

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

VOL. I, III.—No. 27

SUNDAY, JULY 2, 1933

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions.

The Logic of Faith.

THERE must have been a time when religious people meant what they said and said what they meant. That was the time when there was a greater harmony between a man's professed religious beliefs and the social environment than exists to-day. In those days there was no need to work to keep people religious, because it was almost impossible for them not to be so. Then, the man who did not believe in some sort of a religion must have been a curiosity, standing to his fellows as a mutation stands to the body of animals from which it emerges. But as the environment changed and as religious teachings became more discordant with the general body of knowledge and customs it became more and more difficult to keep people religious, while the number of those who were definitely non-religious became larger. And at the present stage of development we have actually reached a position in which all the logic is on the side of the religious fool and all the unreason lies with the intelligent believer.

A stupid person, for example, believes in prayer. But the prayer that he believes in is, given certain premises, quite logical. He says, if there is a God, and if God answers prayers for fine weather, or for a good harvest, or for the cure of a disease, then there is a good reason for praying, and praying is justified by results. This is the old-fashioned, the original conception of prayer, and it is the only reasonable view.

* * *

Fooling with Faith.

On the other hand there is the better educated, the more intellectual believer—such as Dean Inge or Bishop Barnes. He believes in encouraging John Smith to pray, he also asserts that God answers prayers. But he says that it does not follow that rain will come if John Smith prays for it, or that a good harvest will come in answer to his prayer, or that

when these things follow the offering of prayers that they are a direct answer to individual petitions. He asserts with the Atheist that rain or good harvests are independent of the prayers of an individual. What, then, is the good of praying? If my praying has no effect on the course of events, why pray? Well, one reply is that while prayer does not alter the natural order of things, a man feels the better for the prayer and is strengthened in his fight with the world. No one need deny this. If a man believes that standing on his head every evening for five minutes will give him strength to fight to-morrow's battles, he will feel the weaker in his work if for the whole of a month he spends every evening on his feet. A man who is in a temper may feel the better for going into his garden and indulging in five minutes good "cussing." A man in trouble will derive benefit by pouring his troubles into the ear of a sympathetic friend. All these things are as plain as can be, and no one will seriously dispute the influence of belief, as such, on human nature. It is the nature of action that raises the whole issue.

Did those who prayed believe that their prayers had only a subjective value, and that only so long as they persuaded themselves that prayers had an effect which they were well aware they did not have? How can a man offer prayers to God for rain, or for health, or for a good harvest, while feeling convinced that his prayers will have not the slightest objective consequence? No man will go on for long fooling himself in this elaborate manner. In this matter of prayer it is the fool who has the logic of the situation, it is the intelligent believer who is hopelessly illogical. It is ever true that we must be as little children to enter the kingdom of the Christian Heaven. One must be as ignorant as a child and as credulous as a child to qualify for entrance.

* * *

Substitutes for Religion.

I was set going on this line by a statement from a Methodist parson—although it might have been made by any parson—that "There is no alternative to religion, and there is no substitute for God." Of course, what he meant was that there is no logical substitute for either God or religion. And in that I am with him. You can have no substitute for God unless you have a God who is not a God. That is one reason why whenever I have been put the very ancient question, What will you put in the place of religion? I have replied, Nothing at all. Of course, those who put this question took it for granted that religion is so useful in the social economy that if it is given up something else must be found that will discharge the same useful function. But no Freethinker can admit this for a single moment, although there are very many instances where people who have given up one religion have straightway adopted or invented another to put

in its place. But neither "God" nor religion has in and by itself been of the slightest use to anyone at any time. The good attributed to religion has been the product of those social factors with which religion has always been associated, but has had just about the same amount of influence for good as the mascot which so many silly people hang on their motor-car has in preventing road accidents.

When, for example, it was made plain that the religious ceremonies associated with the sowing of seed had nothing whatever to do with the raising of a crop, but that human labour and judgment plus the nature of the soil were the important factors, there was no substitute offered for religion. God and religious ceremonies were simply set on one side as irrelevancies. They were unnecessary, and, historically, were admittedly nothing but expressions of codified ignorance. For the production of any natural phenomenon whatever science does not say, "Here are two explanations, God and science, the one is an alternative to the other." It says that "God" is no explanation at all. It insists that there is only one order of explanation in the field. You may reject it if you will, but in that case you have no explanation at all. God is a substitute for science, science is another name for God, only for such as have no adequate understanding of either religion or science.

* * *

As Little Children!

So far I have put the matter very crudely because I wished to put it very plainly, and fundamentally because real religion is in itself a very crude and a very childish thing. I have not the slightest doubt, in fact one may be certain, that many of the stories of the wonders of fairyland which now delight children, were once listened to by fully-grown adults as narrations of matters of fact. The fundamental facts of religion—the belief in some super-natural being who calls things into existence by a "Let there be," who makes men and animals by some magical process, who stands by to work miracles for such as believe in him, who can make disease vanish in the twinkling of an eye, all this is as crude as fairyland, but quite real to the immature mind. All this is part of the very essence of real religion, which depends upon the persistence of the childish type of mind for its existence. It is quite true that you must be as little children to secure an easy pass into the Christian heaven; the mature intellects all go to the other place.

But the religionist who has advanced beyond the more primitive stages of religion such as is represented by the Salvation Army or by some of the B.B.C. preachers, does not always say that science is a substitute for God or is an alternative to God. That would be rather dangerous, since it might lead many to conclude that with the acceptance of the substitute the original may be dispensed with. What he actually sometimes says, and nearly always implies, is that one cannot escape "God," and that science is merely giving us an account of God's ways of working. These people accept God by explaining that he is an unknown quantity behind or permeating nature, or that he stands for some abstract conception and symbolizes man's idea of the world in which he is living. This is about as satisfactory a substitute for "God" as an empty plate is for a dinner, or the costume of a Nudist is for a dress-suit. For whatever this abstraction is, it is certainly not the God of religion, and for religion that is the only God that matters. Genuinely religious persons cannot possibly go on praying for help to some X, or feel strengthened by believing themselves in contact with a symbol of something or other. As well might a naturalist think he was studying nature in the wilds by stroking the lions in Trafal-

gar Square. Primitive mankind may have been very simple in its ways and childish in its conclusions, but it was not quite so foolish as consciously to manufacture a symbol and then fall down and worship it as a person. For it is a personal God that religion must have. Some one who can think and feel and listen and reply. The God of religion must be at least as real to his followers as is an unseen and unknown speaker at the other end of a long-distance telephone.

I agree with the parson—that is if he means what he ought to mean by what he says, which parsons usually do not—that there is no alternative to religion and there is no substitute for God. To be genuinely religious a man must believe in a super-natural world in addition to this one. To believe in a real God, a God who is of the slightest meaning or value to believers, he must be a person, not an abstraction or a mathematical symbol. And to-day both the supernatural world, and a personal God are as impossible of perpetual preservation as is the theory of a flat earth or of demonic possession.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Thirty-three Saviours.

"Truth can never be confirmed enough,
Though Doubt did ever sleep."—*Shakespeare*.
"The clergy are the sappers of our strength."

George Meredith.

OLD Dr. Martin Luther once said that the Christian Bible resembled a nose of wax and could be twisted into any shape. This remark is also true of all the numerous so-called "Sacred Books of the East," but of none is it more correct than the Bible used by Christians. The old theologians of the Ages of Faith were past masters of the art of splitting hairs, and chopping straws, but the modern variety have a facile fluency which reminds one of nothing so much as a dictionary with the diarrhoea. To the vast majority of these theologians words are their sole stock-in-trade. Their pomp of court and their priesthood are nothing else than sheer verbosity. To any reader familiar with the sober use of words, their explanations, definitions, and comments are simply delirious jargon. They are the bastard offspring of riotous imaginations playing, in the light of a specialised and narrow theological education, upon resonant polysyllables. They are very like quack doctors who make stump orations in public in order to sell pills, which they pretend will cure anything from housemaid's knee to hydrophobia.

As an up-to-date example of this love of verbosity it would be difficult to improve upon *Christianity and the Crisis*, edited by the Rev. Percy Dearmer (Gollancz, 5s.). This extraordinary outburst of hundreds of pages of sheer rhetoric is contributed to by no less than thirty-three professional and amateur theologians belonging to the State and also Free Churches, including a couple of archbishops, five bishops, a number of mixed ecclesiastics, and smaller clerical fry. The majority are respectable, if not respected, figure-heads of the sects they more or less adorn, and this pleasant reminder gives zest to the inevitable criticism which this particular omnibus-volume provokes.

The most extraordinary feature of this book is that, despite the ecclesiastical eminence of its many authors, not one in all the thirty-three presents the Christian Religion as it has been taught for twenty centuries. What they one and all do present is, not a rehash of the bad old teaching, but something entirely different, a brand of nebulous nothingarianism which might, with a few alterations, pass for Ethical Culture or even Zoroastrianism. Indeed, the point of view of

these eminent theologians is almost ridiculous, for they all rant like Transatlantic evangelists, and are obsessed with the quaint notion that the present state of the world is just chaotic, and that there is no hope anywhere save in their star-spangled bunkum, which they pretend bears some relation to the Christianity exemplified in the New Testament, and in the teachings of the historic churches.

