

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions.

The "Truth" of Religion.

We were, unfortunately, not far out in saying that there would be very little notice taken of the Ingersoll Centenary in the English press. Whether the American press will behave differently remains to be seen, but for information on that head we shall have to wait until American papers reach us. So far, the only notice of Ingersoll we have seen appeared in the *Christian World*. This points out the similarity in the careers of Bradlaugh and Ingersoll in their political and anti-religious propaganda, and says:—

Both had a somewhat similar experience that accounted for the position that they took up of hostility to orthodox Christianity. As Mr. Moody said of Ingersoll shortly after his death in 1899, "I believe that Ingersoll was driven away from Christianity by the abuse of Christians. He was railed at by them, and he saw the dark side of Christianity. He got twisted when he was young."

The italics are mine, and it illustrates the truth of the quotation given from Ingersoll last week, that generally when one buries a lie it is resurrected in the form of an epitaph. The truth that both Ingersoll and Bradlaugh rejected *Christianity*, real Christianity, must be hidden lest some should be induced to wonder why, and so be led to end with the same result. The Christianity that these men attacked was the Christianity of at least ninety per cent of the Christians of their day. The arguments they used had little or nothing to do with the character of Christians. Arguments as to the reality or falsity of revelation, of miracles, of the existence of God or of a future life, have nothing whatever to do with the character of those who believe in these things, and neither of the two men named was such a fool as to argue that doctrines could not be true because many who believed in them were blackguards. It is true that both Bradlaugh and Ingersoll had very Christian parents. In Bradlaugh's case the combined action of parson and parent led to his leaving home, but that was because he had begun to question the truth of

Christianity. It was not the action of parent and parson that caused him to question Christian teaching. And Ingersoll protested in the plainest language that his father never acted towards him with unkindness in any direction—unless it was the unconscious unkindness of loading his youthful mind with Christian teaching. Ingersoll was not driven from Christianity by the abuse of Christians. Christians abused him because he would not accept Christianity. The *Christian World* reverses the order of things. It is true that Ingersoll got twisted when he was young. That is the way Christians are made. You cannot turn a healthy boy into a Christian without twisting. But Ingersoll straightened himself out when he was yet in his 'teens, and those who remained twisted railed the harder at him for doing so.

* * *

How is it Done?

The *Christian World* closes its notice with another effort at explanation. It quotes Major Pond, the famous lecture agent, as saying that Ingersoll was "without doubt one of the greatest popular orators of the age," and concludes:—

How far things have advanced since his day concerning the battle ground of faith is well illustrated by the title of one of his most popular and effective books, *Some Mistakes of Moses*. Enlightened Biblical criticism has long since put that type of Secularist argument out of court.

Agreed! For large bodies of Christians to-day the main arguments of Paine's *Age of Reason* as of Ingersoll's *Mistakes of Moses*, are unquestionable. But not for all Christians even to-day. Millions of Christians in England and America are still, to-day, much in the position that believers were a couple of generations ago. And but for such writings as *Some Mistakes of Moses*, the vast majority of them would be in that state. Enlightened Biblical criticism has not put Secularist arguments out of court by refuting, but by accepting them. Freethought propaganda has brought enlightenment to thousands of Christians, and has so made possible a larger measure of intellectual honesty to hundreds of preachers. The *Christian World* must have forgotten that it is hardly more than two generations since Christian believers were split into warring camps over Bishop Colenso's criticism of the Pentateuch, with the vast majority on the side of a rigid orthodoxy. And Colenso was only doing in a more scholarly way what had been done over two generations earlier by Freethinkers, very many of whom were sent to prison for saying what "enlightened Biblical critics" said with comparative safety at a later date.

But the *Christian World* is just a trifle disingenuous in writing as though Ingersoll's work was concerned only with the orthodox view of the Bible, and that the sting has been taken out of his attack by enlightened criticism accepting his conclusions. Criti-

cism of the Bible was but a part of the attack. What of the attack on the belief in God, in a soul, in a future life, of the evils of established churches, of the impetus given by religion to some of the worst qualities of human nature? Has enlightened Biblical criticism "put these out of court?" It is not merely the Bible that Ingersoll attacked, it was the whole of religious ideas, and all modern scholarship has done is to confirm the attack. It is an old game for a threatened interest to give away a little in order to retain the rest, but in this case what is retained has no better claim to veracity or utility than what has been rejected.

* * *

Bunk about the Bible.

Another illustration of the shifts to which defenders of the Bible resort! At present the *Daily Telegraph* is running a series of articles on various Bible stories in relation to Egyptian folk-lore and early Egyptian life. The articles are by Dr. Yahuda, a very eminent Hebraist and Egyptologist. In the *Church Times* for August 4, the *Telegraph* advertised the coming articles under the title "The Truth of the Bible," and the advertisement went on to say that the series would offer "the latest evidence on the truth of the Bible narrative." Now the series of articles does nothing of the kind. When Christians speak of the truth of the Bible, they mean the truth of the story as told in the Bible, beginning with the creation story, and ending with say, the account of the settling of the Jews in Palestine. But all that Dr. Yahuda shows is that the story of the Flood, etc., is built up from different legends and that in their existing form they were recast by someone who was well acquainted with Egyptian customs and language. This no one denies. For a very large number of years one of the Freethinking indictments of Christian belief in the Bible is just what Dr. Yahuda is now striving to establish, namely, that the Biblical stories of the creation, the Flood, etc., are legends, different forms of which existed in the ancient Eastern world, and which were reduced by some unknown hand to a single narrative, and then palmed off on the world as literal history. What Dr. Yahuda has actually done is to prove that the story of the Bible as told by the Christian and Jewish Churches is hopelessly false.

I do not say that Dr. Yahuda is trying to bolster up the Bible story as the Churches have it. I fancy that this is due to the editorial policy of the *Telegraph*. It is still not a profitable game for a newspaper to tell the truth about the Bible or about religion. The delusion must be kept up somehow; if it cannot be perpetuated in the old form then it must be in a new one. And no one who is acquainted with Christian propaganda will ever expect an over-scrupulous regard for the truth.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To R. G. Ingersoll.

BECAUSE YOU gave me Light where all was Darkness;
Because YOU stripped my Path of lurking fears,
And shattered, in the splendour of YOUR greatness
The tawdry temple of my wasted years.

Because YOU gave me back Life's joy and laughter;
Because YOU came "with healing in YOUR wings,"
To one frail heart afraid of the Hereafter—
Great Robert Ingersoll, for all these things

I thank YOU, and applaud in exultation
For clouds YOU scattered from Man's dreary end;
Now I shall never kneel in adoration
To any Deity but YOU—my Friend.

STELLA GOLDSMITH.

Debasing the Moral Currency.

"On words rests the axis of the intellectual world.
On a word hath hung the destiny of nations."

W. S. Landor.

"The pen may be mightier than the sword, but the claims of humanity are superior to both."—J. K. Sykes.

FREETHINKERS must often smile at the pious manœuvres of the Press Gang by which all matters relating to the Freethought Movement are either excluded altogether or most grossly misrepresented by Christian editors in the interests of their own religion. Indeed, in some cases, the conspiracy of silence against Freethought is passing wonderful. The very name is treated like that of the deity of the Ancient Semites, which was never to be spoken. Where the conspiracy of silence is broken, accidentally, the Christians display another aspect of their attitude towards Freethought which is then misrepresented and slandered. Few, however, are fully aware that this particularly pious habit is extended far beyond the newspaper and periodical press, and even extends to literature itself, and that the campaign of calumny is just as apparent in some books as in press publications. Look, for example, at the so-called works of reference which are to be found in public and private libraries and so many homes, and notice how Freethought and Freethinkers are treated in their pages. Sins of omission and commission leap to the eyes of the reader, who may be ill-prepared for this present-day exhibition of the fierce flash of the primitive spirit of fanaticism of the Ages of Ignorance and Faith. For, nowadays, Christians are no longer able to crush opposition with the rack and the stake, and they are obliged to answer its arguments, or make a noisy show of defending their own medieval doctrines. Feeling that the tendency of Democracy is against them, and afraid to resist it, they bend before it rather than break.

One of the most popular series of the present day is the Home University Library, which includes, among numerous other volumes, a work on the *Victorian Age of Literature*. This particular work has been entrusted to Gilbert K. Chesterton, whose Romish brand of piety is so pronounced that even the editor of the series apologises for its exuberance. He may well do this, for Chesterton uses his talents tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of all Churches. He has nothing but the crudest insult for the great intellectuals. Ignoring a shelfful of masterpieces from the pen of Thomas Hardy, Chesterton refers to him as "a sort of village idiot," brooding and blaspheming over the village idiot." Swinburne, a rare and brilliant genius, who enlarged the boundaries of English poetry, is accused of composing "a learned and sympathetic and indecent parody on the Litany of the Blessed Virgin," surely an ironical suggestion in a Protestant country. Writing of the superb *Songs before Sunrise*, Chesterton attempts to belittle these beautiful lyrics by adding that they celebrated a sunrise that never materialized. Even the great authors of the nineteenth century do not escape his Romish censure, and are dubbed, spitefully, "lame giants." All women writers who show any independence of thought are derided and mocked. Emily Bronte, the shy genius who wrote *Wuthering Heights*, and some very noble poems, is described as being "as unsociable as a storm at midnight." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is even civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who, he informs us, pontifically, "knew how to be democratic in the dark." As Chesterton spells the poet's name with a "p," the compliment is a very doubtful one in the end. And Gilbert Chester-

ton is the journalist who challenges the dogmatism of Freethinkers, convicts science of irrationality, and who pretends to find liberty inside the ring-fence of Romanism, with its monasteries and nunneries. Chesterton contributing jests to comic papers cuts a much braver figure than Chesterton grinning through a horse-collar and fancying himself an historian.

