bring with them their card of membership for the current year. Between the morning

and afternoon meetings a luncheon will be provided in the Grafton Hotel, at a charge of 2s. 6d. per head. Those wishing to join in the luncheon should advise the General Secretary not later than June 2.

In the evening a public demonstration will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square. There will be a number of speakers. Full particulars appear on the back page of this issue of the *Freethinker*. We are looking for the co-operation of London Freethinkers to make this evening meeting a striking success. We should be pleased to see Freethinkers unable to gain admission through so many Christians being present. At all events it will be a good thing if Freethinkers can bring along a friend who is a Christian.

Admission to the evening meeting will be free, but there will be a limited number of reserved seats at one shilling each, which may be obtained from the General Secretary or from the Pioneer Press.

On the Saturday evening preceding the Conference (June 3) a reception will be held in the Grafton Hotel, by the President and Members of the Executive, at 7 o'clock. This will give all members and delegates an opportunity for an exchange of views, and a chance of renewing old friendships.

On the Saturday following the Conference the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee has arranged for a visit to be paid to Bradlaugh's grave at Brookwood. Luxury coaches will leave the Thames Embankment at 2.30. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner and Mr. Chapman Cohen with other well-known Freethinkers will accompany the party. On arrival at Brookwood a wreath will be laid on the grave and some short speeches delivered. The party will then partake of tea, and afterwards return to London. The cost, including tea, will be 5s. each. Tickets may be obtained from either the *Freethinker* Office, or from the Secretary of the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, 38 Cursitor Street, E.C.4. But it is necessary that early application should be made, both on account of securing coach accommodation and making proper provision for the tea.

A glance at the list of acknowledgements to the Bradlaugh Centenary Fund is published on this page, and it will be noted that it is progressing but slowly towards the required sum of £1,500. We daresay the total will be forthcoming between now and the date of the anniversary, September 26, but we should like to see it coming along more rapidly than it is doing so at present. If the Centenary is to do what it ought to do, the sooner the £1,500 is made up the better.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in the Woolwich district to-day (Sunday) and for the following week. Meetings will be held at a different place, and details will be found in the Lecture Notice column. While speaking of Woolwich, we suggest that where a number of public meetings are in progress at the same time, as in Beresford Square, the use of musical instruments at any of the meetings should not be allowed. Of course the offenders are Christians, with no regard for any courtesy towards other meetings, hence the need for a regulation prohibiting the use of musical instruments.

The North London Branch N.S.S. has carried on open-air work fight through the past year, over one hundred meetings have been held. The strength of the Branch has been well maintained and the Balance Sheet is quite a presentable document. Miss K. B. Kough is President, Mr. E. Pinnock is Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. I. Ebury is delegate to the Executive, and Mr. B. Perry is in charge of the literature.

This note may be in time to catch the eye of those Oxford saints who have not yet applied for membership in the Branch of the N.S.S. about to be formed in Oxford. A meeting will be held on Thursday evening, May 25, at the Labour Club, St. John Street, at 8 o'clock, when all particulars will be available.

Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

XIV.—SOME EARLY TRIUMPHS.

