

THE FREETHINKER

▪ EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN ▪

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

Views and Opinions.

The Power of Religion.

A LENGTHY letter received the other day accuses me of closing my eyes to the power of religion in the lives of men. I must plead not guilty. I could, if I choose, cite much evidence from others who accuse me of wasting my time in attacking religion, and suggesting that I should expend my energies in a more fruitful manner. In defence here I may plead that I should like to give more of my time than I am able to give to other matters that interest me, and which are of undoubted importance. Some time ago a well known journal asked for an article or two dealing with a particular aspect of religion. I complied with the request and then received an invitation to write more articles on other subjects. I declined on the ground that so few were doing what I was doing that I could not spare the time, but that if the editor would open his columns to articles criticizing religion I would willingly write on "Other subjects." My offer was not accepted, and the reason was pretty plain. Of all the vested interests and established institutions that one may attack there is none that offers quite the same opposition as does religion. There is not a political party in the country that would not be hopelessly shattered if it made a direct attack on religion. There is not a man aiming at political or social advancement who would not find himself heavily, or hopelessly handicapped if he made public the fact that he believed all religion to be untrue and injurious. There are few men in business who do not hesitate publicly to denounce religion for fear of suffering in their occupation. The worst, and the bitterest and the most unscrupulous opposition is that which arises from religious animosity. It is not I who fail to take note of the power of religion; and it is certainly not those who ask me to leave religion alone, or who tell me I am "flogging

a dead horse." Those who openly attack religion know its strength; those who say leave it alone fear its strength too much to attack it openly.

* * *

The Religious Mind.

One illustration of the power of religion is unconsciously furnished by the *Evening Standard* of a recent date, in its comments on German affairs. It says:—

Hitler's Germany is to be a Christian Germany. He has restored religious instruction, abandoned under the Republic in every school in the Reich. Every parade of Nazi troops now begins with a religious service—Protestant for Hitler's Protestant followers, Catholic for the Catholics.

The newspapers of July 1 supply a further striking example of the power of religion. Gunman Hitler, or "the men behind the guns," have been endeavouring to "re-organize" the Protestant Churches of Prussia. New Commissions have been appointed, and in one instance a Nazi version of the Lord's prayer has been introduced. So an appeal was made to President Hindenburg by some of the Evangelical Churches of Prussia, and the President asked Hitler to see him and discuss the matter. The President says:—

The dispute that has arisen between the Prussian Government and the Evangelical Churches of Prussia fills me, as an Evangelical Christian, and as head of the State, with the deepest concern. The many telegrams and other messages reaching me show that the German Evangelical Christians are deeply alarmed by this controversy, and are filled with anxiety with regard to their religious freedom. . . . Before God and my conscience I feel compelled to do all in my power to avert these dangers.

This is deeply interesting. It shows that where liberty is threatened we may, in the last resort, depend upon the Christian conscience coming to the rescue. The Christian conscience may remain unmoved while millions of men are deprived of the privileges of free citizens; it is silent in the face of some thirty or forty thousand men who are confined in prison camps, for the offence of not being in agreement with their gangster governors; it can stand the spectacle of men and women being "beaten up," outraged and murdered; but there are limits, and these are reached when these governors lay their hands upon the privileges of the Evangelical Christian Churches. Then "before God" the Christian conscience of the President takes action, and even the gangster chief feels that he has gone too far, and promises to cease his operations—so far as the Evangelical Churches are concerned. It is a striking example of the way in which the Christian conscience stands up in defence of liberty, and of the power of religion on the human mind. Even in America the

gangsters never held the Churches up to ransom. It would have outraged their own religious sense, and would have united the Churches in an active warfare against racketeering.

* * *

Religion and Brotherhood.

The more one reflects on the state of affairs the more one is struck with the power of religion. The Nazis themselves offer a strong illustration of this. They are at one at beating old and young, in starving out those who do not agree with their political programme, in deciding that there must be a large birth-rate in order to provide cannon-fodder, they are agreed in a programme of robbery, murder and outrage. In all this there is perfect unanimity. But when they parade in order to receive fresh encouragement in their enlightened programme, they break up into two separate camps. The Catholics stand on one side, the Protestants stand on the other, and probably each lot damns the other heartily—as heartily as they both damn the Jews. The Nazis can plunder in unison, they can kill in unison, they can lie in unison, the one thing they will not do, and the one thing that even Hitler cannot, dare not, force them to do is to pray together. How can one question the power of religion in the face of this phenomenon?

The phenomenon is not peculiar to Germany. In another form we have it in this country. There are two features about the criminal classes in this country that are fairly well known to investigators. One is their belief in religion, the other is the way in which they carry out their "code of honour." No one has such contempt for a traitor as has the professional thief. To peach on a pal is the most unforgivable of crimes. Here again we have the spectacle of the heartiest co-operation in all kinds of robbery and misdemeanour, combined with an unbridgable gulf in matters of religion. The Jewish crook, the Protestant crook, the Roman Catholic crook, will work loyally side by side, sharing the danger and fairly dividing the spoils. But the Jew would not dream of going with his brother crook into a Christian Church, the Roman Catholic criminal would not think of worshipping in a Protestant chapel. Each knows that other offences might be forgiven, but to be false to one's religion is to place oneself beyond hope.

Not even the law dares to outrage this most sacred feeling. The man who goes to prison finds his spiritual needs carefully provided for. In the ordinary routine of prison there is something of a common life. The men work side by side, they take exercise side by side. But when religion enters each class goes to his special pen. The prison regulation carefully provides a Roman Catholic priest, a Church of England parson, a Methodist minister, and in order to be impartial, thoughtfully makes the provision that if the religious needs of the criminal are not provided for in the variegated parsonic prison equipage, then he may be visited by a minister of his particular denomination, and have a full-dress religious parade all to himself. The only inmates of prisons that are not so provided for are Freethinkers. If they will not have one of the prison's spiritual staff they must go without any. They are not permitted to have, say, a representative of the National Secular Society to visit them. And when some years ago it was suggested that the regulations might be altered to the extent of giving to Freethinkers the privileges enjoyed by Christians and Jews, the reply was that there were not enough Freethinkers in prison to justify the change. So Freethinkers are compelled to pay for the upkeep of the prisons, and allow Christians, Jews, and other godites to get the lion's share of the entertainment.

How Religion Acts.

Most of my readers will be able to supply numerous other illustrations of the peculiar power exercised by religion. They will see it in the usual rule in all sorts of social clubs barring the discussion of religious topics. It is recognized that while men may differ on other subjects and still maintain a friendly intercourse, once begin to differ on religion and good fellowship comes to an end. Why, it is even hailed as a triumph of the Christian spirit that members of different Christian denominations can be brought together on the same platform to work side by side for objects outside of religion. Not all of the sects can reach this height of good-fellowship, but that some of them can be induced to do so after all these centuries of Christian rule is considered a distinct triumph of good nature.

I agree with all that is said of the power of religion; I differ only as to the quality of the influence exerted. In human history, so soon as we get above the primitive stage of existence religion asserts itself as essentially an anti-social force. The condition of its own perpetuation is that it shall resist all change, and challenge every new idea. It divides where social influences tend to unite, it sharpens hatreds where they exist, and creates them where they do not. Religions hate each other in terms of their religion, they unite in terms of the humanity from which they cannot completely separate themselves. I do not ignore the strength of religion, I assert it. I also assert that it is only in proportion as its power is reduced that the better elements of human nature will have opportunity for undisguised expression.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

All Quiet on the Spiritist Front.

"Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not."
Epictetus.

"After centuries of pious stupor men are beginning to awake, and the oracles are being found out."
G. W. Foote.

SIR OLIVER LODGE should be a great favourite with those sentimental folk who profess and call themselves Christian. He possesses a title, and most of them love titles. He champions the immortality of the "soul," which they, in the innocence of their hearts, believe to be identical with the resurrection of the body. And, wearing the rectorial toga of Birmingham University, he creates the illusion that science and their own pet superstitions are as closely allied as the Siamese twins.

In his latest publication, *My Philosophy* (Benn), he makes a promise that, after death, he will communicate with his friends on earth. His method will be to detail a childish habit which he has recorded in a document deposited in the custody of the Society for Psychical Research. In support of this curious method of producing evidence, Sir Oliver refers to the previous case of a half-brick. The story goes that a man gave his sister a marked half of a brick and hid the other in a secret place, promising to reveal the hiding place after his death. Some months after he died the secret was revealed, so Sir Oliver says, by table-rapping at a seance held by the woman and her mother.

"Where is Hafrica?" asks the Cockney housemaid in "Cavalcade." Where is this Promised Land beyond the Grave? Lodge talks glibly and fluently of the "Ether of Space." He suggests that human

beings possess an ethereal as well as a material body, and that death releases this "soul," which can communicate with this earth through mediums.

For a scientist, Lodge is so very credulous, and so easily satisfied. His son, Raymond, was killed in Flanders in September, 1915, and it is claimed that members of his family have been in communication with the young man since that time. One point relates to a prophecy of Raymond's death made at a seance in America a month before he was killed. Another refers to a "sitting" shortly after the young man's death, in which an alleged message from Raymond was conveyed to his mother, containing the words:—

Good God! how father will be able to speak out! Much firmer than he has ever done, because it will touch our hearts.