The popular Everyman's Library, issued by the House of Dent, has many admirable qualities, but at least one work is open to similar objection. This *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, is by J. W. Cousins, who is as bigoted and biased as Chesterton himself. The following curious passage relates to Shelley, whose Freethought stood "four-square to all the winds that blow."

The charge of Atheism rests chiefly on "Mab," the work of a boy, printed by him for private circulation, and to some extent repudiated as personal opinion.

This is unpardonable, for even the title of the poem is quoted wrongly. Shelley admitted himself an Atheist, and his book was the subject of prosecution many times for blasphemy. But any stick is good enough to hurl at a Freethinker. James Thomson is this time introduced as an awful warning, for we are told his views "resulted in depression, which led to dipsomania." George Eliot is caricatured by saying that her general view of life is pessimistic, despite the fact that this gifted woman expressly coined the word, "meliorism," in order to show her actual attitude towards optimism and pessimism. Robert Buchanan's Freethought views are slurred over by the grudging admission that his most outspoken poems were directed against certain aspects of Christianity.

Still, another famous reference-book, *Chamber's Encyclopædia*, in an edition issued a few years ago, is full of bias against Freethinkers. A diatribe against Thomas Paine is quoted from the pen of Leslie Stephen, which the writer apologised for afterwards, but there is no mention of the latter fact. Robert Ingersoll is said to have attracted more attention than he deserved. Readers are referred for information about Charles Bradlaugh to a libellous life by "Mackay," a work which Bradlaugh proceeded against in the Law Courts, and had destroyed. Even Ouida, once queen of the circulating libraries, is accused of "muscular heathenry," and "encyclo-pædic ignorance."

So one might go on filling column after column, but enough has been said. This is the latest form of an infamous religious tradition, which may be traced back through the centuries to at least the time of Lucretius, the old Roman poet. The fortunes of really outstanding authors, like Voltaire, Byron, Shelley, Meredith, Swinburne, and even Bernard Shaw, have been much influenced by this frigid and calculating misconception. Freethought invariably incurs the hatred of the orthodox, and no human enmity is more unscrupulous, more relentless, or more venomous. This garbage is thrown at Freethinkers of malice aforethought, and of set purpose. It is meant to discredit the characters and writings of men and women who are outside the ranks of the Christian Religion which is a vested interest. Freethought has wrested so many positions from Christianity that in order to support the tottering edifice of superstition, believers will hesitate at nothing to strengthen the wavering allegiance of their luke-warm fellow-Christians. The priesthood will never rebuke their faithful followers for lying for the glory of their three-headed God, even if they debase the moral currency in the process. And, mark you, all this

chicanery, all this lying, all this dishonesty, is for the perpetuation of an Oriental superstition, by means of which an impudent and audacious set of priestly impostors can gain an easy and comfortable livelihood in a time when millions of British men and women are in the grip of the direst poverty!

MIMNERMUS.

The Victorian Child.

"One can understand the atmosphere in which the future Victorians grew up, when we realize that for so many of them, during their most impressionable years, the Lord was above, and papa, if not listening at the door, somewhere below, and lower still, a not improbable Hell. (E. Wingfield-Stratford: *The Victorian Tragedy*, p. 67.)

THAT the treatment of the child throughout the Christian ages—by which we mean those periods which were governed by a belief in a future life, either in heaven or hell—was stern and severe, is indisputable. And, granting the premises by which the parents were guided, their actions were quite logical. If there is an eternal future of agony or bliss, awaiting every being born into the world, depending upon his conduct and belief while upon earth, then it is the plain duty of parents to make every effort to secure an eternity of bliss for their offspring, and the utmost severity is justified in punishing any straying from the straight and narrow path of piety and duty. By neglect of their duty in this respect, they would themselves have to answer for their conduct at the judgment day.

We are told by Christian apologists that Christianity threw a halo over childhood, because Jesus was born in a manger. It did nothing of the kind. In a heathen country like Japan, the children are much happier than they ever were under Christian rule. Many travellers have testified to the fact. Mrs. Hugh Fraser, who knew the Japanese intimately, after describing the unfettered life led by little children in Japan, says: "There is no scolding and punishing, no nursery disgrace . . . Here, children are always welcome; they come and go as they like, are spoilt, if love means spoiling, by father and mother, relations and servants; but they grow imperceptibly in the right shape." Love for children, in Japan, "is recognized as a national virtue." Heathen Japan sets an example here that Christians would do well to follow, for, says Mrs. Fraser: "There is no baby torture here, no beating, no starvation, none of the indescribable horrors exposed and punished in some degree by our only too necessary Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. From one end of Japan to the other, a child is treated as a sacred thing, be it one's own or a stranger's." (Vol. II., p. 227.)

Last year there were 106,382 cases of cruelty to children brought to the notice of the above-named Society, of whom 511 were prosecuted! A Japanese would be shocked to know that any nation could need such a Society. Mrs. Fraser continues: "I feel that there must be a great deal to say for a system of education which, without robbing childhood of a moment's bright happiness, can clothe little children of every condition with this garment of perfect courtesy. I have rarely seen its match, except once or twice among little Austrian and Italian royalties." (Vol. II., p. 195.) And this was the result of artificial education.

Nor were these fine manners confined to the aristocracy, for, comparing the upper and lower classes,

¹ Mrs. Hugh Fraser: *A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan*, Vol. I., p. 349.

Mrs. Fraser observes: "except that the nobles showed rather more gravity of demeanour, and were far more beautiful to look at, there was really nothing to choose between the classes." (p. 194.) Explain it who can, concludes Mrs. Fraser:—

It is in the blood, and can be counted on with absolute certainty. It is, to me, most comforting to see that all that is desirable in the little people's deportment can be attained without snubbings or punishments or weary scoldings. The love showered upon children simply wraps them in warmth and peace, and seems to encourage every sweet good trait of character without ever fostering a bad one. Japanese children are never frightened into telling lies or hiding their faults. Open as the day, they bring every joy or sorrow to father or mother to be shared or healed, and their small likes or dislikes are quite as much taken into account as those of their elders. (Mrs. H. Fraser: *A Diplomatist's Wife in Japan*, Vol. II., p. 195.)

Mrs. Fraser thinks it cannot be explained—"It is in the blood." The Japanese have not had to endure nearly two thousand years of the Christian religion; that is the whole secret of the matter. Hannah More, whose moral and pious works were very influential, and widely circulated during the eighteenth century, puts the Christian view of children in a nutshell. She says:—

Is it not a fundamental error to consider children as innocent beings, whose little weaknesses may perhaps want some correction, rather than as beings who bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions, which it should be the great end of education to rectify? This appears to be such a foundation truth, that if I were asked what quality is most important in an instructor of youth, I should not hesitate to reply, "such a strong impression of the corruption of our nature as should ensure a disposition to counteract it: together with such a deep view and thorough knowledge of the human heart, as should be necessary for developing and controlling its most secret and complicated workings."²

Children are *not* little innocents; they "bring into the world a corrupt nature and evil dispositions," which must be stamped out if the child's soul is to be saved; hence the severity of Christian education. We can imagine with what scorn a Japanese would receive this revolting suggestion.

The childhood of the average uncultured savage is much happier than that of the average Christian child during the Christian ages down to the nineteenth century, and in most cases is so still. Sir Hector Duff, who has been acting Resident under the Nyasaland Government, tells us, in his recently published book, *African Small Chop*:—

Africa is, in fact, a paradise for children—that is, native children... Even their lessons take the agreeable form of answering riddles and listening to stories of the past. I don't think they are ever beaten, but then it is difficult to see how they could do anything to deserve a beating in a world where so little is required of them and so little forbidden. (pp. 106-107.)

Westermarck, in his great and valuable work, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, says: "All authorities agree that the Australian black is affectionate to his children." Howitt, who studied their manners and customs, declared that he had never "seen a parent beat or cruelly use a child." Other representatives, says Westermarck, "of the lowest savagery, as the Veddahs and Fuegians, are likewise described as tender parents." And he concludes: "Innumerable facts might indeed be quoted to prove that parental affection is not a late product

of civilization, but a normal feature of the savage mind as it is known to us." (Vol. I., p. 530-531.) Westermarck cites the testimony of over fifty travellers to this point.

Let the reader, if he has not done so, read that pathetic masterpiece, *Father and Son*, by the late Sir Edmund Gosse; and *The Way of all Flesh*, in which in the form of a novel, Samuel Butler describes his childhood; then he will understand what the Victorian child had to endure. The late King Edward's early life was made wretched in a similar way.

The two sisters, Ann and Jane Taylor, who flourished during the early and middle part of the nineteenth century, wrote several books for children, including *Infant Hymns for Infant Minds*. One of the hymns is entitled, "A Child's Hymn of Praise," of which the following is a verse:—

I thank the goodness and the grace,
Which on my birth have smiled,
And made me, in these Christian days
A happy English child.

There is more concentrated, if unconscious, irony in this quatrain, considering the time when it was written, than in any other verse with which we are acquainted.

W. MANN.

"Powder and Shot."