ONE of the earliest of Bradlaugh's actions in defence of a free press occurred in 1858, when he was twenty-five years old. It was during the excitement caused by the attempted assassination of Napoleon III. by Orsini, and Lord Palmerston's handling of the representations made to the Government by the French Ambassador. This caused the defeat of the Ministry, and probably led to the release of Dr. Simon Bernard who was charged with conspiracy to murder at the Old Bailey. Orsini himself seems to have been well known to and liked by the little group who met at the old John Street Institution. Among them was W. E. Adams, who wrote a pamphlet on Tyrannicide published by Edward Truelove. Adams had for his title *Tyrannicide: A Justification*, but his publisher suggested *Tyrannicide: Is it Justifiable?* and this emendation was adopted. After a few copies had been sold Truelove was arrested on a charge of libelling the Emperor Napoleon. A Truelove Defence Fund was immediately started. It numbered among its members John Stuart Mill, Professor F. W. Newman, W. T. Fox, Harriet Martineau, Abel Heywood, Arthur Trevelyan, Joseph Cowen, "Jnr.," and Dr. Epps. Of this Committee Bradlaugh was appointed Secretary, and at once began to pull strings and obtain help. Lord Palmerston's Attorney-General, began the prosecution, but the result of the Bernard trial intervened, and when Lord Derby's Attorney-General took up the challenge (Lord Palmerston having been defeated over his Conspiracy to Murder Bill) it was only to run away. Truelove was dismissed with many words of caution. Bradlaugh, as Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner tells us, was much disgruntled with this termination of the case. He blamed Edwin James, K.C., who was the Truelove Counsel for having "sold his client" in order that the Government might be relieved from a distasteful and unpleasant position. In view of James's after career this is probably true.

Sir Edward Parry in his *My Own Way*, reprints an impression of Bradlaugh which His Honour wrote in 1885. It includes the amusing and effective relation of Bradlaugh's adventure at Devonport in 1859. Bradlaugh having been, as he proved, unlawfully arrested, determined to give the lecture that had been interrupted by the police in the open air at the Park Gates. Judge Parry tells us what happened:—

The Mayor of Devonport shall be there with Riot Act and the military in due array, for the Bradlaugh Party, it is said, is to be in strong force. This time they will wait and arrest him in the midst of his Lectures for seditious utterances, blasphemy, we know not what. Alas! fond Christian Hopes of Young Men's Association to be frosted o'er and killed of a sudden even in the day of their Brightest Blossoming. They collect near the Park Gates on the river's brink. Bradlaugh walks quietly towards the Gate, steps into a little boat, rows out to a barge moored a short distance from the shore, and there, nine feet without Devonport Jurisdiction, delivers his Lecture. Pocket your Riot Act, friend Mayor. Right about, hence to Barracks, ye Military. Home, home, and gnash your teeth in seemly privacy, ye Young Christian Men. This is not, it seems, a man to be easily persecuted, to be trampled under foot, or to be whiffed off the face of the earth by plugshot volleys of Dull Bigotry.

Sir Edward Parry has given permission for the reprint of the chapter of his book, from which this is taken, and it can be had from the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee. The pamphlet is entitled *Charles Bradlaugh and the Parliamentary Struggle*.

A.C.W.

Biological Concepts.

ADAPTATION.

PHILOSOPHIES which, like Bergson's, start with adaptation as a principle which accounts for the ability of living things to respond "adaptively" to their surroundings, are doomed to failure. Such theories, writes Prof. Morgan (*Scientific Basis of Evolution*) proceed "as though evolution belonged to theology instead of to science."

If modern theologians, he continues, "regard living things as having been adapted in a single fiat by some extraneous kindly providence it behoves them to study and account for some of the extraordinary manifestations for evil that have been set going." The postulate of a God logically entails that of a Devil. The cruelty, wastefulness and tragedy of nature is never adequately considered by theologians. "In truth nature is neither moral nor immoral." (*Ibid.*)

Nor does adaptivity itself necessitate belief in a supervening providence. As Morgan points out, adaptation concerns each individual for itself alone, and "is selfishly apart from any grand scheme concerning the beneficence of the universe."

Again, forms are only adapted *on the whole*. This qualification is highly significant. "Organisms display many peculiarities which by no stretch of imagination can be regarded as fitting them better for the conditions of life. To assume that every peculiarity of structure is useful . . . is pure assumption, unfounded on anything but teleological prejudice." (Hogben, *Concept of Adaptation*). It has long been known, too, that the habitat of animals is not wholly determined by their special suitability. Following the work of Ray and Linnæus, it became evident "that the teleological standpoint in comparative anatomy is inadequate." (Hogben, *Methodology of Evolution*.) We do not find the greatest degree of similarity in animals pursuing similar modes of existence. To this "the whole study of systematic zoology bears witness." (*Ibid.*)

Neither, again, can adaptivity be considered peculiar to life. We say living organisms are "adapted" to their environment; they are in "dynamical equilibrium" with their surroundings. So is the atom, the difference being one of complexity. "We are thus forced to consider the order of complexity of the living system [re adaptivity] . . . as the essential feature which distinguishes it from non-living things." (*Concept of Adaptation*.)