This is quoted from *Raymond, or Life and Death* (Methuen, 1916). In this book Lodge gives several descriptions of life in the alleged next world, well worth noting, for the reason that they contradict popular ideas on the subject. For example, Raymond is alleged to state that there are men and women in this post-mortem existence, but no children are born there. "People are sent into the physical body to have children on the earth plane." Another piece of information is that there are laboratories over there, and they manufacture all sorts of things in them, including cigars. Another statement is to the effect that Raymond had seen Jesus Christ, presumably wearing the blue blanket and halo of tradition.

Sir Oliver thinks all this gibberish is decisive, and that the verdict for a future existence must be in the affirmative. But, "soft awhile," as Shakespeare puts it. What is there actually in Lodge's so-called evidence to convince the world, or even to carry conviction to the minds of reasonable men and women? The prophecy of his son's dissolution was not improbable, for he was a soldier, and sharing a warrior's constant risk of death. And what are we to make of the revelations of the hereafter, with its "laboratories," and its "cigars," and its "factories?" Are we to suppose that all life is indestructible? In that case, we have still to ask where life begins; and wherever the line may be drawn, it is manifest that the jelly-fish, the cockle, and the bug and the flea, are on the hither side of it, and have "souls" of their own. And, if there is the slightest scintilla of truth in spirit photography, it must be clear that shirts, collars, jewellery, and all manner of clothing, also have "souls," or else they would not survive. Which, as old Euclid says, "is absurd." All these, and a thousand other difficulties, encounter us when we try to consider Lodge's imaginative account of the beautiful land beyond.

There is one point, however, which is well worth attention. Whilst Lodge's description of a future life seems absurd and contradictory to us, it is very different to Orthodox and Christian views on the same subject. Life after death is not painted as being horrific, but as a continuation of life on earth, recalling Shelley's sarcastic description of "hell" as a place "much like London." Apparently, even religious folk now-a-days are getting ashamed of the theological theory of a beautiful heaven and a very horrid hell. Unconsciously, their ideas are becoming more and more secularized. Their ideas may be crude, even childish, but it is some gratification to find that they are far more humane. There is an enormous difference between Lodge's farcical views of a future existence and the tragical views of the Romish Church and the Salvation Army, the real Die-hards of the Christian Churches, and, incidentally, the only two that are not suffering from galloping consumption.

Among religious people the din of conflicting views on a future life is very apparent. Priests talk very loudly and very glibly of the immortality of the "soul," which is pure Platonism, but their own Bible insists on the resurrection of the body, which is as the poles asunder from the priestly view. Priests urge very insistently that the surgeon's knife cannot find the "soul." Yet, in a real sense, Spiritualism does try to find the "soul" with the knife, that is, by material means. It wants to get as good evidence for the existence of Charlie Brown after death as it had for the existence of Charlie before his dissolution. The supposed "spirit" of Brown is required to prove his existence and presence by making himself audible, by showing that he remembers Aunt Eliza, or Grandpa' Brown or the Red Lion, or by having his photograph taken in the same clothes that he used to wear upon the earth, which have long since journeyed to the dust-destroyer.

It must be confessed that the newest and most up-to-date, scientific Spiritualism is very like the old stuff which dazzled our grandparents. The hand may seem the hand of Esau, but the voice is that of Jacob. Behind Lodge's semi-scientific, educated vocabulary, there is always "Sludge, the medium," with his yards of butter-muslin, and a tambourine between his bare toes. In spite of the oracle in the robes of Birmingham University, the riddle remains unanswered, the sphinx is still silent. Couched in educated language, presented with all the eclat and glamour of academic robes, the message is still unconvincing. The newest Spiritualism gives no better answer than the old, and it still uses the old theatrical properties. Mr. Vincent Crummies told Nicholas Nickleby that realism on the stage was "the London way." It is still the London way both in the theatre and in the darkened rooms where they hold seances and retail romance for money.

MIMNERMUS.

Devices to Dispel the Spirits.

IN every region of the globe, the burial customs of mankind are more or less inspired by the fear of the dead. The lying epitaphs on the tombstones and other memorials in our cemeteries and graveyards are the lineal descendants of inscriptions dictated by dread of the ghosts of the departed, who were quite capable of manifesting their resentment, if their praises remained unsung. Yet, when every attention had been paid to the corpse in the form of adulation, sacrifice, and prayer, many of the unappeased spirits made themselves extremely troublesome to the survivors. As a matter of fact, the modern stonemason's memorials, our tombstones above all, have been slowly evolved from the cairns and other massive materials erected upon the resting places of the dead, to imprison their spirits, and thus prevent them from wreaking their malevolence on their posterity.

Pervading the service conducted at the cremation of the late Horatio Bottomley at Golders Green, was the desire that the prince of the spirit realm would act considerately towards the ghost of the dead man. The deity was invited to make allowance for us all. Apprehension, rather than hope, predominates in all our funerary ceremonies, for the fear of punishment in the land of the shades still exercises a morbid influence even in the most secularized communities.

With uncivilized peoples everywhere, as well as with the cultured and refined nations of antiquity—in Egypt, Greece and Rome—the elaborate attentions devoted to the dead are, and were, occasioned not so much by respect and affection, as by the dread of

their uncanny powers for mischief. The neglected ghosts are apt to revisit their indifferent or forgetful relatives, and are inclined to inflict injury on any one they dislike.

The measures taken by primitive tribes to circumvent ill-disposed spirits are almost infinite in variety. Indeed, had the time, ingenuity, and expenditure lavished, in all ages and climes, on the imaginary wants and desires of the dead been applied to the service of the living, the world would by this time have become a far superior dwelling-place. Yet, even now comparatively few fully realize not only that the vast sums constantly squandered on the many religious organizations represent so much economic waste, but that practically all their missionary and propagandist activities are inspired, directly or indirectly, by the cult of the corpse.

It is a common practice to appeal to the spirit of the recently defunct to proceed quietly to its rest, and after its burial to repose in peace. Some genial ghosts listen to this good counsel and cause no further trouble. Many, however, prove completely impervious to reason, and rise from the graves to harass and affright the living. Moral suasion being thus disregarded, there remains no alternative save that of employing more energetic methods.

Among the European Slavonians and Bohemians it was usual for the mourners to pelt the deceased's ghost with burning coals, clods and stones, when returning from the funeral. In Finland we read that the survivors "had not even the decency to wait until the dead was in the grave, but opened fire on him as soon as the coffin was outside the house." In Eastern Europe similar practices prevailed among the Jews, for before the burial the ghost was pelted with broken pottery and afterwards with clods.

Massive masonry was also placed on the sepulchre to prevent the spirit's escape, and remembering that the souls of manslayers and those of their victims are constitutionally restless, every wayfarer who passes their graves is bound to add a stone to the heap. This custom survives in Arabia, Catholic Germany and Spain, and naturally enough, it is popularly believed that when a corpse is laid in a shallow grave the ghost is certain to haunt the district.

Students of Gibbon's masterpiece will readily recall the historian's vivid description of the burial of Alaric the Gothic sovereign, when the course of a stream was diverted so that the mighty dead could be laid to rest in its bed, and then the river was restored to its original channel. This mode of burial, designed to incarcerate the spirit, is still accorded the chiefs of savage tribes in Central Africa.

At times, the bones of the dead are broken, or the head or limbs nailed to the coffin, while suicides and sorcerers are decapitated or staves are plunged through their bodies. Tearing the heart to pieces and cremating the corpse are other means employed to render the ghost harmless.

Haunted houses are alleged to exist in England, but few believe in them, at all events in daylight. In many lands, however, haunted dwellings or deserted tenements abound. Ghosts everywhere love to linger near the homes made dear to them before death. Drastic measures are therefore adopted to scare them away. Thus, the New Zealanders maltreat the body so as to intimidate the soul. In Imperial Rome, the heir to the property solemnly swept away the spirit of his ancestor with a ghost-expelling broom. The Siberians were very punctilious when dealing with the ghost of the recently defunct. The soul was granted forty days' liberty to roam within the homestead. When these days of grace have expired, should the spirit still linger, the shaman or priest puts it to

flight and drives it down to the abode of the dead. But to make assurance doubly sure, the shaman accompanies the tricky sprite to the spirit realm and prepares a hearty welcome for the newcomer by standing a treat of brandy to all the demons there in residence.

Yet, despite all the artifices employed to circumvent the spirits they frequently find their way back to their earthly homes. Then it becomes imperative to bar the house against their intrusion. Sprite-scaring charms, such as an axe or a lock resting on the threshold were used as defences in Russia and Prussia. In England doors and windows were thrown open to allow the ghost of a dying person to escape.

The world-wide custom of closing the eyes of a corpse seems traceable to the idea that when the dead's eyes are shut the spirit is also blinded. In ancient Rome, as in modern Siam, the eyes of the dead were bandaged until the remains were securely laid in the grave and not until then were the eyes uncovered. Throughout Christendom, in Germany, Austria and in England, the superstition lingers that were one to neglect the closing of a dead man's eyes his ghost would return and snatch away a member of the living household.

Mourning attire appears to have arisen in the disguises assumed by the survivors with the object of deluding the dead. The Bohemians wore masks and indulged in weird antics when returning from a funeral. It is significant that mourning observances in general are distinctly different from those of ordinary daily life. In his brilliant address on *Burial Customs* Frazer points out that: "Thus at a Roman funeral the sons of the deceased walked with their heads covered, the daughters with their heads uncovered, thus exactly reversing the ordinary usage, which was that women wore coverings on their heads while men did not. Plutarch, who notes this, observes that similarly in Greece men and women during a period of mourning exactly inverted their usual habits of wearing the hair—the ordinary practice of men being to cut it short, that of women to wear it long."