THIS year marks the centenary of the abolition of the slave trade for, in 1833, the Bill which emancipated thousands of slaves in British possessions passed through the House of Commons. Observant students of the Church's newspapers will have noticed that most denominations are using the occasion to offer to the Almighty their belated thanks that the benighted Negroes have been released from bondage for such a long time. We ask in all seriousness how it is possible for the Christian's conscience to play this Jekyll and Hyde sort of pantomime and remain free from the charge of dishonesty and humbug.

In *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, by Chapman Cohen, there is told such a tale of horrors inflicted upon defenceless races by Christian people that we cannot fail to treat the pious apologia of the twentieth century clericals with the scant respect that it deserves. One would think from what they say to-day that slavery was finally abolished one hundred years ago, for which fact our thanks to God were due. They do not suspect that aught is amiss with the Negro populations of America, Africa and other places, at present, despite the existence of many wealthy and wide-spread agencies for converting the heathen to the ways of Jesus Christ. We can only regard the concern for the slaves evinced by the Churches this year as we should a bilious attack which temporarily relieves the patient of internal difficulties, but does not teach him to stop gourmandising in the future.

Putting the motive of the Churches in the most favourable light, that is to say, assuming that they celebrate the centenary with a genuine twinge of conscience, what do we find? In mere verbiage they are liberal enough, but, if we look for a practical programme of expiation for one of the most terrible crimes in the history of the Churches, we see no signs at all of this. Bishops can shed salt tears copiously for the poor Negroes who were tortured in the interests of the Christian clerics of bygone times, but before we believe that they are more than crocodile

² Cited by Langdon-Davies: *A Short History of Women*, p. 321.

tears we must have some evidence that these same bishops are prepared to make such reparation to their Negro victims as lies in their power. First, let them protest throughout Christendom against any kind of Colour Bar as earnestly and effectively as did Sharpe and Wilberforce against the slave trade. Secondly, let the clerical hierarchies give back to the Negroes the land which they have appropriated from them. Thirdly, let them withdraw their foreign missions which serve the purpose, not merely of substituting one unenlightened superstition for another, but of keeping the Negroes and other Coloured People in a state of ignoble submission to those whose aim it is to rob them of their human rights.

In producing here more evidence of the disgraceful part played by the Christian Churches in the slave trade we have two objects in mind. One is to prevent the impression arising that such evidence as has already been collated is all that can be found. And secondly, it is our hope that such information will be used by the propagandists of the National Secular Society to denounce the present hypocrisy of the Churches. If we neglected to take up this attitude we might encourage our Christian opponents to minimise the enormity of this particular crime, for which their religions were largely responsible, and so make it easier for them to perpetrate the fresh crimes which they are contemplating for the future.

The Church's attitude to slavery is revealed in the following quotations:—

There was a general notion throughout all Christendom that it was wrong for one Christian to enslave another, and that as soon as a pagan was baptized he could be no longer held as a slave. This prevented for many years the work of Christianizing the Negroes. So strong was the feeling that it was found necessary in several of the colonies to pass laws expressly stating that the condition of the slave was not changed when he was taken into Church. (*The Story of the Negro*. Booker T. Washington, p. 115.)

Among the early Colonists of the Carolinas were the Moravians and the Salzburgers, who were opposed to slavery upon religious grounds. These people withstood for some time the temptation to employ Negro slaves. At length, however, they received a message from the head of the Church of Europe to the effect that if they took slaves for the purpose of receiving them into the Church and leading them to Christ, not only was this not a sin, but it might prove a blessing. (The same, pp. 118-119.)

Yet, despite the laws, a more powerful motive had to be found before the Negroes of the slave plantations in the New World were finally Christianized. William Law Mathieson writes that:—

There were 21 parishes in Jamaica; but their average area was above 140 square miles, and the clergy were far from earning their substantial stipends and enormous fees. Their incomes were said to have ranged from £1,000 to £3,000 per year. A society for the conversion and education of the Negro slaves had been founded under the auspices of Bishop Porteus in 1794.

An Act of 1817 provided for the baptism of Negroes at 2s. 6d. per head. In six months one of the clergy announced he had baptized one-fifth of his 24,000 negro parishioners and had adopted "preparatory measures for the speedy baptism of the whole." At least two other clergymen had been almost equally successful. Instantaneous conversion was no novelty to English people at home, but they were not prepared for the form it was to assume in the West Indies. "The usual practice has been to assemble numbers of the Negroes either at the churches or on the estates, sometimes from 50 to 100 or more; they are merely asked what their names

are to be and then baptized *en masse*, the rector receiving half-a-crown currency for each convert. (*British Slavery and its Abolition*. p. 110.)

The commercial benefits of the slave trade were recognized and accepted with the Church's sanction.

In a report of the Common's Select Committee on the slave trade in 1832 we find that:—

A planter who was examined by the Committee testified that religious instruction made the slaves more obedient and raised their market value. (The same, p. 217.)

We can say that up to 1832 the Quakers were the only religious denomination which had identified itself with the movement for the abolition of the slave trade, and that the Baptist leaders were not disposed to abandon their neutrality. One Roman Catholic has been bold enough to admit that his Church did nothing whatever against the Trade. Fr. C. C. Martindale, S.J., has said that:—

Catholic countries entered into slave trade competition as much as others did; and it was not Catholics who took the lead in abolishing the trade. . . . I do not know that Catholics, anywhere, denounced, collectively, that the system as such was sinful.

The laws which the Christians devised to keep the Negroes in order would lead us to believe that these slaves must have been wild beasts, if we had no other evidence of the savagery of which Christians are capable. For instance, John H. Harris quotes from the written laws of the sugar islands as follows:—

It is therefore enacted that any negro, who has been one year in the island and runs away 30 days, shall suffer death. (Barbadoes.)

Slaves harbouring runaways to receive 21 lashes by order of a justice for the first offence, and the runaway the same punishment; for the second offence 39 lashes; for the third 39 lashes, and shall be branded R on the right cheek. (Barbadoes.)

A slave absenting himself 3 months, to suffer death, loss of limb, or whipping, at the discretion of two justices. (Antigua.)

A slave offering violence to a Christian, to be severely whipped, for the first offence; for the second, to be severely whipped, his nose slit, and branded in the face with a hot iron; for the third such greater punishment as the governor and council shall think fit. (*Slavery or Sacred Trust*, p. 7.f.) (Barbadoes.)

Clergymen themselves were not above such barbarous practices, for the Rev. R. W. Bridges, who had endeared himself to the planters in the West Indies by publishing a pamphlet in reply to Wilberforce, was put on trial and acquitted, despite incontrovertible evidence, for having violently struck and kicked his coloured cook, Kitty Hylton, and for having had her flogged with bamboo rods.

Lord Dartmouth, a prominent Evangelical (nicknamed the "Psalm-singer") who became Prime Minister, said: "We cannot allow the Colonies to check or discourage in any degree a traffic so beneficial to the nation."

The Church's celebration of the centenary of the abolition of the slave trade does not wipe out their past record in this respect. Nor does it show that they have any real remorse or desire to mend their ways. That can only be shown by a changed attitude towards all the forms of slavery, forced labour and exploitation of the "Heathen" races by the Christian nations which exist to-day, and which the Church not only sanctions but actively supports.

The Prodigal Son.

A DISTINGUISHED rationalistic writer accepts the parable of the Prodigal Son as "really beautiful and important"; but does not furnish any detailed reasons for doing so. If it is suggested that the parable contains lessons of the highest morality and the wisest kind of compassion, the present writer begs to demur.

The parable is an illustration of the recovery of the lost. In Luke xv. it follows immediately after the two parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin. "The Prodigal Son" has always been a favourite theme with modern evangelists. But when it has been looked closely into, one has difficulty in discerning the grounds for characterizing the story as beautiful and important. No doubt from a literary point of view there is a sense of the dramatic in it; but any real or practical *good sense* is not to be discovered. The reception of the erring son by his father savours of sheer sentimentality.

But its Law and its Economics are alike grotesque and impossible. What is the story? "A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." Thereafter the younger son travels to a far country, spends his substance in riotous living, is overtaken by famine, hires himself out as a swineherd; and at length having "come to himself" decides to return to the old homestead, is received by his father with a welcoming kiss; by his father's command he is invested with the best robe, has a ring put on his hand and shoes on his feet, the fatted calf is killed and a joyous feast is held to celebrate his return. Naturally when his brother, the elder son, returns from his toil in the field he is puzzled by the noise of music and dancing at home, is indignant when he learns the reason for it; and refuses to share in the festivities. In answer to his father's entreaties, he points out that notwithstanding his loyal service for many years on the farm his father never even gave him a kid that he might make merry with his friends, but that when the prodigal comes back, the fatted calf is killed for him!

Now to go back to the beginning, what must we assume to have been the actual position? We are told the stark fact that the father divided unto his two sons "his living." Let us take it this meant the fee or capital of the father's estate, subject to a provision for the father's maintenance during his life. As he was, however, deprived of the younger son's service by his departure from home, one would suppose that the latter's share in the division would be *pro tanto* reduced in some way to effect an equitable arrangement. But we are told no more in this regard than that he divided unto them his living.