Ecology (the study of the relations of species to particular types of environment), illustrates the progress that has been achieved by the study of physiological mechanisms in place of the application of the "principle of adaptation." The trout, for example, will only live in running streams, whereas the carp can subsist in still water, where the oxygen content is much lower. We do not say that the trout is fitted to running, and the carp to still, water, by the principle of adaptation, and leave it at that. We proceed to investigate the mechanisms concerned, a procedure which follows the work of Krogh on the physico-chemical properties of the blood-pigments of the lower organisms. The difference between the two fish is understood when we know that the haemoglobin of the carp has a much higher affinity for oxygen than has that of the trout, and consequently its blood is sooner saturated with oxygen.

It is not adaptation that accounts for the physiological mechanism. It is the latter which occasions a scientific label or concept for the purpose of discourse. That concept is adaptation.

G. H. TAYLOR.

Bradlaugh and Biblical Criticism.

Few things are more remarkable in the history of modern thought than the way in which Mr. Bradlaugh's criticisms of the Bible have been adopted by those whose predecessors most bitterly opposed him at the time.

Mr. Bradlaugh's attitude towards the Old Testament was thus described by the late J. M. Robertson:

He argued that if the Old Testament be demonstrably false in its history and barbarous in its morals, the idea of "inspiration" in its theological senses disappears, and the Hebrew book becomes mere ancient literature, forged or otherwise, and wholly disentitled to be made a text book for mankind. Though a good Hebrew scholar, he did not profess to rest his case on the textual analysis of the "higher criticism." For him the "sacred book" was discredited as such by its contents, however composed: and he made it his business to attack them as an imposition on human ignorance and credulity.

And Mr. Bradlaugh's own attitude is described by himself in an introduction he wrote to one of his publications:—

There is no great honour and pleasure, although there is much wearisome toil, in gathering the materials for proving that Genesis nearly always blunders in its attempt at statements of fact; that it is repeatedly chronologically incorrect; that copyists, through ignorance, carelessness, or design, have in many cases incorrectly transcribed the text; that translators, according to their respective creeds, vary in their interpretations of different meaningless passages; that the Hebrew language itself has been altered by the addition of vowel points, by means of which a sense, entirely different from the original purpose, is often given. But it is absolutely necessary to do all this in a form accessible to the general reader as long as the Church persists under statutory sanction and endorsement, in its teaching to the people from their early childhood that this Bible is God's Word, free from blemish.

If the book only had claimed for it that which may be claimed for all books—in part or whole—to represent the genius, education, and manners of the people and of the times from whom and which it issued, then it might fairly be objected by the supporters of the Bible that the tone of criticism here adopted is not of the highest order, and that the petty cavillings about misplaced names, misplaced bonds, incorrect dates and numbers, geographical errors, etc., are hardly worthy of a serious student. But as the Bible is declared to be the representative and revelation of perfect intelligence to the whole human family: as it is placed by the whole of its preachers immeasurably above all other books; as it is alleged that the Bible is free from the errors of thought and fact more or less found in every other book; and as it is by Act of Parliament declared to be a criminal offence for any person to deny this book to be God's Holy Word—it is not only right, but it becomes an unavoidable duty on the part of a Freethinking critic to present as plainly as possible to the notice of the people every weakness of the text, however trivial, that may serve to show that the Bible, or any portion of it, is fallible, that it is imperfect, that so far from being above all other books, it is often below them as mere literary productions.