Among less cultured communities mourning customs include the practices of wearing clothes of unusual appearance, attiring themselves in ragged garments, cropping the hair, gashing the body, covering it with black ashes, dirt, or smothering it with paint. All these devices may apparently be traced to the fantastic superstition that, by donning disguises, the living thereby obtain security from the malevolent propensities of the disembodied ghost.

T. F. PALMER.

Without Rime or Reason.

God made this universe,
And I, this verse—
Which is the worse?

"Worse" does not rime with "verse,"
But I care not a curse;
Does God care more?

We both have botched our work;
We both can shirk:
Will God do better if we him implore?

"Curse" does not rime with "verse";
Nor "universe" with "worse";
Nor "shirk" with "work."

My poor botched puny verse!
God's great botched universe!
Which is the worse?

BAYARD SIMMONS.

Under Which Flag?

Mr. ARTHUR WOODBURN, the genial Secretary of the Labour Party in Scotland, has brought about his ears a cloud of clerical hornets for having in the *Scotsman* newspaper criticized the Church of Scotland for its attitude to the policy of the Socialists. Mr. Woodburn's position apparently is that the Church is not seeking to give effect to the sociological teaching of Jesus; and that in effect the Socialist Party in this respect has had to take up the burden of the task. Naturally it is retorted upon him by the "meen-isters" that belly hunger is nothing to be compared in importance with soul hunger, which the Church offers to satisfy with the "Bread of Life." To this Mr. Woodburn rejoins that what Socialists ardently desire is that the impoverished millions should have secured to them such comforts of a material existence as will allow of their developing the higher side of their natures. The changes are rung upon the "awful example" or "promising experiment" of Russia—according to the respective protagonists; none of whom however has reached or seems to be aware of the real kernel of the whole business.

The earliest Christians seem to have made a brave effort to base the Christian society upon Communism as preached by the Galilean. But they were not long in finding that this was wholly impracticable and had to be abandoned. In the matter of the private ownership of property, notwithstanding anything Jesus had said, it was a case of "As you were!" As a consequence the provision of opportunities for self-development and self-expression had to be subordinated to the devising of means for swaying and retaining the allegiance of the crowd. The astute "early fathers" of the Church compounded in a system what was most appealing to the Greek with what was most appealing to the Jew; and having impressed rulers with the impressive size of the following they thereby obtained, they were not long in securing as converts these very rulers themselves, and soon Christianity became the State-recognized, State-established and State-endowed institution which it remains unto this day. Individual liberty and independent individual thought naturally made—and make—the leaders of the Christian Churches apprehensive, so that these things have to be kept within proper limits and must only proceed on lines which meet with ecclesiastical permission.

What both Mr. Woodburn and his critics overlook is the fact that, historically, it has been the supreme aim and object of the leaders of Christianity to make and keep religion a communal thing. So they dwelt upon the wrath of God and instituted schemes of social and economic boycott and persecution against all heretics. True, the latter evangelists emphasize the necessity of personal conversion; but cases of conversion were and are in the vast majority of instances the results of gatherings of highly excited crowds belabored at by leather-lunged missionaries of the Cross; and the convert soon became but a unit of the herd ruled by the will of the herd. It has been the policy of priests and parsons to encourage and nourish and vitalize the mob instinct, which under the influence of the Christian superstition has been the most devastating cause of human hate and cruelty, personal greed and self-aggrandisement. If religion really remained but an individual thing as many of the nineteenth century dissenters liked to describe it, Christianity would not be responsible for all the national crimes that stain the pages of history; but the ignorance and credulity of the mob which carried out the edicts of powerful priests, and of monarchs dictated to by

powerful priests, were allowed full play and reduced to wretchedness and ruin fair regions of the Earth—as witness Roman Catholicism in Mexico and Spain, and Greek Catholicism in Russia and adjoining lands.

Religion depends for its power upon the historical fact that it has been made and remains a communal thing (after efforts to make it a communistic thing had failed) and rebellion suffers weakness from the fact that for the most part it has merely been an individual thing. But once the influence of supernaturalism is divorced from the imparting of information and from our educational systems, the power of religion will decline and the power of the rebels will advance. The shrewdest leaders of the Church appreciate this well enough and that is why they strive to keep up a public opinion against a secular solution of the education problem; why they are keen on nobbling and directing the Cinema, the B.B.C., the League of Nations, all the political parties—even the Hikers. A non-Christian hiker who refuses to rest in Church for an hour or so during his Sunday hike is, of course, a lost soul or a fiend incarnate reserved for the devil and his angels. The cool lake to-day; but the lake of fire tomorrow!

It is somewhat amusing to reflect upon Mr. Woodburn's idea that Conservative and Liberal Christians are likely to sit quietly under his claim for the Labour Party that it is the only political party which is bent upon giving effect to the "sociological" teaching of Jesus! It is clearly implicit in this claim that a Conservative or a Liberal cannot be a good Christian like Mr. Arthur Henderson or Mr. George Lansbury! One sees the bridling figures of stalwarts like Lord Hugh Cecil, the Attorney-General, and many more! Have they not as much sympathy for the woes of the impoverished millions as Mr. Henderson and Mr. Lansbury? True Mr. Lansbury appealed for a day of prayer for the unemployed, and Uncle Arthur still tootles from Wesleyan pulpits when he is not supervising the wrangles of the League of Nations; but why are we to assume that the Labour Party has a monopoly of altruism for the down and outs? Indeed, if we are to believe some family critics of the Labour Party itself we must conclude that before you can expect any protection from it you must be earning not less than £3; be acquiring your own house, and have a substantial share in a Co-operative Society. Even if we do not believe anything of the kind, we are not likely to be impressed by the nauseating hypocrisy that follows the course of every Christian sect in arrogantly boasting that it alone is the repository of the Truth.

Apart altogether from all questions of religion or politics it is neither common sense nor common decency that any citizen should not have adequate food, clothing and shelter and reasonable opportunities of study and recreation, whether he is employed or not. Indeed, much is to be advanced for the opinion that more consideration should be extended to the unemployed than to the employed worker. The former has the less happy life. But the mission of the Church is to mystify, and so long as its talons grasp the reins of government, so long the people as a whole will be deceived by invented complexities and distortions of the Truth.

IGNOTUS.

But this it is, all sects, we see
Have watchwords of morality;
Some cry out Venus, others Jove,
Here 'tis religion, there 'tis love.

Moore.

The Book Shop.

A STORY of Walter Savage Landor, to the effect that when staying with the Brownings he only threw his dinner through the window once, is repeated in another form. In Mr. Havelock Ellis' introduction to *Imaginary Conversations and Poems*, Everyman Library, 2s., it is recorded that the old Roman threw his cook through the window. Whatever the truth may be of the incident, it is certain that no serious reader can touch Landor and be immune from his influence. The introduction by Mr. Ellis to the selection is comprehensive, interesting, instructive, and well covers the significant writer's period. Browning admitted that he owed more as a writer to Landor than to any other contemporary. Landor must have been a voracious reader; his projection into his characters in the *Conversations* showed that he had the faculty of literary assimilation, and his criticism of Plato through the mouth of Diogenes is loaded with good sense. It was a happy moment to encounter, in this collection, his memorable and short verse:—

"Ah what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee."

This is the warrior in a melting mood; he had a tempestuous youth, in trouble at school, fights with the Spanish Army against the French; his very words, says Southey, "are thunder and lightning," and yet, he writes, in some playful fit of irony:—

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and, next to Nature, Art;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

Landor's definition of philosophy, which is not included in this selection will bear repetition at a time when a V.C. should be awarded for safely crossing the road—so rapid is progress these days that yesterday is old-fashioned; "This is philosophy: to make remote things tangible, common things extensively useful, useful things extensively common, and to leave the least necessary for the last." All the word-spinning fraternity of theology will never be able to master the first proposition of this very clear statement; there is grey matter required to simplify the complex. *Imaginary Conversations* is an acquisition to the now famous Everyman Library; readers may make the acquaintance of well-known historical figures, and if Landor does nothing else, he stimulates the critical faculties.

Enthusiasm for Swinburne commenced with the writer of this series, when it was considered stylish to wear a khaki tie; that was way back in the days of the Boer war, and also when Max Beerholm was doing really funny sketches for a weekly paper called *Pick-me-Up*. Slowly I have gathered together Swinburne's works; after nearly reading through *Love's Cross-Currents*, I informed the bookseller that in fairness to him I ought to buy it. The following passage made me shut the book and walk in to buy it: "The world will dispense with us some day; but it shall not while we can hold out . . . Have as little as you can to do with fear, or repentance, or retrospection of any kind. Fear is unprofitable; to look back will weaken your head . . . Be content to endure without pluming yourself on a sense of submission." It shall be placed with sixteen more of Swinburne's volumes to be read carefully; and in the event of treating serious things seriously, I will remember the naughty story told to a friend of a friend of mine, on Wimbledon Common, by the poet. (Sit down, C-de-B, who the devil wants to hear your remotest of remote connexions with one of the mightiest singers in the world?) It was a good story, Rabelaisian in flavour, abounding in niceties of definition, analytical to a degree, yet very human. And he who

could with genius resurrect the glory of ancient Greece, could tickle with a feather the ears of a modern Hebe who made him a cup of tea.