It may of course be suggested that the old man had some secret hoard; or that by the law of the land he had patriarchal rights which reserved to him peculiar powers over his property, or that the farm was retainable by him as not being part of his "living." But in any view the younger son's share, whatever it was, had entirely escaped the father's control, was not affected by any reservation in the father's favour and was in point of fact squandered by the younger son in a far country in "riotous living." So that any funds the father could depend upon for his own support or enjoyment must have been his own or his elder son's. If, however, we accept the story literally he had completely divested himself of his living in favour of his two sons; and therefore the state of things suggested by the question which the younger son addresses to himself beside the swine troughs:

"How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare and I perish with hunger?" was entirely non-existent. How could his father have servants when he had no means of paying them wages? The elder son, one naturally supposes, was in full possession and management of the farm, and his father was living with *him*—not he with his father. So the father was rather exceeding his right by ordering the expensive reception for the younger son without prior consultation with the elder. And again if we are to accept the statement as to the division of the father's living without qualification, the complaint by the older son that he had never been given a kid to make merry with his friends was clearly absurd and childish; as also was his assertion that up to then he had been serving his father. In fact, with his share of the living in hand, he was serving *himself*; and it was open to him to have a bachelors' party when he wished to do so without going cap in hand to his father for permission.

We need not enter upon an unprofitable discussion as to the relative qualities of the two sons which has been a favourite topic among Christians for generations. But even if the father had the legal or economic right and title to receive the prodigal as he did without reference to his elder son, he carried the thing to excess; and the younger son's acceptance of his father's lavishness does not put him in a very favourable light. A striking parallel to the younger son is to be found in the *Master of Ballantrae*, by Robert Louis Stevenson. Stevenson as a child was brought up in a strict Presbyterian atmosphere, and was thoroughly familiar with the Bible. The *Master of Ballantrae* (James) was the black sheep and wandering rascalion. Henry, his brother, who remained at home, was quite in keeping with the character of the elder brother in the Parable. But James, despite all his devilment (and repentance was a plant he had no use for in his garden!) was ever the father's favourite. Again and again he made terrible inroads upon the family's financial resources, fought a duel with his brother, and came to a squalid end.

A genial Archdeacon of the Nineteenth Century avowed that when as a young clerk in orders he had to read in Church for the first time the parable of the Prodigal Son, he waxed so eloquent that when he reached the words "Bring forth the best robe, etc." he only just pulled himself up in time from declaiming: "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him; put rings on his fingers and bells on his toes; and there will be music wherever he goes!" The father in the parable in any event seemed unable to do enough for the prodigal and let his emotions run away with his discretion. On the other hand, any young man with common sense, a proper reticence or any feeling of restraint, in the position in which this younger son was placed would have been content to efface himself; and would have pleaded with his father to make the occasion of his return a quiet family reunion. And besides, before making himself the gaudy principal figure of a gay festival it would have been the becoming thing immediately after experiencing his father's welcome, to seek out his unobtrusive brother and have a private heart to heart talk with him. There is no suggestion of anything of this kind in the prodigal's attitude. We are left to assume that he readily acquiesced in his father's arrangements. One fears there may have been a bit of the *Master of Ballantrae* about him! In any view we end where we started with the contention that there is no substantial support for the statement that the Parable is beautiful and important, as exemplifying good sense, high morality and wise compassion.

IGNORUS.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of Durham, Dr. Hensley Henson, has just issued in the *Bishopric* for August, his hymn of Hate. When a theologian lets himself go on this theme, we expect, with history at our back, something particularly lurid and devastating. Dr. Henson's effort, however, when compared with even recent models, is very small beer. The man after God's own heart could turn out a cursing psalm in good round style which bore handsome witness to the strength of his religious convictions. Nowadays, with religious convictions weakening, it requires something like a Great War to rouse Hate to its pristine glories. Dr. Hensley Henson for instance, hates smoking by clergymen in the streets and compliments to individuals in parish magazines. On our part we have no objection to clergymen smoking in the streets, but we must confess we would view a compliment in a parish magazine with more than misgiving. He hates amatory letters torn into small pieces, and orange peel, in the Bishop's Park. We don't care to see orange peel even on unsanctified pavements.

Here is something which we think might have excused an outburst of wrath on the Bishop's part. Several tons of oranges, not orange peel, have been recently thrown into the sea at Liverpool, because, we assume, what is termed a commercial price could not be obtained. In one of the country's darkest unemployed areas, nearly two millions of oranges thrown to the fishes! Probably the Christian conscience is too fully occupied in the business of building and maintaining stupendous Cathedrals in this Christian city to pay attention to such an enormity. Mr. Kenneth Bradshaw, in the *Liverpool Daily Post*, has been calling attention to, condemning and doing his best to avoid any repetition of such scandals and has met with little support. But Mr. Bradshaw is one of those individuals who does not occupy himself with soul-saving and is mundane and materialistic enough to be concerned with the empty stomachs of men, women and children. His immortal soul bothers him not at all. Such detestable occurrences as the wanton destruction of human food will only cease when there are more like him.

A representative of the *Western Morning News* has been on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and reports that when in Damascus he was shown the house of Ananias. We have little doubt that the evidence for the authenticity of this building rests upon the word of a direct descendant of that gentleman. The house has now been converted by the Roman Catholics into a small Church. We confess to some surprise at the peculiar sense of fitness shown in this case.

Father Knapp, Vicar and Sacristan of the Dominican Priory, Hampstead, has been saying some sensible things about Spiritualism, or Spiritism, as he, and many others, prefer to call it. He calls attention to the alleged post-mortem utterances of great men which are "less than the drivellings of an idiot." He cannot understand how people can allow themselves to be deceived by cheese-cloth "ectoplasm" and vague rappings and rumblings. But he does believe that "spirits manifest themselves, but only to God's chosen saints on particular occasions." Freethinkers, seeing a too strong family likeness, make no such nice distinctions.

We note that a French priest, Prosper Alfaric, Professor of the History of Religion at Strasbourg University, has been found guilty by the Holy Office of apostasy, and excommunicated. In his writings and lectures he had doubted the divinity and existence of Christ. Even the threat of excommunication a few hundred years ago suggested nameless terrors and blanched the bravest cheeks. If the doubtful blessing of a popular press had existed in those days the "news-value" of a Papal Excommunication would have been recognized as unmistakable. Nowadays the fact, if mentioned at all,

is given as a "fill-up." The Pope fulminates but who cares? As for the person excommunicated, whom we congratulate, we suspect that a Professor of History who doubts the historicity of Jesus, will be able to bear being deprived of the Sacraments with both fortitude and relief.

A pious writer in a Church paper recently devoted some columns of "slush" to show how he agreed, and how Christianity agreed, with the Bishop of Chester's recent pronouncement on Divorce. Of course, the final and indeed the only authority is "Our Lord." What Our Lord is supposed to have said nearly 2000 years ago settles the question beyond discussion. The unlucky man married, let us say to a confirmed drunkard, the unfortunate woman to an incorrigible blackguard or burglar, either married to an incurable lunatic or insane homicide—these and dozens of similar tragedies are referred to as "painful anomalies" or "hard cases" which do not affect the question. All that matters is what Our Lord said, and Our Lord, if he lived at all, was a celibate who had no more idea of marriage and modern marriage at that, than a child of eight.

That it is possible to argue as this man argues, and that there is still the most tremendous opposition to divorce reform, shows the terrible power the Church still holds. She still can say to men and women, and what is more, actually impose her will, that they have no right to normal happiness, that they must abide by a past mistake or damnable misfortune and live in hopeless misery because Our Lord said some unmitigated nonsense to some hopeless fools long ago. We are actually told as if it were an excuse that "no severer book than the New Testament exists." So that if Our Lord told everybody to wear a spiked shirt which never ceased lacerating the flesh, and some people didn't want to, we should be politely told, of course, it's very severe advice, but it has to be done because Our Lord said so! Divorce reform was never more needed than now, and to obtain it, our advice is—make Freethinkers.

The Ven. A. E. J. Rawlinson delivered a sermon at Westminster Abbey recently on "The Church's debt to the Oxford Movement." It was a prean of praise taken as a whole, but he was obliged to let the cat peep out of the bag just a little. He said:—

Of course, there have been party divisions. There has been party strife. Foolish things have been said and done. There has been controversial unfairness. There have been ill-judged and sometimes absurd actions whether on this side or on that, in the life of the Church of England during the past 100 years.

Considering the Church claims to be Divine, to be in direct touch with Our Lord, it is rather surprising to find anyone admitting this wrangling and quarrelling. And we would like to ask the ven. gentleman if Our Lord took sides or was in any way responsible? If he didn't and wasn't, how does he make the Church Divine?

The Right Reverend Walter Carey, Bishop of Bloemfontein, has been requested by the Church of England authorities in England to accept an appointment as supervising organizer of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Funds have fallen off and Bishop Carey is considered to be the most likely man to loosen the purse-strings. It is a solemn thought that the fate of the immortal souls of millions is to depend upon Bishop Carey's success in this direction. If he should fail, the heathen in his blindness will continue to bow down to wood and stone and the blessings of Christian civilization in the shape of War Debts, Hitlerism and Unemployment, will be still further delayed. We think it is too heavy a responsibility to put upon the shoulders of any one man, and the Bishop has our sympathies.

Mr. P. G. W. Grobler, Minister of Native Affairs in the Transvaal, has been making darker things which were dark enough before. From the *Rand Daily Mail*

we learn that at a conference of the Nationalist Party, this gentleman dealt with the unemployment question. He had been told that things are going to improve. He hoped so but at the same time he urged that they should not look to the Government for everything; he asked them to recognize the hand of the Almighty and to turn to the Almighty for help and succour. So that in Unemployment Mr. Grobler recognizes the hand of the Almighty, just as the magicians in the time of Moses knew that the plague of lice was indubitably the finger of God. We suggest that if the finger of God is seen in unemployment it is God's will, and to endeavour to sway him from his purpose savours of presumption.