The point of view presented in so many pages by these theologians is that the world is in a state of actual chaos, and only the application of Christian principles can save it from utter perdition. This plea has a very familiar ring about it, for it is the stock-in-trade of all evangelists, but our thirty-three theologians "wear their rue with a difference." What these would-be-Saviours of mankind now put forward as Christian principles are nothing of the kind, but are seen quite plainly as ideas stolen from Democracy, such as the brotherhood of man and other humanitarian ideals.

The religion of the Bible used by Christians has never at any time been democratic. The deity depicted in the Old Testament is described as being a jealous god, and his preference for a particular chosen people is the very negation of modern ideals. The New Testament is even worse than the Old, for it threatens with eternal fire all outside its narrow pale. Despite the sentimentalism of the so-called "Lord's Prayer," there is no escape from the arbitrary division of humanity into "saved" and "damned," "sheep" and "goats," "believers" and "unbelievers." You may be as wise as Plato, as virtuous as Marcus Aurelius, as gentle as Shakespeare, as merciful as Florence Nightingale, but if you do not believe you are not a Christian, and you are doomed to utter destruction. Indeed, the caste system is carried many stages further by the great Christian Churches. There are the many grades of priesthood from the Archbishops and Cardinals, the right-reverends, very reverends, and common, or garden, reverends. In addition, there is the mutual back-scratching between ecclesiastics and royalties, which is so close a relationship that Priestcraft and Kingcraft are as perfectly united as the obverse and reverse of a single coin. What has all this insistence on caste to do with Democracy? This caste system is as pronounced in Christianity as in Hinduism, but most Christian believers are so inured to these divisions and subdivisions that they are as subservient as the downtrodden Untouchables of India.

Exactitude is not one of the shining virtues of these thirty-three saviours of mankind. For the purposes of their argument they all insist on the chaotic conditions of to-day. They are to save us all from a chaos which they know perfectly well is non-existent. They know it, for they must be aware of the pleasing fact that their salaries are paid with the old regularity. The world is not rocking to its foundations if the State Church is still established and endowed heavily, and the bench of bishops still display their beautiful lawn-sleeves and impede democracy in the House of Lords. We are not so near extermination or starvation as in the dark days of the last great war. But these thirty-three saviours dip their brushes in crimson lake to produce those lurid effects which they know so well how to exploit to their own financial advantage.

Oh, most impotent conclusion! If this is all that thirty-three Christian apologists can get from their Oriental creed, small wonder that men and women are turning from it towards those Democratic ideals which the thirty-three saviours find so good as to borrow from. Even the Christian clergy realize that they can no longer rely on an outworn barbaric superstition, and they are forced, in sheer self-defence, to gloss

their religion with a veneer of civilization and modernity. Let the thirty-three would-be saviours leave the people of this country free to work out their own secular salvation, without the frettings and fire-works of a foolish faith. Modern man is outgrowing the dogmas of Eastern creeds, and civilized humanity is already better than the many-headed deities of the decadent superstitions. This latest book by the thirty-three theologians portrays the business-side of religion at its shadiest. It shows what can be attempted by a number of eminent Christian apologists who choose to remember that a very large number of their co-religionists are only half-educated, and are very innocent after twenty centuries of Christian teaching.

When Mark Twain was confronted by a too-insistent insurance agent, he remarked, blandly, that he wished to be secured against the risks of going to bed. "More people," he pointed out, "die in bed than on railways or steamships." This is still true, and the thirty-three present-day saviours know it quite well. But it is part of the priests' business to promote scares. Sometimes it is national chaos, at others the end of the world. Both lead to the same golden results.

MIMNERMUS.

Why Christianity Persists.

(A Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the N.S.S.)

SOME Freethinkers, contrasting the hold which Christianity still has on the community with the changes which the great currents of modern thought are said to have effected in Europe, find themselves confronted by an unsolvable problem. But this persistence of a religious system, once it is in possession of the field, is traceable throughout the history of man's effort to achieve freedom of thought, and is easily explicable in the light of the facts with which the history of Christianity, in particular, has made us familiar. What is taking place to-day in Germany and Italy, and to some extent in England, is the twentieth-century counterpart of many previous attempts to enforce uniformity in religious belief, and, as a corollary to that, in political ideas as well.

The spread of Christianity over Europe is one of the great facts of history. No Freethinker disputes this. What he contends is that Christianity as a religious system is nothing more or less than an amalgam of older beliefs and ceremonies long current in the Eastern Mediterranean, and that there is nothing original in it except its exclusiveness, its "dread doctrine of salvation by orthodoxy," and its tremendous emphasis on future rewards and punishments. "Either Christ or Antichrist!" is still the cry of the Roman Catholic Church. This claim to the exclusive possession of the "keys," the fountain-head of the persecuting spirit, so far from repelling the type of man and woman to whom such a religion as Christianity appeals, has a powerful attraction for them. The Inquisition and the Index of Prohibited Books are not accidents of Christianity, they are essential to the maintenance of any system to which the human race is subject by divine appointment. Now couple this spirit of exclusiveness with the fact that the mental soil, just as much as the material, can be cultivated to produce a given crop, and with the further fact that historical circumstances gave the Christian Church a greater opportunity of cultivating it than had ever previously existed, and you will have no difficulty in realizing why Christianity persists to-day.

Early in the fourth century the Church became allied with the enormous power of Roman statecraft, and this, it must be admitted, enabled it to impose some measure of order upon barbarian tribes; but the same power was applied, until the time of the Reformation, to the spiritual enslavement of Europe as no such force had ever been applied before. Such a system was bound to run its course until it became unbearable. We have seen at close quarters what recently happened in Spain, where the ecclesiastical abuses were slight compared with those existing in parts of Europe in the fifteenth century. But the reformers, wherever and whenever they gained a dominant position, were as ready as Rome to enforce such conformity as they desired. Nothing amuses me more than to hear Protestants insisting on the survival value of religion, declaring that a purely secular view of life can never satisfy man's highest aspiration, and in the same breath discoursing eloquently on the moral depravity which centuries of papal supremacy worked in Europe. The truth is, religious systems and their hierarchies tend to perpetuate the degradation which first made them possible, and have no other survival value. Protestantism is at the end of a blind alley. It is clamouring for a return to the "primitive faith" at the moment when the only form of Christianity making headway in Protestant countries is Roman Catholicism, which is surely primitive enough to satisfy the most evangelical Christian—a good illustration of atavism in the evolution of religious systems. Elaborate preparations have been made to celebrate, this very year, the centenary of the Oxford Movement, which has done so much to consolidate the Romanizing forces in the Anglican Church. Prayers for the dead, the real presence in the Eucharist, and veneration for relics worthily represent the "mature" work of a millennium of triumphant theology. It is not strange, after all, that many thousands of "educated" men in England to-day are kept in a state of abject terror by just such stories about future judgment as Aristophanes, four hundred years before the Christian era, declared could no longer frighten an old woman.

Nominal Christians cannot, of course, live in a modern community without to some extent sharing its intellectual outlook, and many who consider their Christianity more than nominal have abandoned positions once regarded as essential. Secular interests are constantly pushing their way to the front and competing with those of the traditional faith. But it is never wise to under-rate your enemy's resources. Religious systems to-day derive most of their power from the success with which they have interwoven their rites and ceremonies with human interests, and they will only decay in proportion as they are found to be restraints on these interests. Many a man who would laugh at the idea of defending the possibility of miracles, and still more at the portents of the Apocalypse, would feel quite uneasy if he did not have his infant child baptized by a priest. A similar remark applies to the lingering influence of religion in other spheres—marriage, death and burial, Sunday observance, and particularly in the whole system of education from the primary school to the University. And at the back of it all is the State, still largely feudal in character, doing whatever it can to sanction the influences propagating religion and to repress those opposing it. We have an Established Church. Its titular head is the King, by the grace of God, defender of the faith, and it is represented in the House of Lords. A few weeks ago, in the debate on the Bill to prevent the teaching of blasphemy to children, the Duchess of Athol said that the supporters of the measure did not object to the intellectual Freethought of a Gibbon. This is worth noting. The political

party to which the Duchess belongs, when its interests are threatened by any other party, cannot find words strong enough to denounce class legislation.

There are apologists of another kind who are doing a good deal to prolong the life of superstition. I mean those who have hardly any belief in the doctrines of Christianity, but are profoundly impressed by its attendant blessings, and attribute to it ethical principles for which it has never stood. They belong to the type of Christians who ask such inane questions as, "What would Christ do if he came to Piccadilly?" I don't think Piccadilly is much concerned whether he comes or not.

It is altogether unhistorical to imagine that, when the Church was repressing all opinion that clashed with the traditional creed, the vast majority of men and women were yearning for free thought. What they wanted then, and what they want to-day is much the same as what they wanted under the Caesars—"bread and circuses." Not that they were indifferent to the destiny of their immortal souls. Far from it. In Italy they had seen the pictures of the damned in hell. In England, a little later, they had listened to the sermons of John Wesley. But they knew exactly where to go for salvation. That there has been a general decline of religious belief as a controlling factor in the life and thought of the masses is undeniable. The influence of modern industrial conditions is not one making for other-worldism as the central interest of Bill Smith. All the same, Bill does not consider it his business to demand a clean sweep of Christian tradition, theology and forms of worship, merely on the ground that they menace the intellectual life.