If a man can sing pleasantly I will stop work to listen to him. If his matter is good and his manner is artistic he shall have my eyes and ears. Mr. Bayard Simmons has published a book of poems, rightly praised already in the *Freethinker*, *Minerva's Owl and Other Poems*, Elkins Mathews & Marrot. Round the candle of life Mr. Simmons has wreathed many pleasing colours. There is great care and austerity, and a happy facility for the right word.

There would be a good number of thousands between the first and last editions of Mr. Bernard Shaw's book, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*. Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and we now have *Adventures of the White Girl in Her Search for God*, by Charles Herbert Maxwell. The Lutterworth Press, 4 Bouverie Street, E.C.4, price 1s. It is a very poor affair, colourless and unconvincing, and does not get within speaking distance of Mr. Shaw's none too advanced Freethought. There is the element of evangelism in it that sounded familiar to us in 1895, there is the usual string of theological assertions of unprovable statements, and the book, to say the best of it, must have provided work; it is a pity, since none will deny free speech and free opinion for opposite opinions, that it did not also provide food for thought, although malnutrition from a religious diet is the rule and not the exception.

Mr. Richard Aldington, in *Everyman* of April 15, brings an element of reality into the sphere of the written word. The pen may be mightier than the sword, and with such metaphysics we need not waste much time, but when sincerity and an ideal are conveyed in the written word, it is a welcome sign in the world of literature, which may almost be described as a wilderness of croaking frogs. I will not ascribe the rôle of Don Quixote to Mr. Aldington, but I confess that he strikes a very responsive chord when he states his ambition, which is as follows:—

"My aim is the simple one, already recorded, of trying to induce a few people to abandon the newspapers for the poets; and my hope is that by reading the poets established by time there may be some who will go further and turn a more alert and interested gaze on contemporary poets who some day will form part of the English tradition, whether posterity holds them up to scorn as a decadence or to admiration as a renaissance."

The *Freethinker* persistently blows the gaff on humbug, slippery philosophy, mysticism and all forms of bog-lights misleading the human race. A very careful scrutiny of its pages would not reward the devil's advocate in any discovery of a gibe at truth, goodness or beauty. It has well and truly taken to heart the Greek proverb of "Hope thou not much but fear thou not at all." Mr. Aldington in his romance, "All Men are Enemies," in the article mentioned above, and in an interview reported in *Everyman* on March 11, has had these three Greek qualities as near neighbours; for that reason alone he is an honoured guest at the banquet of life to which the good come uninvited.

C-DE-B.

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion; thus it was,
Some plundered, some drank spirits, same sang psalms.

Byron.

Oaths were not purpos'd more than law,
To keep the good and just in awe,
But to confine the bad and sinful
Like moral cattle, in a pinfold.

Butler's "Hudibras."

Acid Drops.

After our statesmen and military experts have done their best to frighten the children and the old ladies of both sexes with the aeroplane horrors of the next war, Mr. F. Handley Page states that talk of cities like London being "blotted out" in the next war is so much pure nonsense. He says that for such a task, if every plane could carry a ton of bombs, a fleet of 125,000 planes would be required, and then each plane would have to drop its bombs with mathematical accuracy. We do not suppose that this kind of calculation will stop the scare-mongers, and when we remember the ease with which tales of poisoning the water supply of London were circulated (many hundredweights of poison would be required to have done the trick) it is clear the public will believe anything. The credulity that swallows religious tales is ready to swallow other tales of an equally Munchausen character, and the general ignorance of science enables the average man and woman to transfer to the scientist the magical powers once given to the priest. To most people science is just another kind of magic.

A remarkable case of prayer being answered is reported from Sydney, Australia. It seems that Canon R. B. S. Hammond wished to hold a religious meeting in a certain hall but found that fifty chairs more were wanted. He uttered a prayer in the usual clerical fashion, and the Lord compassionately responded in this wise: An hour later, a telephone message came from a local bank manager who had a number of chairs he did not want, and wished to give them to the Canon, who—knowing they came, in reality, from God—joyfully accepted them. On their arrival, he found they numbered exactly fifty. This not only proves that prayer is answered, but also that God is a mathematician and we gladly give publicity to a fact, which, in the early days of Christianity, was of very common occurrence, but somehow only happens rarely now-a-days.

A correspondent to a new paper named *New Britain* has made the wonderful discovery that the press needs purging. All sorts of jokes may be made in connexion with the process apart from the one that the press is an undesirable purge in itself. Readers of the *Freethinker* have never been under any illusion about the rascality and general condition of the popular press, and it is evident that this correspondent is unaware of the existence of the *Freethinker*. It is necessary at this point to emphasize the fact that in a Christian country a paper may establish a reputation in spite of its mental poverty, so long as it refrains from attacking Christianity.

A Manchester reader of the *Daily Herald* writes to that paper declaring that the majority of listeners enjoy the B.B.C. religious services. His reason for saying this is that he knows many people beside himself who hurry home from Church on Sunday evening to listen to the broadcast sermons. Now we, of course, would never dream of questioning the word of a Christian on such a matter. But we venture on two observations. First, the majority of this man's personal friends is not quite the same thing as the majority of licence holders. Second, if this man and his intimate friends really do run home from one service in order to listen to another sermon, and from a B.B.C. preacher, this would be good enough evidence of a state of mental deficiency among the general population that is very alarming. Every editor, ourself among the number, receives letters obviously from people who clearly ought to be in some mental institution, and we take it that the letter in question is one of them. And it may also be that the editor of the *Herald* seeing that the letter dealt with religion thought that the mental state indicated exhibited nothing unusual, and so published it.

The Bible Society says that its aim is to make the Bible known to all men. Now taking that expression in its widest sense the procedure strikes us as a religiously dangerous one. More men have been started on the way to Freethought by knowing the Bible than by any other method. We fancy it is the recognition of this fact which has led Christian leaders to protest so strongly against cheap Freethinking publications which have aimed at making the Bible as widely known as possible. But perhaps the Bible Society does not mean all it says. Perhaps it means getting people to believe in the Bible as the Bible Society believes in it, but to avoid every opportunity of really knowing it or knowing about it. It wants people to know the Bible exactly as the B.B.C. wants the people to know Christianity—in a way that will prevent their understanding it.

A pastor is anxious to "Christianize" society. He tells a Nonconformist journal that:—

The world is waiting for a lead back to God. Thinking men are weary of "the uncertain sound" of the Church, the hazy sermons and anæmic doctrines expounded are unsatisfying; the fear of offending one's listeners leaves our congregations cold, and the people are anxious for a courageous and confident lead.

The Church, we learn, must preach Christ, the historic Christ, the Divine Jesus. "The people love the old Gospel, then let us get back to it." This is rather a big order! It would necessitate scrapping all the "progressive revelation" received during the past twenty-five years—which appears responsible for the lazy sermons and anæmic doctrines, etc.—and acknowledging it to be all a mistake. Preaching the old Gospel and getting back to the historic Jesus and the historic God would mean that men, women, and especially little children would be frightened with threats of Hell-fire and a Big Policeman in the Skies. That may be the proper way to Christianize society. But the evil effects of past successful efforts in this direction are so apparent to many medical psychologists, sociologists, and thinking observers that we devoutly hope society will never again be properly Christianized.

The Tablet is very disturbed at the activity of Freethinking propaganda in Travancore. It says that an Anti-God movement is now strongly organized and such expressions as "Man without God is possible, but not God without man," "The priest is an exploiter of public credulity," etc. In a Tamil paper Ingersoll, Bradlaugh, Bertrand Russell, and Lenin are translated and commented on at length. *The Tablet* says the movement is strongly organized and has 117 groups. This is very disturbing—to Christians.

Mr. Fred Montague tells the readers of the *Daily Herald* that "The idea that even a majority in Parliament is entitled to ride rough-shod over the rest of the accredited representatives of the nation is sheer undemocratic nonsense." And yet there can be little doubt that each of the political parties that is either represented or not represented to-day in Parliament, is prepared to act on that idea immediately some sort of majority can be secured. Therefore, indignation on the part of any party that happens to be out of power seems to be a trifle unreal.

As an example of how the brotherhood of man will arrive in the world via the Christian religion, we take this letter from a Methodist paper. It concerns the Anglo-Catholic High Mass in the White City:—

I hope that readers will daily ask God to prevent this abomination. He has in His hands, wind, rain, hail, sleet, snow, fog, lightning, earthquake, all of which He has used to indicate His wrath. Transubstantiation, and all it necessarily involves, is the greatest insult to the Lord Jesus Christ ever invented.

(Col.) Alfred Percelli (Hove).

The great thing, 'tis said, about the Christian religion is that it teaches one to Love one's fellow men—especially if they be fellow Christians. It would be blasphemy to deny it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is no doubt in possession of the usual amount of faith that goes with his position. It is no surprise therefore that he should, in proposing the toast of journalism at the annual dinner of the Newspaper Press Fund, have great faith in the honour of the Press. To swallow a camel and strain at a gnat of sensationalism represented by the Press would be a miracle.