The same gentleman went on to say that it was because of our neglect of God that so many other evils had upset them. Conferences overseas, with the exception of the Ottawa Conference which had been opened with prayer, had led to nought, and to his mind this was largely due to the disregard of Divine Guidance by the authorities throughout the world. In a Canadian paper, we see that the same note is being struck. The present crisis is insoluble by man's efforts and can only be ended with God's help. We note as well and with more pleasure, that Bertrand Russell has been pointing out in the *Referer* that times of national difficulty and distress provide superstition with its opportunity. When a man is sick the expression "God help him" is recognized as one of the most hopeless pessimism. Things are indeed bad—but not quite that bad.

A special service has been recently held at St. Augustine's Roman Catholic Church, Nottingham, in order to bless a long line of motor-cars and distribute medals first subjected to the appropriate thaumaturgy. The blessing ceremony was performed by Canon M. A. Parmentier, who explained that the piece of metal was quite different from the black cat or soft doll which some superstitious people carried in their cars. There was nothing superstitious about a Catholic. The blessing of the cars had a deeper meaning. No Catholic believed that a piece of metal would help him. That would be indeed superstition. The medal was a holy thing because it had been blessed. It would be instrumental in bringing to the mind of the owner, St. Christopher, who was the patron saint of motorists and he was the gentleman who would (perhaps) keep them safe and sound. Once more, there was nothing superstitious about a Catholic. Methinks the gentleman doth protest too much!

Catholics are not superstitious. All they claim is that they know a useful thing when they see it. If you are bitten by a snake a prompt "ring up" to St. Sebastian will do some good. You must approach St. Judas for that tickling cough and (mirabile dictu!) he will not let you down. St. Appollonia is the goods for *tic doloureux*. St. Clara is useful for sore eyes and St. Michael is told off for cancer cases. It is not the medal or the amulet which does the trick, this only induces in you a useful state of faith in your patron saint. Omnipotence, owing to the way mankind has obeyed his command as to full quivers, has as many branch offices as a Government Department. St. Christopher was once the patron of ferrymen, but on his reporting a diminution of business, motorists have come under his protection. When out driving, and the blessed medal catches your eye, concentrate quickly on St. Christopher, and God will, or may, guide your steering-wheel. Freethinkers, who have a firm grip on the idea of causation, will concentrate on the steering-wheel in the sure and certain hope that they have done their little best.

Our Lady has let the vast number of pilgrims who went to Beauraing in Belgium to see her, very badly down, and really this is most unkind. So far the only gentleman she has favoured is Monsieur Tilmant Côme, and she met him twice in the grotto there, and on the second occasion gave him a vision of a great church she

wanted building. No fewer than 200,000 pilgrims have been so far to Beauraing, but they have all been unlucky. They followed M. Côme breathlessly but nothing happened. At least, nothing to them but M. Côme went off into a trance, became incoherent and exhausted, and when he came out of it announced that he had seen Our Lady again. Which is not surprising, as funny things generally happen when one goes off into a trance and becomes incoherent.

Naturally such an astounding miracle had to be broadcasted and M. Côme seems to have had a delightful interview with the Mother of God who went into detail about the church she required and the statue of herself in it "in all her splendour." On her right there was to be a statue of St. Joseph, and opposite, one of Our Lord in a black robe, quite an original innovation, and one which gives that touch or reality so often absent from similar visions. After this—and plenty more—one would have thought the crowd would have cheered the dear Tilmant to the echo. Alas, they were very disappointed at not seeing Our Lady for themselves and they also hoped to see "flakes of snow falling upon the grotto or upon the spot where the chapel is to be erected." As snow in the broiling weather we have had lately would have been almost another miracle, we can quite understand their disappointment. We do wish Our Lady would broadcast "Her Own Story." Why should M. Tilmant Côme be the only one to get away with it?

Already over 5,000 invalids have applied for permission to touch the Holy Coat of Treves and more than two million pilgrims are expected in Treves within the next seven weeks. Cures that will ensue here and at Lourdes and other places will occur with such frequency that in medical quarters the freedom of Catholics from serious disorders will soon be very obvious and the practical utility of Catholicism established beyond a peradventure. There is nothing superstitious about Catholics.

Fifty Years Ago.

EXPERIENCE shows that our early beliefs result purely from a geographical accident. We cannot decide before our birth in what country or of what parents we shall be born. Neither can we determine the quality of our organization. We are brought into the world without our consultation, and we necessarily believe that to be true which our parents and instructors teach us as true.

We cannot mistrust our parents or teachers, for what interest have they in teaching us to believe that which in reality is false? None whatever. Consequently, in our childhood we implicitly accept all that is told us by persons of greater knowledge and experience than ourselves; and it is not until we hear of persons with other beliefs that we are at all sceptical concerning the truth of our own.

The theologian is ever anxious that we should believe that there is only one God and one true religion. He does not like us to know that there is strong competition in his line of business, and that if he cannot satisfy us with his "little god" and periodical doses of soothing syrup, there are others in the market who will try their "hand." So the theologian seeks to convince the young first. He takes the child when its mind is quite plastic, and sets the theological seal upon it. The reason of man he declares to be "foolishness" in the sight of God. He puzzles the child by saying that God is everywhere, though he cannot be found anywhere; he says that God is all-powerful, though he cannot prevent the Devil from turning everything "topsy-turvy"; that he is all-good, though he sometimes allows the tyrant to oppress and punish a whole nation of inoffensive people. But all these things are done, the child is assured, that God may be glorified.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

The Ingersoll Centenary.

We are pleased to be able to announce that our Ingersoll issue was a pronounced success. We have received a large number of letters from readers expressing their high appreciation of the sketch of Ingersoll's life and work, and many have repeated their orders for more copies for distribution. Wholesale agents also have sent along "repeat" orders, and although we printed a large number in excess of our usual quantity, it looks as though what we have left will soon be exhausted.

Some of those who have written have expressed the desire to see the sketch reprinted in a more permanent form. If this were done it would be enlarged, and in that shape, with additional illustrations from Ingersoll's less known writings and speeches, it should make a useful and interesting booklet. If it is decided to issue an enlarged account of Ingersoll, due notice will be given.

But we thank all who have written us so warmly and so appreciatively, and feel sure they will excuse our not replying personally. We are always pleased to hear from our readers, but we have only one pair of hands and they are kept fully employed.

Meanwhile we suggest that a very practical way of thanking us is to use this issue as a means of getting new people interested in the *Freethinker*.

We hope that our friends will be equally pleased with our forthcoming Bradlaugh Centenary number.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

We are asked by the Secretary of the South London Branch N.S.S. to acknowledge a donation of 15s. to the Branch funds by Mr. Wakeley, who has omitted to include his address.

J. CLOSE.—Thanks for congratulations. We take as much care of our health as we can, but the work has to be done. However we are well, and hope to continue so.

W. J. McCABE.—We quite agree with the general tenour of your letter, but it would not be policy to publish it before the event, which will not we hope justify your forebodings.

A. COHEN.—The N.S.S. does not make itself responsible for every statement made by any lecturer on its platform, nor for everything they may happen to write. But there is no mistaking the innate intolerance of the Jewish religion as displayed in the Bible. The Christian Church had good warranty for its own intolerance here, however much it may at the height of its power outdo its Jewish teachers in the arts of savage persecution.

J. HUMPHREY.—We do not see that phrenology, even if its claims are granted can explain the origin of so-called racial qualities. Nor does it pretend to do so. Explaining qualities in terms of "race" is on all fours with explaining the wetness of water by a principle of "aquosity."

T. M. MAY.—Pleased to learn you are so delighted with the Ingersoll number. We are sure that sketches of the lives and works of Freethinkers would be very interesting to most of our readers. We note what you say about Robert Taylor.

J. STEPHENS.—The man who can say that Bradlaugh was not an orator writes himself down as an Ass. The other statements you cite are equally foolish.

"TAB CAN," C. S. FRASER AND STELLA BROWN.—Owing to the dislocation of the ordinary run of matters through the space taken up with the Ingersoll issue, we are obliged to hold over your communications until next week.

R. WHITE AND OTHERS.—The complete set of *Ingersoll's*

Lectures (Dresden edition) is published in New York. A second-hand copy might be obtained at £3 or £4.

D. GARLAND.—Many thanks for new subscriber, paper being sent.

B. A. McDONALD (Johannesburg).—We are obliged for the *Rand Daily Mail*, containing the pious and depressing remarks of Mr. Grobler, Minister of Lands. You say he is a direct descendant of President Kruger. Well, that gentleman's piety was boundless, but it had to give way, as usual, to the larger battalions. We too, in this country, have our own peculiar afflictions of this type.

P. J. MORSE.—Thanks for cuttings.

K. BRADSHAW.—We saw your letters in the *Liverpool Daily Post* as to the wanton destruction of millions of oranges and hope they will help to prevent the repetition of such a crime in the city of mammoth cathedrals. See Acid Drops.

BOX 3174 (Montreal).—Thanks for your letter and cuttings, which we will use. In a godly province like Quebec there is apparently little sense and less humanity.

E. J. H.—A cheap edition of *The Secret History of the Oxford Movement* was published for 1s., but we are afraid it is now out of print. Try Messrs Kensit, 31 Cannon Street, London, E.C.4. *The Priest in Absolution* is quite unobtainable.

