

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIII.—No. 35

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 1933

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

The War of Opinion.

The war of opinion is one of the oldest facts in human history. It lies, indeed, at the very basis of human civilization. From the time when man fashioned his first tool, from the time when he first questioned a single superstition or a single institution, the progress of human society has been dependent upon the quality and extent of this warfare. Man has been defined as a tool-using animal, and that definition certainly marks one of the outstanding distinctions between the human and the purely animal group. But tools themselves are, so to speak, solidified psychological facts. The community of feeling that unites a family, the community of ideas and feelings that unite a group of a society, come under the same heading. Institutions—the State, the Church, the Monarchy—are all psychological creations, and they are transmitted as part of the social heredity into which each of us enters at birth.

It is this that makes the war of opinion, not merely an important fact, but a perpetual and a desirable one. The common statement that the more some people get the more they want is exactly what the "more" ought to achieve. The family that moves from one room to two acquires a desire for comforts and for refinements which their one room never incited. A little knowledge leads to a desire for more knowledge. To set up a record in any direction is to create a desire to break it. Twenty miles an hour was once a terrific speed at which to travel. To-day it is a mere crawl. An institution that lifts man above his present condition, by its beneficial effect antiquates itself, and creates the necessity for change. A good teacher is one who not merely enables his pupils to do without him; he is one who inspires them to leave him in the rear, and the main feature of this perpetual striving is the warfare of opinion.

The War ON Opinion.

But side by side with this war of opinion there goes on a war on opinion, and that is a very different matter. This, too, has always been in existence. It has always been recognized, more or less consciously, that the maintenance of existing customs and institutions, or the creation of new ones, largely depends upon the existence of frames of mind in relation to them. And as a consequence of this the two processes have gone on side by side. On one side the healthy fight between conflicting opinions, on the other side the unhealthy attempt to crush all opinions save one. This has been done in the name of religion, of patriotism, of loyalty to the king, devotion to one's country, etc., but it has been the same in essence. The chief distinction between the past and the present situation is that of consciously avowing the end in view. To-day, in Russia, Italy and Germany, so far as what may be called national movements are concerned, the movement is open and avowed. It has become quite religious inasmuch as suppression of opposing opinions is exalted to a principle and is covered with the cloak of morality. And in most countries to-day there are considerable numbers who realize that the only way to keep things from assuming a form which they do not want is forcibly to prevent opposing opinions being heard. This is really all that is meant by religious unity, or by national unity. It is not the unity which comes from considered and unanimous opinion, but a unity that exists because no opposing opinion is permitted to express itself. At the moment Germany is the clearest expression of this principle, although we have it in this country in such attempted measures as the Seditious and Blasphemous Teaching Bill, the orders of a man like Lord Trenchard that his instructions to the police must not be questioned by those under him, and the manner in which magistrates permit "evidence" to be brought before them which often consists in a catalogue of a man's opinions on particular subjects. In Malta, after a very lengthy trial, a number of men have been sent to prison for sedition, a decisive piece of "evidence" against them being that they had in their possession, books written by G. Bernard Shaw, Lord Passfield (Sydney Webb), Karl Marx, etc. In Germany, where the forcible suppression of opinion is carried to its extreme, but logical limits, government servants have just been officially informed that they must not entertain an opinion opposite to that ordered by the Government, and in many of our Colonies and in America men may be refused entrance on the simple ground that their opinions are not agreeable to the authorities. That reason for exclusion is also adopted by officials in many cases in this country.

In every case the aim is the same and the ideal is the same. It is that which was well expressed by

Rudyard Kipling when he made the Monkey People chant in their Road Song :—

All the talk we ever have heard
Uttered by beast or bat or bird
Hide or fin or scale or feather—
Jabber it quickly and all together!
Excellent! Wonderful! Once again!
Now we are talking just like men.

All we can say is that the monkey people were unfortunate in the class of humans they had come across and which had given them their impression of men. But at present these same monkeys, if they were put on trial for libelling the human race, might cite considerable evidence in support of their song. Fascist and Communist, Church and Chapel, Mosque and Synagogue, are all inspired by the ideal of getting—by hook or by crook—the people to jabber the same “slogans” all together, and then to exalt a general cackle of meaningless words into an expression of communal unity.

* * *

Man and Society.

