

# THE FREETHINKER

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## Views and Opinions.

### Happy English Homes.

EVERY now and again we read of a visit paid by some members of the royal family to the slums. The visit paid, I expect they go home thinking that they at least know how slumdom lives. I once was under the same impression myself. For, many years ago, in consequence of a habit I had of prowling about the slums of our large cities, particularly London, I also thought I knew about the slums. But after reading *The Naked Truth*, by Miss Joan Conquest (Werner Laurie, 3s. 6d.), I know that not only myself but also the King and Queen and the Prince of Wales know very little about the slums. I knew them only from the outside, and although I knew more and saw more than does any member of the royal family, I did not see enough. They go to selected places, visit selected houses, talk to selected people, and see only what is prepared for them. Of the real facts they see nothing and know nothing, just as I saw nothing and knew nothing of the real facts of the situation. None of us saw inside the houses in which families of six, eight, and ten people slept, etc, and performed all the functions of nature in one room. We did not see human beings sleeping three and four in a bed, without regard to sex or age or relationship, rooms with the walls reeking with damp, floors broken, beds filthy, places over-run with rats, and we did not know these dwellings were sometimes owned by religious associations which carefully collected funds for the benefit of tenants, so that these same tenants may repay the said Associations the enormous rents demanded. What I saw, and what the royal family see, is about as near the truth as is a cosy fire on a winter evening to the flames of hell depicted by good Christians of a couple of hundred years ago.

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### A Land for Heroes.

Miss Conquest is a nurse whose occupation took her inside the houses of slumdom, and who naturally

entered into intimate relations with its dwellers. Her book should be read by all, although one requires a more than usually strong stomach to go right through with it at one reading. Her book is at once too horrible to be read, and one that everyone should read. It hides nothing, and when I have spoken to nurses engaged in the same work as was Miss Conquest, I have found that it contained nothing with which they were not well-acquainted. I do not know whether any country in Europe has slums as bad as those described by Miss Conquest, but I am dead certain that none can have worse. I am also certain that if the *Morning Post* could have printed descriptions of anything similar in Soviet Russia its columns would have been flaming with denunciations, and the Duchess of Atholl would have been imploring the House of Commons to break off all relations with a country in which so vile a state of things existed.

All the places described by Miss Conquest exist within a bus ride of a few pence from Central London. She gives no name, but describes them as Slum one, Slum two, and so forth. She writes only of what she sees and what she knows. Her scenes are not embellished by rhetorical flourishes or meaningless appeals to mere sentiment. She claims that:—

When compared with this country's advance in science, hygiene, medicine, culture, the arts, luxury and extravagance, London's conditions are worse today than they have ever been.

And she proves her statement up to the hilt.

Above all, her book is written in defence of the slum people and in defence of the slum mind. She does not indict *them*, but she does indict *us*, the local governing bodies and other authorities who—often because of sheer corruption—forebear to put into operation the many Acts which might better the state of things described, and the general public who from sloth permit this state of things to exist. The slum people are what their conditions have made them. They are born to squalor, to filth, to crime and to all sorts of uncleanness.

I can give only one or two examples—not the worst ones—furnished by Miss Conquest. The first is of a basement dwelling in "Slum two":—

There are two rooms. The front room, so underground that tops of the windows reached to about twelve inches above the level of the street, was simply poisoned owing to the incandescent gas burning all day long, the smell of the washing on a line near the ceiling, of reeking damp, and that peculiarly sickly odour that emanates from a consumptive. The room which is to develop the individual character of the adult Two, was about fifteen by fifteen feet and choked with family belongings, two beds, a dresser, a table and two chairs. It was not too dirty. What remained of the family pride had urged Mrs. Two to scrub the floor and window and polish the kitchen grate. Because the back-room



was over-run with rats and dripping with damp, the Twos use one room while paying rent for two. I looked into the back room. Black and foul, the plaster in heaps on the floor, the floor broken, the walls broken, it looked out on to a small reeking back yard. Two rats scudded almost over my feet. Fungus and mildew served as wall-paper to the room for which Mrs. Two pays rent weekly to a well known institution which incessantly clamours for funds to help patch up the derelict human beings it allows to live in its infamous houses.

For these two rooms Mrs. Two paid fifteen shillings per week, and this to an Institution that actually collected at least part of the rent in the shape of donations given for the benefit of the many Mrs. Twos of the neighbourhood. In another instance Miss Conquest remarks that one of these human warrens had two lavatories for the use of sixty people. This was a large house let to families each living in one room. Here is another case:—

The Five family live in a basement in a huge Early Victorian mansion. The family occupy two rooms and a kitchenette, for which the rent is twenty-five shillings a week, or get out . . . The smaller room is let to a lodger to help towards the extortionate rent. Mr. and Mrs. Five and ten children occupy the larger room . . . The eldest son, out of work, but selling papers, sleeps on the couch. Mr. and Mrs. Five and the older sons and daughters share one bed, the eldest daughter and the younger children the other. They wash, undress, and answer nature's calls in front of each other. They cannot do otherwise seeing that there are nine families in the house which was originally intended for one family, two lavatories almost always out of order, no bath, and a queue lined up every morning for the two washing sinks on the landing. The eldest girl sometimes sleeps with the lodger. Why not?

There are many more cases recited by Miss Conquest, not merely as bad, but much worse, so much worse that their sheer repulsiveness stops one citing them at length. But these dens, over-run with lice and bugs, and rats and mice, with ordinary decency impossible and incest an everyday occurrence, are here in London, that London where we receive foreign Kings and representatives, and drive them through the parks to the palace in order to acquaint them with the greatness, the luxury and the culture of the British public. Not less striking than the description given by Miss Conquest of the slums and the slum people, is the list she gives of the property-owners of one of the worst districts described by her. They are—a charitable Institution, a well-known titled lady, a retired officer of one of the services, a wealthy professional man, and a certain Association connected with the Church.

\* \* \*

#### A Defence of the Slum Mind.

Now I agree with Miss Conquest that none but fools or rogues will take a book of the kind under notice as an indictment of the slum people. She does not complain of their drinking, but properly points out that in such conditions the public house is the brightest spot in their lives. The character of the people is bad enough, the brutalities inflicted on both children and adults, the exhibitions of indecency sufficiently revolting. All these things live with one like a nightmare. But what else can one expect from those brought up in an environment such as theirs? Character moulding is largely a question of environmental influence. Most decidedly it is not a matter of class, and not dominantly, of family. Remove a thousand healthy babies from the slums and another thousand from one of the best parts of London, ex-

change and reverse the environment in which these children are brought up, and there is no evidence whatever that the average character of each thousand will differ in any marked degree from the people among whom they are reared. Of course you will find all degrees of character in both groups. Examples of drunkenness, brutality and lust may be found in the mansion or in the palace as in the rat-infested, vermin-lined dens of the slum. But the White-chapel stock is fundamentally as good as that of May-fair. I agree with Miss Conquest that ninety-five per cent of the slum crimes would not be committed were the slum body properly housed and the slum mind properly trained.

\* \* \*

#### Who Is Responsible?

The responsibility for slums does not rest with the slum-dwellers. They are as much a social product as any other Institution we possess. Consider the solid truth in the following:—

The word "bloody" shocks . . . It is one of the first words pronounced by a slum baby, if one dares say that a slum child has any babyhood or childhood. The slum child is often so old. It is old at its mother's breast; wizened from under nourishment, and old from the horror and filth in which it is conceived; old from the crime and hopelessness of its forbears. The slum child curses because its parent curses, just as they cursed from the very same reason. The slums inherit foul language along with the rest of the filthy things we allow them as their fair share of the good things of the earth.

The slum child does not need to be told that it must not curse at school. It is sharp-witted enough to know that it must not. But school only touches the slum child in school hours. Few—and from this springs the curse of the slum mind—worry about the slum child after school hours. The flood of obscenity flowing from a slum child's mouth must be heard to be believed . . . Because no one has ever bothered to first teach, then ground, their forbears in such qualities as self-restraint, thrift and the ordinary decencies of life, and to give them decent surroundings in which to develop their qualities, many a slum child curses and thieves from its childhood.

A not ill-fitting close to these notes on what is surely one of the greatest scandals in the England of to-day comes from a Chinese gentleman who was urged by a missionary to adopt Christianity:—

I was educated in England, at Eton and Cambridge. I have seen your prostitute infested streets, and I read, only the other day, that your honourable Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, had in the last year intervened on behalf of one hundred and six thousand cases of child-neglect and hardship, and of whom some seven thousand were children brutally ill-treated in a Christian country . . . We Chinese may ill-treat animals, but after all they are soulless and born to be beasts of burden. The Chinese mother-in-law is what you honourably call a tartar, but that is her prerogative for bearing sons. She has, as you say, come into her own. No, Sir, the heathen Chinese, as you honourably deign the yellow dog, could not possibly consider a religion which allows thousands of small children to be thrashed, bruised, and beaten.

I venture on one suggestion. When the *Daily Mail* next year runs its "Ideal Homes" exhibition, I suggest that it contains a few model homes of the kind described by Miss Conquest, with life-sized and life-like models of the residents therein—including the rats, mice and household vermin.



## Sermons by the Surf.

"Poor breathing orators of miseries!  
Let them have scope: though what they do impart  
Help nothing else, yet do they ease the heart."

Shakespeare.