GUY ALDRED.—The Mr. Drinna who writes that the *Boston Investigator* was on the side of Slavery is either ignorant or malicious. When the abolitionists were unable to get a hall in which to speak against slavery, it was Abner Kneeland, the proprietor of the *Boston Investigator* who placed a hall at their disposal.

H. P. TURNER.—We will try and find a date for Burnley, but we are threatened with a terribly busy autumn and shall have some difficulty in doing all what we should like.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Charles Smith, President of the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism is again being prosecuted for addressing open-air meetings without a permit. He recently won a case in the New York Appeal Court, but he has now been summoned in the Court of Special Sessions which decided that Atheists must obtain permits before speaking publicly in the streets.

Hitherto the New York law has permitted all sorts of street-speakers without a police permit. The only exception has been that religious services must not be held in the streets without a licence. The object of this prohibition was understood to apply mainly to public baptising, the worship of the Mass, etc. Now, however, this proviso has been stretched to Freethought propaganda. Charles Smith is again appealing and will fight the case to a finish. Meanwhile in Harlem, the Negro quarter of New York, six "anti-religion" lecturers, all coloured men, are being prosecuted similarly. We hope to hear that Smith's courageous stand will be successful against the bigots.

We learn with regret that the Freethinkers of America have had to postpone the unveiling of the monument to Ingersoll, which had been arranged for August 11. The reason given is that the monument is not yet finished. The "Four A" Ingersoll Demonstration has

secured Mr. Roger Baldwin as one of its speakers. Roger Baldwin is President of the American Civil Liberties Union.

We notice pointed and very useful letters from Mr. H. R. Clifton in the *Croydon Advertiser*, and from Mr. G. Burgess, Secretary of the Stockport Branch N.S.S. in the *Cheshire Daily Echo*, commenting on the policy of the B.B.C. In their respective efforts both writers are full of hope, in the first case, that hard-baked Christians in Croydon may be rescued and restored to common sense, whilst Mr. Burgess is hopeful that the appointment of Mrs. Mary Hamilton to the B.B.C. may infuse a little fresh air in the clericalized mentality of that body.

We are indebted to a reader for a copy of the *Basutoland News*, from which we learn that letters and articles have been appearing in the Basuto native paper in which "dictatorship on education by ministers of religion" is objected to, and to that end it is advocated that the schools should be placed directly under Government control. One writer says, "the church system of conducting the education of our children is abominable and should be discouraged immediately. The teacher is appointed not on the strength of his educational capacity but rather on the strength of his Christian ability. . . . It is obvious therefore that the purpose of education in Basutoland is to a large extent merely to swell the ranks of the religious fanatics rather than to educate the race sufficiently to take its proper place among other advanced races of the world."

The Basutos see clearly enough that Secular Education is logical, just and helpful. We are not at all surprised, for an appeal to first principles can always get a ready response where there is simplicity of character and where the "plugging" of contrary opinions by interested parties has not been prosecuted on such a scale as to confuse the mind and obscure the issue. That fine old Zulu monarch, Cetewayo, in his day was an intelligent friend of Secular Education. He fully appreciated the advantages of being able to read and write and regretted that "the missionaries did not confine themselves to that kind of teaching." It was the clear and direct mind of an intelligent native that shattered Bishop Colenso's bibliolatry into fragments. But Colenso was more than a Bishop, he was a man—he laid no special stress upon the colour of the skin, his mind was always accessible to truth from whatever source it came, and his reactions could always be anticipated if the issue were a simple one of fair play and justice. Consequently the natives loved him and the Church hated him. It affords us great pleasure to chronicle that the native races of South Africa are very much alive to one of the greatest obstacles to national well-being.

There is now an opportunity for Nottingham saints to have a Branch of the N.S.S. Following some open-air meetings addressed by Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc., an effort is being made to form a Branch of the Society. There should be no difficulty as far as numbers are concerned, and will all Freethinkers wishing to co-operate please communicate with Mr. T. M. Mosley, 3 Carnarvon Grove, Gedling, Notts.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be lecturing in the Paisley district for a week, beginning to-day the 20th; details will be found in the Lecture Notice Column. The local N.S.S. Branch has been dormant for some time, and Mr. Whitehead's visit might be made the starting point for renewed activity. Glasgow saints are becoming very active and keen on extending their sphere of influence, and a little co-operation with Paisley may easily be helpful to both.

Mr. J. T. Brighton will be in Bradford this week-end speaking for the local N.S.S. Branch at the Motor Park, Bank Street, on Saturday evening at 7 o'clock, and on Sunday evening at the same time. Mr. Brighton is rapidly building a reputation as a successful propagandist, he is sincere and enthusiastic, and is sure to receive a hearty welcome from the local saints.

The Evolution of Legendary Stories.

THE development of religious fantasy forms a fascinating theme. In every region of the globe evidences exist of the evolution of divinities, saints and heroes from personalities who attracted more than normal interest in their mundane lives. One famous missionary, whose successes were such as to secure his canonization at Rome, serves as a striking instance of the growth of fables and fictions so dear to the pious imagination.

Francisco Xavier, the "Apostle to the Indies," was born in 1506, and his experiences as an evangelist are fairly well known. A man of studious disposition and commanding character, with all the advantages of patrician descent, he was appointed to a professorship in Paris, and appeared certain of a brilliant position in the republic of letters. But he soon succumbed to the wiles of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order, and was persuaded to abandon his academic career for missionary enterprise in the Far East. Xavier laboured incessantly for the salvation of Asiatic races, and his efforts were crowned with considerable superficial success. These labours lasted twelve years, until he died heroically on a desert island.

A copious correspondent, Xavier composed a multitude of epistles long since published, and these, with the letters of his contemporary workers, reveal the man in the midst of his missionary strivings. All the events mentioned are purely natural in character, yet, within a year or so of his death, stories of miracles and special providences began to gather round his name. Xavier certainly shared the superstitions of his time, and traced the recovery of his converts from illness to the efficacy of baptism or to the answer to prayer, but of special supernatural intervention or of miracle there is no suggestion in his letters, and none of his co-workers mentions any miracle by him performed.

Some twenty years subsequent to Xavier's death, a Jesuit priest, Immanuel Acosta, published a collection of the saint's letters, but no miracles are claimed, or even hinted at. Yet these letters contain the most minute particulars of his evangelizing activities. Again, various later publications concerning Xavier appearing during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are as silent as the grave regarding the supernatural occurrences subsequently circulated with every assurance of truth.

It is very significant that Xavier and his companions, in their letters, deplore the difficulties under which they toiled in the Lord's vineyard. Moreover, when we note the later claim that Xavier possessed a miraculous power of language, it seems strange that he himself complains that he was seriously handicapped by his inability to express himself in foreign tongues, and bewails the drudgery he underwent in attempting to master the elements of Japanese.

In the Eastern countries where Xavier preached the Gospel, no one appears to have suspected, much less witnessed, any miracles. Also, we have the testimony of Joseph Acosta, a learned Jesuit, who in 1571 composed a work dealing extensively with the evangelizing of the East, in which he writes of Xavier in the highest terms, both as missionary and as man. Acosta accounts for the slight progress of Xavier's mission, when compared with the astounding success of the primitive Apostles, as a result of Xavier's inability to perform miracles, for, he states: "there is now no power of working miracles."

When we compare such sober narratives with the delirious assertions of later writers the contrast is startling. Yet, Xavier was scarcely cold when stories began to spread of the miracles he enacted. He was popularly credited with the power of prophecy, he had raised a dead man to life, and restored the sight of the blind. Three years after Xavier's death a Jesuit priest in 1555 had heard reports of nine miracles, including the driving out of devils, and miraculous healing of the sick. Then the credulous John III. of Portugal gave urgent instructions for the production of "an authentic account of Xavier's ministry." Naturally, his requirement was soon supplied.

As yet, the men who were continuing Xavier's work in the East remained ignorant of his marvellous achievements, but in 1562, ten years after the apostle's death, pious fabrications faintly appear. Here and there, priests encouraged the now constantly increasing tales of wonder, but those in authority continued to ignore them. Even at the great Council of Trent no reference was made to them, although Laynez, Xavier's close friend and fellow-missioner, was present. Obviously, had these stories been taken seriously by the clergy they would have been employed as potent weapons by the Church in its bitter conflict with the Protestant Reformers.

In 1594, however, Father Tursellinus, in his *Life of Xavier*, included the various stories collected by the King of Portugal's emissary, with those of the uncritical, if zealous, hagiologists. In this mendacious biography Xavier's performances rival those of Jesus.

At last the Church decided to utilize these legends, and they were submitted to the customary process of inquiry at Rome. Their authenticity having been established, Paul V. beatified the Jesuit missionary in 1619, and he was canonized by Gregory XV. in 1622. At the canonization ceremony in the presence of the Pope, Cardinal Monte, in an oration favouring the claims of Xavier to sainthood, declared as a matter of demonstrated truth, that Xavier with the sign of the cross had converted the brine of the ocean into fresh water; that in several instances he had cured fatal diseases and resurrected the dead; that he was suspended in the air, and was transfigured in the presence of sundry spectators; and that he occasioned an earthquake and buried the blaspheming population of a certain city in the ashes of a volcanic eruption. This fable was soon embellished, and St. Xavier was pictorially represented in the act of conjuring fire from the sky and thus demolishing the town. Several other miracles equally trustworthy were attributed by the Cardinal to Xavier. One that particularly appealed to the Pope was that of a lamp containing holy water which, when placed near the saint's image, burned with the brilliance of oil.