Dean Inge, among a crowd of ecclesiastical mediocrities is always interesting. In his sermon at Clifton College, he reminded his congregation that the crisis was still with us, and the only hope was, to pray that God would continue to make the nation worthy of its great traditions and glorious history. We expect a much better analysis of the world situation than this from the Dean. If he would draw attention to the bunkum and bamboozlement which are now and forever associated with so many of our leaders in finance and politics and the press, he could cheerfully leave the nation and God to look after their respective selves. If he succeeded in clarifying what passes for a world crisis he would see that the best thing to do would be to rub the noses of our "leaders" in the present mess, and send them packing to experiment (with certain reservations) on the running of winkle stalls.

An Anglo-Catholic writer, "looking back at the past hundred years" comes to the conclusion that the policy of Rome "has tended to separate her further from the Church of England and from Catholic tradition, and to make all dreams of union apparently more hopeless than ever." There was no need to look back 100 years to come to this conclusion. It is obvious that Rome must be supreme if Christianity is out to conquer for in her Church is the real, credulous, stupid conglomeration of beliefs which either have to be swallowed complete or rejected completely. There can be no permanent half way house. The term, the Church of England, covers no settled beliefs at all. High or low, fanatical believer or rank modernist—it is all the same to her and a powerful organization like Rome does not hide her contempt. Rome or Reason is *our* battlecry.

If one wishes to find out how easily Christians may be gulled, one naturally turns to the Roman Catholic press. For as its readers are not encouraged—mostly they are forbidden to read the other side—the game is easy. Nothing is too far from the facts for credence. Thus, in a recent issue of the *Universe* readers are solemnly told that there is no connexion whatever between the pagan Spring and Harvest festivals and Christian feasts. And this in the face of the almost universal acceptance of the identity by all warranted to speak on the subject with authority. But we are inclined to forgive the *Universe* because of the humour of an answer to another correspondent who has evidently been asking what he is to do to avoid getting meat extract served up in his food on Friday. "Order a vegetable soup and hope for the best." That is leaving it in the hands of God. If God cares to work a miracle and turn the meat extract into a vegetable one, or strike the cook dead for tempting a Catholic, he can do so. If not, then it is his look-out, not that of the poor believer's.

The June issue of the *London Mercury* suggests that editors do not get knighted because of their enlightened opinions. Sir Jack Squire lets loose a rabid pietist, Mr. Osborne Burdett, to write a very belated "critical survey" of Bernard Shaw. Mr. Burdett's literary genius may be gauged by his remark that Sydney Smith was "nearly his (Shaw's) namesake, also a famous pamphleteer." He finds little to admire in

Shaw, except, naturally, that "the Inquisitor's long speech in Saint Joan" was "attractive," and that Shaw writes "magnificent journalism." Burdett sees clearly enough that "though Shaw denies the term, his arguments often turn out to be a Materialist's." Thomas A' Kempis (whose saying is quoted "The Holy Spirit has liberated me from a multitude of opinions") can, far better than Shaw, "comfort the ignorance of simple souls," who need instead "the old religion that we believe to be true." "All experience, reason, imagination, forbids us to believe that intelligence can be the creator of a Force, personality the creature of an Impersonal." This meaningless jargon of words comes from a writer who claims to be superior to all the scientists. He sneers at "the theory" of Evolution which he neither understands nor believes in. Jack Squire may be knighted. Burdett is obviously benighted.

Catholics, Roman and Anglican, are very worried about Jerusalem. Though both sects will loudly proclaim Palestine as the national country of the Jews, in reality they want it to become thoroughly Christian. For example, Mr. Athelstan Riley, the eminent Anglo-Catholic has been on a "pilgrimage" to Jerusalem, and he is horrified at the "great edifice, with lofty tower," built there for the Y.M.C.A. It is only a club, he declares, and "represents the undenominational principle carried to its logical extreme." That is, it caters equally for Jew, Christian and Mohammedan, and it stands for "Western civilization, not the Saving Cross." How angelically tolerant! It gives one an idea of what would in reality happen if Mr. Riley or his fellow Anglican or Roman brethren were actually in power. Fortunately, "Western civilization" is able to curb people like Mr. Riley or the Latin Patriarch who agrees with him.

What is happening to Lourdes? Thousands of real, fervent and pious Catholics annually make the pilgrimage, and those who were ill before, return as sick as ever. The latest example comes from the 3,000 French railmen who were led to Lourdes by Mgr. Reynann. He had to be wheeled in a chair going and was wheeled back on returning. Does God ever cure a sick Catholic priest, or are only obscure Catholic lay people healed?

Fifty Years Ago.

If it be necessary after all that has been said, to state in detail what substitutes we have for religion, the following list may be taken and expanded by the reader himself. In the room of religious falsehood (for every line of theology is an absolute falsehood) I would substitute truth of all kinds; for the worship and service of a god, the independence and mutual assistance of mankind; for prayer, thought, strategy, and industry; for trust in the unknown, trust in that which has been tried and tested and found true and useful; for the backward look rivetted upon a golden age for ever past and a redemption wrought by a poor bewildered and helpless fanatic, I would substitute a gaze into the future, fixed upon a golden age yet to come, not the gift of capricious and incapable gods, but the fruit of human toil and invention; for hope of any impossible heaven (the bribe of coward faith), I would substitute the rational hope of all the good that time can bestow upon the noble and the good; and for the fear of hell or the dread of meeting an angry taskmaster, I would substitute the fear of shame, the personal condemnation that results, in an honourable nature, from a wrong once done, and a firm resolve to avoid the like for the future; for the false system of rewards and punishments, I would train every child in morals as carefully as in arithmetic; instead of teaching it as a solemn duty to believe what no one ever yet understood, or of which anyone could give any rational and honest account, I would teach the young never to believe anything without full investigation, and give them to understand that belief can never become a duty.

The "Freethinker," July 8, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

TENTH LIST OF DONATIONS.

AMOUNT previously acknowledged, £607 14s. 6d.; J. R. Armstrong, £2 2s.; Northumberland Miners Mutual Confident Association, £2 2s.; Col. A. W. Mantell, £1 1s.; J. Jacobs, £1 1s.; G. B. Tarring, £1 1s.; R. T. Hartley, £1 1s.; J. G. (Newcastle), £1; D. H. Kerr, £1; F. Chilvers, £1; T. Warden, 10s. 6d.; A. H. Millward, 10s.; F. E. Jones, 10s.; Mrs. Ballard, 5s.; F. Muston, 5s.; V. K. Rangaswami, 5s.; F. F. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; J. Ansell, 2s. 6d.; W. Grubb, 2s. 6d.; S. V. Gulvadi, 2s.; R. Ironside, 1s.; J. W. Elsworth (2nd Donation), 1s.; T. Burne, 10s.; C. S. Fraser, £2 2s.

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Total required £1,500

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

V. G. Ives (Java).—Thanks for cuttings. They supply one more instance of the prevalence of the grossest superstitions among people who call themselves civilized. There is no substantial difference between the mentality of the believers in these miracle cures and the acknowledged savages who exists as reminders of a frame of mind that was once common to the race.

G. B. WEBB.—Our strictures applied rather to those who do not merely refrain from speaking out, but at the same time attacked or criticized those who make their position quite plain and unmistakable. We have always recognized that there are circumstances where open speech means ruin, and in such circumstances much may be excused. The question you ask is important enough to warrant a special article, and we will deal with it as soon as possible. One cannot answer it in two or three sentences.

W. A. ROGERSON.—We are pleased you liked the recent article on Robert Cooper. The text you quote from him is obviously a printer's error. It should, of course, not have been overlooked.

T. BENNETT.—Thanks. Your suggestion has been handed to the Committee.

"HOPE."—Your letter came to hand too late for insertion in this issue.

MR. P. COLLINS writes asking whether the diaries mentioned by James Thomson (B.V.) in his *City of Dreadful Night* are still in existence. Perhaps some of our readers may be able to oblige with the information.

N. BRIDGES.—There is no truth whatever in the statement that Horatio Bottomley was a relation of Charles Bradlaugh.

W. BARRON.—You will have to get a second-hand copy. Our Business Manager will probably write you on the subject.

W. SPRATT.—Charles Darwin was born in 1809 and died in 1882. His fame rests on two of his books, the *Origin of Species*, 1859 and *The Descent of Man* 1871. His contribution to the general theory of evolution lay in his formulation of the theory of Natural Selection. He called himself an "Agnostic."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Thomas Pickering, a priest, was charged at the Manchester Police Court with obstructing by attempting to hold a meeting on the highway "without permission." Pickering was requested by Police-Sergeant Doody, to close his meeting as "he had not obtained permission to hold a meeting." Pickering, in the end, was fined 20s., but as he declined to pay, was sentenced to thirteen days imprisonment. Now, so far as we know, the Police have no authority to issue permits to anyone speaking on the highway. There is no right of meeting there, but no one can be prevented providing there is no obstruction and no likelihood of creating a breach of the peace. The onus of proof in that case rests with the police. But the police have no other power and the Magistrate was exceeding his powers in acting as he did.

There is one other point in connexion with this case which shows that the officials in the Manchester Police Court need instructing. A witness asked permission to affirm instead of taking the oath. Thereupon the Clerk, Mr. Sergeant, said that if he held a religious belief he must take the oath. "The Act relating to the matter only permitted affirmation to those without religious belief." That is gross ignorance on the part of the clerk. The Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 distinctly states that a man may claim to affirm on either the ground of having no religious belief, or on the ground of the oath being contrary to his religious belief. What with one thing and the other something needs doing to the Manchester Police Court.