It is this policy of realising the expression of one general opinion, by forcibly preventing the expression of any other, which Mussolini glorifies in Germany and Italy (but not in Russia) in a recent issue of the *Morning Post*, under the name of the “unitarian, authoritarian, and totalitarian State,” a conception which he says is gaining ground in both England and America. The *Morning Post* in a leading article is quite sympathetic, but is intensely opposed to the “unitarian, authoritarian, totalitarian State” when it emerges in Russia. True to their type Mussolini, the *Morning Post*, Hitler, and the Soviet all believe in the authority of the State so long as the State falls in line with their opinions. When it does not, then the salvation of humanity depends upon the forcible overthrow of the State in spite of its unitarian and authoritative character. Logic and common-sense go badly with an autocracy, whatever be its internal character.

I am not denying the legitimacy of State action, neither am I foolish enough to assume that freedom can exist without restrictions. Real freedom can only exist through the imposition of restrictions. It is the restrictions placed upon each that guarantee the freedom of all. And there are circumstances which demand not only the action of the State, but also justify a measure of compulsion that enforces co-operation on the part of its members. But there are several things to be borne in mind here. The first is to note the confusion set up between the coercion of opinion, and the enforced co-operation of members of the community in cases where some action is inevitable, even though there may be several possible courses open. In the latter case there is no need to argue infallibility, or even that the action to be taken is inevitably the best or the wisest. Experience may prove that what is done is the wrong thing, but in the absence of the experience which proves or disproves the wisdom of what is proposed, the only course may be to act, and provided that the members of a State have the liberty of expressing an opinion, no injustice to them is done by demanding their co-operation, in what is apparently the better way. Collective action is taken in cases where some action is imperative, and no claim is made to infallibility or to even complete accuracy. The claim for the democratic State is that it can give every citizen the right to express a dissident opinion on whatever is to be done, while still agreeing to a common action where action cannot be avoided.

But the authoritarian totalitarian State of Mussolini aims at achieving the impossible, that is a complete unity of opinion. This is to be established by authority. By what authority? If we were dealing with religion there would be some pretence of reasonableness in the claim; for religion demands obedience in the name of God, and granting the existence of God the authority may well follow. But in the case of mere man? There is no principle here, there can only be a scramble for power. The right of A. to impose on, or to prevent the expression of an opinion by B. is no greater than that of B. to act in a similar manner with regard to A. The fact that A. by a manipulation of force compels B. to silence does not take away from B. the right to turn the tables at the first opportunity. And this reduces social life to a series of outbreaks in which the bully occupies the dominant position—for the time being. The rule established by this method is of no better quality than that of a robber lord during the dark ages. The fact that this despotism may occasionally be of a benevolent character is beside the point.

The State which could or would achieve and establish permanently the ideal of Mussolini and Co. would doom itself either to a state of stagnation or to one of rapidly increasing inferiority. It could afford no greater opportunity for development than would a species of animals where the young produced were absolutely similar in every way. For if we put Mussolini's formula—which is essentially the Fascistic and Bolshevik formula—into everyday language, it means a community in which all are alike, and where the all-likeness is maintained by some arbitrary authority which in some way outrages its own rule by being, at first, unlike the rest of the people in order to get itself established, and which afterwards keeps itself established by a policy of severe repression and elimination. But progress means variation, and if this all-alike Society is established, and retains its all-alikeness, one wonders how it can ever vary enough to improve, save by turning itself into a society in which variation is found, and in which its members cease to be all alike? What has then become of its “unitarian, authoritative, and totalitarian” character? The authority must fail, the unity—as Mussolini understands it—has gone, the one opinion represented by totalitarianism has vanished. That such crazy thinking as that of Mussolini and Hitler can pass for political science is evidence of the small amount of sane thought that lies at the base of much that is served up for public consumption.

But I do not wonder that the *Morning Post* is sympathetic towards Mussolini and similar individuals—who are not either Communistic or anti-religious—because it believes in suppressing opinion so long as the opinion suppressed is one with which it does not agree. It has not learned the lesson that the policy of suppressing opinion has never yet been permanently successful, and that so far as it has succeeded it has resulted in nothing better than the multiplication of cowards and hypocrites.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

RISING TO THE OCCASION.

A clergyman, who was not a teetotaller, was presiding at a meeting at which one speaker waxed eloquent over the wickedness of alcohol.

“If I could get all the alcohol in the world in front of me here,” he said, “I would take it and throw it all in the Thames.”

“My friends,” said the vicar, “let us conclude this meeting by singing that well-known hymn, ‘Shall we Gather at the River?’”

The Tithe Trouble Again.

"I would find certain folk who should make sharp inquest into their title-deeds, and spell the indentures syllable by syllable."—*Landor*.