Everything was now in trim for the intensification of the truly incredible. Each succeeding *Life of the saint* equalled, if it did not excel, its predecessor in its medley of wonders. In 1622, a biography appeared with official approval in which several new miracles were incorporated, while those already in use were attractively enlarged.

In his *Warfare of Science with Theology*, Dr. White furnishes a notable example of this style of expansion. "In his edition of 1596," he states, "Tursellinus told how Xavier one day needing money, and having asked Vellio, one of his friends, to let him have some, Vellio gave him the key of a safe containing 30,000 gold pieces. Xavier took 300 and returned the key to Vellio; whereupon Vellio, finding only 300 pieces gone, reproached Xavier for

not taking more . . . Xavier, touched by his generosity, told Vellio that the time of his death should be made known to him that he might have time to repent of his sins and prepare for eternity. But twenty-six years later the *Life of Xavier*, published under the sanction of Vitelleschi, giving the story, says that Vellio on opening the safe found that *all* his money remained as he had left it, and that *none at all* had disappeared; in fact, that there had been a miraculous restitution. On his blaming Xavier for not taking the money, Xavier declares to Vellio that not only should he be apprised of the moment of his death, but that the box should always be full of money." Subsequent romances embellished the tale still further for the edification of the faithful.

But the crowning masterpiece of pious mendacity was Father Bonhours' biography published in 1682. In this theological romance miracles constantly occur. In addition to the four resurrected subjects of earlier fictionists fourteen now appear with various other amplifications, while several novel episodes are introduced.

Finally, the discrepancies concerning Xavier's philological capacity are amazing. Tursellinus tells us very truly that: "Nothing was a greater impediment to him (Xavier) than his ignorance of the Japanese tongues; for, ever and anon, when some uncouth expression offended their fastidious and delicate ears, the awkward speech of Francis was a cause of laughter." A century afterwards Father Bonhours solemnly asserts that Xavier "preached to the Japanese in their language, but so naturally and with so much ease that he could not be taken for a foreigner."

So recently as 1872, the notorious Jesuit, Father Coleridge, audaciously asserted, in defiance of Xavier's own disclaimer, that the saint "spoke freely, flowingly, elegantly, as if he had lived in Japan all his life." But even this was excelled, and it has been confidently claimed that the various nationalities each listened to Xavier's outpourings, delivered in its special language and with faultless phrase.

T. F. PALMER.

The Miracles of the Bible.

(Continued from page 486.)

II.

ONE of the most prominent of Christian scholars, Dr. Moffatt has said that the two most serious questions facing people to-day are the questions of money and miracles. I do not think that it can be said that Christians have really faced the subject of money. If the Gospels are to be believed at all, then the founders of the Christian religion and the first apostles were very sceptical of the character of the rich man. It was hard for him, so hard as to be almost impossible, to enter into the Kingdom of God. It cannot be said that the Church has taken that seriously. It is one of the richest institutions in the world. It has shown remarkable financial ability. It has got into its hands more money than is probably possessed by any other organization in the world. How the Church will justify itself in that, and how it will justify itself in its obvious intention to allow rich men to rule in the councils of the Church, is a matter which does not interest us now. What does interest us is the question of miracles.

That is a serious matter. No matter to what branch of the Church you go, it is perfectly plain that the foundation of the whole structure is the faith in

miracles. To Rome, of course, religion is built up on a sequence of miracles. We might say that it is built up on a sequence of lies. But even in the case of the Modernist, who tries to shed the unscientific elements in his creed in order to make it more consonant with modern science, miracles lie at the basis of the whole thing. Even for the Modernist there has been an intervention of God in the stream of history, an overturning of the laws of the world. We need not go into all the points raised there, for there are hundreds: the question of the reality of God, the possibility of the intervention of personality into the stream of history once the stream has begun to flow, and so on. To do so is unnecessary. It is simply the question of the miraculous that we are dealing with now. It is a more important thing than the fact that there are certain stories told of Jesus which are called miraculous. It is the whole philosophical conception that lies at the basis of the miraculous that needs to be called into question. If there can be miracles at all, then the world is made in a certain way. There is a particular constitution of things. It is that which we need to look at. We will deal with some of the isolated miracles afterwards.

By a miracle, if a man means anything, he means an intervention, an interference of the divine mind with the natural order of the world. He means that, without any other reason than the fact that he wants to do so, God has stepped in and made the world go in a different direction from that in which it was going before. To take a small instance. Water is composed of oxygen and hydrogen in certain proportions. Once those two things have been brought together, they are water and cannot be anything else but water. Now, if by a man speaking over them, they become wine, that is, if they become water and grape juice mixed, without any juice of the grape being added, then there has been a miracle. Also, it is a law of life that there cannot be birth upon the human plane without two living beings, male and female, coming together. If then we know that there has been somebody born without that union of male and female, then again there has been a miracle. Now when you hear of something that is outside of your knowledge, it is foolish to say that it is impossible. All the instances of birth have not been examined, and so it is impossible to say that a virgin birth could not be. What you need to do is to examine the conception of life that lies at the back of the thought of the birth of a child to a virgin.

Now it is certain that the constituent factors of the world are the same now as they were in Palestine two thousand years ago. There may have been evolution in certain directions, but in the main, the elements were the same then as they are now. In the brief time that has elapsed since then, there has been little or no change in the elements. And so if you cannot juggle with things now and make them seem to be different from what they really are, it means that you could not juggle with them then. We know that there is no such divine intervention into the stream of human history. There may be a man here and there who has a better brain than his fellows, but that can be explained on ordinary psychological lines. But there is no evidence that a man can be so different from his fellows that he can turn the world upside down. The universe is a universe. It has one principle running through it. That is the law of reason. And if it were possible for the law to be overturned and the ordinary method of evolution to be subverted two thousand years ago, because the world needed it then, I submit that the same sort of thing should be seen to-day. The world to-day is infinitely worse off than it was then. If there was ever a time when

divine intervention was needed, it is now. If there was ever a time when men needed something that should set them on their feet and give them courage, it is now. It is strange that a divine intervention came at a time when people were not in a position to appreciate it and to examine it critically, while it does not come at a time when people need it more, and where they have the intelligence to examine it. The conclusion is that there is no divine intervention and there has never been. It was only the superstition of people that made them think that there was.

There is no reason for thinking that the natural world is any different now from what it has ever been. If oxygen and hydrogen came together in the time of Christ, they would make water and nothing but water, unless something else had been added. The only difference is that in those days, men would believe anything that was told them, especially if it was told them by a priest, whereas now they find it hard to believe anything that is told them, again, particularly if it is told them by a priest.

In the case of a miracle, you should have absolutely fool-proof evidence before you can expect anyone else to believe it. The more a story deals with what is outside human experience, the greater proof you are required to give of it, before you can expect anyone else to accept the story. Credibility is in inverse proportion to unusualness. Now nobody has ever presented a case of a child born of a virgin or of a man rising from the dead or of a man walking on the sea. And so, on scientific grounds, we beg to withhold belief in those stories until irrefutable evidence is presented to us. There is not a single miraculous story told us in the Bible or in any other book of religion, which carries its proof along with it. There is not a shadow of evidence for one of the stories. There is no doubt whatever, that if the same stories were related to-day, the religious world would dispute them. There is no evidence that the world has changed its form in the last two thousand years or so. There is no evidence that the stream of history has been broken at any one point or altered by a power that was not in the stream itself. And so we can dispute any story that is told us in proof of the Christian religion. I might be willing to listen if there were evidence that seemed on the face of it to be irrefutable. But even then I should think that there was something wrong with the relater of the story or with my own knowledge of the world. I should find it impossible to believe in anything, whatever the evidence, that meant a complete alteration of the structure of the world.

H. T. FOWLER.

A Thought on the Deep.

THE placid moon broods o'er the silent sea,
And seems for us alone: There's not a breath
Of air astir: It seemeth as if Death
Were ravished with her own tranquillity:
The boundless blue, and dome of studded light
Do wear an aspect of Infinity,
Appalling in its charm; for, on this night
The voiceless Spirit of Eternity
Breathes o'er the scene with melody divine:
The holiest sights and songs we see and hear
Are for the soul, and seek the inner shrine;
They need the purer light and Spirit cheer:
Here all things grew to Life, e'en from the slime,
A boundless realm, defying Age and Time!

W. J. LAMB.

The Miracles of St. Martin.

PART I.

THE TESTIFIER.