The claim that was made for the Bible when Mr. Bradlaugh wrote may be gathered from a statement that was issued in 1862. A book had just been published known as *Essays and Reviews*, which had been written by six clergymen and one layman of the Church of England. These included Dr. Temple, who was afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Their articles if published to-day would pass un-

noticed. In 1860 they raised a storm which lasted for years and led to proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts, and debates in Convocation. One clergyman had ventured to doubt whether three-quarters of the human race were to spend an eternity in endless torments, and he was suspended from his cure, but this decision was reversed in the House of Lords.

But the majority of the clergy made their views known: the following manifesto was issued:—

We, the undersigned presbyters and deacons in holy orders of the Church of England and Ireland, hold it to be our bounden duty to the Church and to the souls of men to declare our firm belief that the Church in common with the whole Catholic Church, maintains without reserve or qualification the inspiration and Divine authority of the whole of the canonical Scriptures as not only containing, but being the Word of God, and further teaches in the words of our blessed Lord that the "punishment" of the "cursed," equally with the "life" of the "righteous," is "everlasting."

This was drawn up by the Archdeacon of Oxford, the Provost of Worcester College, the Archdeacon of Taunton, the Rev. W. C. Fremantle, the Warden of All Souls, Dr. Miller, and Dr. Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew. It was signed by 10,000 clergymen of the Church of England.

In looking through the religious literature of that period, abundant proofs are to be found that these 10,000 clergymen represented the opinions of a great majority of their fellow-countrymen. The *Quarterly Review*, in an article on Palestine, refers without comment to the two bears, who are said to have killed the forty-two "little children" who "mocked" Elisha, as being "no doubt" the ursus Syriacus. It also informs us that 300 foxes caught by Samson were jackals, and with respect, to the other difficulty that two animals, united by their tails, would stand still and fight most fiercely, it must be remembered that we are not told the length of the cord that united the animals—a very important consideration.

Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* left no doubt as to the reality of the stories told about Jonah, while Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of Lincoln, in his Commentary, tells us that:—

The great fish was probably a large shark or sea-dog which is common in the Mediterranean, and has so large a mouth that it can swallow a man whole. St. Augustine mentions, that in his time a fish was exhibited at Carthage which would have contained many men in its belly. St. Augustine also says, "the heathen scoff and sneer at the history of Jonah." To which we reply: Either we must reject all miracles as incredible or we must admit that there is no reason for not believing this miracle.

Dr. Wordsworth, in his commentary on Joshua answers the question: how could the earth's rapid rotation motion have been suddenly stopped, when the sun stood still? He points out that the act is reported by the sacred writer as the Act of God, and that God could have obviated all such consequences as these. The Omnipotence of God, which could arrest the motion of the earth, could equally obviate all the disastrous effects which would naturally arise.

Dr. Wordsworth, in his commentary on Genesis, was evidently persuaded of the historical truth on the creation, flood, and other stories in that book. In this he was supported by the Bishop of Oxford, writing in the *Quarterly Review* in 1860. In that article the Bishop refers to "the vulgar 'American' (*sic*) lecturer, who is making a tour of blasphemy through the haunts of our manufacturing districts." "All the cavils," says the Bishop, "against the Mosaic Cosmogony disappear. There is a marvellous agreement with the re-

cord with which the science of geology is daily furnishing us. The higher discoveries of science will manifest to all the essential truthfulness of the Mosaic account of the creation."

Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* in an article on Genesis, by Dr. J. J. S. Perowne, afterwards Bishop of Worcester, who informs us that the derivation of the whole human race from a single pair has been abundantly confirmed by recent investigations. The same authority, writing on Joshua, says that the treatment of the Canaanites, which is mentioned in this book, has been denounced for its severity by Eichhorn and others. But there is nothing in it inconsistent with the divine attribute of justice, or with God's ordinary way of governing the world. This is the view of Dr. W. T. Bullock, Secretary of the S.P.G.