"The man that fights priestcraft is striking deeper for freedom than can be struck anywhere at present."

Meredith.

The two Tithe Bills, sponsored by private members, and intended to relieve the difficult situation between farmers and parsons, have been killed by the Cabinet. The political Mandarins have decided not to make any alteration in the law, and have refused facilities for the discussion of the proposed legislation.

Yet it is abundantly clear that the time is ripe for public inquiry and legislative action. On the one hand, we find the priestly tithe-owners who claim "sacred-tenths" on agricultural land. On the other hand, we have the tithe-payers, farmers, who contend that they should not (or they cannot) pay the priestly demand.

The farmers are really roused to action. Nearly seven hundred distraint warrants have been issued for tithe in Kent alone, and a thousand more for Essex and Suffolk. All this happens in three counties only. There have been numerous disturbances, almost amounting to riots. There have been farcical sales at which there have been no bids at all, or else the property has been bought by neighbouring farmers at utterly ridiculous prices. This state of affairs profits nobody, and makes bad feeling all round. In the present temper of the farmers it is idle to tell them, unctuously, that "sacred tenths" were levied in the days of the "Old Testament." They reply that they are living in 1933, and that they cannot afford so heavy a tax. Their stubborn resistance also proves the strength of their belief in their case that agriculture should not be taxed to support superstition.

For nearly two thousand years this onerous tax of one-tenth was actually paid in kind by farmers to Christian priests. In all probability the tax was paid still earlier to Druid priests. In 1836 the ecclesiastical Shylocks substituted a money payment based on the then current prices of corn and other cereals. They forced the Government of the day to embody these changes in an Act of Parliament. But the present situation was actually created by the Tithe Act of 1925, brought in by a Conservative Government, which rivetted the shackles on the farmers more firmly than ever before. This later Bill actually increased the tax by five per cent, or £105 for every £100. In addition, the landowner pays four and a half per cent towards a sinking fund for the redemption of tithe in 85 years from the passing of the Act.

How is it that agriculture came under the toll of the priests? The answer is quite simple. From time immemorial priests have always lived at the expense of laymen, and Christian priests simply carried on the predatory methods of their Pagan predecessors. In its origin it may have been voluntary, but ecclesiastics at a very early stage made tithe compulsory, and in their clutching hands the thing soon became as impersonal and cold-blooded as a mortgage or a money-lender's bond.

In the high and palmy days of superstition, when the Roman Church ruled the greater part of Christendom, the scheme worked admirably—for the priests. But when sects began to arise everywhere, and men even began to challenge the credentials of the priests, farmers grew restive at the ecclesiastical imposition. To-day farmers argue that they cannot bear this heavy priestly burden when agricultural prices are so low that they can hardly get a living

out of them. Corn, they say, is down by thirty per cent, whilst the stabilization of wages, and the high cost of machinery, have increased charges fourfold. Yet farmers have to pay these priestly charges or be sold up. And, to add insult to injury, the farmer may be a Nonconformist or Freethinker, and have serious objections to support the clergy of a church which disseminates what he regards as false and pernicious ideas.

It is good news that the farmers have risen against one of the last vestiges of the temporal power of the Church. Ancient as Babylonia and Egypt, the payment of tithe, or a tenth of the produce of the land to the agents of a deity, has been a custom in Britain since the twilight of history. The present amount of money at stake is over three million pounds annually, which is used in the furtherance of superstition. For this base purpose the priests are breaking the already bent back of agriculture. A battle hymn has even been composed and sung by the farmers to the familiar tune of the "Old Hundredth." Its words show the bitterness of the feeling:—

"Save us from these raiding priests
Who seize our crops and steal our beasts,
Who pray, 'Give us our daily bread,'
And take it from our mouths instead."

Tithe is only one of the impositions associated with the so-called "Church of England" which has long since ceased to be the church of the nation, if, indeed, it ever were. A few years back a great newspaper conducted a religious census for London, and found that only one person in nineteen ever attended a place of worship. Out of the total, sixty per cent attended Nonconformist chapels and abodes of fancy religions. Yet this Anglican Church, relying upon State support, interferes with politics, pokes its sacred nose into education, and acts as if it were the only pebble upon the beach. But the shoe pinches hardest in the case of this tithe-business, for it affects a basic industry, in which a quarter of a million farmers are directly concerned.