The progress of Hitlerism in Germany is a striking illustration of what may be done by a murderous minority in the face of a majority composed of different parties not ready to join in a united stand against something to which they are all in fundamental opposition. The ruling body of Germany to-day no more represent the whole of the German people than did the ruling Gangsters in Chicago represent the whole of the people of that city. But a ruffianly minority may easily hold in subjection a large majority—at least for a time. And Hitlerism began very astutely by rousing into activity an Anti-Semitic feeling, always easy amongst the more ignorant and more brutal section of the population. Then one after another different sections that might question the supremacy of Hitlerism were wiped out, those who did not agree with the policy of terrorism remaining passive because for the time-being they were safe. Soon they began to pay the price for their passivity.

A denial to others of the liberty claimed for oneself is always a dangerous and a costly procedure. What it obtains is too dearly bought, and what it loses is of vital value to the health and development of a people. A little

foresight on the part of leaders of the different parties in Germany would have warned them that standing quietly by while the liberties of others were suppressed was one way of wiping out their own freedom. Had the German people as a whole realized the real upshot of Hitlerism it would never have gained control, and even now we do not despair of ultimate recovery. Gangster rule is bad while it lasts, but its redeeming feature is that it is so bad, so fundamentally anti-social, that it ultimately rouses the better part of a country to effective revolt.

But the lessons of the situation are applicable outside Germany. In this country, for example, there has been growing up of late years a disregard of personal liberty by those who wish to keep things as they are, and also by those who think that they can usher in the Golden Age by the methods of a diluted Hitlerism. Officialdom is more generally established, perhaps more securely established—than it has ever before been in our history. Advanced bodies are fond of using a military vocabulary, and accustoming their followers to the idea of “seizing” power, and then using it to impose their will on others, whether the others agree with it or not. The Grand Jury is being abolished with the consent of the Labour Party, and an attempt is being made to drive a wedge between the police and the general public. Here, as was the case in Germany, when the freedom of people or parties is threatened, a silence is maintained among those who are not in agreement with their party or policy. It is forgotten that the demand for liberty does not depend upon all who claim it being in agreement, but upon the recognized existence of disagreements. No man is fit to have freedom for himself who does not feel himself outraged when it is denied to others. This principle is a little out of favour to-day; hence the greater need for saying it.

The Bill for the abolition of Grand Juries has passed its second reading in the House of Commons. Sir Stafford Cripps, late Attorney-General to the Labour Government, offered no opposition, but said “The archaic procedure of the Grand Jury had ceased to have any reality at the present day.” The Grand Jury has exactly the same value it has always had, that is, it offers a bar between the autocratic or vindictive action of the Executive, and may also be used as a protest against some laws that are hopelessly out of date. But in these days the rights and freedom of the individual are thought little of by our leading politicians, whether of the Hitler, the Labour, or the Conservative variety. The great thing is to have plenty of officials, and to educate the people to obey an official order so soon as it is issued. We have got rid of the divine right of kings to substitute the divine right of an official order. And a king always has the redeeming quality of possessing but one neck.

We are glad to learn that some excellent open-air meetings are being held in Derby, and the genuineness of the interest taken by those attending is evidenced by the sale of literature that is being effected. Many a man will listen; but when he heeds and reads his interest is certain. To-day (July 9) there has been arranged a debate between Mr. A. Salem and Mr. Blackman on the question of “Is there a God?” The discussion will be in the Market Square at 7 o'clock.

A meeting of the Cardiff Branch N.S.S. will be held at John's Cafe, Station Square, Cardiff, to-day (July 9), at 6.30. Cardiff friends may make a point of bringing along a friend with them.

From Liverpool Mr. G. Whitehead will cross the river and carry out a week's open-air work in Birkenhead, commencing to-day (July 9). Birkenhead is a Christian stronghold, consequently intolerance is well in evidence, but that offers an excellent opportunity for local saints to gather round the platform and show the more healthy outlook encouraged by Freethought. Details of the meetings will be found in the Lecture Notices column.

Upon the Existence of God.

FOREWORD.

MR. SWAGGLUS DUFFER needs no introduction to our readers; many of our readers—so they tell us—need no introduction to him.

One of the most highly-paid journalists of our time, he dominates, by sheer weight of personality, Fleet Street, the Strand, Carey Street and Red Lion Court. By the mere process of throwing his weight about, Mr. Duffer has contrived to insinuate himself into the innermost sanctuaries of British Christendom. More dogmatic than many of our professional Protestants, Mr. Duffer is at once as ponderous as a bishop, as versatile as a film star, as disinterested as an auctioneer, as devout as an undertaker.

He has views on everything, sound, unsound and mixed. He floods our press, both secular and Sunday, with outpourings of rhapsodic eloquence that put our co-called Revivalists to shame, and that would humble the pretensions of those poor politicians who are incapable of turning out more than ten thousand words of journalistic jellification a day—were politicians only capable of “that humble feeling.”

Mr. Duffer is simply explosive with information upon all subjects, especially the more recondite questions of metaphysical speculation. Where quieter, lesser-known men are doubtful, Mr. Duffer *knows*. He not only knows; but he tells you so. He tells you so so forcibly that you would believe all that he tells you; if it were not for the insignificant fact that he is nearly always demonstrably wrong. But that, after all, is a trifling matter both to Mr. Duffer and to his millions and millions of readers. What is truth, when all is said and done? No one knows; and, if they did, such a commodity would scarcely be marketable in the Strand and Fleet Street.

And so we turn to Mr. Duffer not so much for truth, as for a certain luxuriant wallowing in words, a careless dishevelment of logic, a superb contempt for historic facts. What *are* facts? No one knows; and if they did Mr. Duffer would not trouble to allow mere facts to stay the tremendous, and well nigh overwhelming torrent of his eloquence. As he says, Why should he? So he doesn't, as a mere matter of journalistic principle.

For a handsome consideration, though for far less than his incomparable gifts warrant, Mr. Duffer has consented to share his splendid omniscience with our readers, who, possessing neither the knowledge nor the eloquence of Mr. Duffer, may enjoy an occasional glimpse into the luminous recesses of a mind at once well-fed, well-toned, well-patronized and well-paid. Mr. Duffer's first contribution to our columns follows. His next article, it is hoped (under Providence), will touch upon the Nineteenth Centenary of the lamentable—but for us fortunate—decease of our Blessed Lord.

V.B.N.

“If God did not exist,” said a German scientist, “it would be necessary to invent him.”

The French Atheist, Voltaire, who took so prominent a part in the Revolution, was forced to admit His existence, although he persisted in his Atheism to the end of his short but ill-spent life.

Life had a beginning, and that beginning is God. That is the imponderable rock upon which all infidel philosophy splits.

If it wasn't God, what was it? Science does not know, infidelity cannot tell, so it follows logically that it *must* be God. If it wasn't, what was it?

But we have written proof that it was. No sane man now doubts that God wrote the Bible; if He didn't, who did? No one knows; and if they say they do, they're wrong. That is final.

And God declares, in the Book that He Himself wrote, with the aid of His Own inspired penmen, that He made the world. The world was made of dust, omnipotence and nothing, with a little breath

thrown in afterwards to give it vitality. . . . Such is the divine teaching; and it is neither pure nor wise to question it. It is also dangerous; and the man who takes risks with his soul is a fool. I have scriptural warrant for saying this; and even if I hadn't, it's a necessary sort of thing to say these days.

That the world is actually formed of dust, omnipotence and nothing is a conclusion to which our scientists are being forced by the recent archaeological discoveries in Egypt, Palestine, New Guinea and Nebraska.

Thus the very soil is rushing headlong to confirm the truth so lucidly set forth—for the behoof of all men—in the Holy Bible.

Whoever refuses to accept this evidence is either a fool—as the Holy Scripture and I have mentioned before—who understands neither religion nor science, or a scoundrel, who probably practices polygamy in order to cast doubt upon the doctrine of divine immanence. There is clearly no middle course.

If there were one, it would not serve those who, in denying the verities of Christianity, the only *real* religion in the world—are plunging our nation into chaos, our youth into debauchery, and our minds into spiritual destruction.

Think a moment; pause; reflect; cogitate; perpend. In a word, Halt! And then you will perceive suddenly, in a white flash, as it were, that everything tends to prove everything else; and so we are thrown back, with a vast bump of inexplicable wonder, upon the First Great Cause—God.

God! What a word! *What a word!* as my friend George Robey might say, if he were a parson. It explains everything to me. I say "God"; and off I go into a kind of trance wherein I feel that I know everything. If I don't, it is because of my own god-given limitations. And I feel, somehow or other, that somewhere or other, somewhen or other, we shall meet, God and I. What a meeting that will be!

If God is not everywhere, where is He? Once again Science cannot answer; Reason is dumb; but intuition—my own intuition—steps in, and explains everything; not only to my own satisfaction, but to the satisfaction of every reasonable and unprejudiced man and woman who reads my heart-poured and soul-awakening messages to humanity.

Well; God is everywhere; all over the place; that is the reason, when you come to think of it, why Christianity is so widely spread, appealing, as it does, to the uninstructed and innocent all over the world.

Babes, savages, patriots and salvationists are at one in trumpeting-forth the saving—and healing—grace of the Gospels of God, those divine messages to mankind that strike the sceptic dumb, pulverize the proud, humble the haughty, and abash the Atheist. And this is but another proof of the truth—the real human truth—of Christianity.