INGERSOLL said that when a Christian dogma was found to be too silly for use in the pulpit it was handed on by the priests to their Sunday school teachers, and when it was found unsuitable even there it was finally used by the missionaries. These discarded dogmas are also used by the howling dervishes, who frequent the seaside-resorts of England. From Southend to Scarborough, from Brighton to Blackpool, these evangelists carry the harmoniums and the glad tidings of godliness. Lest holiday-makers should escape their pious attention, they plant themselves on the sands between the sea and the visitors, and fill the air with their raucous cries.

An auctioneer might be tempted to describe these evangelists as "a job lot." Certainly, they are as crude and as highly-coloured as the peppermint "rock" sold around the coast-line. They include the flat-chested warriors of the Church and Salvation Armies, itinerant evangelists, local busybodies, and budding political candidates "trying it on the dog." Sometimes a "star" turn is introduced from a neighbouring church or chapel when the temperature is very high and the attendance very low. But these occasions are scarce, for no tradesman deserts his shop until the shadow of the broker's man falls on the doorstep.

When "loafing and inviting my soul," as Walt Whitman calls it, I have sampled some of these heaven-sent messengers, who pretend, very loudly, that they are specially commissioned by Omnipotence to redeem a saucy world from naughty ways. Intellectually, they are all "under proof." The vast majority talk the theological language of a past generation, which is as distressing an experience as reading the columns of the *War Cry*. Even the potential Members of Parliament snuffle far too much, and, whilst they prattle of the "Sermon on the Mount," seem to be under the delightful delusion that it was composed by Karl Marx, a suggestion sufficient to make the burly author of *Das Kapital* turn in his grave.

A young sailor, describing his captain in alleged verse, wrote:—

"He was most unusual calm  
He did not give a single "damn."

But these evangelists harp on damnation. "Flee from the wrath to come," some shout. "It is terrible to fall in the hands of the living god," others bawl. "Hell" is on nearly all their lips, always excepting the promising young politicians who suggest that Satan was a capitalist, who lives in one of the largest houses on the cliffs, and "purrs" to the city in a Rolls-Royce.

Why do these professional evangelists preach "hell with the lid off?" Because the cultivation of fear is too useful to be discarded. A man will pay any money to save his life, and priests and their satellites wish to frighten the poor wretch so much that he will give anything to save his "immortal soul." That is the reason why the Greek and Roman Churches have never discarded a solitary spark of their fiery damnation. As befits smart business, the Salvation Army "plays the sedulous ape" to the two older churches, and flames "blood and fire" over the least educated part of the population.

It is not only the Flotsam and Jetsam who preach

on hell. The Romish Church is the most reactionary of all the religious bodies in this country. Like the Bourbons it learns nothing and forgets nothing, and it would be fitting if it shared the fate of that once-royal family. Unfortunately, the Romish Church is the only live religious organization, and it is being assisted actively by priests of the Government Religion. Half the clergy of the Protestant State Church are Anglo-Catholics, that is, Romans in everything but name. The very recent stagy celebrations of the High Church Party shows something of its significance. All these Anglo-Catholic priests preach a hundred-per-cent hell and damnation as loudly as their tansured colleagues in the older church. As time goes on, this Protestant State Church becomes more and more Romish, and the clock is being put back four centuries. A little more of such "Protestantism" and we shall find Calvarys at every open space in the country.

All these evangelists and priests prey on the gullible, no less than the palmists and fortune-tellers. They may not advise women how to find husbands, or disclose a short or long "life-line" on their client's hands. They make bolder dashes into futurity, and describe the alleged life after death of their credulous listeners, and their courage meets with the same golden reward as the palmists. At rock-bottom the evangelists and priests are just as much impostors as the fortune-tellers. They pretend to possess that which neither they nor any other people possess. But whereas an ordinary person who tells fortunes is fined or sent to prison, the same fraud may be practised with impunity if one uses the *abracadabra* associated with the Christian Religion. The Vagrancy Act provides that all persons professing to tell fortunes shall be liable to a fine or imprisonment. Such is the modern and merciful form of the Scriptural commandment, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Selden, in his "Table Talk," says, acutely, that "the old laws against witchcraft do not prove witchcraft to have existed." That is so, for it never did exist. As a fact, hundreds of thousands of women, perfectly harmless and innocent, were legally murdered on fantastic evidence, which ought to have been incredible, for doing what was physically impossible, in supposed obedience to a legendary command of a doubtful deity. Fortune-telling to-day means fines and imprisonment for poor people, but the clergy, who tell the "old, old story" of a horrible red-hot-poker department in a next world, in order to scare people into their folds, escape scot-free. And this happens in the twentieth century.

Freethinkers who imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind, because the astute clergy appear to be giving the old savage ideas faint support in their public utterances, will do well to remember this active propaganda that is actually going on all over the country. Something should be done to counteract it, for in many cases the harm done by these misery-merchants is tragic. Sensitive children are often scared by these vivid pictures of an after-life. That adults do not escape is proved by the simple statement that victims of religious mania are to be found in all the asylums and mental homes of the country. The evangelists are deceiving and imposing on ordinary citizens just as the fortune-tellers, and both collect coins from the credulous by means of the cult of the cryptic.

That being so, why do the authorities not take energetic measures to stamp out such an obvious nuisance? The reply is that a Christian minority is in authority, and wishes to impose its views upon the entire nation. The case is almost an exact parallel to that of the



British Broadcasting Corporation. In that instance a handful of religious busybodies has assumed command of the ether, and forces their own petty views on millions of their countrymen. The only effective remedy is to make more and yet more Freethinkers, for this country will never know real liberty whilst Christians wield temporal power.

MIMNERMUS.

## Some Christian Playbooks

As we expected, we have been taken to task for writing on "Christianity and the Child." We are told that the cruel treatment of the child was not due to Christianity, but in spite of the teaching of Christianity. Further, that we are inspired by hatred of Christianity and tools in the hand of Satan.

Certainly, we have never dissembled any love for Christianity. Why should we when we believe that it destroyed two civilizations, threw back the progress of mankind for over a thousand years, and has been an endless source of strife, intolerance, and misery? Even to-day the menacing Cross of St. Peter's at Rome casts its sinister shadow over Europe, while beneath it sits, enthroned, Christ's representative, ready to give his support to any bloodstained autocratic tyrant who will recognize his religious authority. As he has given it to Hitler and Mussolini, so his predecessor gave it to Napoleon. It is difficult to understand how Catholics like Hilaire Belloc and Chesterton, who claim to be democratic, can countenance such proceedings.

Christianity is an historical religion, and the tree must be judged by its fruits, as, indeed, the Gospel enjoins. To commence with, the New Testament declares that by Adam's transgression sin entered into the world and has infected every child that has been born ever since. The only exception is that of Jesus Christ, because he was born of a virgin, and therefore escaped the virus of sin bequeathed by Adam. As Lecky observes:—

According to the unanimous belief of the Early Church, all who were external to Christianity were doomed to eternal damnation, not only on account of their own transgression, but also on account of the transmitted guilt of Adam, and therefore even the newborn infant was subject to the condemnation until baptism had united it to the Church.

The opinion which was so graphically expressed by the theologian who said "he doubted not there were infants not a span long crawling about the floor of hell," is not one of those on which it is pleasing to dilate. It was one, however, which was held with great confidence in the Early Church. (Lecky: *History of Rationalism*, Vol. I., p. 359.)

To combat the effects of this satanic inoculation, and save the child from this awful fate, the severest training into the hard and narrow way of salvation was justifiable. What was the suffering inflicted during the few years of his earthly pilgrimage in comparison with the eternity of suffering which was destined to be the lot of him who took the easy and broad road leading to destruction?

Moreover, as Lecky, in accounting for the frightful tortures inflicted by the legal and ecclesiastical authorities during the Middle Ages, as compared with the practice of Greece and Rome, points out: "It is quite certain that those who seriously regarded eternal suffering as the just punishment of the fretfulness of a child, could not possibly look upon torture with the same degree and kind of repulsion as their less orthodox neighbours." (Vol. I., p. 332.) It also made them callous to the sufferings of the child. To con-

demn the punishment of the child was, in effect, to condemn the action of God who consigns the unbaptized child to hell.

Then again, the gospels taught that this life was only a preparation for the life to come. That sorrow and suffering, far from being regarded as evil, should be accepted with thankfulness, "Blessed are they that mourn," was preached. As an acute critic of Christianity observes: "Christianity envisages a framework for human society in which earthly miseries have a recognized permanent, and honourable place. They are trials sent by Heaven to test and train us; as such, it is impious to repine against them." All these things tended to make the Christians of the Middle Ages what history declares they were, callous to suffering themselves and unspeakably cruel to others.

It is true that Christians are not like that to-day, because—except for Catholic monks, Fundamentalists, and Salvationists—they do not believe in a lurid hell, or that this world is a vale of tears, through which we have to make a weary pilgrimage. The humanitarian spirit of an age of unbelief no longer tolerates the cruelties and austerities practiced during the Ages of Faith, and which continued, so far as children were concerned, nearly to the end of the last century.