Dr. Perowne glances at a "further difficulty" about the age of Sarah when she attracted the attention of Pharaoh—65, when the freshness of her beauty might have supposed to have been faded. But the Bishop points out that she lived to be 127, and therefore was only in middle life—what a European woman would be at the age of thirty-five, an age at which personal attractions would not be impaired.

So much for biblical criticism seventy years ago. We get the best and latest account of the views now held by, and put forward by the leaders of the Churches on the Bible in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which is edited by Dr. J. K. Cheyne, the Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford University, and Dr. J. Sutherland Black, and the thirty volumes of the International Critical Commentary, which is edited by Dr. Driver, Regius Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge, Dr. Plummer, Master of University College, Durham, and Dr. Briggs, Professor of Biblical Theology, Union Theological Seminary, New York. Let us see what they say about the matter referred to above.

Dr. Skinner is Professor of Old Testament Language and Literature, of Westminster College, Cambridge. He takes Genesis in the international Critical Commentary, and here is a summary of his views:

The legendary character of the Genesis tradition appears in such features as these: The narratives are the literary deposit of an oral tradition which, if it rests on any substraction of historical fact, must have been carried down through many milleniums. Few will maintain that the Patriarchs prepared written memoranda for the information of their descendants. The literary quality of the narratives stamp them as partly products of the artistic imagination. The simple test is the simple matter-of-fact test of self-consistency and credibility. It is not difficult to show that Genesis relates incredibilities which no reasonable appeal to miracles suffices to remove. With respect to the origin of the world, the antiquity of man on earth, the distribution and relations of peoples, the beginnings of civilization—the statements are at variance with the scientific knowledge of our time.

No person of educated intelligence accepts them in their plain natural sense: we know that angels do not cohabit with mortal women, that a flood did not cover the highest mountains, of the world, that the Ark did not accommodate all the species then existing.

It is admitted that no external evidence has come to light of the existence of such persons as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. The definition of "day" (in creation) as a "geological period" is exegetically indefensible. The creation of the sun and moon after the earth and after the alternative of day and night are so many scientific impossibilities. The strictly mythological background of the story of the fall emerges on the conception of the Garden

of Eden, the tree of knowledge, the serpent and Eve, and the cherubim.

Dr. Cheyne, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, thus sums up the story of Jonah. It is:—

An imaginative development of a thought or theme suggested by scripture or an edifying religious story. Jonah was swallowed by the sea because this was a common poetical phrase for the danger of destruction which repeatedly beset Israel. The widely spread nature-myth of the dragon lies at the root of the apologue of Jonah.

As to the stories about Samson, Dr. Moore, Professor of Hebrew, Andover, Mass., writes:—

The similarity in several particulars between the story of Samson and that of Hercules was early noticed. Many modern writers have made the same comparison and inferred that Samson is the Hebrew counterpart of the Phœnician Melquart, the Greek Hercules, and that the story of his deeds was originally a cognate myth, or has taken up numerous mythical elements.

These examples might be multiplied indefinitely from the latest writings of present-day divines. They may thank their stars that they did not live seventy years ago, when Mr. Bradlaugh was saying the same things as they are now saying.

ENDYMION.

Ireland: People and Priests.

IRELAND to-day finds itself divided into two administrative areas that are hostile camps—with populations radically differing not only in religion, but in race, temperament, tradition, outlook, and social economy.

The Free State, much the larger area, has 2,900,000 people in 26,000 square miles. Nearly four-fifths of these live in rural districts; the farms range from six or seven acres to about 400—for the most part given to pasturage; in some counties, as Limerick, Tipperary and Cork, there is also a large peasant class. There are only three important towns, and manufacturing industry is practically non-existent. Emigration on a vast scale (vast, considering the small area and population) has long gone on in the counties now of the Irish Free State; but the world depression of recent years has been a check on male emigrants. The United States, the most important outlet for human export, is now practically closed.