"Science" and "modern thought" are terms largely used by both Freethinkers and Christians. We must not, however, over-rate the direct support which the popular Freethought movement has received from scientists. Very few of them accept the whole Christian creed; but many of them carefully avoid coming into conflict with the theologian, and nowadays the latter is well satisfied as long as his system is left to a tolerably secure existence. When we consider the technical applications of science we are in a world truly modern. We should all say that wireless telegraphy and the motor-bus are signs of astounding progress. Yet the former is used for Christian propaganda, while the publicity it affords is withheld from us. The bus which takes one man to a school takes another to a church, where he hears a sermon identical with what he would have heard five hundred years ago. Improved means of communication are opening up trade in Asia and Africa; they are also facilitating the work of Christian missions in the same areas.

Observance of "good form" plays a large part in bolstering up the shams and absurdities of Christianity. Beliefs illogical, false, and revolting alike to sense and feeling, are declared to have a spiritual value. To speak of them irreverently is "bad form," and may indeed be punished by the law of the land. We know the sort of character which reverence produced in the ages of faith. A man pre-occupied with the question of his soul's destiny is sure to feel deep veneration for the doctrines and ceremonies by which grace is communicated. But reverence for an institution which is not dependent upon human knowledge and experience for its authority has its drawbacks. It cannot be maintained indefinitely, and when the authority is seriously challenged the result is such chaos as exists throughout Christendom to-day.

All over Europe, and beyond it, a desperate attempt is now being made to exterminate free thought and

free speech. The Church, the Press, the school and the university, and the administrative services are co-operating to establish a dictatorship which will standardize the mental life of the nation and make authority supreme. Their chances of success or failure will depend mainly on how many people still value freedom of speech and how much they value it.

A. D. McLAREN.

Christianity and the Child.

"I think it is better to love your children than to love God, a thousand times better, because you can help them, and I am inclined to think that God can get along without you."—(R. Ingersoll, *The Dying Creed*, p. 30).

No claim is more confidently advanced for Christianity than its influence on child welfare. To read some Christian apologists, one would gather that there was no domestic virtue, or family love, before the advent of Christianity. Such writers are either very ignorant of Pagan literature, or they are relying upon such ignorance on the part of their readers.

The Christian was enjoined to set his affections upon heavenly things, not on earthly ones; and family affection was condemned along with all other distractions. Jesus himself declared: "If any man come to me and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (*Luke* xiv. 26.)

The early Christians—unlike those of to-day—believed that Jesus meant what he said, and they acted accordingly. In this connexion, says the historian Lecky: "the intense hardness of heart and ingratitude manifested by the saints towards those who were bound to them by the closest of earthly ties, is known to few who have not studied the original literature on the subject." Sentimentalists delight in idealizing the past, and, we may add, in falsifying it. Lecky continues: "To break by his ingratitude the heart of the mother who had borne him, to persuade the wife who adored him that it was her duty to separate from him for ever, to abandon his children, uncared for and beggars, to the mercies of the world, was regarded by the true hermit as the most acceptable offering he could make to his God. His business was to save his soul,"¹ which would be imperilled by diverting his attention to worldly affairs.

Lecky gives, as an illustration of what this teaching resulted in, the following shocking case of religious callousness and brutality:—

A man named Mutius, accompanied by his only child, a little boy of eight years old, abandoned his possessions and demanded admission into a monastery. The monks received him but they proceeded to discipline his heart. "He had already forgotten that he was rich; he must next be taught to forget that he was a father." His little child was separated from him, clothed in dirty rags, subjected to every form of gross and wanton hardship, beaten, spurned, and ill-treated. Day after day the father was compelled to look upon his boy wasting away with sorrow, his once happy countenance for ever stained with tears, distorted by sobs of anguish. But yet, says the admiring biographer, "though he saw this day by day, such was his love for Christ, and for the virtue of obedience, that the father's heart was rigid and unmoved. He thought little of the tears of his child. He was anxious only for his own humility and perfection in virtue." At last the Abbot told him to take his child and throw it into the river. He proceeded, without a murmur or apparent pang, to obey, and it was only at the last moment that the monks interposed, and on the very brink of the river saved the child. (Lecky: *History of European Morals*, Vol. II., p. 126.)

This horror is recorded, not as something to be condemned and avoided, but as in the highest degree praiseworthy, and an example to be followed; for we are told that: "Mutius afterwards rose to a high position among the ascetics, and was justly regarded as having displayed in great perfection the temper of a saint."

In this secular age, these pious ruffians would soon make acquaintance with the cell of a prison, as a variation to that of the cell of the monk. Not, of course, that they would mind that. They would regard themselves as martyrs, suffering persecution for Christ's sake, and be more puffed up with spiritual pride than before, like the early Christians when they were punished for their riotous attacks on the Pagan temples. These fanatics consider themselves persecuted if they are not allowed to persecute those of a different faith to their own. The early Christians were too intent upon saving their miserable souls to be troubled with children. As Canon Donaldson remarks:—

It is strange how seldom children are mentioned in the Christian writings of the second and third centuries. Almost nothing is said of their training; no efforts are mentioned as being made for their instruction. The Christians had come to the belief that the world had enough of children, and was fully stocked, and that every birth was a cause of sorrow and not of joy. (Donaldson: *Woman*, p. 180.)

"Why should we be eager to bear children," asks Tertullian, one of the earliest of the Church Fathers, "desirous as we are ourselves to be taken out of this most wicked world and received into the Lord's presence." He describes children as "burdens which are to us most of all unsuitable, as being perilous to faith." (Donaldson: *Woman*, p. 181.) During the Middle Ages, the ideal of the perfect life was that of the monk, dedicated to God, and renouncing all family life and affection.

Let not the Protestant pride himself that this was the work of the Catholic Church, with which he has no part or lot. Wherever Christian faith has been held with the same intensity that it was among the early Christians, the result has been the same; religious fanaticism steam-rollers over all natural and family affections. Buckle, in the chapter of his history dealing with the Scotch intellect during the seventeenth century, cites a case in which the Kirk-Sessions of Glasgow summoned before them a woman, merely because she had received into her house her own son after the clergy had excommunicated him; and made her promise not to do it again, and to tell the magistrate when he came to her next. Upon which Buckle observes:—

She promised not to do it again. She promised to forget him whom she had borne of her womb and suckled at her breast. She promised to forget her boy who had oftentimes crept to her knees, who had slept in her bosom, and whose tender frame she had watched over and nursed. All the dearest associations of the past . . . at one fell swoop all were gone. So potent were the arts of these men, that they persuaded the mother to conspire against her son, that she might deliver him up to them. They defiled her nature by purging it of its love. From that day her soul was polluted. She was lost to herself, as well as lost to her son. To hear of such things is enough to make one's blood surge again, and raise a tempest in our inmost nature. (Buckle: *History of Civilization*. (Ed. 1904), p. 790.)

Even the great poet Milton barbarously beat the children under his care. For his young wife: "pleaded in self-defence when she had gone home against his will, that it made her miserable to hear his poor little nephews whom he was educating, cry

¹ Lecky: *History of European Morals*, Vol. 2, p. 124.

when he beat them." ² Take again the attitude of John Wesley, the greatest religious force of the eighteenth century. Wesley established a school at Kingswood for educating children; of which Lecky observes:—

The little children rose every morning, winter and summer, at four, and were directed in the first place to spend nearly an hour in private devotions. "As we have no playthings," Wesley adds " (the school being taught every day in the year but Sunday), so neither do we allow any time for play on any day; he that plays when he is a child will play when he is a man." (Lecky: *History of England in the Eighteenth Century*. Vol. III., p. 88.)

It is satisfactory to know that Wesley declared that no undertaking had given him more trouble than this school. He was constantly changing the masters, and he complained of the poor little children that " They ought never to play, but they do every day, yea, in the school." Such an inhuman system was bound to fail, he was fighting against nature. But it was quite in accordance with his religious principles. It was in fact a result of his religious ideas, as stated in the following, and in many another verse and sermon:—

No room for mirth or trifling here,
For worldly hope, or worldly fear,
If life so soon is gone:
If now the Judge is at the door,
And all mankind must stand before
The' inexorable throne!

That is the real genuine Christianity, from which modern Christians have moved so far away that it is almost incomprehensible to them now.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

² Godfrey: *English Children in the Olden Time*, p. 199

"God and the World of Art."

THE clever Christian is much troubled by the repercussions of science upon his beliefs. The growingly indifferent public is curious about those same repercussions. On the fact of it, it looks as though religion is in a fix. Now the B.B.C., ever ready to give a helping hand to piety in need, has had a series of "talks" on "God and the World through Christian Eyes." One of them, that by Dr. Maude Royden, on "God and the World of Art," is an excellent example of the slim and deceptive praise of science which marks the most modern apologists. Miss Royden says, "some of the loveliest things I have ever heard said about beauty were said by scientists." She gives some instances. Sir William Bragg, lecturing to children, says, "If we think of the atom as the letter in nature's alphabet, and of the molecule as her word, surely we may think of the crystal as her sonnet!"

Again, Miss Royden says, "It happened to me once to go into a hall in which Sir Arthur Thomson was lecturing with slides at the moment when he was throwing on the screen a picture of the transverse section of the spine of a sea-urchin. If I had not caught his words as I entered, and known what it was he was showing us, I should have supposed it to be the rose window of a Gothic cathedral." Stript of its plausible accuracy this argument is just the old Design argument over again tricked out in all the finery of cultured apologetics. Who but a Christian minister—and Miss Royden is one—would have the impertinence to suggest that there is something surprising in a scientist being as moved to appreciation by the study of reality as the Christian is moved by the contemplation of a myth?