There was one period of our history when Christians, genuine Bible Fundamentalists, ruled the country, and that was during the Commonwealth under Cromwell. How did the children fare then? Elizabeth Godfrey, in her book, *English Children in the Olden Time*, devotes a chapter to this period; it bears the ominous title "Under a Cloud." And a very heavy cloud it was too. During the Puritan ascendancy a whole series of little books for children, many of them written expressly for them by Puritan Divines, among them, "those by James Janeway, an eminent Puritan Divine, had the greatest vogue, and were extolled and recommended throughout the latter part of the seventeenth century." In these the child appears "as a little imp of darkness." "Your child," says Janeway, in his preliminary exhortation to parents, "is never too little to go to hell"; and enjoins that parents, "put your children upon learning their Catechism and the Scriptures, and getting to pray and weep by themselves." This Catechism contained one hundred and seven questions and answers, most of them very long and deep:—

When he [Janeway] comes to be addressing the children themselves, though he calls them lambs, he does not scruple to terrify them with hell-fire. "How dost thou spend thy time?" he proceeds; "is it in play and idleness with wicked children? . . . Do you dare to run up and down on the Lord's Day? Or do you keep in to read your book? Which of these two sorts are you?" . . . Next he enjoins the child to get acquainted with godly people, and ask them good questions, and endeavour to love their talk; he bids them hear the most powerful ministers, and read the most searching books, and says he, "get your father to buy you Mr. Joles' *Father's Blessing and Guide to Heaven*." And this to quite little children, from two or three years old up to eight or nine! Nothing is more amazing than the precocity of these infants, exemplified in the series of little histories he proceeds to relate as patterns for their emulation: the instance of one "eminently converted between eight and nine years old" seems quite mature in comparison with the rest. One story is entitled, "Of a child that was admirably affected with the things of God when he was between two and three years old. With a brief account of his death." For that is how most of these stories end. "Too good for this world," would be the phrase of those who wept over the little coffin, but the verdict

<sup>1</sup>L. Woolf: *After the Deluge*, p. 219.



of to-day is over-pressed in brain and sensibility, a victim to morbid conditions.

Nearly all the stories are in a similar vein. The mere titles are enough to show their drift; it would be wearisome to the reader to quote in detail. These are a few specimens: "Of a little girl that was wrought upon when she was between four and five years old." "Of a notorious wicked child that was taken up for begging and admirably converted. His holy life and joyful death when he was nine years old." There are many more, and in hardly any of them does the subject live to grow up. The poor babies seem like little Mrs. Lucy Apsley, to have been "carried to sermons," of which they were expected to render a full account when they were brought home again, and wrought up to a pitch of precocious sensibility quite likely to bring on water on the brain, and everything that was most morbid and unwholesome rather encouraged than repressed. (E. Godfrey: *English Children in the Olden Time*, pp. 204-206.)

Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, "with its gruesome stories of persecution and torture, was one very frequently put into the hands of young children." The same book, garnished with illustrations of the victims undergoing torture, was given to the present writer as soon as he could read.

John Bunyan finding his *Pilgrims Progress* so much appreciated by the young, for whom it was not primarily intended, wrote a book especially for them entitled *Book for Boys and Girls*, a dreary production containing besides the ABC, and some columns of spelling, the Ten Commandments in doggerel verse, and the Lord's Prayer in the same form. Also a poem entitled *The Awakened Child's Lament*, beginning:—

When Adam was deceived,  
I was of life bereaved,  
Of late too I perceived,  
I was in sin conceived.

This poem, says Elizabeth Godfrey, "consists of twenty-nine verses in the same penitential strain. Imagine the whiny voice, the weary distaste of a child condemned to get this stuff by heart!" (p. 210.) Further on "in a dialogue between a sinner and a spider, the one is represented as being as loathsome as the other."

It was remarkable, says the same writer, "that the popularity of this juvenile literature should have persisted as it did; it continued to be produced all through the eighteenth century, both here and in America, and the Evangelical Revival of the early part of the nineteenth brought about a recrudescence." (p. 211.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

### Rondeau.

Love is a game, a game that few can win;  
The mass must lose; and wisest they who grin;  
Who smile and say it is worth while to try  
To taste that bitter-sweet before we die,  
Though tears of blood they secret weep within.  
The losers in the game say love is Sin,  
A charge the winners hasten to deny;  
While Eros shouts, and Echo makes reply,  
"Love is a game."

The finest vintage in life's dusty bin  
Surely is love, and beauty is its kin,  
But in the game of love the stakes are high:  
To youth his words sound far away and thin,  
But age hears Eros shout above the din,  
"Love is a game."

BAYARD SIMMONS.

## The World of the Miraculous.

### I.

BEFORE anyone can understand stories of miracles, and before any Christian has the right to defend Christian stories, it is necessary to study the world in which miracles were born. Of course, you cannot really expect Christians to do that. That would be for them to see the weakness of their own case. And many Christians give you the impression of being rather like ostriches. They shut their eyes to a fact, and then shout loudly that there is no such fact. Now if we can once get hold of the ideas that were in the minds of the people to whom miracles were natural, it will be much easier for us. Miracles came about in a pre-scientific age. It may be hard for us to put ourselves in the position of these people, but we should try to do so. There was no such thing as law and order in the world. There was no such thing as effect following cause. There was no such thing as secondary cause. Anything could happen at any time. God could do anything. It was a world of fairies. Gods and men could unite and create giants. Men could shout and walls would fall down. And so on. All that happened was supernatural. God did everything. A Miracle was merely something a little bit more divine than the rest of the things that happened. That is all. It was all miraculous. But one or two things were especially miraculous. Generally things happened in the usual way. But now and again, God wanted them to happen in an unusual way. And so he made them happen. There was no breaking of law, for the simple reason that there was no law to break.

There is nothing remarkable about all that. Our fathers were children. The tragedy is not that we started like that, but that we have not grown out of it.

Miracles are common to all religions. There is an age of miracles. And by that, I do not mean an age in which miracles happen, but an age in which people thought they happened. A miracle is not a fact, but an interpretation of a fact. The facts of the world are the same to-day as ever they were. But people looked at them in a different way. They looked at them in a miraculous way. Belief in the miraculous belongs to the childhood of the race. And one of the strange things about religion, all religion, is that the stories of the religion believed in are accepted as miracles, whereas the stories of all other religions are looked upon as mere tales. It is not only Christianity that is guilty here. All religions have that fault.

In many cases, you see the miracles growing in front of you. I shall point that out later when I deal with the miracles of the Bible. Let me illustrate now by quoting from stories that are not in the Bible. There is the case of St. Francis Xavier. Francis was a man of Spain who became a member of the Society of Jesus, went to the Far East as a missionary and died there. He lived in the sixteenth century. Now Francis has left us himself a fairly detailed account of his life. Also many of his fellow-missionaries wrote letters about him and to him. But nowhere is there a story that bears in the least degree the appearance of a miracle. And nobody in his life-time ever made the suggestion that he could perform a miracle. But after he died, the stories began to appear. And the further off writers were removed from him in date, the taller their stories became. He raised the dead, he brought an earthquake down on a blasphemous city, he made fire come down from heaven, he spoke Japanese right away without having to learn it. And on the basis of those stories, he was canonized by the



Pope. In that day, it was the easiest thing in the world to give a miraculous twist to a story that to begin with was quite natural. And if there were no stories that could be twisted into miracles, they could easily be manufactured. It was a case of respect for your hero making you tell tall stories about him. And once the stories were told they were repeated, and so they became venerable with age, until everybody believed them, as they do with the stories of the Bible.

The same sort of thing happened in the case of Alfred the Great, Thomas à Becket and a host more. In their lives there was nothing of the miraculous. But after their death, in order to show their fine character, stories were told about them which showed their miraculous power. Once accept a world in which anything can happen, and you can easily see how the idea of the miraculous came in. Generally the story existed nowhere else than in the imagination of the teller of it.

It is important also to remember that miraculous stories rarely occur in the first-hand documents of a person. It is only when a long time has elapsed since his death that they begin to appear. The closer we get to the person himself, the less of the miraculous there is. That is very suggestive, and it needs to be borne in mind when the stories of the Bible are discussed.

H. T. FOWLER.

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### Magic and Religion.

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It is rather unfortunate that Sir James Frazer, in *The Golden Bough*, asserts that magic and religion differ fundamentally, that there is a "radical conflict of principle" between them. Naturally this finding was seized upon by religious propagandists, and has doubtless been used with considerable effect.

It is probable that many Freethinkers have felt dubious on the point. And it is interesting to note that one of our most learned anthropologists, Professor Westermarck (formerly Professor of Sociology in the University of London and now Professor of Philosophy at the Academy of Abo, Finland), dissents from Frazer's conclusion, pointing out the fundamental resemblance of the two features, viz., "mysteriousness, occultness." Obviously both deal with the supernatural or preternatural; and therefore "the character of mystery . . . makes magic akin to religion."

Westermarck (*Early Beliefs and their Social Influence*) then proceeds to show that the relation between the two, as evidenced by the cults of barbarian peoples of the present day and those of early historic peoples, is very intimate. "Owing to the element of mystery which is found in both, magical forces may be personified as spirits or gods, or be transformed into divine attributes, or lead to divine injunctions." And again, "Curses and blessings, supposed to be effective on account of an impersonal magic force that is ascribed to the words themselves, develop into appeals or prayers to gods."

A further contention of Frazer's is that magic is akin to science, because both assume that "the succession of events is regular and certain, being determined by immutable laws, the operation of which can be seen and calculated precisely," while the result of religious practice is of course not certain, but supposedly dependent upon the variable wills of spirits and gods. Here again, Westermarck draws attention to the gist of the matter, viz., that "unlike science, magic misunderstands the nature of the particular laws which govern that sequence." To this we may add that magic is the antithesis of science in the respect that it has no basis in adequate observation or other investigation, testing or verification. It is, in fact, a mere illusory projection of man's own attribute of power into a variety of objects, which are then assumed, without any real evidence, to

work effects by their magic force. An essentially similar projection of man's willed activities results in the making of supernatural beings.