The great bulk of Free State citizens are Catholics. Nearly all are regular church-goers, and frequent the sacraments. The clergy live in comfort and often in affluence by voluntary contributions and testamentary donations. The political and religious leaders, and the press, continually boast that the Free State Irish are a religious leaven in a materialistic world. The original conversion of Europe is attributed to the labours of Irish apostles and teachers, and there are hopes that this achievement may be repeated. De Valera's broadcast of last January dealt with this theme—the Divinely appointed mission of the Irish to provide an example of the truly Christian State.

Away from the towns, literature is rare. Weekly newspapers and booklets on religious subjects are the chief reading of the people. English Sunday papers, and all writings prejudicial to faith and morals, are banned. The Saorstát shuts out of sight the unbelief and wickedness of the outside world. The secular press, unlike that of other countries, devotes much space to religious events, and the activities and utterances of prominent ecclesiastics.

Deep reverence for the priesthood still remains an Irish characteristic. The farmer glories in the sons he contributes to the priesthood; the future priest is marked out from birth, perhaps before it, and is not

supposed to be allowed any choice in the matter. Far more females than males, however, enter the religious life. The Free State itself, of course, does not need but a fraction of them, but the vast Irish "diaspora" in other lands, continually demands the services of Free State-born priests, monks and sisters.

At home, the priest still occupies a dominating position. He manages the schools, appoints and controls the teachers, appears on all public committees; and takes the political platform. The failure of Redmond's Nationalists to include the North in a Home Rule settlement exposed them to clerical denunciation, which swept Sinn Fein into power.

Since the break up of the old Irish Party, some priests speak for Cosgrave, others back De Valera. The Redmond Party, in its days of power, had the solid backing of the priests, but the Hierarchy and Rome were less cordial to it.

The bishops, certainly, look askance at the extreme elements such as Oglaiigh na h-Eircann; imputing to them the taint of Communism. It is not easy to understand how fanatical Nationalists can have any concord with the advocates of a Communist World State, but some Sinn Fein extremists do express regard for Bolshevik Russia, perhaps only as a foe of the British Empire, and not because they agree with its recent system. (A recent attempt at a real Communist meeting was broken up by a Dublin mob on religious grounds.)

While both town and country support the Church, it is in the rural areas that the priest has special influence. It is held "unlucky" to quarrel with a priest, to "differ with" him even on the most trivial secular subjects, or to criticize him if he is guilty of moral turpitude. Such ideas, according to a French Jesuit, Thibaut, in his book *The Irish Race*, distinguish the true Irish from all other nations, not excluding other Roman Catholic ones.

Some carry this veneration to a superstitious excess, attributing to the priest mysterious powers of inflicting disease, deformity, or paralysis with a word or a wish. We do not see the "examples," as they call such "miracles," because "the priest who exercises this power must suffer terribly after doing so"; though, according to some, the Pope does not give the "power" to every priest. Such primitive ideas exist, not indeed among highly educated people, but among those who are by no means illiterate. Loftier minds than those of peasants hint at malevolent priestly powers. Captain McCullough, a writer of articles on Mexico and Russia, maintained in the *Irish Independent*, about eight years ago, that the paralysis of Lenin's last days was due to his imprisonment of Roman Catholic priests with their Bishop Cieplak. An obscure Sinn Fein sheet had previously attributed Lord Kitchener's mysterious end to a "curse" laid on him by an Irish priest.

Truly the Gaelic mind can conjure up strange visions. A World State run by Irish in the interest of religion was suggested in a novel by the late Father Hugh Benson, *Lord of the World*. Religion for the Hibernian means the Roman Catholic Church and nothing else; all other opinions and creeds from Atheism to Anglo-Catholicism being anathema.

DUBLINER.

Note.—"Oglaiigh na h-Eircann," referred to by British papers as "I.R.A."; but those "Young Warriors of Ireland" scorn a Saxon appellation.

A reading machine, always wound up and going
He mastered whatever was not worth the knowing.

J. R. Lowell.

Correspondence.