If I may be permitted to quote some lines written in these columns (October 7, 1928) they may suggest, even more directly than I do, the fallacy of the association of a sense of the beauty of nature, or beauty itself, with religion. "It is strange that among primitive peoples, who, as the expression goes, live very close to nature, there does not appear to have been any great love of nature such as it displayed by moderns. Even with the ancient Roman and Greek writers, the fondness for

nature was fitful and undecided. And with the Christian ages it grew weaker still. It is an enlightening fact that among the ancient writers, the one who has shown himself most observant of nature, and displayed most sympathy with animal life was the materialistic poet Lucretius. It is, indeed, from the scientific side that the impulse to study nature has come." Miss Royden's "Divine Artist" would have—if he existed—the odium of having inspired the crudest art and the most ruthless iconoclasm, the tawdry images of Latin piety and the Puritan hatred of nature and beauty.

"Ugly things," says Miss Royden, "distort or hide God from our eyes just as much as cruel or false things." Hence she goes on to condemn banal music in churches, bad rhymes in hymns, barn-like chapels, and bids all the faithful see that they worship "in the beauty of holiness." How long has "holiness" been the handmaiden of beauty? It is only because the moderns will not suffer the coarse and ignorant language and formularies of preachers and services that we have this belated and unconvincing effort to attribute the highest achievements of men to the source of his worst errors and distresses. "Consider the lilies," says this writer, quoting the New Testament; she does not go on to say, "they toil not neither do they spin," nor to point out that, "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." The appreciation of that glory was the product of cultivation by man, but she says "it is man-made beauty we distrust," whereas the only beauty we can "trust"—and do trust is that which belongs to the realm of human thought and achievement. Man did not make the mountains or the seas, nor the avalanche nor the tidal wave; but he has climbed the mountains, and gone far to harness the waves to his use, and to rob them of their aforesaid terrors. Fear of the ocean, the mountain and the forest was a primitive characteristic and, indeed, was hardly less general in ancient Greece. And the early Greek poets saw no beauty in these natural elements. The perception of Beauty, like the love and knowledge of Truth, is a human achievement which has matured and developed despite the hostility of the pious.

To sustain her special pleading for religion Miss Royden proceeds to use terms which, in one of her culture, can only be called as unfortunate as they are misleading. For example: "We separate the beauty of nature which is the beauty of the divine Artist from the beauty of what we call 'art,' meaning the beauty of human artists, and so have fallen into a foolish and fatal mistake." If the beauty of nature is the beauty of "the divine Artist," to whom, or to what are we indebted for "Nature red in tooth and claw?" The "foolish and fatal mistake" is made by those for whom and to whom Miss Royden speaks. Beauty, whether of nature or of art, is something perceived by the mind of man as a result of certain combinations or contrasts of matter and colour, of thought and language, of reason and sense, of intelligence and emotion. When Miss Royden says, as she does towards the end of this "talk," that "we have learnt much, we Christians, from the advance of science, not only about this material world, but about the God Whom, if there be a God, it must reveal, for the worker is known by his handiwork," we are compelled to ask how much has Miss Royden learnt "from the advance of science" if, at this time of day, she can thus repeat, almost in the same terms, the antiquated and fatuous argument from design in its crudest and earliest form. We are told that "the mountains, the rivers, the sky, the countryside do speak to us of God, whether we hear his voice or not," but does not Miss Royden know that the "voice of God," as thus heard, is, like the "wrath of God" and the "law of God," only audible or observed or obeyed by certain persons in certain mental and physical states? The peasant may have no eye for the beauty at his door; the navy may have more appreciation of poetry than the peer; and all appreciation depends, in the last analysis, upon the capacity to appreciate not only appearances but how they come to be. In short, there is no more room for God in the world of art than in the world of science. Both are the creations, the achievements of the studies and the hopes of men.

(The late) ALAN HANDSACRE.

Acid Drops.

We wonder whether anyone can tell us exactly what is meant by a "kingly presence"? The phrase occurs in the *Daily Herald* in an account of King Feisal being received at the railway station by King George. Both Kings are dressed with a number of feathers and military uniforms, and there is a row of Cabinet Ministers, dressed in fantastic costumes, standing in a row like pantomime artistes, waiting to be hired. But there is no indication of what is a "kingly presence," unless it is in the expression that King Feisal has a "shrewd business man's lace." But one hardly thinks of the average business man as having a Kingly presence. So we remain quite in the dark as to what it means unless it is looking as every King is supposed to look. And as kings are tall and short, fat and thin, ugly or passable in looks, and silly or sensible in their behaviour—in fact differing in no degree from dustmen or doorkeepers, we are bound to conclude that looking like a king means the way a king looks when he looks as that particular king looks. At any rate it is good newspaper language, but what newspaper language means "God only knows." Unless it means so much per column.

The Duchess of Athol, a lady whose mentality belongs to the backward part of the seventeenth century, told a meeting of the Religious Tract Society that religious instruction in grant-aided schools is in a stronger position to-day than at any time within the memory of people now being living. This ought to act as a spur to those who believe in the principle of Secular Education. But it is interesting to learn, if true, that while religion is avowedly weaker to-day all over the country than it has ever been, it is stronger amongst the children. What a light it throws on Christianity, for that is all the Duchess understands by religion, to know that the only ones it can hold its own with are those who cannot argue back.

It may throw some light on the attitude of those who are so keen on seeing that the children get plenty of religious teaching, to print the following letter which appeared in the *Schoolmaster* for June 8:—

Sir,—I see that at the Head Teachers' Conference being held at Hastings this week "School Buildings" are to be discussed. Personally, I regard it a sad reflection on our Union that there are still almost 1,500 blacklisted schools being used in this country. Most of them were built fifty or sixty years ago, not to educate, but to instruct. They are just barns. We all know the type. For all the world they remind us of churches with their heavy stone-framed windows so high that most of the floor space is in shadow. Ofttimes the children have to sit with their faces to the light. The church and its needs were of paramount importance when they were designed and the children and their needs secondary. But in 1870 primary education, after all, was in its infancy, and no expert knowledge had been collected. The log books of these schools record that from the beginning to the present day the temperature on cold winter days is far too low (my statistics for 1932 prove the average temperature for February was 41.7 deg. Fahr., and March, 46.4 deg.). There exists the same old hygienic defects, poor ventilation, shocking cloakroom accommodation, dullness and darkness, no drying room for children who come miles to school, no partitioning of classes. The soapy water from the basins runs on to the road in front of the school to make a stench, especially in hot weather. The desks are old and obsolete, with no back rests, and cause curvature of the spine.

The churches are being renovated, decorated and refurnished. They are installing central heating. Why then allow blacklisted schools to remain dusty and dismal, bleak and bare, cold and comfortless, smoky and smelly, when their needs are far greater? Their draughty shells cause illness and misery. Their inadequate heating precludes educational progress. They are just dug-outs falling in—overcrowded, insanitary, badly lighted, unhealthy, damp, dark, smelly, unventilated—but saving the country a few paltry millions of filthy lucre at the expense of the future citizens of the Empire.

The Duchess of Athol will not be nearly so upset to learn these facts—although we expect she already knows them, as she would be to learn that the children are not getting plenty of religious instruction.

Churchmen and Nonconformists are delighted that the Royal Commission on Lotteries and Betting looks like making these things thoroughly illegal. One pious writer's comment is that "a courageous attempt has been made to lay down lines on which a serious social evil may be brought under public control." The words "public control" are delightful. We agree, however, that the £11,000,000 going to Ireland might have been retained for our own hospitals, and would have been but for the working of the Christian conscience which condemns gambling for two reasons. One, that the backer is not certain to win, and two, that many get enjoyment out of its gain.

Christians are a long time learning the truth about themselves—few read the *Freethinker*! For instance, the Rev. A. E. Whitham has only just discovered the following, and passes it on to Methodist readers:—

A few lessons in elementary psychology would teach many of us, who think ourselves superior in tastes and ideals, that very ordinary and sometimes rather low motives lie behind our superior attitudes. There is more egotism than idealism in many of these attitudes.

We may add that there is rarely an issue of the *Freethinker* that does not reveal the "rather low motives" lying behind Christian beliefs and actions. For instance, when a Christian goes regularly to church, gives as regularly to the collection-plate, tries to "get right with God," and seeks to propagate his religion, his real motive is by no means a lofty one. He is hoping to receive some of God's favours in this world, or else post-mortem reward. He thinks it "pays" to please God rather than to antagonize him. And he "rationalizes" these motives, and talks about doing things religious for "love" of God.

Professor Julian Huxley suggests (in the *Listener*) that the application of biological knowledge to practical affairs will produce great changes in human nature and human habits as revolutionary as those which were brought about by the application of mechanical and chemical science to practical affairs last century. He therefore declares that:—

The world needs a philosophy of life. And instead of one based on the idea of fixity we must have one based on the idea of change and progress. Without that we are heading for chaos. It is well worth while thinking about quite remote effects of science in order to see the general trend of our evolution and think out a general philosophy to fit it. Only then shall we be ready for the control over our own human destiny which science is holding out to us.

In this connexion it may well be suggested that the philosophy of Secularism furnishes the kind of philosophy required. It excludes supernatural hopes and fears, and repudiates all alleged divine guidance or interference—such ideas having proved to be mischievous and also obstructive to change and progress. Moreover, it inculcates self-reliance and prepares man for the control of human destiny.