Science cannot in any satisfactory sense be regarded as following from magic any more than from religion, but may be said to follow from the natural thought and unorganized knowledge of primitive man, such as that involved in ordinary activities, like the gathering of food and the making of implements.

Another anthropologist has made a hasty statement useful to religious writers, viz., that magic is concerned with bad or anti-social and religion with good or social ends. But as Westermarck points out, there are both bad (black) and good (white) magic; and as Frazer and others have abundantly shown, magic is extensively used socially to control the weather and in other ways to increase the food supply for the community, to expel public evils, and so on. On the other hand, the social end of religion is far to seek when it leads to the extermination of those who will not accept a particular cult (e.g., those of Jahweh or Allah), to say nothing of the religious wars, murders, torture, banishment and imprisonment associated with medieval and early modern Christianity.

It seems clear, therefore, that we may justifiably rest in the conclusion to which some of us were led several decades ago, viz., (1) that magic and religion form twin branches of occultry, and belong alike, both in nature and origin, to the primitive stage of human ignorance and feeble thought—to the pre-scientific era; and (2) that this stage is followed, or is to be followed, by the stage of developed, purely natural, positive and organized thought—the scientific era; using the term "science" in the broad sense which includes "scientific history," as well as geographical and other genuine, verified knowledge of man and his world.

We may therefore continue to associate the two features, and attack them in combination as extensively and intensively as may be. There is still much to be done before we shall see the end of astrology and palmistry, to say nothing of the still more childish superstitions associated with Friday, number thirteen, charms, mascots, and the like. All these things, equally with theology, are to be strongly condemned because they lead to neglect of reality, to loss of time, energy and substance in following after will-o-the-wisps, and to reliance on something other than rational human effort for effecting "the relief of man's estate."

J. REEVES.

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### Acid Drops.

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Speaking at the Albert Hall, Lord Justice Slesser said that Christianity is more seriously menaced to-day than it has been since the time of Constantine. His Lordship might have gone further and said more. For in the time of Constantine, as in subsequent periods until the past century, it was only one form of religion that was in danger. Christianity was menaced by another form of belief, or the other forms of belief were menaced by Christianity. But to-day the great enemy to Christianity is not a rival religion, but the reasoned rejection of all religion. Historic struggles have a way of working themselves to something like a logical conclusion, and the manner in which rival creeds and sects are striving to find a common line of defence against a common foe, is proof that the issue between Atheism and Theism—the only vital issue—is becoming clearer.

Lord Slesser gave as an illustration of his statement that last year fifty per cent of the marriages in the Royal Borough of Kensington took place in the registrar's office. He said this meant that half the people who got married thought so little of their religion that they did not trouble about it on so important an occasion as their marriage. Of course, Lord Slesser might have pointed out that the civil marriage is actually the only legal marriage in this country. The law will recognize no marriage but one in which the conditions laid down by the Secular authority are fulfilled. There may be what-



ever religious ceremonies the contracting parties wish to have, but the civil contract must be made. And even though the marriage may take place in a Church, it is legal only because the parson is licensed to perform marriages.

The growth of marriages before the registrar is surely a sign of the end. Largely the Church has maintained its influence by its influence on or over the more important functions of life, birth, marriage, death, etc. Once these are definitely withdrawn from the Churches by the majority of the population, the clergy will become in theory what they are in fact—repositories of a mass of primitive superstitions seeking by all kinds of artifice to maintain an influence over a civilized society.

The connexion between Oil and Holiness may be to the uninitiated rather difficult to understand, but these puzzles are so frequent that it is better to simply accept the connexion as a historic fact which has persisted even unto this day. The Old and New Testaments are full of oil and the Book of Leviticus reeks of it. Moses poured it over Aaron and his sons with a liberality which must have been gratifying to none save the oil merchants of those days. On all the occasions which affect most the well-being of the men and women of these islands, oil comes into its own. At Coronations, and Consecrations of the more Dignified Clergy, anointings with oil are admittedly of the very essence of the contract, and it is generally conceded that the first steps of a King or a Bishop in the sphere in which it has pleased the Lord to call him, must be always accompanied by a certain personal greasiness. What is very important as well is that the Lord has told his followers that oil (plus prayer) is an *infallible* remedy in every kind of sickness. Pray over him, said St. James, and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the sick shall be saved. It is a kindness however to point out that if a Christian acts upon this and it doesn't work, his fellow-Christians will give him plenty of leisure in one of His Majesty's Prisons in order to meditate upon how he has come to misunderstand the divine injunction.

In that famous chapter of Micah which is brought out of obscurity on occasions to show unbelievers how near Secularism, Christianity really is, in which we are told that what the Lord really requires is for us to "do justly and love mercy and walk humbly with our God," we are also asked, "Will the Lord be pleased with ten thousand rivers of oil?" To be candid about the matter, we don't know. But we do know that there are many people who will. They have been meeting recently at All Hallows Church. The Chairman and Directors of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company attended a special Festival Service there, and as the Church can be relied upon to know what constitutes Big Business, the Lords Anointed, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archdeacon of London, and a few other less generously oiled clerics, put in an appearance. They prayed and they sang and they returned thanks for favours received and they asked for Singar Plums for the morrow. They entreated their Faithful Creator "to hallow the course of this vast human enterprise so that peace and patience may prevail with fruitfulness." More Oil, O Lord, More Oil! When Big Business resorts to prayer we can be sure the situation is felt to be more than ordinarily delicate.

The *Neue Londoner Zeitung* informs us that one of the most beautiful churches in Norway is at Heidal, in the district of Gudbrandstal, and that it is also famed for its wonderful cultural and historic value. It also reports that it has been struck by lightning, set alight and reduced to ashes. No doubt there is a moral somewhere.

Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton recently said in a speech on Broadcasting at Oxford that "People must be ready to listen to opinions which they do not like, to opinions which they might even think are dangerous, and then they must consider the question for themselves." Mrs.

Hamilton is a Governor of the B.B.C., and she knows perfectly well that if there is one thing Sir John Reith is absolutely opposed to it is broadcasting a speech with which he himself is in entire disagreement. It is not a question of the "people" at all. Sir John would certainly not allow anything against Christianity from any Freethinker who mattered. For example, would he allow a reasoned argument showing that the Jesus of the Gospels is pure myth, that he never did exist and could not have existed? Would he allow a reasoned attack on the medical fraternity against vaccination and vivisection? Would he allow a Bolshevik attack on Capitalism and Royalism? Really, is not Mrs. Hamilton, who has done nothing so far in the interest of free speech at the B.B.C., a trifle too disingenuous?

Once again Mr. James Douglas has rushed to the rescue. This time it is in favour of an out-of-work man who has seven children, and who was recently rebuked by a judge. This roused all the journalistic instincts of James Douglas who came out with a slushy article in favour of plenty of children backed up with a number of Biblical texts such as "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full." A man should have children and more children; never mind if he is unemployed and homeless and perhaps not even on the dole. As for the wife and the poor kiddies, Mr. Douglas, in his righteous indignation, refuses to discuss their feelings at all. In his recent article on the subject he never mentions either. What does it matter what they feel—or suffer? What are successive pregnancies and deliveries under horrible conditions of poverty to *him*? What do the sufferings of hungry children born in slums mean to a "populator" crank? Plenty of children and more of 'em is the slogan. We are glad Mr. Douglas is such a thorough Christian.

The Oxford Movement is certainly responsible for some funny statements, but what is a good earnest Christian to say to the Bishop of Bradford? He declared recently that "We have learned that we are not Protestants but Catholics, that we are not Erastians but Christians." 1900 years of Christianity, boosted up by millions of priests, forced on people by torture, repression and persecution, permeating practically the whole of our social life for centuries, and the good Bishop has only just learned through the Oxford Movement that "we" are Christians! He would not, presumably, have known it if there had been no Oxford Movement and he obviously does not consider his brothers-in-Christ, the Protestants, as genuine Christians at all. What beautiful harmony always exists in Christianity and how clearly does the divine religion make one think!

Apropos of which, we note that a Catholic editor tells one of his correspondents that "There is no Blessed Sacrament in Anglican Churches for Anglican clergymen are not real priests and have not the power of consecration." This seems to be a smack in the eye for Anglicans who claim that Our Lord is just as much on their altars as he is on Roman altars, and the pretty wrangle looks as if it is going on quite as much now as it did just after the Reformation. What a pity it is that Our Lord does not settle the question *viva voce* from one or other of the altars. Even the wicked infidel would then be impressed.

Whatever the value of the Oxford Movement may be from its "spiritual" side, it is obvious that the other side—the money side—cannot be disassociated by its enthusiastic supporters. To carry on the "good work" initiated 100 years ago, the Anglo-Catholic congress is asking for at least £7,000 a year. In other words, people are asked to subscribe a huge sum of money to bolster up a movement which seeks to perpetuate the silliest and crudest Christian superstitions. It need hardly be added that the money will be found. Poverty, misery and disease can be rampant and go unaided; but there is always plenty of cash for religion.



The Prince of Wales sent a message to the Chairman of the Anglo-Catholic Housing Association in connexion with the Centenary of the Oxford Movement. It is a plea for the Association to work for the abolition of slums, and we only mention it because, though sent on such an important occasion, there is not a word in it about Blessed Sacraments, Mass, Vestments, Reservation, Images, Confessions or Incense. Not even is the name of Jesus mentioned anywhere, or that without the Son of God, slum clearance is impossible. In fact, the message is pure secularism, and as such must have given the Congress some rude shocks.