N.S.S. PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SIR,—As Mr. Stafford has omitted to define what he means by the expression "going into the sphere of politics," his remarks concerning the implications of my previous letter are somewhat pointless. If the expression is intended to mean "affiliating with a political party, or supporting some particular political theory, or even forming a separate political party," then my letter contains no such implication; as Mr. Stafford knows by experience I have consistently opposed such a course.

If, however, the expression is taken to mean "taking note of political utterances and activities and criticizing where necessary, or exposing fallacies seen in political theories, or denouncing the frequent attempts to delude the people," then such activity is part of the work already performed on N.S.S. platforms, and I plead guilty to a desire to see it increased.

In my previous letter I was anxious to show that the proposed alterations to our principles and objects might, if adopted, result in our ignoring the political life of the country, and that, in my opinion, would be a dangerous course. Vitally necessary as is our anti-religious propaganda, we ought not to lose sight of the fact that modern political developments threaten Freethinkers in an ominous manner.

I deliberately bracketed proletarian dictatorships with Nazi and Fascist dictatorships because, if my understanding of the word "dictator" is correct (and it spells tyranny to me), it is not made more attractive by the insertion of a vague adjective. The intention of the Nazi regime may be poles apart from that of the proletarian dictatorship, but under either scheme I fear that I should be denied free expression, hence my opposition to any and all these mushroom dictatorships.

By criticizing the trashy thinking of most politicians and exposing the many fallacies in current political ideas, the N.S.S. will not be joining any party, but it may force the political crew to act more honestly.

Finally, I would echo in a more comprehensive way Mr. Stafford's warning—Freethinkers may in the near future wake up when it is too late—when a dictatorship is being established.

S. R. A. READY.

Sir,—As a Non-Member of the N.S.S., I would like to point out the speech of the late J. M. Robertson (reprinted in the January issue of the *Literary Guide*) apropos of the alteration in the objects clause of the N.S.S.

It was entitled "Contaminated Ideals." The part I particularly wish to draw attention to is the last paragraph:—

At least, it is left for the Rationalist to maintain that his ideal, negating every order of tyranny, persecution, or menace in that sphere, gives the one truly scientific ground for the hope that a humanity steadily taught to think in terms of critical reason will progressively find the other things added unto it.

JOHN H. SHAW, JR.

[We have been compelled to slightly abridge these two letters, but not, we think, with loss to their arguments. Several other letters are held over till next week.—ED.]

THE CHRISTIAN AGE.

SIR,—A reprint of the title page of the first edition of *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*, which tells its own tale, may be of interest:—

Satan's Invisible
WORLD
Discovered
or

A choice collection of Modern Relations, proving evi-

dently against the Saducees and Atheists of this present age, that there are Devils, Spirits, Witches, and apparitions from authentic Records, Attestations of famous witnesses and undoubted Verity.

To all which is added

That marvellous History of Major Weir and his sister
With two Relations of Apparations of Edinburgh.

By Mr. George Sinclair, late Professor of Philosophy in
the College of Glasgow.

Edinburgh, Printed by John Reid, 1685.

J. MACKINNON.

P.S.—Major Weir was burned between Edinburgh and Leith in 1670, and his sister hanged in the Grassmarket both for Witchcraft. As late as 1886, Professor Sinclair, the author, is referred to in a book of Old Edinburgh as "a man of high scientific attainments."—J.M.

HITLER AND FREEDOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of the 21st you point out the need of free speech. It is also essential, however, that there should be a willingness to weigh and consider what is said and written. On this point Hitler has a genuine grievance. He has written a book, *Mein Kampf* (My Fight), which has been before the world for eight years. If people had bothered to read this book, an immense amount of misunderstanding could have been avoided. But there is no English translation, and the book has been read only by a handful of people like myself who know German. Evidently our publishers do not think people would bother to read it, even if there were a translation.