It is admitted by Suetonius, Livy, Gibbon and Arthur Mee that before the advent of Christianity, and the blessed birth of our blessed Lord, the whole world was about to succumb to an orgy of lust, murder, suicide and earthquake. Tacitus and Josephus confirm this. Everyone and everything confirms it—if one only has faith. Ah! How necessary is Faith to a true understanding of the workings of divine providence!

Every rightly-instructed student knows, if he be honest, and, if he be honest, he knows, that there is no answer to the Eternal Verities; save one. And that answer is God. There is no efficient answer to this; it is self-evident; and not even an infidel will dare, if he be honest—as, alas! too few infidels are!—to contradict it.

Now; to sum-up. God is everything; everything is God. God created it all; He reflects Himself in humanity, His Own creation. Before He came there was nothing; but He changed all that. He is everything, everywhere, all the time; because of the divine plan that everyone talks about, that no one understands, that only I can explain. How simple it all is! How complex! How illuminating when rightly understood!

If I appear, to the superficial reader, to be repetitive, be it remembered; firstly, that I'm trying to hammer divine truth into thickish human skulls; secondly, that I write by the thousand; thirdly, that rhetoric comes very easily to so utterly profound a thinker, so over-ripe a scholar, as myself.

SWAGGLUS DUFFER.

"Powder and Shot."

In common with other cases of Empire building, theft and fraud has played its part in the building of the British Empire. The first count in the indictment concerns the slave trade. Those who have studied the subject know that England's commercial supremacy was very largely based upon that iniquitous traffic:—

The monarchy, the aristocracy, the commercial world and ecclesiasticism alike, defended the slave trade and directly benefited therefrom. . . . The "Society for Propagating Christianity," including half the episcopal bench, derived, as masters, from the labour of their slaves in the West Indies an income which they spent in "teaching the religion of peace and good will to men."

(*The Black Man's Burden*. E. D. Morel, p. 21.)

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel was in the unfortunate position of being a slaveholder on the two estates belonging to Codrington College in Barbadoes. It is remarkable that the use of the driving whip was admitted by the Society as late as 1829, six years after its abolition had been recommended by the British Government.

(*British Slavery and Its Abolition 1823-1838*. William Law Mathieson, p. 216.)

The betrayal of the African Chief Lobengula constitutes another count. This Chief was tricked and he and his tribe were robbed of their lands and cattle, and those who were not killed in the Matabele "war" were reduced to the condition of serfs working the gold, which unluckily for Lobengula and his tribe was found upon their lands. The fall of Lobengula and his people was due to that Chief's love for the white men and reverence for and trust in the "Great White Queen" in England, whom the missionary, Dr. Moffat, a great friend of Lobengula's father, had extolled as friend and protector. The "clash" with the Matabele tribe which gave the excuse for the "smashing of Lobengula," shows the unscrupulousness of the whole business. It was shown afterwards by the official appointed by the High Commissioner to report upon the affair, that the first shot had been fired, not by the Matabele, but by the British. Thirty of the Matabele had been killed, and no member of the British force had received a scratch. Major Forbes, who was in chief command of the "smashing" process, reveals that *on the morning after the collision*, Dr. Jameson produced an elaborate plan of campaign for the military invasion of Matabele, and large tracts of land and cattle which were subsequently captured were promised to the troopers taking part in the expedition.

In less than three months the war was over. Thousands of Matabele were killed—one regiment of 700 lost 500 of its number. Many fled towards the Zambesi, where they suffered terribly from famine and fever, as well as from wild animals.

(*The Black Man's Burden*, p. 44.)

This was the "Matabele War," and for the glorious victory, which has yielded loot in the form of over £30 million worth of gold since 1890, the "Christian people in English Churches gave God thanks."

How did the "Coloured peoples of Kenya lose their lands?" Mr. John Harris tells us that:—

The natives have not sold their lands, they have not lost them by conquest, and they have not forfeited their title through insurrection and rebellion. The blunt truth is that the natives have lost their title to large areas of their best lands in very much the same way that Naboth lost his vineyard.

(*Slavery or Sacred Trust*, p. 75.)

In any case, as recent events in Kenya have shown, the fact that people have titles to the land which are acknowledged and guaranteed by law does not prevent their being robbed of the land if their skins happen to be dark.

What were the Churches doing? Precisely the same as the other adventurers—stealing from the Africans the land which the Churches coveted and recognized as the basis of their power. Archdeacon Owen, writing in the *East African Standard*, on February 13, 1926, said:—

After nearly twenty-two years in Uganda and Kenya I can look back on many situations in which I believed at the time I was acting justly, but now know that I was mistaken, and mistaken in my own interests. For one thing I cheerfully took over for the Church land already owned for long generations by Africans, and that too without any compensation.

The high sounding phrases to which the ministers of God and Mars gave tongue at the Empire Day celebrations are false. To talk to children of the British Empire being "welded together not merely by force but by honour and square dealing," in view of the facts which we have disclosed, and a multiplicity of others which we have not space to discuss, is not only cant, but is deliberately to deceive and mislead the children.

What will the Coloured Africans or the Indians who are kicked off the pavement in the public streets of the Empire think of the honesty of those who say 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."

The relations between white and black is well put in *Slavery or Sacred Trust*, by John Harris: "The struggle in South Africa began nearly a century ago with the colonization of South Africa by the Dutch settlers; this struggle was ultimately focussed in the *Gronwet* of the Transvaal by the formal declaration: 'There is no equality in Church or State between White and Black.'" Sir Thomas Watts, who was formerly a minister in Natal, wrote in the *Times* of March 30, 1926:—

The white man . . . is determined to do what he can to remain, and what is more to rule . . . To those who say that England cannot be a party to greed and injustice I would reply that the matter is to us in South Africa such a vital and fundamental matter that no ethical considerations . . . will be allowed to stand in the way.

Sir Thomas's view is one which is very widely held. A Nationalist member expressed similar views in the

South African Dominion Parliament. He was reported in the *Eastern Province Herald* of July 14, 1920, to have said that:—

Native interests and European interests were irreconcilable. The idea of giving justice to the negroes had never entered the heads of white men except a few negrophilists.

The late Lord Brentford, an "upright Churchman" if ever there was one, was equally frank about Britain's real interests (which are estimated at £1,000 millions of investments) in India. He said in 1927:—

We did not conquer India for the benefit of Indians. . . . That is cant. We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Great Britain. We conquered India by the sword and by the sword we shall keep it. I am not such a hypocrite as to say that we hold India for the Indians. We hold it as the finest outlet for British goods in general and Lancashire goods in particular.

Though we abhor his point of view we think that Lord Brentford was a thousand times more honest than Mr. Frank Roper of the Coventry Unionist Association. The latter declared on May 24, that "with the exception of territories tacked on since the last war not a square inch of it (the British Empire) came by conquest," and that the British were in India "not by conquest but by request."

We have room for only a few of the damnable chapters in the child life of India under British rule, chapters which should have been made public in every Church Magazine and made the basis of protests in every church in Britain if the representatives of the Christian Churches in India had done their duty. But, with only one or two notable exceptions, the representatives of "God's Empire" have joined in the conspiracy of silence and have shut their ears to the "cry of the children" in India, as their forefathers did earlier when British children were the victims.

Children of as young as five years are to be found in Indian unregulated factories, working for unlimited hours, under terrible conditions, with no statutory protection and liable to corporal punishment of the most brutal kind. The Committee appointed by the Madras Youth League to enquire into the conditions of Indian labour published its report in 1930. *New India* (a paper which has as its motto "for God, Crown and Country") :—

The condition of the boys in these factories is described in the report as nothing short of slavery of the worst type. Often the boys have chained to their feet logs of wood so that they may not run away earlier than the master is inclined to let them go. . . . In one factory in Triplicane the Committee noticed that the manager of the factory took up a cane in the hottest part of the day and thrashed all the boys indiscriminately in a heartrending manner. On investigation it was found that the reason for this dreadful assault was not any fault on the part of the boy-workers, but simply to prevent them from giving way to the drowsiness induced by the heat.

According to a rough estimate the number of children working in such factories was 14,000 out of a total of 35,000 workers. Why do the parents allow their children to be thus exploited? The Report of the Royal Commission on Labour in India supplies the answer:—

Many of the parents of these child workers are in debt to the employer. As a result they are not in a position to enquire too closely into the treatment meted out to their children or to do other than return an absconding child.

As the Report, which is a Government publication, points out, the system "recalls some of the worst

features of child apprenticeship in England." Not only young children but even tiny babies are to be found in the Indian mill. In the Bengal Jute factories, which are run principally with British capital, and which rendered an average dividend of 90 per cent during the ten years ending 1932:—

Infants are taken into the mills and can be found lying on sacking, in bobbin boxes and other unsuitable places, exposed to the noise and danger of moving machinery and a dust laden atmosphere, and no year passes without a certain number of serious and minor accidents, and sometimes of deaths occurring among such children.

(Report of Royal Commission on Labour in India, p. 65.)

This is how "God's Empire" protects its children and shows them the benefits of Christian civilization as compared with the pagan darkness in which they used to live before "God gave us this Empire" (vide the Rev. John Shillaker).

Finally let us hear a Unionist, orating upon the splendours of the Empire. Mr. Roper told the Coventry Unionist Association on "Empire Day":—

If the Empire failed it would leave the world with something it never had before. The fall of the Roman Empire left the world with law, and the Grecian Empire with art. If the British Empire fell it would leave the world with liberty.

(Coventry Standard, May 27, 1933.)