We were glad to see that a pious Catholic editor severely rapped on the knuckles a reader who ventured the opinion that certain "happenings" in the New Testament might be "symbolical." He stands unequivocally for literalness—as he should. "The Catholic Church," he declares, "believes that Christ's blood was shed for us literally and not figuratively. . . Christ's human body really rose from the tomb and was reunited to his human soul," and so on. We simply have no patience with the symbolists, and we affirm that the only true interpretation—for a Christian—of the New Testament is sheer literalness. Everything happened exactly as described and should be believed in on the authority of the Roman Church—or faith, which amounts to the same thing. Reason must be banished entirely as well as history and science. This is the only way to hold aloft the flag of Christianity.

The Methodist Conference shed tears at one of its meetings over the fact that Sunday is now regarded as "more and more of a holiday." The report on Sunday Observance presented to the Conference said that "The competition of games with church-going is leading to fewer Sunday worshippers." It also stated that:—

Complaints are heard that in comparison with the radio, the cinema, and Sunday journalism, sermons are apt to seem dull and uninteresting.

This is quite distressing! We have no doubt that every member of the Conference would join in heartily singing "All hail the power of Jesus's name." But how can one expect the power to be great enough to cope with the cinema, the radio, and the attraction of out-door games? And yet Jesus is all-powerful, so long as no one opposes him. But it is unfair to expect Jesus to draw young people away from lawn tennis, or the holy ghost to prove a bigger draw to young women than Ivor Novello.

There is only one grain of comfort in this situation. A report on Methodism in Scotland says that the "extraordinary number of denominational missions in Scotland gives evidence of the ingrained religious sentiment of the Scot. That is almost a calumny on the Scot, for we know of no reliable evidence that the Scot is more averse to civilizing influences than other people. And as the same report says that in Glasgow, where one fifth of the population of Scotland is centred, "the great mass of the people is outside all the Churches, and some were definitely hostile to Christianity," perhaps the insidious reflection on the intelligence of the Scot is not true concerning his innate religious sentiment. At least all our experience goes to show the average Scot can more than hold his own, where intelligence is concerned, with the average Englishman.

At the recent inquest on some of the victims of the train disaster at Salkeld, Cumberland, the Coroner said that Providence had been kind, only twelve people were injured. This was said in all seriousness. Humans are very curious objects! If a King or a Queen does or says anything sensible or human, public attention is at once called to so remarkable a phenomenon. If God arranges things so that in a railway accident only twelve are injured, instead of a number being killed, then official attention is called to his goodness. And when a Freethinker calls attention to the damnable stupidity of it all he is reminded that he is disrespectful or irreverent!

The Rev. Langford-James, replying in the *Daily Telegraph* to a description of male communicants in the Church of England, asks, What has mental education to do with the reception of Holy Communion? Mr. Langford-James has, in our opinion, made a distinct score, for except in the sense that education is essential even to a training in stupidity, the reply is, nothing at all. The less education, the less intelligence the better. His reply reminds us of a picture in one of the daily papers during the High Mass pantomime at the White City. It depicted a number of women and was headed "A Study in Devotion." It might well have appeared in the *Freethinker*. It gave ample support to Mr. Langford-James. Mental education had nothing to do with their taking the communion. That much was quite clear.

## Fifty Years Ago.

AN INTERVIEW WITH G. W. FOOTE AND W. J. RAMSEY  
IN HOLLOWAY PRISON:

JUST a word or two of hearty greeting, a strong brave smile from the prisoner, a rapid answer to the inquiry as to his health, as if that were a matter of the least moment, and then to business talk. Half an hour is but a little time to tell a man of all that has been done on his behalf during many weeks, and to discuss plans for the coming weeks. I told him that his dear friend, J. M. Wheeler, was back and at the good work again, giving him a hearty message from his and my helper, full of business details and cheerful words. Then the meeting that was to be held four hours later, the resolutions, the speakers, the feelings in regard to it were swiftly discussed. I told him that it was certain to be a grand success. I only wish now that I had known how grand a one, and even the hopeful enthusiasm with which I spoke would have been increased. The books that I had brought to be his companions and comforters were named, and their names greeted as old friends. How the paper and magazine fared came next, and next to his interest in the living beings dearest to him, his interest in these was greatest. That they were thriving appeared to be a matter of greater moment than any affecting his release. At the mention of all who had been working for him and for a greater than he, that of Freethought, now so closely identified with that of free speech, his face lighted up gratefully; and the prison dress, the prison bars, the presence of captivity seemed forgotten.

A few minutes later and our other friend was talking to me. My visit to him was a surprise. He had seen none of his relatives before me. Hence his half hour was largely spent in talking of books needed and messages to home. But his mind, like that of his co-sufferer, was active and more anxious about the Freethought party than about its martyrs. He had been mending shoes, with such application and dexterity that he did as much work as the rest of his fellow prisoners put together. But as they are criminals and he an honest man of the working class and the working-creed, this was to be expected. With the familiar twinkle in his eye he told me that on the very day then passing half his term was over, and that on the morrow he began to go down-hill. He was counting the days, the hours, the minutes, and said again, with a merry look, that as his time was up on a Sunday he should gain a day upon Justice North by being liberated on the preceding Saturday. Yet through all his cheerfulness and courage, the former not a little assumed, the latter not a whit, I could read how the long confinement was telling upon him. I am certain I do not exaggerate when I say that neither of the two men thus brutally tortured will ever be quite as they were before. But the strength of body of which the cruelty and cowardice of the Christian bigots may have deprived them, will be more than compensated by the added strength of mind, the deepened intensity of hate for Christianity with which they will quit their dungeons to engage again in that fight against the wicked creed in which we also are strengthened as we think of their wrongs.

The "Freethinker," July 29, 1885.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

## Ingersoll Centenary.

"THE FREETHINKER" for August 13 will be a special Ingersoll issue. It will contain a lengthy sketch of the greatest of American Freethinkers, with several portraits.

No other Freethought speaker and writer since the time of Paine has ever equalled Ingersoll in the influence he exerted all over the English-speaking world. His lectures, on a great range of subjects, political, ethical, literary and religious drew huge audiences in the United States, and his writings circulated by the thousand where even the greatest of his contemporaries had to be content with hundreds. The happy marriage of wit and wisdom, profound thought with simplicity of language, delighted both the capable thinker and the man in the street, and gave him a unique position in the world of liberal thinking.

There will be no extra charge for this special number, which may or may not be an enlarged number. But we strongly urge those who can to take extra copies, as many as possible, and circulate them among their friends. Or if they will send along the cash and names and addresses they may be sent direct from this office. We will send twelve copies post free for 3s. There is a chance here for some useful work being done.

We shall be printing a much larger number than usual, but it will assist us if those who wish to secure extra copies will give their orders to their local agents at once. Newsagents send along their orders a full week before the date of issue, and orders given to them a few days before cannot always be discharged.

We are counting upon the co-operation of our readers.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L.M.—Mr. Cohen has dealt with the superstition of a Jewish "race" in his *Creed and Character*, and has no time at present to deal with the subject. Perhaps on some future occasion. To explain things in terms of the "Semitic Race" is bad enough, but when it comes to creating a Jewish race one reaches the highest level of hopeless misunderstanding. If those who explain the qualities of the Jew in terms of race were to ask the simple question, How does a "race" acquire its qualities? they might realize the hopelessly unscientific character of the expression. Presumably the "race" acquires its indelible character by some kind of divine endowment. No one has poured greater scorn and contempt upon this "race" explanation than the late Mr. J. M. Robertson. His description of it as a "paleo-theological" superstition just fits the fact. It is the most baseless of superstitions, and a sheer denial of a science of history.

"SATANO."—We do not question what you say, but we are so busy writing the old language that we have not the time to learn a new one.

S. THOMAS.—All that many Christians need to meet their God is to use a looking-glass.

L. WALTERS.—Mr. Cohen will be visiting Liverpool on October 15.

W. WILLIAMS.—Thanks, but see reply to "L.M." Superstitions die very hard.

T. SALMON.—The worst we can say of many Christians we know is that they deserve "salvation." It is a case of "Many are called but few there be that deserve rejection."

MR. J. S. SHAW writes.—"I should be glad if any of your readers could suggest the probable character of the song, "Do not Destroy," mentioned in the titles of Psalms 57, 58, 59 and 75, and of which the first line is given in Isaiah 65-8."

C. HARPUR.—We have never accused either politicians or scientists of cowardice because they treated Christianity with "civility." Those of whom we complain are such as cringe in word or speech to something they know is a mere superstition, or laboriously invent apologies for what they feel to be incapable of straightforward justification.

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

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*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.*

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## Sugar Plums.

Optimism is not altogether discredited, for even some of our religious J.P.'s are not above being taught by experience. About a month ago we noted the case at Aldershot of a magistrate who made a woman borrow a hat and wear it before he would take her evidence. He said it is treating God with disrespect to offer evidence bareheaded, although what God has to do with a Court at Aldershot no man knoweth. Another case of the same kind occurred in the same court before the same person on July 13, and this time after ventilating the same rubbish about God, the woman, Mrs. Rudge, of Leyton, who refused to wear a hat, was permitted to give her evidence—to the great displeasure of Almighty God and Brigadier-General Lushington. Brigadier-General Lushington's comments were really impertinent, but where religion is concerned insolence in office is to be expected. We congratulate Mrs. Rudge in acting as she did.