The whole essence and substance of Hitler's book is that Germany is hopelessly over-populated, and her people are consequently poor and miserable. He points out that Germany possesses only an insignificant fraction of the earth's surface, ludicrously disproportionate to the numbers and ability of her people. He says that Germany is surrounded by a ring of enemies who are determined not to let her have more land, and that she must therefore fight for her rightful share of the world.

His anti-semitism is merely a by-product of his general thesis. Germany being hopelessly overcrowded, somebody must be sacrificed, and he prefers that it should be the black-haired people who go to the Jewish Church rather than the fair-haired ones who go to the Christian Church. Moreover, the Jews are pacifists, who will not fight to get Germany her rightful share of land, and therefore they are very proper people to sacrifice.

Hitler's grievance is identical with that of Mussolini and the Japanese statesmen, who bitterly complain that their nations are deprived of their rightful share of land. I think their complaints are well founded. The British Empire has seventy times as much land as Germany, and Russia has forty times as much. That is landlordism in its most outrageous form. The treatment of Japan and Italy is equally scandalous.

I strongly advise the people of Britain, France, Holland, and other countries which are surfeited with land, to open their ears and to think; otherwise they will get a very unpleasant awakening.

R. B. KERR.

[Persecution in Germany is not confined to Jews. Every advanced opinion—Freethinking, Communistic, Socialistic, etc., anything not in conformity with the Hitlerite programme is being suppressed.—Ed.]

I also am a Freethinker, that is to say, a rebel against all the dogmas that the fear of death has induced man to invent; but I bear no malice against Churches, be they Catholic, Apostolic, Roman, Protestant, Russian, Greek, Buddhist, Jew or Mussulman. Besides, I have a way of looking at them and explaining them. A Church, I say, is a piece of homage to the unknown. Now the more knowledge increases, and the more the unknown diminishes, the less need there is for churches.

Uncle Sosthène—Guy de Maupassant....

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"The Popular Mind."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Religion; The Enemy of Human Progress."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Regents Park): 3.0 and 6.30.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, May 28, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Religion and Intolerance." South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, May 29, Mr. L. Ebury. Albert Street, Regents Park, 8.0, Thursday, June 1, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, May 28, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, May 8, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. McLaren.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, May 28, Mr. C. Tuson. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. and Bryant. Platform 2, B. A. le Maine. 6.30, Platform 1, Messrs. Tuson and Bryant. Platform 2, Messrs. Saphin and Hyatt. Wednesday, May 31, 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Le Maine. Thursday, June 1, 7.30, E. C. Saphin. Friday, June 2, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. The *Freethinker* and other literature can be obtained during and after the meetings of Mr. Dunn outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, May 28, Mr. G. Whitehead. "The Ship," Plumstead Common. 8.0, Monday, May 29, Mr. G. Whitehead. Lakedale Road, Plumstead. 8.0, Tuesday, May 30, Mr. G. Whitehead. "The Ship," Plumstead Common. 8.0, Wednesday, May 31, Mr. G. Whitehead. Beresford Square Woolwich, 8.0, Thursday, June 1, Mr. G. Whitehead. "The Ship," Plumstead Common. 8.0, Friday, June 2, Mr. G. Whitehead.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade), 2.0, Member's meeting. Bigg Market, 7.30, Mr. Allan T. Sanders.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN, 7.0, Sunday, May 28, Mr. J. Clayton.
BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.0, J. Cecil Keast—A Lecture.

BURNLEY BRANCH N.S.S. Picnic arranged for Sunday, May 28 will be postponed.

BURNLEY MARKET, 7.30, Tuesday, May 30, Mr. J. Clayton.
GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street): 3.0, Robert Buntin. Peel Street, Partick, 8.0, Mrs. Whitefield and Mr. Robert Buntin. *Freethinkers* and *Freethought* literature on sale at both meetings.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, May 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, May 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, May 31, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 7.30, Friday, June 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WATERFOOT, 7.30, Friday, May 26, Mr. J. Clayton.

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