Catholics have never been particular opponents of the use of force except when applied to themselves so that it is very interesting to see how they view the brave Nazis' recent attacks on individual members of the Catholic Congress at Munich. With the courage which is the admiration of the world, the Nazis clubbed priests and laymen and broke up meetings and made violent onslaughts on Catholic leaders. The Nazis' speciality is always to attack where they cannot be hit back, and so long as Jews were the victims, the average Catholic could always claim either that the Jews deserved it or that they were Communists, and were therefore "asking for it." One eminent Churchman's comment is "unless Herr

Hitler either controls or disowns his friends, there will be little sympathy left in the world for Germany." The Nazis are thoroughly Christian.

Hitler is compelling all school teachers to register their religion. Those "who avow themselves Agnostics or Atheists are dismissed at once." The same kind of clearing up is to take place throughout the Civil Service and German Labour Councils. Jews and Catholics are lumped with Atheists and Communists as anti-religious, and the Nazis are going to unite all the Evangelical Churches under one banner. The Protestant Church of Prussia heartily endorses the movement.

A pious writer remarks, "Every moment alone is an opportunity for man to hear the voice of God." Listening to the alleged voice of God has throughout the ages, set man grovelling on his knees before a bogey born of his own fears. Inspired by the alleged voice of God, man has committed some of the worst crimes the world has known. Listening to the voice of God brings modern man mentally down to the level of the Stone Age.

A well-known Labour politician, famed for his piety, contends that the new conditions to-day need new ideas. "This is not the nineteenth century; it is the twentieth. We want twentieth century ideas and twentieth century methods." Curiously enough, this worthy person draws inspiration from a Holy Book in which is enshrined First Century ideas and none since. His equipment of twentieth century ideas would therefore appear to be decidedly incomplete.

A book published recently arranged a competition in which children from all parts of Britain were asked to submit ten questions to which they would like answers. Believers in the Design argument particularly should make a brave attempt to answer some of them. We should dearly like to see the replies, for example, to these:—

How did God make himself?
Does a hen know chickens will come out of her eggs when she is sitting?
Why does the cuckoo cuckoo?
Why does boiling make eggs hard and potatoes soft?
What did the first living thing eat?

Dean Inge's faculty for saying things which make his fellow-believers feel uncomfortable is again exemplified in his latest pronouncement. "God," he said, "does not always punish selfish nations by adversity but gives them prosperity." Now how can a thoroughly orthodox and pious believer reconcile this with his conception of a Deity who invariably rewards the good and punishes the wicked?

According to the Bishop of Chichester, "Science cannot provide a faith for the modern world: it is useless unless we have a faith that can use it." With Christian humbleness the Bishop thinks, of course, that only the Christian Church can provide mankind with a "faith" or philosophy for the proper use of science. To anyone who is acquainted with the historic obstruction of the Christian Church and Faith to Science, the claim made by the bishop sounds remarkably like a piece of cool cheek. Seeing how often the guidance of the Christian Church in human affairs has proved beyond question to have been mischievous, nobody but a fool or a parson would expect the Church or its Faith to furnish reliable guidance for the proper use of science. Still, one must excuse the Bishop of Chichester. Hawking religion is his trade.

Civilization stands to-day at the cross-roads, declares a Missionary Society; mankind must learn to live in fellowship or perish. World Brotherhood of Man, which the Church exists to promote, is the only hope. For our

part, we are not surprised that a sceptical world doubts the ability of the Christian Church and Faith to achieve world brotherhood. Nineteen centuries of experience of that Church and religion—with its disputes and persecutions and warring sects—unmistakably bears witness to the fact that world brotherhood is extremely unlikely to come from such a source. But, of course, the Missionary Society is only addressing people who believe what they are told.

A reader of the *Daily Express* seems to be doubtful whether the people of this nation are really irreligious. He has just heard the tale of the "astounding increase in the current sales of our English Bible translation." Yet, he says, outside religious institutions he has never seen it being read. Therefore, he thinks that "these ever-increasing sales of the Bible as literature to an apparently irreligious people are very puzzling." Perhaps the puzzle would, we suggest, dissolve itself if he (1) refused to believe everything he is told about Bible sales, and (2) could discover exactly what is the number of Bibles that are annually sold (not given away) in this country to non-adherents of the churches.

During the past ten years there have been weekly doses of religion in the newspapers, daily and weekly doses broadcast by the B.B.C., and large numbers of evangelizing efforts—invariably reported as "successful" or "very satisfactory"—all over the country. To save guessing at the result of this lavish free distribution of "glad tidings," let us listen to the President of the Baptist Union, who dolefully announces that "Seventy-five per cent of the population never cross the threshold of our churches." Only twenty-five per cent of the people confess to being "miserable sinners," and willing to accept everlasting bliss for making the confession! The only consolation to the parsons—is that the state of affairs is no worse. Meanwhile, that noble horse, Religious Revival, seems to be a non-starter in the Evangelization of Britain race. This is greatly to be lamented, seeing that the opportunities are unprecedented, as the religious scribes put it.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE best way, perhaps, to test the value of a book or institution, is to ask ourselves what we should miss or lose if that book or institution were destroyed, or had never existed. To select the Bible and Christianity, for example, what would the world miss or lose were they both erased from existence? We should still have left all the sunshine and other weather that fall to our lot now; all the agriculture, trade, commerce, art, science, fine arts; all our literature (except the religious). No truth would be lost, beyond a few scraps of history, no useful art, scarcely a fruitful or beautiful idea. In social life there would be more charity, and we should miss most of the world of cant; persecution would cease, and imposture would dwindle down to extremely narrow dimensions. In law we should miss scarcely one good statute, while many barbarous ones would disappear. What then should we lose if Christianity and the Bible were no more? It seems to me that it would be a welcome relief for most, while those whose "craft" it is to teach this religion would be reduced to—the necessity of seeking honest and useful employment; a few sincere mortals would for a time feel just like smokers who resolve to cure the habit which enslaves them—unspeakably miserable; and the hypocrites and bigots would gnash their teeth in futile rage over the loss of their keenest weapons of persecution. That seems to me to be a pretty full summary of the losses the world would sustain if the Bible and Christianity were suddenly destroyed. The real loss is so trifling that it is not worth estimating; and even the sentimental loss would soon be found to amount to exceedingly little.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—F. Muston, 28. 6d.

FUND FOR ADVERTISING THE "FREETHINKER."—A. Cohen 21s.

H. BLACK.—No member of the N.S.S. is warranted in using his membership as authority for his representing the Society in any sense whatever without the express authority of the Executive. The particular incident to which you refer has already been dealt with, and we do not think it is likely to occur again. If it does there is a very simple way of dealing with it. Members of the National Secular Society may, of course, belong to any other organization he or she likes. But they do so as private individuals, and not as representing anyone but themselves.

B. L. BOWES.—Obliged for cutting.

J. BARTRAM.—Mr. Cohen was away over the week-end, and owing to your order for literature being addressed to him, it could not receive attention until he returned. The other matter in your letter is under consideration. Can you suggest any plan by which something in the direction you suggest could be attempted?

D. SIMPSON.—We do not share your view as to the importance of the British Israel Movement. Religious stupidity will find its advocates so long as a particular type of mind exists. But it is not likely to affect the general course of development away from religion. The British Israel campaign strikes us as more providing material for study in social pathology than anything else.

M. SPRATT.—We do not know anyone named "Charles Daron." Have you made a mistake in the name?

W. CARROLL.—We believe Hitler is a Roman Catholic. Pleased to hear from a new and interested reader.

A.C.—You do not appear to have grasped our point. Anyone born in England is a British subject and, legally, an Englishman. We were not thinking of Jews desiring to lose "racial characteristics"—that would encourage the development of all sorts of ugly qualities; but emphasizing the fact that these group characteristics are perpetuated and strengthened by segregation, and tend to die out where complete social equality exists.

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. Rosett, 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.

Arrangements for the Bradlaugh Public meeting at the Friends House, Euston Road, which is to take place on Saturday, September 23 are now practically complete. Professor Laski will take the chair, and the speakers will include Mr. George Bernard Shaw, Judge Cluer, Dr.

Drysdale, Mr. George Lansbury, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, Lord Snell, Mr. Fred Maddison, Mr. F. Verinder, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. A. B. Moss, and Mr. Chapman Cohen. The tickets for the meeting will be one shilling for the body of the hall, and sixpence for the gallery. All seats will be numbered, and only tickets for which there are seats will be sold. For this reason early application for tickets should be made for what should be an historic occasion. It is no use waiting till a few days before the meeting before applying for tickets. They will not, we expect, then be available. Tickets may be had from the *Freethinker* Office, or from the Secretary, Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, 38 Cursitor Street, E.C.4.

The Centenary Dinner, on September 26, will be held at the Trocadero Restaurant. There will be numerous well-known speakers. The tickets will be 10s. 6d. each. We also advise early application for these.

Amongst the "Great Jubilees of 1933," the *Church Times* notices the "curious entry" of Bishop Colenso. To-day, we are told, his name is known only to the student of history, and already at the time of his death he had become "quite insignificant." The *Church Times* has a certain generosity of view which is missing from most religious journals, and if it wishes to maintain that reputation it must take a broader view of a man's activities than his effect on the doctrines and government of a particular Church. But Colenso's offence was evidently so rank that it smelt to Heaven, and it evidently smells even to this day. He did not respond to the Bibliolatry (a hideous thing) and, if you like, the Christology, of his day; therefore any niche he has carved for himself on time has to be minimised.