MANY fully described miracles are attributed to St. Martin of Tours,¹ by Sulpicius Severus,² one of his younger contemporaries, a man who knew him intimately, and who entertained for him the greatest veneration. The strangeness of the facts reported, and the highly favourable position of the reporter, make it no less interesting than necessary to inquire what manner of man he was. We should, however, know very little about his career were it not for surviving letters addressed to him by a close and lifelong friend. This man, whose ancestors on each side were Romans of senatorial rank, was born at or near Bordeaux in A.D. 353 or 354, and received, perhaps not simultaneously, a series of well-sounding names forming the resonant appellation Meropius Pontius [Ancius] Paulinus. His parents possessed great wealth, and gave him a splendid education in the University of his native city, then the intellectual centre of the Western Empire. He practised at the bar and held important offices of State, including at least a substitutionary consulate. About A.D. 390, Paulinus renounced the faith of his fathers and was baptized a Christian by Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux. Soon afterwards, with his wife, Therasia, who is supposed to have aided in his conversion, Paulinus departed to Barcelona, where he passed four years, during which period he gradually disposed of his own and his wife's property, giving nearly all the proceeds to the poor. On Christmas Day, A.D. 393, the local bishop, yielding to a sudden demand made in church by the populace raised him to the priesthood. He and his wife next went into Italy. At Milan, St. Ambrose received him with honour; but at Rome, the Pope, Siricius, and some of the clergy, either envying his good repute, or disliking his precipitous ordination, showed him disfavour. Thereupon—A.D. 397—he retired to Nola, thirteen miles from Naples, founding there, with the rest of his fortune, a small but select monastery at the shrine of St. Felix the Martyr, to whom he was greatly devoted. Thenceforth he and his wife lived together as brother and sister. Great esteem was shown to him by Augustine and other famous lights of the Church; and he gained the benevolence of the Popes. In A.D. 408, he became Bishop of Nola, and held the See until June 22 A.D. 431, when he died in his 78th year mourned alike by Pagans, Jews, and Christians.³ As regards Sulpicius Severus, for whom his affection was very great, Paulinus incidentally discloses the following facts. Severus was the younger of the two friends.⁴ His possessions were not less than those of Paulinus, and he enjoyed more celebrity and greater leisure. He acquired

riches by marrying into a consular family. He lost his wife whilst still in his youth, and thereafter resided with his mother-in-law.⁵ He and Paulinus embraced Christianity about the same time.

Paulinus, whilst at Barcelona, warns him against attempting to justify their act and its consequences before men of the world.⁶ Soon after settling at Nola, he applauds him for having made such a great sacrifice, extolling it as greater than his own in various respects.⁷ This caused Severus to reply that he was not worthy to be so highly praised, because, unlike Paulinus, he had not absolutely disposed of his belongings, even in the case of a single estate, but had simply made them over to the Church under the condition of his retaining their revenue. Paulinus rejoins that in merit such an arrangement exceeds absolute renunciation, since he who has money at his command is exposed to far greater temptation than falls to the lot of him who is penniless!⁸ In Epistles referred by the Editor to A.D. 303, Paulinus credits Severus with having built two churches and a baptistry. Primuliacum, a town of Aquitania whose site is now uncertain, is given as the locality of the second and larger church, to which, at the request of Severus for relics, Paulinus sends a fragment of the true Cross. Paulinus, who was well acquainted with what Severus wrote about Martin, tells him that it would not have been granted unto him to write Martin's life unless he had made himself morally fit to write it; and he also says that Severus and Martin were equally blessed, the one in finding such a noble subject, and the other in having such an excellent biographer.¹⁰—Elsewhere he mentions his having recited "our Martin" to a distinguished lady, and extolled Severus in the presence of famous men, adding:—

For to me it is a glory to be esteemed and loved by thee whom a life consonant to [thy] speech testifies to be a servant of the truth.¹¹

Severus himself declares that Martin was always holding up to him and to others the supreme merit of Paulinus in having sacrificed completely all his possessions,¹² and also on his own part Severus pays Paulinus a very noble tribute.¹³ According to the chronology attributed to the letters, Severus does not figure therein after A.D. 506, although the correspondence itself extends up to A.D. 421, and perhaps to A.D. 424.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be continued.)

⁵ *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

⁶ *Epis.* i. 4, 10. ⁷ *Epis.* v. 5. ⁸ *Epis.* xxiv. 1-4. *Vita* ix. 4.

⁹ *Epis.* xxxi. 1; xxxii. 1, 5, 7. ¹⁰ *Epis.* xi. 11.

¹¹ *Epis.* xxix. 14. *Quem famulum veritatis consoma lingue vita testatur.* Severus states that his "Life of Martin" was introduced to Rome by Paulinus. *Dialogue* i. 24.

¹² *Vita S. Martini* xxv. 4-5. ¹³ *Dialogue* iii. 3.

The Tower of Silence.

THERE is a solemn stillness in the air,
That death-like steals o'er all this hallowed ground,
Jealous of its own realm of sight and sound,
So strange and eloquent of sight and sound,
Are hushed awhile upon the walls around
The "Tower of Silence," where the carrion fare.
The Fire Worshipers, in duty bound,
With sober superstitious rites prepare;
And now upon the tower-top attend
The white-robed men, the festive board to lay,
In sight of Heaven; and soon the features grey,
That spake of Life, are not; so, without end,
Death and Existence serve,—and sweetly blend,—
Th' eternal sacrifice—and bird of prey!

W. J. LAMB.

¹ Born about A.D. 316 at Sabaria in Pannonia (modern Hungary) and died at Marmontier near Tours, November 8, 397. *English Church Union Calendar*, London, 1863 (under November 11.)

² *Sulpicii Severi Libri qui Supersunt*, edited by Karl Halm for the Imperial Academy of Letters at Vienna, and published there in 1886 as part of a collection of (early) ecclesiastical authors who wrote in Latin.

³ See the Life of Paulinus (*Vita S. Paulini*) prefixed to his works (*S. Paulini Nolani Opera Omnia*) edited and published by the Abbé Migné, Paris 1847. There are 51 Epistles, thirteen of them to Severus. All are prolix, but singularly penurious in facts, being crammed with pious twaddle and rhetorical quibbles. He is not the Paulinus who wrote a metrical "Life of Martin," included by Migné, along with other pieces, in the volume containing the above-named writings.

⁴ *Actate Florentior.* *Epis.* v. 5.

Obituary.

DEATH OF GEORGE LOWE ALWARD.

THE Freethought movement in this country has lost one of its oldest supporters by the passing of George Lowe Alward, of Grimsby. Mr. Alward had been a strong supporter of the National Secular Society from his youth, and we believe had frequently entertained Charles Bradlaugh in his visits to Grimsby. He rarely missed the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S., and at the last one his presence was an inspiration to many of the younger members. His Freethought was open and unashamed, and his character was proof against anything that religious bigotry might have attempted against him.

He was intimately concerned with the Grimsby fishing industry, and had done much to build it up. He and his brother were among the pioneers of the steam trawling industry, and to the end he remained closely identified with its development and maintenance. He was also the author of several books on the fishing industry, his most recent work, published last year being *The Sea Fisheries of Great Britain and Ireland*.

An account of the funeral appeared in the *Grimsby Evening Telegraph* of August 8. Mr. Cohen's absence from London prevented his being present to conduct the service, but in his absence a very able address was delivered by Mr. Rosetti, part of which was reprinted in the paper mentioned. The deputy-mayor was present representing the civic authorities, and representatives from numerous associations were there. Their number gave some measure of the respect in which Mr. Alward was held.

For ourselves we can only add that we have lost one whom we were proud to call a friend, and one whose adherence to principle had always commanded our profound admiration. He was an ardent Free-thinker in the days when being such meant much more than it means to-day; and if to-day many of the inconveniences that were then present have now disappeared, it is to men such as George Lowe Alward that we have to give thanks.

C.C.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

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

"Dinah" complains that her Donation has not been acknowledged. Will she please refer again to the *Freethinker* of June 18, and the July number of the *Literary Guide*.

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, August 20, Mrs. E. Grout—"The Religion for Slaves." "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2, 8.0, Thursday, August 24, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, August 20, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, August 20, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, August 21, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, August 24, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, August 20, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 23, Mr. C. Tuson. Chestnut Road, Balham Station, 8.0, Thursday, August 24, Mr. C. Tuson. Aliwell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, August 25, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Grout.

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

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 20, S. Burke—"Augumentum and Hominem." "The Ship." Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, August 23, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, August 25, S. Burke and F. W. Smith.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON MARKET: 8.0, Wednesday, August 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

ASHINGTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Grand Hotel, Ashington): 7.0, Friday, August 18, Mr. Allan Flanders.

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (On the Motor Park, Bank Street): 7.30, Saturday, 19 and Sunday, August 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Members' full support requested.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.30, Tuesday, August 22, Mr. De Lacey.

CROOK (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, August 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DERBY BRANCH N.S.S. (Nottingham, Council House Square): 7.30, Thursday, August 17, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. Derby (Market Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 20 and Tuesday, August 22, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY: (Albion Street). August 18, West Regent Street, Saturday, August 19, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at each meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, August 20, Messrs. C. McKelvie and D. Robinson. Grierson Street, 8.0, Monday, August 21, Messrs. D. Robinson and S. Wollen. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, August 24, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Short.

NELSON (Carr Road): 7.30, Tuesday August 22, Mr. J. Clayton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PAISLEY—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture for a week, commencing Sunday, August 20.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.30, Saturday, August 19, Mr. Allan Flanders.

(Continued on page 543.)

FOOTSTEPS of the PAST

— By —

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(Continued from page 542.)

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Hallgarth Square Mission, Monkwearmouth): 8.0, Thursday, August 17, A Debate—"Has Christianity a Liberating or Shackling Influence on the Mind." Dr. G. Howe (Free Church of Glasgow) and Mr. Allan Flanders N.S.S. Lambton Street, 7.0, Sunday, August 20, Mr. Allan Flanders.
 TRAWDEN: 8.0, Friday, August 18, Debate—"Is the Bible a Divine Revelation?" *Affir.*: Mr. Bibby (Great Harwood). *Neg.*: Mr. J. Clayton N.S.S.
 WIGAN MARKET, 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday August 20, Mr. J. Clayton.

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