As illustrators of that liberty of which all Britons boast, some of our colonies—where religion is concerned—are not quite so nice as they might be. In Canada we have been chronicling the persecution of a man for blasphemy, and his confinement in an asylum, under obvious pressure from Roman Catholic priests. His fault appears to have been the discovery of a priest's misconduct with his wife. In Australia they have a law against "Unseemly Language," and to a religious person anything which criticizes religion—his religion—is, of course, unseemly. And if that were applied to all subjects the chief business of anyone in power would be locking up, or fining everyone with whom he disagrees.



For instance. In Sydney a Mrs. Lennon was fined £10, or twenty-one days hard labour for using "unseemly language." Mrs. Lennon appealed against this, and lost, and has again appealed to the high court of Australia. Here is the "unseemly language":—

We do not subscribe to this abstract God. Those of you who want religion can have as much of it as you like. Have it till the cows come home, but you must pay for it, not me. Don't come to me, your religion is your own. But it must not interfere with the government of the country . . . This God of you Christians is a Jewish God, not an Aussie God . . . Just a Jewish God with his money bag round his neck. How do you like it when I tell you that in olden times each man or tribe had his own God. They carried him around in a little wooden box, and if you dared look at this God the God would strike you dead.

It is almost unbelievable that in a civilized country a woman can be sentenced to twenty-one days hard labour for saying this. It is nothing but common-sense and established truth. There is no doubt whatever each tribe had its own god, and if the wisecracks who sat as judges only read their Bible they would find that the Jews did carry their God round in a box, and that it was a very serious offence to look upon him with anything but the eye of faith. Really, it is just as well to receive repeated assurance that wherever the British flag waves liberty is assured. There are some things that need to be said often or they would soon cease to be believed.

Messrs. Watts have issued a revised edition of Mr. Joseph McCabe's *The Popes and their Church* (2s. 6d. net.), and we warmly recommend this devastating exposure of what the author calls "the chief paradox of our age." A number of books against Roman Catholicism were written last century by extreme Protestants, but few had behind them the intimate knowledge, not only of Catholic history but of Catholic procedure, that this work shows on every page. Half the book is devoted to the history of the Roman Church and the other half to the Church of Rome to-day, and we know few books written from the militant Freethought side which present our case so well and so overwhelmingly. Mr. McCabe writes most interestingly, and his withering contempt for Roman Catholicism does not prevent him from avoiding extravagant statements. The truth is bad enough without quoting extreme or untrustworthy writers.

Very encouraging reports continue to reach us from Messrs. J. T. Brighton and J. Clayton. In the latest to hand Mr. Brighton speaks of some very successful meetings in the North East area, where Freethought is making good headway. Several clerical opponents gave valuable help by their efforts for Jesus. That of course is the usual result, and we may in the near future offer spare-time jobs for a number of clerics to assist at Freethought meetings by stating the case for Christianity.

We are pleased to note that Mr. Jack Clayton's lecture at Stockport on the 23rd inst was so well received. As a result, a debate has been arranged between the Rev. T. J. Jones and Mr. Clayton to take place on Thursday, August 3 at 7 p.m., in Armoury Square, Stockport. Freethinkers in the district should make a point of bringing Christian friends to swell the audience which the discussion is sure to draw.

From August 12 the General Secretary of the N.S.S. will be away on a short holiday. During his absence only matters of pressing importance will be dealt with. Where possible all matters needing attention should be forwarded to the office so as to be dealt with before August 12.

The law is a sort of hocus-pocus, that smiles in yer face while it picks yer pocket; and the glorious uncertainty of it is of mair use to the professors than the justice of it.—*Charles Macklin.*

## The Oxford Movement.

FEW centenaries have had such a wonderful press as the movement started by Keble in 1833. The national newspapers and the religious journals have filled columns of undiluted praise of the pioneer Tractarians, and a vast public, most of whom will swallow anything so long as there is a suspicion of religion about it, have swallowed wholesale the fairy tales which have been dished up for their especial benefit.

For let us make no mistake about it. The idea that there was a "quickenings of the spirit," a spiritual "uplift," that the Church of England was reborn, that it was lifted from stagnation, that the "common people" flocked in thousands to hear the wonderful founders of the Oxford Movement, is pure unmitigated myth. To read the thousand and one writers who have flocked into print ever since they saw that now is their chance of breaking a lance in defence of the True Faith or making a little money by rehashing the old controversy, one would imagine that 100 years ago some stalwart Christian champions, white-hot with anger at the eclipse of genuine Christianity, set out to reawaken their slumbering or sloth-like brethren, and that ever since, something pure and undefiled before God Almighty, spread all over the land. There seems not to be a single writer—outside some extreme Protestants—who has had the pluck to tell the truth about a movement which would be hard to beat for unqualified submission to the crudest supernaturalism.

I am anxious to be fair. I know that many, perhaps all, of the Tractarians were sincere men. But sincerity does not necessarily mean truth or reason. It does not mean either a scientific or even an æsthetic outlook. It can mean the silliest, the most stupid and credulous exhibition of faith. A savage witch-doctor is sincere; a Spiritualist or a Christian Scientist is sincere. Even an ignorant and reactionary politician may be sincere. I feel the right to attack sincerity if it is based on the crudest of superstitions, and I know of nothing so crude or so silly as some of the things which the Tractarians wished to bring back to their particular brand of Christianity.

Whether the Church of England was in a state of stagnation in 1833, and for some time previously, does not much matter now, but it certainly was not honey-combed then with what Protestants call Popish practice, ritual and mummery. It may be that the Reformers when they practically ejected Popery from England in the sixteenth century were actuated by high motives. That the Church of Rome was then corrupt—I would prefer to say foul—is admitted even by Catholics. (I hope no angry Catholic will ask me to give chapter and verse for this statement. It can be given). The Reformers may not have substituted something better, but at least some of them were very able men who defended their point of view with consummate ability. Popish practices were abhorrent to many of them. They put forward eventually the Bible as the supreme Rule of Faith and denied that the ritual of Rome could be found therein. Throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the controversy waxed furious. Indeed, during most of last century there was a hatred of the Catholic special ceremonies which became almost a disease. Liberal Churchmen like Whately, Milman, Kingsley and others tried hard to be tolerant for they saw with more or less increasing fear the encroachment of a ritual by members of the Church of England which looked suspiciously like that of the Church of Rome without any reservation.



That is what the first Tractarians wanted, the Church of Rome in the Church of England, but without the Pope. It has always puzzled me why Keble and Pusey and Hurrell Froude and Palmer should have boggled at the idea of a Pope. They were swallowing all the Popish ritual, Mass, Confession, all the Sacraments in fact, incense, elevating the Host and many other of the mummeries which accompany pure Christianity, but they objected to calling the Bishop of Rome God's Viceroy or Supreme Head of the Church. And the reason, except that the Pope is not actually mentioned as such in the Bible, I have never been able to find out.

If John Keble, the author of that pious but thoroughly mediocre book of poetry called the *Christian Year*, was the actual "begetter" of the Movement, his first enthusiastic follower was the erratic but engaging Hurrell Froude. He wanted the Church of England to be what it was before the Reformation. He hated Protestantism and Liberalism in religion. He wanted to believe everything the Roman Catholics believed in except the Pope, but he died young and was thus not able to see the result of the efforts he made to bring England to Catholicism.

But if Froude never knew or guessed what would happen, he did one thing which brought the Oxford Movement, one might say with one bound, into the limelight. For it was he who introduced John Henry Newman to Keble, and Newman was easily the greatest and ablest of those who called themselves Christians in his day.

Let me admit I hesitate rather to approach Newman. I do not know whether I understand Newman or am capable of conveying my own impressions of a great and brilliant man. I do not know for certain whether Newman was a Christian in the sense that Keble and Froude and Pusey were Christians. I am certain a large number of his fellow-believers looked upon him as a heretic, and that even when he became a convert he was looked upon with more or less suspicion by the Roman Catholic Church. Froude in 1829 wrote that he "would give a few odd pence if he were not a heretic," and as W. G. Hutchinson says in his *Oxford Movement* Introduction, "from Froude, Newman learned reverence for the hierarchical system, conviction of the supernatural powers of the priesthood, dislike of the Reformers and scorn of 'Bible Christianity.'" Even then we have the evidence of Newman's own *Apologia* that he was never certain of his ground, and he never was sure till his incessant reasoning and questioning brought him into the arms of that Church which has always been famous for silencing heretics either by their complete surrender of all reason or—when she had the power—by torture and death. The Oxford Movement was born, as Dean Church says, of the heart-searchings and communings of these three men.

Froude and Newman made a tour of the Continent just before 1833, and it is on record that they asked Wiseman in Rome, "on what terms they could be received into the Roman Church," so that it is not difficult to understand the statement in the *Apologia*: "Alas, it was my portion for whole years, to remain without any satisfactory basis for my religious profession; in a state of moral sickness neither able to acquiesce in Anglicanism nor able to go to Rome!" And yet Newman was a priest of the Church of England at this time. It was he who wrote the first of the *Tracts of the Times* as they were called. It enjoyed a good circulation, but whether I am not able to appreciate tracts on religion in general, or whether I am without a spark of sympathy for Newman's aims, or whether I am utterly unable to understand his subtle arguments, I must frankly confess, his tracts

bore me quite as much as a seventeen-year old girl novelist's first attempt at fiction, if not more. To say as Dean Church says, that they are "clear, brief, stern appeals to conscience and reason, sparing of words, utterly without rhetoric, intense in purpose," is to say something which I personally cannot apply to those tracts I have read. Even tract 90, which caused a hullabaloo of the most intense description, is merely a theological discussion, in Newman's most subtle style, of the Thirty-Nine Articles, what they mean, or may mean, or don't mean, or omit, or what various Fathers of the Church say, or what the Homilies say, packed full of quotations from all manner of Christians and even Newman himself. What he wanted to show was that it was possible to give "the Articles a Catholic interpretation and bring them into harmony with the Book of Common Prayer, an object of the most serious moment to those who have given their assent to both formularies."