When the *Church Times* tells us that "his many fine qualities were largely neutralized by his self-reliance, his heretical temper," it is plain once more that the critical appraisal of anyone cannot be left to theologically-minded people. Outside the Churches the qualities the *Church Times* rejects will be accepted as being amongst the rarest and at the same time, the most socially valuable that there are. We are told as well that "much he wrote about the Pentateuch soon became the commonplace of scholarship, though Colenso was inadequately equipped for his task, and expressed himself with a naive crudity which aroused indignation." This strikes one as a rather shabby attempt to pull back with the left hand what the right hand has given. If one admitted, which one does not, Colenso's inadequate equipment and his naive crudity, then it is clear that if the Higher Critics with all the scholarship did not deliver the goods before Colenso they must have been suffering from some grievous handicap. Probably it was because they lacked the momentum acquired from Colenso's loyalty to Truth, for his plaint was, "It is painful to me how little love of truth there is among those from whom one hoped most." As for the "indignation" he aroused, Dean Stanley in 1880, said "He was assailed by scurrilous and unscrupulous invective"—and it is the Dean's English that fits the facts.

Activity and enthusiasm are behind an effort to form a Branch of the N.S.S. at Derby. Meetings are being held in the Market Square, and a debate has been arranged to take place on Tuesday evening, July 4, at 7.30, on "Christianity v. Secularism," between Pastor R. W. Tomlinson and Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. There are a large number of Freethinkers in Derby, and will those willing to help in the formation of a Branch of the N.S.S. communicate with Mr. Blackman, 11 Macaulay Street, Sinfyn, Derby.

After his successful campaign in Swansea, Mr. G. Whitehead goes on to Liverpool. Commencing to-day (July 2) meetings will be held each evening until Friday, details announced in the Lecture Notices Column. The Liverpool Branch N.S.S. is very active and may be relied upon to take full advantage of the possibilities in Mr. Whitehead's visit. Unattached Freethinkers might also make it the opportunity for joining-up and helping to carry on the local work.

Science and The Future Evolution of Man.

WHILE discouraging hopes of supernatural aid, science can teach man how to turn his own labours to profit. While dispelling fears of supernatural intervention, it can show man how to overcome the difficulties which he encounters.

It is science that has given us sea, air and land transport; which has tapped minerals, harnessed electricity, and made the ether carry messages. But quite a new field of activity is opened-up in biological discovery which may lead to man's partial control over his own evolution.

It is known that mutants can be effected by physical causation (such as the application of strong light rays) on the chromosomes (units of heredity). What if man were to discover more about this, and were finally able to make a successful application of the physical agency, obtaining thereby a pre-conceived result? And suppose this knowledge could be used in the treatment of human mutants: man would have in his hands an instrument of evolutionary progress.

The discovery, too, that sex is determined at conception by reason of two kinds of cells (the male and female determining), of which the female is the larger by the possession of an extra chromosome, paves the way to a possible control of sex. Add to this the already utilized knowledge of birth-control, sterilization, and wise birth-promotion, and the prospect becomes even more interesting.

But unfortunately, besides being interesting, it might also be dangerous. What if these wonderful instruments were to fall into the hands of the Sinister Few, who were to use this power for personal aggrandisement, making themselves lords of the earth?

What is required is, as Wells would say, foresight.

True, but where does such foresight reside? In what section of the community shall we look for it? We speak of the "self-government of the people." Possibly . . . given the right sort of people. Adhesion to this principle (which is contained in the N.S.S. principles and objects), need not commit the adherent to the advocacy of its adoption in the case of the people of 1933. If I profess anarchy, it need not indicate my desire to see it tried *now*.

I cannot believe that this foresight resides in the "people"—any nation of people, that is, of 1933. Consequently their "self-government" (assuming that it has not only been a name, but a fact) seems to me, for the present at any rate, inadvisable.

Nor am I at all sanguine that this foresight characterizes those who, at second or third-hand, execute the "self-government" of the people. That is to say, I do not look for "professors of foresight" among politicians. Monarchs and Fascisti I am likewise disposed to pass over.

Shall we, then, not look for this foresight among the scientists themselves? History abounds with instances of the high principles of men of science. Jealous they may have been, at times, for their own prestige, but the prospect of monetary gain has been completely overwhelmed by the *interest* in nature's phenomena—interest in science for its own sake. The formulation of a scientific law compares with the work of a Beethoven or a Raphael. The uplifting influence of science has been a remarkable feature throughout the ages. Some scientific thinkers like Bruno, have faced death rather than recant their beliefs. Personal aggrandisement cannot compete with scientific interest. Bertrand Russell speaks in glowing terms of his experiences in mathematics; as the Americans say,

he gets a kick out of it. In science, then, selfishness is submerged; interest is predominant. Marlowe's version of Dr. Faustus was only a legend.

It seems permissible to assume that our present-day problems, like unemployment, are capable of solution by science rather than by politics. Will science oust the politician? If so, what sort of Government will it adopt?

If we are proletarian in temperament we shall envisage a society guided by science with the full knowledge, understanding and supervision of an enlightened and educated Democracy, whose people collaborate with their votes in the maintenance of a scientific, democratic state.

If, however, we distrust Democracy; if we have no confidence in what we sometimes like to call the mob—the Christian mob, who are so easily deluded by whatever the popular press cares to print, who so easily succumb to palatable newspaper opinion; if we doubt their ability to do the best for society, we shall picture a shorter cut, with the people playing only a passive part. We shall conceive a group of scientists, possessing decisive power in virtue of their knowledge and apparatus, and who may thereby resort to coercion as an expedient, and who, out of the intense interest they take in the experiment, will, figuratively, bring sociology into the laboratory, where they will grow a people to their liking, integrate in them certain conditioned reflexes, deprive them of any voice in the management of affairs, and aim at the cultivation of a contented, peaceful, artistic and cultured people: in brief, a benevolent expert Oligarchy, infused with foresight and armed with science.

I do not commit myself to either alternative; I merely suggest. But it seems evident that in the hands of politicians we just stumble along; whereas in the hands of scientists we can have a human community living in harmony, a society operating purposefully, with plan. In Russia, at least, this ideal has been visualized.

How, then, can a scientifically governed State direct the evolution of its members? "If intelligent understanding of the problem is the means by which man is going to direct his future evolution," says Prof. T. H. Morgan, "success seems more likely in a society limited in numbers." (*Scientific Basis of Evolution*). Energy should not be concentrated on the mere job of keeping alive, as is the case in a society grown so large that numbers can barely get a livelihood, while others remain workless.

Two solutions to the problem of over-population are birth-control and the redistribution of land. A rigorous execution of the former might in a very short time dispense with the need for the latter, which seems the more likely to lead to friction. However, it has been argued in these columns by Mr. R. B. Kerr, who has the double advantage of being both lucid and well-informed.

As against the limitation of numbers, it is sometimes argued that the greater the number of individuals the greater the possibility of favourable mutants. The argument seems to overlook the fact that this would be more than compensated for by the better chances of mutant-survival when the conditions are more favourable for all individuals. It is not enough for favourable mutants to appear: they must be maintained.

Along with birth-control, birth-promotion. Such an important event as the production of a human life can, and should, be lifted from the realm of haphazard to the level of an event of social importance, which it undoubtedly is.

According to Behaviorist ideals the child should fall almost literally from the womb, or, speaking of

the future, the incubator,¹ into the educationists' bag. In *The Psychological Care of Infant and Child*, Dr. John B. Watson, America's leading Behaviorist, seeks to expose the many dangers of motherlove.

* * *

It may even, of course, be possible for science to breed foresight, but in this discussion of the advantages of an expert oligarchy I have had in mind the transitional stage.

G. H. TAYLOR.

¹ Later months of foetal development may conceivably be spent in an incubator.

"Powder and Shot."

ON May 24, "Empire Day" was celebrated in most of the schools in Great Britain, under the direction in many instances of Bishops, Brigadier-Generals and clergymen. In some cases even, the celebrations took the form of a religious ceremony in the church itself. This means that millions of British children were forced to take part in a systematically organized orgy of praying, hymning and flag-wagging, accompanied by praise and worship of the British Empire as the creation and expression of the will of God on earth. The justice and morality, the temperance and the courage of the British people were extolled as being high above all others. Their patriotic and philanthropic mission towards the millions of subject peoples was dealt with in impressive and inspiring language. In short, the children were deliberately lied to in the name of "education" and of "culture."

We Freethinkers cannot discriminate between dogmas which are impressed on the plastic minds of the children in the community in the interests of organized religion, and those which are so impressed in the name of Imperialism. In both cases the aims call for our condemnation, because they seek to prevent the children from thinking for themselves so that they will in the future be unable to distinguish between right and wrong. And the result of teaching those dogmas is in both cases the same, for the taught are largely unable to throw off the chains of superstition and authority which bind them and are disinclined to strive for their own freedom or for the just treatment of others.

It is, therefore, no surprise to find the clericals allying themselves with those who proclaim the divine right of the Britisher to convert and exploit weaker races over which they have assumed political and economic control. We find the Churches lending their experience in the black arts of imparting dogmatic instruction, and of inculcating superstition, (arts which they have carefully perfected through the long centuries), to the Imperialists. They receive in exchange the recognition of their corrupt institutions as State Departments plus any temporal advantages which their officials can lay their spiritual hands upon.

We have culled from various provincial papers specimens of the Imperialist propaganda in which the clergy give their considerable assistance to the Imperialists. And these examples are but the more outstanding and open manifestation of what is being continually instilled into the children through the national system of education.