G.F.G.

Hooliganism in Germany.

ONCE again we see a return to the intolerance and barbarism of the middle ages exhibited in the outbreaks of post-war nationalism.

Berlin has had for a quarter of a century the first institute for the scientific study of sex problems, and the greatest sex library in the world.

Now, that has been closed and its books have been carted off (not by legal process, but by Nazi students and rowdies from the Berlin University) to be burned.

The institute had been founded by a Jew, the great and kindly Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld, who was also one of the founders of the British Sexological Society in Bloomsbury Square. He is happily safe from assault or assassination, in Switzerland. But the disgrace of such proceedings! This in the land of "Kultur," where, hitherto, even the Prussian militarists of the hard old school, have always respected science and free enquiry.

And the loss to the world of all this stored information, how low has mighty Germany fallen to permit deeds that could not be outdone even in Tennessee.

This madness will pass; and the books can be collected again. The human spirit cannot be destroyed by fire, or knowledge drowned out of existence in castor oil.

Man's mind overcame the fell Inquisition, when the authors were burned along with their works, and where ghostly terrors could be appealed to, which, now, have become as harmless as "a thunderclap that died."

So let us give our sympathy to these pioneers and our defiance to their persecutors.

TAB CAN.

Pride, like laudanum and other poisonous medicines, is beneficial in small, though injurious in large quantities. No man who is not pleased with himself, even in a personal sense, can please others.—F. Saunders.

Some Cornish "Saints."

THE holiday season is upon us, and, no doubt, many readers will be visiting Cornwall during the next few months. If, as is possible, some of them wonder at the number of Saints whose names are there enshrined in place-names, it is as well that they should know what many of these "saints" really are.

Dr. T. F. G. Dexter, in a recent book (*Cornwall, the Land of the Gods*, Watts, 1s. 6d.) has demonstrated, beyond peradventure, that many of these Christian "saints," far from being what they pretend to be, are really the gods of the old pagan civilization which the power of Rome, and, later, Christianity, stamped out in these islands.

Such writers as the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, who wrote a series of sixteen volumes of the lives of the saints, have tried to identify these Cornish parishes with some of the early Christian martyrs, without much success.

For instance, St. Ewe, the supposed patron of a parish in South Cornwall, has been identified with St. Eve, a Breton lady, of whom nothing whatever, save only her name, is known! This has been one of the standard puzzles of Christian hagiology. The whole question, however, clears immediately it is seen that Hu, often called Hu-gadarn, "Hu the Mighty," was a great sun-god. Some of the ancient Welsh poets have sung his praises. And, behold, in a Cornish parish, this god from Egypt (brought over, as Dr. Dexter suggests, by the Phœnicians) is converted into a Christian saint and martyr.

Another standing puzzle to the orthodox is Cury, which is a parish in the Lizard district. St. Corentin, Bishop of Quimper, has been supposed to have given the name to the parish, much corruption of names being possible. It is, however, doubtful whether this could have taken place, and the doubt is increased when it is learnt that the feast of St. Corentin is observed in Brittany on December 11 and 12, which dates are nowhere near the parish feasts and fairs of Cury.

Curoi, sometimes written Curui, was an ancient Irish sun-god, and it seems far more likely that this is whence the name of the parish is derived, particularly when it is found that the feasts and fairs of Cury are found on the dates most closely connected with the ancient ceremonies of sun-worship.

This conversion of pagan gods into Christian saints and martyrs was, it is known, part of the avowed policy of the early Christian Church, and it is not difficult, when an experienced hand like Dr. Dexter's has pointed the way, to see many of these old puzzles solved.

At any rate, the reader who gets the book will find that his holiday in Cornwall will become more interesting and (perhaps) more enlightening too. The old pre-Christian and pre-Roman civilization of these islands still peeps through at times, and nowhere more than in Cornwall.

JOHN ROWLAND.

Correspondence.

THE ANXIETY OF MR. LUNN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My statement to the effect that non-Catholics are on the defensive was not intended to refer to Secularists of Mr. Cohen's school. They are not on the defensive: they are on the run. There is much religious indifference, but militant Atheism is dying. Contrast, if you doubt this, the circulation of the *Church Times*, *Universe*, and *Freethinker*. I am interested to learn that I am on the defensive. A man who has issued a challenge to a debate is usually considered to have taken the offensive, particularly when the challenge is not accepted. Last year Mr. Cohen and I debated Mr. Cohen's philosophy—materialism. Mr. Cohen had the last word. I have challenged Mr. Cohen to a second round to debate my belief in the miraculous. We debated last year, "That Materialism involves the suicide of thought." I

suggest that Mr. Cohen should move, "That the belief in miracles involves the suicide of science." Or alternatively, if Mr. Cohen prefers me to open the debate I will do so, but in this case I shall expect the same advantage that Mr. Cohen enjoyed last year, the advantage of the last word. It would be easy to arrange that we were both allowed exactly the same amount of time. Until Mr. Cohen accepts a challenge which he has evaded so far, the less he says about other people being on the defensive the better.

ARNOLD LUNN.

[I am really not concerned whether Mr. Lunn considers I am on the offensive or defensive. Neither am I inclined to waste time and energy in discussing at this time of day so out-of-date a subject as that of Miracles, particularly when I have not the faintest idea as to what Mr. Lunn means by the term. But if Mr. Lunn really wishes to meet me again in debate there are other subjects at issue between Atheists and Theists which might provide suitable material for discussion. If such a subject were found, and its nature involved Mr. Lunn opening, I should have no objection to handicapping myself to the extent of giving him a closing speech if he considers it necessary.—C.C.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 30, 1933.

The President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, A. C. Rosetti, Moss, Clifton, Wood, LeMaine, W. J. W. Easterbrook, Ebury, McLaren, Mrs. Quinton, Jr., Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and accepted, and the monthly Financial Statement submitted. New members were admitted to Oxford, Birmingham, Glasgow and Parent Society. Reports and other matter were dealt with from Messrs Brighton, Clayton, Whitehead, Bartram, Allfrey estate, North London Branch, Brighton Branch, National Peace Congress, National Council for the Abolition of the Death Penalty, International Federation of Freethinkers, Bradlaugh Centenary Celebration. Messrs McLaren and Sandys were co-opted for service on the Executive. Motions remitted from the Annual Conference were attended to and a committee appointed to deal with Motion No. 14.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on July 28.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"Your Money and Your Life."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, "JeHoVaH' and 'King Kong': Ignorance and Fear."

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2): 8.0, Thursday, July 6, Mr. Paul Goldman—"Christianity the Enemy of Progress."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (Shorrolds Road, North End Road): 7.30, Saturday, July 8, Messrs. Barnes and Bryant. *Freethinkers* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, July 9, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, July 9, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 10, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, July 13, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, July 9, Mrs. E. Grant. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, July 12, Mr. L. Ebury. Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, July 14, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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

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 and E. C. Wood. Wednesdays, 7.30, W. P. Campbell Rverden. Thursdays, 7.30, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Wood. Fridays, 7.30, Bryant and Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): Sunday July 9, at 8.0 p.m., S. Burke—"Consistent Inconsistency." "The Ship," Plumstead Common, Wednesday, July 12, at 8.0 p.m., Speakers, F. W. Smith and S. Burke. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, Friday, July 14, at 8.0 p.m., Speakers, F. W. Smith and S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 3.0, J. Cecil Keal—A Lecture.

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane Corner, Rock Ferry): 7.30, Sunday, July 9, Mr. G. Whitehead. Monday, July 10, Tuesday, July 11, and Friday, July 14, at Birkenhead, Haymarket. Wednesday, July 12, and Thursday, July 13, at Well Lane.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.30, Friday, July 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DERBY (Market Square): 7.0, Mr. A. Salem, B.A. (London Mosque) and Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.S., Debate "Is there a God?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, Friday, July 7, Saturday, July 8, and Sunday, July 9, Mrs. Whitefield, Mr. Buntin and Mr. Moore. *Freethinkers* and Freethought literature on sale at above meetings. Meeting of Committee in Central Halls, Bath Street, July 11, at 8.0. Members invited.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Friday, July 7, Mr. G. Whitehead (London). Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, July 9, C. McKelvie and J. V. Shortt. Grierson Street, 8.0, Monday, July 10, H. Little and D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, July 13, A. Jackson and E. S. Wollen.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Sunday, July 9, Ramble in Wirral. Meet at Landing Stage for Birkenhead Boat about 2.45. Food to be carried. Return expenses will not exceed 1s. 6d.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. Allan Flanders.

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, July 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, July 9, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, July 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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New Age.

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Birmingham Gazette.

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The Trustees set themselves the task of raising a minimum sum of £8,000. This was accomplished by the end of December, 1927. At the suggestion of some of the largest subscribers, it has since been resolved to increase the Trust to a round £10,000, and there is every hope of this being done within a reasonably short time.

The Trust may be benefited by donations of cash, or shares already held, or by bequests. All contributions will be acknowledged in the columns of this journal, and may be sent to either the Editor, or to the Secretary of the Trust, Mr. H. Jessop, Hollyshaw, Whitkirk, Nr. Leeds. Any further information concerning the Trust will be supplied on application.

There is no need to say more about the *Freethinker* itself, than that its invaluable service to the Free-thought Cause is recognized and acknowledged by all. It is the mouthpiece of militant Free-thought in this country, and places its columns, without charge, at the service of the Movement.

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