There is no space to deal as I should like to deal—though with a certain amount of hesitation—with Newman and what he did for the Church of England. His *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* should be carefully read. While he was in the Church he tells us, "As to the High Church and the Low Church, I thought that the one had not much more of a logical basis than the other; while I had a thorough contempt for the Evangelical." And we must not forget that in his *Arians* he quoted—with approval—the advice of Clement of Alexandria:—

... (A Christian) both thinks and speaks the truth; except when careful treatment is necessary and then, as a physician for the good of his patients, he will lie, or rather utter a lie, as the Sophists say . . . Nothing, however, but his neighbour's good will lead him to do this. He gives himself up for the Church.

Newman was a marvellous prose writer and a superb dialectician. He was more than a match for Charles Kingsley, who attacked his good faith in *What Does Dr. Newman Mean?* but I prefer Kingsley's bluntness a thousand times.

Professor Saintsbury, in commenting upon the controversy between the two (which produced the *Apologia*) says of Kingsley "engaging in controversy with nearly the most formidable controversialist of the century, he experienced a discomfiture which was rather due to the blundering of his tactics than to the weakness of his case." And Hutchinson points out that Dr. Arnold, in replying in the *Edinburgh Review*, to Newman's *Elucidations of Dr. Hampden's Theological Statements*, "wrote in a white heat of indignation and his criticism of Newman's methods was certainly damaging. He showed how the quotations from Hampden were garbled by omissions, which made it hard to acquit the author of the *Elucidations* of deliberate dishonesty." After that, the picture of Newman, grovelling at the feet of a Roman Catholic priest, and crying out he would not get up until he was accepted as a convert, merely completes the picture of a typical religious saint.

Arnold said of the Tractarians—for, of course, Newman was not their only writer:—

The fanaticism of the English High Churchmen has been the fanaticism of mere foolery. A dress, a ritual, a name, a ceremony;—a technical phraseology;—the superstition of a priesthood without its power; the form of episcopal government, without its substance; a system imperfect and paralysed, not independent, not sovereign; afraid to cast off the subjection against which it is perpetually murmuring.

This is not a bad analysis of the Oxford Movement then, but I have never seen it quoted in the panegyrics which have filled columns of our newspapers to-



day. Nor that Newman was denounced by Whately and Abbot as well. Sir James Stephen said, Newman "labours under a degree of cerebral excitement which unfits him for the mastery of his own thoughts and the guidance of his own pen." Yet Newman was the great leading light of the Oxford Movement.

If the reader wants a view from the other side, he should read the *Secret History of the Oxford Movement*, by Walter Walsh. This book also has been completely ignored by our popular press bent upon preserving or propagating religion at all costs. The chapters dealing with *Confession* in the Church of England and the book which its confessors must use, *The Priest in Absolution*, should not be missed. This obscene work, a translation of a French manual for Confessors, would be, if it is like some of those I have read by Debrayne and Dens, about the last word in filth. The Tractarians, who began to call themselves Catholics and later, Anglo-Catholics, were very angry when the book was exposed. And they were even more angry when the saintly Dr. Pusey was attacked. I believe Dr. Pusey used to wear a hair shirt so as to be thoroughly uncomfortable if not in actual torture as a form of penance, though no doubt he would have indignantly denied any emulation of the pious Hindu Fakir reclining naked on the points of hundreds of nails hammered through a door. Dr. Pusey recommended as a Penance for Sisters of Mercy "the Discipline for about a quarter of an hour a day." The Discipline consisted of whipping on the bare back and "a quarter of an hour a day amounted to ninety-one hours of whipping every year." So much for another leading light of the Oxford Movement. Nowadays it simply means—or the general public thinks it means—bringing the Church of England back to its one-time pristine purity by the introduction of the whole lot of Popish practices so that the religiously inclined can get what they want there without going to Rome. Whether the Church of England will gain in the long run or whether she will submit, as many of her adherents hope she will, to the Church of Rome remains to be seen. Whichever will be the case one thing must be borne in mind; Freethought must never relax a hair's breadth. Desperate efforts are being made to re-establish Christianity at whatever cost to our intellectual life and freedom. And those who think our fight is all but won simply have no conception of the strength and organization of the enemy. The fight may be long and bitter, but truth, as Milton said, has never been worsted in an open encounter.

H. CUTNER.

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## For Our Youngsters.

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INSPIRED! One of the silliest of all ideas is the pretence that some people are cleverer than others because GOD has "inspired" them. We know this nowadays because we all learn at school, as soon as we can read, that "there is no royal road to knowledge."

Long ago, when most of the religions of the world were invented, people were not only a lot sillier than they have been since, but because of this they were easily cheated.

Christianity, the religion we know most about, made a special point of what they call FAITH. Faith, is, of course, only another word for BELIEF. But if you simply say the ordinary word "belief," which everybody understands, nobody sees any particular merit in it. Nobody can help believing what seems to be true.

But when you call it Faith, you don't have to believe it to be true, you only have to BELIEVE it.

You will do well to be on your guard against anybody who talks about "faith." He generally wants you to accept some statement which is either quite untrue or is at the best highly doubtful.

Sooner or later you will find these people telling you that the stories demanding your "faith," cannot be proven. Some of these stories are very old indeed. When you trace them back far enough you find they rest on the word of some old priest or writer who could not have known any more about it than you or I.

At this stage we hear the word "Inspired"! We are told to have faith in these ancient yarns "because the original author was God." "But," you say, "we thought it was a man named Paul or Luke or Moses or Joseph Smith." Then comes the explanation. "These men (or those we have faith in) were INSPIRED"!

It is amusing to learn how easily the old world was deluded by this queer idea. You had to have faith first of all that these men were inspired, before you could have faith in anything they said. It only occurred to "Infidels" that it was like having to ride on a Unicorn before you knew if there was such a beast.

The worst of these fellows is that they talk about being "inspired" when all the time they mean "inspired by God." There would be very little harm in the word "inspired," if only we used it in its proper sense. It has several meanings. Let us look at two of these. In the "religious" sense, it always means "We MUST be right because God inspired what we tell you." Nobody ever heard any God, nobody ever saw any God, nobody ever read a single word that any God ever wrote. So it stands to reason that to say a thing is "inspired by God" is just an excuse for FAITH. We might believe something, even if it wasn't a very likely story, if it was told to us like any other story. But we know there is something fishy about stories which start with a God.

There is another sort of inspiration. It is a word used by poets. It isn't meant to make you believe anything at all. It only means, at its best, that when we see a beautiful sunset, or a lovely picture, or a very kind action, we say it "inspires" us. We just feel a glow of pleasure. We all at once forget ugly things. We begin to wish we could see more of these fine sights. We would like to imitate the kindly action which we loved to see.

You can quite see that the first kind of inspiration is different from the second. The same word is used for both, because it is part of the religious plan to pretend that all the good ideas in the world are religious. Remember that Atheists can be poets, painters and kind-hearted people, every bit as easily as anyone else. When we are inspired, we do not care about using the word itself, but we feel and think and live as fully as those who say that God has inspired them.

UNCLE GEORGE.

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## On Trees.

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Most cruel it is to cut down trees;  
They cannot run away;  
From an attack the roebuck flees;  
The tree perforce must stay;  
Nor can a tree retaliate,  
But meekly for the axe must wait . . .  
Oh, unkind fate!

BAYARD SIMMONS.



## Prejudice and Bias.

It is a strange thing that many otherwise sensible people when asked why they do not read the books or essays of certain authors offer the reply that these writers are biased. Some of the finest literature of the historical, psychological, and sociological type is dismissed with a wave of the hand on the grounds that it is contaminated with bias. Indeed, I have no doubt that defenders of the recent book holocaust in Germany would use this same argument. Actually, it is no justification whatever; it is a mere excuse and a poor one at that. Even prejudice, if it be discovered in an author, is not sufficient reason for refraining entirely from reading his works. Normally, of course, we tend to use the word bias as a synonym of prejudice, yet to my mind there exists a very important difference. For prejudice is more deeply entrenched than bias; it denotes an attitude of mind which having arrived at a point of view regards all others not consistent with it as erroneous, mischievous, and futile without even taking the trouble of examining them, and which when challenged in argument seldom refrains to resort to blustering tactics. Prejudice is conviction founded on feeling rather than reason. Bias, on the other hand, is perfectly natural in a writer, since it only means an inclination towards or perhaps an acceptance of a particular theory in preference to others. In fine, the mere act of holding an opinion may be said to constitute a bias, but here, as distinct from the effects of prejudice, the individual holding the opinion welcomes opposition and is not loth to enlarge, modify, or otherwise alter it, or else reject it if subsequent analysis in the light of newly-acquired facts makes it appear no longer sound. Only on matters where a man suspends judgment can we declare that he is without bias. Therefore as it is a writer's mission to set forth a specific viewpoint, and even a fiction writer is doing this in a covert manner, he cannot refute the charge of being biased. After all, however, he is being accused of no greater crime than that of saying what he thinks. In the last analysis that is what bias in this sense amounts to. To say, then, that a writer is biased means exactly nothing when it is urged as a reason for not reading him.