At Tewkesbury, for instance, the "tiny tots" were subjected to the process in the following way:—

TINY TOTS SALUTE.

A pretty little celebration of Empire Day was that enacted by the scholars of the Tewkesbury Infants' Council School in their playground, under the direc-

tion of their headmistress (Miss Morris). The first item, entitled "Britannia and her Sons," depicted Britannia welcoming her Colonies. An Empire song was rendered by other tiny tots, and three gave a recitation entitled "Empire Day." The final item was a picturesque dance round the Maypole.

(*Gloucestershire Echo*, May 25, 1933).

At Yarmouth 450 children at the Greenacre school, many of whom were in Guide, Scout, Sea-Scout and Cub uniform, were told by Brigadier-General Sir Thomas Jackson that:—

People realized that where there was British Government there was honesty, justice, fair dealing and peace, where possible.

The Mayor who spoke next was equally euphemistic. He said:—

The Empire was a great heritage, founded on courage, integrity, and the spirit of "never despair," and it was for them to carry it on, and show that it was not welded together mainly by force, but by honour and square dealing.

(Both quotations from *Yarmouth Independent*, May 27, 1933).

At St. Dunstan's (Derby) the Rev. G. R. A. Hartley presided and read a prayer for the Empire and for peace. Sir Henry Fowler delivered an address, in which he referred to "Britain's Queen," Victoria, in the following terms:—

She did much to make England a better country in every standard and live nearer to God than ever before. He told how boys and girls in lands overseas were being taught through our missionaries to be good men and women and so, through our Empire, we were trying to make the world a better place.

(*Derbyshire Advertiser*, May 26, 1933.)

At Grantham, in St. John's Church, where a service, for the scholars of Spitalgate School to attend, had been arranged, the Rev. J. Shillaker unbosomed himself to the following effect:—

Their great Empire was the very greatest that had ever been. They, in that Church, belonged to the white boys and girls of the world, but they had also black, red, yellow and brown boys and girls in the Empire of theirs, which was so large that the sun never set upon it. But there had been other great Empires before theirs, not quite so great, but they had all disappeared. Why? Because they did not serve God as they ought to have done . . . What he wanted the boys and girls to remember was that if they wanted their Empire to last they had to help, in the same way that they helped their fathers and mothers to keep the home together. They would have to keep the British Empire together, because it was God's Empire. God gave us this Empire so that we might spread the knowledge of God all over the wide world. Pointing to the Union Jack placed in the sanctuary, he said, "We know very well wherever that flag flies there are no slaves; everybody is free. You know in this country we are free and it is the best country in the world in which to live." There was, however, he said, a greater Empire than that—God's Empire, which was the world. So they must think not only of the British Empire, but of that greater Empire which took in the whole world. And so Empire Day from that point of view meant a lot to them; it meant each boy and girl growing up to be a good church boy and girl, that they might help the world to know all about God, so that the world would be God's Empire.

(*Grantham Journal*, May 26, 1933.)

At another school in Cheshire the headmaster had composed a prayer which was offered at the Empire Day celebrations. It read as follows:—

O Almighty God, who has granted great power and dominion to the British Empire of which we are

members, we approach Thee with all humility, and present our bodies to be a living sacrifice for Thy holy service.

(*North Cheshire Herald*, May 27, 1933).

At St. Mary's School, Nottingham, Bishop Talbot remarked that:—

We must remember that the basis of our Empire is not the Englishman being top dog, but that we shall be a family of free people under one flag.

(*Nottingham Evening Post*, May 24, 1933.)

On the basis of the foregoing it is not difficult to realize to what harmful influences the children are subjected upon "Empire Day." The point is: what can we do to overcome such a deliberate creation of false views in the minds of the children and of such deliberate misrepresenting of the facts on which they are to base their future judgment and conduct. In the light of the cant and hypocrisy contained in the quotations we have given, it is clearly our duty to make known the truth as widely as we can.

We propose, therefore, to give some indication next week of the way in which the British Empire really was acquired and how it is maintained. We intend also to show how the Churches and the clergy contributed their share to a not always glorious history. For, we think it is of the highest importance that children, and (in so far as a great many of them have had an Imperialistic education), adults too, should understand and feel the shame of the treatment which their "black, yellow and brown" brothers and sisters often receive at the hands of "God's Englishmen"—to use Mr. Baldwin's famous phrase. It is even possible that they may find themselves in agreement with the conclusions of the little Indian boy, who, on being told by his white teacher that "the sun never sets on the British Empire," said, as his puzzled wonder at this natural phenomenon gave place to the dawn of sudden inspiration, "Of course, God knows better than to trust Englishmen in the dark."

G.F.G.

Austin Holyoake.

ON "DANIEL THE DREAMER AND MAN OF ACTION."

AUSTIN HOLYOAKE continues his account of Daniel as follows:—

Daniel then applied to Melza the prince's deputy and said: "Prove thy servant I beseech thee ten days; and let them give us pulse to eat and water to drink: and let our countenances be looked upon before thee, and the countenance of the children that eat of the portion of the King's meat, as thou seest deal with thy servants." Daniel seems to have included Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego in his request, though it does not appear that they desired such fare. However, Metzlar no doubt thinking that a ten days experiment out of three years was no great risk, granted the request, and lo, at the end of ten days, their countenances appeared fairer and fatter in flesh than all that eat of the King's meat. This was remarkably rapid training, and were it stated in any other book one might hesitate to believe it; but after this who can doubt that four persons so highly favoured even in their beans and water were destined by heaven to work out some great moral purpose? At the expiration of the three years all the wise children collected together were brought before the King. And the King communed with them; and among them all was found none like unto Daniel and his companions; for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.

In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams, and his spirit was troubled. So he called all the magicians, astrologers and sorcerers, and the Chaldeans before him, and begged of them to give him the interpretation of his dreams, but as he had forgotten all about them himself he gave them a hopeless task. But Mr. Holyoake says: "They answered as honest and simple men would, that there was not a man upon the earth that could do it." As the King had quite forgotten altogether what his dream was about, the challenge was put to Daniel, and of course, knowing this fact, Daniel had no hesitation in giving an interpretation which quite satisfied the credulous King; and Austin Holyoake says that he himself could have done it as easily as Daniel.

Daniel also is alleged to have had visions which nobody saw but himself, although there were others present, which showed that he suffered from what Macbeth called "a heat oppressed brain." And as a conclusion Daniel is told that Michael the Great Prince who standeth for the children of his people shall appear at a given time to deliver Israel from her troubles.

and so the book ends. This is the sort of stuff that appears in a book which is alleged to be an inspired production, and forms part of the so-called "Holy Bible." Mr. Austin Holyoake then sums up as follows:—

It is very melancholy to think that a document so utterly worthless should be included in a collection of so-called sacred writings. Its chronology is inaccurate, its morality is defective, its imagery is poor and at times grotesque.

Unless the results of modern criticism are carefully kept from the theological students in our Universities, it is impossible to imagine that gentlemen of average intelligence can be trained to enter deliberately on a mission to preach as the "Word of God" such outrages upon common sense as are to be found in that collection of Jewish romances called the Bible. They are proved to be not history, to contain absurd statements, and to inculcate impracticable and immoral doctrines; then what can they be but crude romances written for the amusement of unlettered people? But this is another field of speculation, which I am not now prepared to enter; but those who are acquainted with the Apocryphal Gospels still extant, will admit that there is some force in the conjecture.

And now listen to this criticism of the Bible by Austin Holyoake, which seems to me to be quite up to date, although it was written over half a century ago:—

Some writers who were themselves convinced of the worthlessness of the Scriptures, have described Bible criticism as being unprofitable and useless. To such people I admit it is a waste of time—they are perfectly at ease. Their minds are not tortured by doubts, misgivings and apprehensions arising from the dreadful and bewildering nature of Bible teaching. But there are thousands of young men and women fresh from the Sunday school who are not so fortunate; and till priests and teachers cease to warp and cramp the infantile mind with dogmas of inspiration and infallibility, the Freethinker must never cease in his endeavours to thwart and prevent by showing how chaotic, how utterly untrustworthy is the book upon which they rely. If the Bible were allowed to rest upon its own merits, there would be no need to trouble about it, as it contains within itself its own refutation as a veracious history, as a reliable moral teacher, and as a guide in the affairs of life.

There are hundreds of books vastly superior to it in all these respects. But when the Bible is put forward with the enormous pretensions of infallibility in every chapter, verse, line and word, it becomes a demoralizing book, which every earnest man and woman freed from its dangerous influence should strive unceasingly to destroy. If there were not thousands of men paid millions a year to preach the doctrine that the Bible is an inspired book; if armies of missionaries were not sent all over the world to

force this book upon the unwilling natives of foreign lands, supported for the most part by the pence wrung from poor Sunday school children; if there were not chapels, churches and cathedrals and temples built and dedicated to its use, and all the influence and power of the State used to uphold the delusion—we might go on with the more genial work of instructing one another in science and all useful knowledge. If it were not for the fictitious halo which is thrown about a mere book, and a very imperfect one too, mankind would soon awaken from the dream which has so long deadened their understanding and see in the Bible a mass of contradictions, absurdities, immoralities and false teaching, which passed current among a small and barbarous people in a barbarous time, but which is totally unfit for the age in which we live. It is demoralising and deluding to preach the infallibility of a book which contains such doctrines as those laid down in the Pentateuch; which represents the bloody and devastating tears of the Jews as sanctioned by a God of justice and mercy; which holds up such men as Moses, David, Jacob and Solomon as servants of the most High; which gives the keys of heaven to a false friend like Peter; which sanctions human slavery, which rebukes not acts of the grossest cruelty, treachery and deceit; and which is misleading both in physical and natural history.

I think that all my readers will agree that in these selections from the writings of the late Austin Holyoake, he not only establishes his contention that the Book of Daniel is full of absurdities that are so childish and foolish as to cause nothing but laughter or contempt in the minds of sensible people, and that the Bible itself is not a fit and proper book to be put into the hands of children to be read and studied as the inspired work of a God of Goodness, but also is the fallible writings of an unscientific and in many ways an ignorant people, living in a primitive and very far from a civilized age.

I think also in the writings of the late Austin Holyoake readers will recognize a scholar and a critic of great discrimination in the treatment of problems of real interest to all earnest thinkers and for the general benefit of mankind.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Worth While.

"A TOURIST'S GUIDE TO IRELAND," by Liam O'Flaherty (Mandrake Press, 3s. 6d.). The title of this book is to a certain extent misleading, because it is rather a description of the Irish people than of Irish places; but the author is a profound student of his own countrymen, and the book throws a flood of light on clericalism in Ireland and vividly portrays the poisonous influence of priestcraft. It provides much ammunition for Freethought lecturers with regard to the present state of Ireland, and readers would be well advised to get out the book from their library if they cannot afford to buy it for themselves. Irishmen have often complained that Englishmen and other foreigners have written about a people they do not know and do not understand: no such charge can be brought against Liam O'Flaherty. He knows his own people inside out and outside in.

A *Lawyer's Notebook*, Anonymous (Secker, 5s.). The author of this book is obviously a man of broad experience, with a wide outlook on life. He writes from a definitely rationalistic standpoint on numerous subjects—Feminism, Birth Control, Freethought, the Catholic Church, Liquor, etc. He writes with an intimate knowledge of many kinds of men, and among his friends are numbered Edward Carpenter, Havelock Ellis, H. G. Wells, and many others. The charm of this book is that it can be picked up at any time and opened in any place—always with interest and refreshment.

CRITICUS.

Half-Emancipated Religionists.

ONE sometimes wonders whether on the whole men like Dean Inge and Bishop Barnes do either good or harm to the cause of Freethought and other rationality. Their denunciations of the remnants of magic, necromancy and other of the cruder superstitions that are still commonly associated with the religion they profess may be welcomed, as well as the attacks of one of them on Roman Catholicism, which, of course, represents the most irrational and degrading form of widely organized Christian doctrines and ritual. But whether their strictures have any effect on general opinion we cannot tell.

These thoughts arise on looking through Dr. Barnes' recently delivered Gifford Lectures, on *Scientific Theory and Religion*. In this book we note the disastrous mental fall of one who tries to maintain a position between the scientific and theological stools. A useful evolutionary account of man and his world is given. But instead of adopting the rational conclusion to which all the established facts and principles plainly point, the author becomes immersed in sloughs of obscurantism, accompanied by a great deal of misleading suggestion.

Probably the most extraordinary example of this occurs in the discussion of "virgin birth." It is stated, truly enough, that non-sexual reproduction is common among lowly animals. Some have only this method of reproducing their kind; while others, e.g., insects, employ both sexual and non-sexual methods. The latter, however, does not occur among the higher animals, though the unfertilized egg of a lower vertebrate, such as a frog, may be caused to develop into a more or less normal individual by pricking it with a needle dipped in a suitable liquid.

Dr. Barnes then says he has "little doubt that biological research will in due course prove a human virgin birth to be possible." This may be right; but as the eggs of mammals are not accessible to experimental treatment we do not know.

It is then stated that a being so produced (though having only half the number of chromosomes, the bearers of heredity, and of course having no vestige of paternal heredity) would possess a mind of a more or less normal type. This seems to be very questionable. The Bishop thinks that the nature of such a being would *not* be "congruous with the Incarnation"; but he sees no necessary opposition between such a mode of "Divine action" and the assumption of "the Divinity of Christ."

This amazing display of nonsensicality, this hopeless jumble of natural and supernatural, indicates the obfuscation resulting from the effort to reconcile the real and rational with their opposites. If such a being were produced, either in the ordinary course of events or by experiment, where would divine action come in? How could the phenomenon affect the question of the divinity of a person, or give the theory any support? Would the fact, or its interpretation, apply to Krishna and the rest of the numerous company of the virgin-born or (which is the essence of the matter) god or ghost-conceived beings?

The lecturer displays considerable knowledge of the development of religious and other occult beliefs. Yet it seems impossible for him to recognize the obvious fact that such myths as those cited represent exploded errors which—exactly like those underlying the magico-religious practices he so vigorously condemns—arose and developed principally in a pre-scientific and largely pre-logical age.

J. REEVES.

The world has been harsh and strange :
Something is wrong ; there needeth a change.

Browning.

It is the true office of history to represent the events themselves, together with the counsels, and to leave the observations and conclusions thereupon to the liberty and faculty of every man's judgment.—*Bacon*.

Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT AND ATHEISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Whether I have proof that the universe was not made, or that there was no maker; whether I am wrong in regarding what the "public understands" as an important (though not the only) criterion of the meaning of a word; whether "Hope" is able to explain what he means by the "real meanings" of words—these are matters scarcely pertinent to the original issue which gave rise to this correspondence.

In his first letter "Hope" implied that a Freethinker should not call himself an Atheist because "the definite position restricts freedom more than a confession of ignorance." My reply was to show that if a man can prove the proposition "God exists" to be untrue, he is entitled to call himself an Atheist. I also implied that it is as easy to prove the truth or untruth of the proposition "God exists" as it is to prove the truth or untruth of such propositions as "Jabberwocks exist" or "apples exist."

"Hope's" attitude seems to be that if a man can prove such a proposition as "Osiris exists" to be untrue, he thereby ceases to be a Freethinker, in that he has adopted a definite position to the question of the existence of Osiris. If this is so, then I admit that on the subject of God's existence I am not a Freethinker, as "Hope" interprets the word. For I am as definite about the untruth of the proposition "God exists" as I am about the untruth of the proposition "Osiris exists." At the same time I must beg to differ from "Hope" in his interpretation of the word Freethinker.

C. S. FRASER.

LAST COME, FIRST SERVED.

SIR,—May I say how highly I value the mention made by Mimmernus of the work done by the Humanitarian League, in his insistence on the fact that Freethinkers have not been idle in social service?

There is at present a curious tendency to ascribe all humane efforts to some religious inspiration; as when a zoophilist writer urges that kindness to animals is a duty on Christians "precisely for the sake of their faith," though what that faith has done for the benefit of animals it were hard to discover. That the churches should become aware of their own remissness in the past is well enough; but that the late-comer should appropriate all the credit to himself does not seem quite decent.

HENRY S. SALT.

AN INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE.

SIR,—At the Annual Conference the international language question was discussed, and the opinion was expressed that Esperanto is the most suitable. Sooner or later we shall have to decide this; may I therefore note that the only argument I ever heard in favour of Esperanto is that of expediency, it being better known and established than any other. It is adopted by the International Labour Office, and recognized by the British Association, League of Nations and International Broadcasting Union.

But these facts, I consider, are a testimony, not to Esperanto, but to the idea of an auxiliary international language. The claims of Ido for comparative simplicity and beauty cannot be ignored. A perhaps not too uncommon example illustrates. In Esperanto:—

Mi vidis la najbarajn knabojn farantajn grandajn rughajn makulojn kaj longajn buajn striojn chiujn miajn belajn novajn lerno-librojn.

Translated into Ido it reads:—

Me vidis la vicina pueri facar granda maakuli, reda e blua strii en omna mea bela lerno-libri nova. I wonder if there is a retaliative example.

G. H. TAYLOR, M.R.S.T.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Alternative to Dictatorship."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, July 2, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, July 2, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 3, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, July 6, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, July 2, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, July 5, Mr. C. Tuson. Clapham Junction 8.0, Friday, July 7, Mr. C. Tuson.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. Wishart—"Religion: the Enemy of Human Progress."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, A. H. Hyatt, E. C. Saphin, and others. Wednesdays, 7.30, W. P. Campbell Everden. Thursdays, 7.30, E. C. Saphin. Fridays, 7.30, Bryant and Le Maine.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

OXFORD BRANCH N.S.S. DISCUSSION CIRCLE (22 St. John Street, Oxford): 7.0, Reading and Debate on—"Christianity and Slavery."

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 3.0, Mr. De Lacy A Lecture.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.0, Friday, July 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DERBY (Market Square): 7.30, Tuesday, July 4, Debate—"Christianity v. Secularism." Pastor R. W. Tomlinson and Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, Friday, June 30. Saturday, July 1, 8.0. Sunday, July 2, 8.0. Mrs. Whitefield and Messrs Buntin, More and White. Paul Street, Partick, 8.0, Tuesday, July 4, R. Buntin. The Freethinker and other Freethought literature on sale at above meetings.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths), Sunday, July 2, Tuesday, July 4, Wednesday, July 5 and Friday, July 7. Grierson Street, Monday, July 3. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Thursday, July 6. Mr. George Whitehead (London) will address these meetings. All meetings at 8.0.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Platt Lane, Manchester): 7.0, Mr. Sam Cohen (Manchester).

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. F. Bradford.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, July 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, July 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Pier Head near Marine Park): 7.0, Wednesday, July 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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