The burning of so-called un-German books has a psychological affinity and may be explained—though not completely—along the same lines. Had these books chanced to have a Nazi or Hitler bias or prejudice all would have been well, since Hitlerism is, at the moment, synonymous with righteousness, justice, and truth, as we are all aware. Lacking this they could not be tolerated; you see they might have induced some misguided people to believe there were actually men who were cleverer than Hitler, and, of course, that is, as Jack London might have said, "inconceivable and monstrous," worse, it is rank treachery. Hitler, as any Nazi gallant will fervently assure you, is infallible.

In Hitlerism, Fascism, and Roman Catholicism we observe the workings of the prejudiced mind at its worst. It is ego-centric, self-righteous and omniscient. Its idealism can be best expressed in the words of Herr Sauckel, Governor of Thuringia. He is reported to have spoken thus in Weimar: "I command you now to be intolerant towards everyone with different views from yourself. In Thuringia there must be henceforth one political faith and that is the faith of National Socialism."<sup>\*</sup>

That is the very essence of prejudice. Scientifically considered it is totally distinct from bias, for bias, as I have endeavoured to show, is rational and tolerant, nor does it distort one's judgment. It may be pointed out though that, given a dilatory brain, bias could very easily degenerate into prejudice. I do not think that the earnest seeker after truth needs the warning. He is a close and careful reasoner, his mind is ever on the alert for new ideas, new interpretations, and at intervals he overhauls and spring cleans his thoughts and beliefs, so that the possibility of his allowing a bias to become an obsession is decidedly remote.

TOM BLAKE.

## Correspondence.

## THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of July 2, 1933, G. H. Taylor, M.R.S.T., had a criticism of Esperanto, in favour of Ido. As the mover of the resolution, at the Conference, in favour of the recognition of Esperanto; I feel that I ought to reply. My apology for the delay is that I have been too busy to do so.

I knew that this kind of objection would come. It has. "Strange is it not," that every time there is any evidence or recognition of the spread and growth of Esperanto as *The International Language*; there is—immediately—a revival of rival languages of the International kind. The obstruction varies: it may be "Anglic" or "Basic English," "Ido" or "After Ido," "Occidental" or "Novial," "Idiom Neutral" or—some other.

G. H. Taylor gives his case away, in the first par., when he writes that Esperanto is "better known and established than any other." Then he tries to confuse the issue by writing that "the claims of Ido for comparative simplicity and beauty cannot be ignored." He ends by what I am justified in styling a manufactured passage in Esperanto—which has been used more than once. That can be left on one side.

Before I took up Esperanto, I examined—to the best of my ability—the claims of all such languages. I decided that Esperanto is IT on two grounds. First, because Esperanto is so simple that it can be learned in a fraction of the time necessary to learn any National Language: at the same time it is so scientifically constructed that the most abstract ideas or scientific principles can be clearly and exactly expressed. Second, because Esperanto is now established. It is a living language.

We could continue, for ever, trying to form an ideally best; always altering; perhaps improving. That would quite suit all those powerful interests which hate—and fear—the idea of a simple universally understood Secondary International language, by means of which the people of the world can understand each other. The present condition of world affairs emphasizes the necessity to put aside futile discussion, and to concentrate on developing that which is now already firmly established.

Besides the three bodies mentioned by Mr. Taylor, I could fill more than a column of the *Freethinker* with proofs of how Esperanto is now established. Space—or want of it—does not permit. There may be an opportunity again.

Finally, the resolution was unanimously adopted at the Conference. In voting it, I said I hoped the delegates would not only vote for it, but that they would go back to their home districts prepared to do something to carry the resolution into effect. Pious resolutions are not for Freethinkers. Let us ACT to help, the world-wide Cause of Freethought by the use of Esperanto.

ATHOS ZENOS.

SIR,—May I be permitted to add a word to the discussion on Esperanto.

None of your correspondents appear to be acquainted with the work of Kunowski, who has presented us with an international corresponding medium in the shape of Esperanto Corresponding Writing.

Have you ever thought how slow you are in not issuing an edition (say) of *The Revenues of Religion, Woman and Christianity*, etc., in Esperanto?

The religious chiefs have not been slow to use Esperanto for their propaganda.

Or you might devote a column of the *Freethinker* to a translation of such "Acid Drops" as have an "international" interest. If you did this, Esperantists would be sending the *Freethinker* to their correspondents abroad. (My own copy would be sent abroad). Esperanto opens up to an ordinary person like myself, the literature of

<sup>\*</sup>See *Manchester Guardian*, Monday, June 19.



other lands. Although I know neither French nor Russian, I am able to read Voltaire's *Kandid*, and Tolstoy's works. Also the works of any author whatever his language, providing there is an Esperanto translation.

SATANO.

## THE BIRCH AT WINCHESTER.

SIR,—“Wykehamist,” while quite agreeing that “corporal punishment was excessive fifty years ago” yet thinks that I have made a mistake in stating that Ridding, at Winchester, castigated fifty boys at a time.

The mistake—if there is a mistake—is made by Mr. Horace Wyndham, for it was from his work *Victorian Sensations* (pp. 57-58) that I quoted. As an old scholar of Winchester, my critic should be in a position to know. Probably Mr. Wyndham has confused Ridding's name with that of an earlier master.

“Wykehamist” confirms the fact that corporal punishment, on the bare back, was inflicted, for he had, as a prefect, sometimes to escort the victim to Ridding's study and assist at the execution.

W. MANN.

## RUSSIA AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—During the period of Anti-Russian hysteria which was so prevalent in England during the Moscow trial, the B.B.C. permitted the Rev. Hugo Johnstone to broadcast a very pointed inference that it was comparable to the trial of Jesus. Although certain cynics are disposed to believe that he was using the sacred story of the Prince of Peace to foment the mass psychology of war, might it be possible to suggest to this worthy cleric that he should carry through his comparison to its Christian logical conclusion.

When Mr. A. J. Cummings of the *News-Chronicle* received a secret nocturnal visit from Mr. Vivian of the British Embassy,\* who tried to explain why telling the truth about the trial was not “playing the game,” this was clearly a case of a guardian angel looking after the vested interests in armaments.

Of course the whole question of belligerence as related to the profits of armament firms, is receiving an increasing amount of both investigation and publicity. If this is embarrassing to the international armament rings, the Rev. Hugo Johnstone might explain that whereas Freethought is essentially materialistic, profitable thoughts and intrigues are essentially of God. In this manner outraged public opinion might be sublimated into a dissatisfaction with the beneficent creator, and the realms of Freethought would expand.

Could the B.B.C. oblige?

R. V. STURGESS.

\*Ref., “The Moscow Trial,” A. J. Cummings, *New Statesman and Nation*, July 15. Also *Daily Herald*, etc.

## RATIONALIST EVALUATIONS AND THE TRUE DIRECTION OF CIVILIZATION

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## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

## LONDON.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, July 30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—“Christian Blasphemy.” “Salmon and Ball,” Cambridge Road, E.2; 8.0, Thursday, August 3, Mr. Paul Goldman.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, July 30, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, July 31, L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, August 3, Mr. C. Tuson.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (Shorrolds Road, North End Road): 7.30, Saturday, July 29, Messrs Barnes and Tuson. *Freethinkers* on sale.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, July 30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 2, Mr. L. Ebury. Balham Station, 8.0, Thursday, July 27, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Alivell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, August 4, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. Outing to Grange Hill. Train 9.45 a.m. from Forest Gate Station (L.N.E.R.). Day Ticket 9d. Return. Lunch to be carried. Tea arranged at Forest View Tea Rooms, Lamborne End. *Freethinkers* and friends welcome.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Wood. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Platform 1, Messrs. B. C. Wood and B. A. Le Maine. Platform 2, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and E. C. Saphin. Wednesday, August 2, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and W. P. Campbell-Everden. Thursday, August 3, E. C. Saphin, 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and B. A. Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, July 30, S. Burke—“Questions for Christians.” “The Ship,” Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, August 2, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. “The Ship,” Plumstead Common, Friday, August 4, S. Burke.

## COUNTRY.

## INDOOR.

OXFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (22 St. John Street): 7.0, Mr. S. Sopote—“The Mysterious Universe” and “The Universe of Science.”

## OUTDOOR.

BISHOP AUCKLAND (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, August 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.30, Tuesday, August 1, Mr. J. Cecil Keast—“Did Christ Rise from the Dead?”

COLNE: 7.30, Tuesday, August 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, Friday, 28, Saturday 29, Sunday, July 30, Mrs. Whitefield and Messrs. Buntin and White.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday July 30, C. McKelvie and J. V. Shortt. Grierson Street, Monday, July 31, H. Little and D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, A. Jackson and E. S. Wollen.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, July 28, Mr. J. Clayton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Platt Lane): 7.0, A Lecture.

MORPETH: 7.0, Saturday, July 29, A debate—“Is the Bible True and Reliable.” Aff.: Mr. Gotts. Neg.: J. T. Brighton.

NEWBIGIN: 7.0, Sunday, July 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, July 30, Mr. J. Clayton.

STOCKPORT BRANCH (N.S.S. (Armoury Square): 7.0, Thursday, August 3, Debate, Jack Clayton v. Rev. T. J. Jones.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, July 30, Mr. G. Whitehead. Gill Bridge Avenue (opposite Central Police Station): 7.30, Monday, July 31 to Friday, August 4, Mr. G. Whitehead. Seaham Harbour (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, August 5, Mr. G. Whitehead.



THE  
NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President:

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary:

R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London.  
E.C.4.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes super-natural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

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Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

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The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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