The Church officials charged with the collection of this tyrannous tax are recognizing the gravity of the situation. With extreme unction, they pretend that they are prepared to deal leniently with hard cases. But agricultural depression is so acute that it will take far more than smooth words to ease the situation. Nothing has so stirred the English countryside for centuries as this matter of "sacred tenths." To tell the farmer that tithe is a savage survival from the ages of superstition does not help him to pay for it. Husbandry is the basis of national life, and it is intolerable that a tithe should be placed on farm produce in the interests of one amongst a hundred competing forms of religion. When George the First came to England he was instructed to say that he came for the benefit of the English people. But his knowledge of our language was strictly limited. Leaning from the carriage window he shouted, "We have come for your goods." That is the position of the priests. They take a tenth from agriculture, they take mining royalties, ground rents, everything they can get their hands on, and the money is used to play the sedulous ape to Rome and to foster Feudalism.

This tyranny of the tithe, this imposition of the "sacred tenth," is, in a close analysis, simply a racket on a Chicago scale. In the case of the American gangsters, their racket is quite a modern innovation, but the priests have been at the sorry game for thousands of years. Seven-tenths of the agricultural soil of England pays this tax to the priests. It is high time that something drastic was done to wipe out this monstrous injustice.

The plain truth is that whilst the nation has been getting poorer this State-aided Church is actually getting richer. The enormous increase in value during the past few years of the urban lands and properties held by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is a case very much to the point. House property has doubled in value, and the price of land in many cases has even quadrupled. Upon grounds of equity the case of the tithe-payers requires immediate investigation, for the livelihood of men engaged in a basic industry is threatened. It is also monstrous that this Parliament-made Church should be getting more wealthy at a time when the whole country is groaning in the grip of economic war. Democracy can never be achieved whilst such grossly unjust burdens remain, and priests are permitted to take millions of money from national resources in order to feather their own nests and foment reaction in its worst form.

MIMNERMUS.

The Miracles of the Bible.

(Continued from Page 540.)

III.

We have reached the point that miracles are stories growing up in a particular sort of age. We have grown out of that age. But some men still live in it. Religion is conservative and resists education. The stories of the Bible come from a credulous people. These people could believe anything. They believed in God, and so the more wonderful the story, the more it seemed to them to bring glory to God. It is the general method of students of the Bible to say that the stories are in the Bible and so they are true, and then they go on to say that Christianity is true because its origin was in such miraculous events. That is obviously arguing in a circle. But what we really need to see is that the Bible came from a credulous age. The men who wrote most of it may have thought that it was history, but that does not prove that it was. But what they were really after was to impress upon men certain religious and moral dicta. It is the ideas that are important and not the stories. And if later investigation shows that the ideas are wrong, no backing up by wonderful stories is going to make any real difference. Also you need to remember that none of the stories in the Bible come from first-hand evidence. Most of the documents were written hundreds of years after the stories that are told in them. And it is simply absurd to suggest that the human memory can preserve a story for hundreds of years and not greatly distort it.

The Old Testament is on the same level as any other religious literature. The Hebrews have shown their ideas of God in the same way as others, and in order to show their idea, they tell the history of the nation. And they made it as interesting as they could. One could not blame them for that. The only people one can blame are those now alive who believe the stories.

It is worth while noticing that in the Old Testament, when you get the original records of the prophets, there are no miracles. There is no miraculous story told of Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel or Jeremiah. It is not my task now to go into the religious ideas of these men. The only point that I am making now is that when you get to the man in the Old Testament, there is no sign of the miraculous. It is when you

have to depend upon stories told by other people, long after the man himself died, that you find the miraculous coming in. That is the case with Elisha and Elijah. Apart altogether from the fact that the stories spring up in a credulous age, and that in any case where they are ordinary and not therefore miraculous, they are absolutely out of the ordinary and therefore beyond belief, apart from that, it does need to be seen that the stories are the accumulation of later days. No man in the Bible tells a miraculous story about himself. It is after his death and generally long after that the story is told. Which simply means that it is legendary.

It is not a thing to wonder at that stories are told of Christ. The wonder would be if they were not told. The Gospels were written many years after Christ died. And the later they are, the more the miraculous enters in. John's Gospel is the latest, and in that there is a very strong miraculous element. There is the story of the raising of Lazarus, for example. The miracles are constantly treated as signs by John, that is, as evidence of the divinity of Christ. This Gospel was obviously written in order to prove a case, and events have been chosen and imagined with that end in view. The story of the raising of Lazarus is not in any other Gospel. We can be quite sure that if any such event had taken place, the whole of Jerusalem would have heard of it. We simply cannot believe that the other evangelists deliberately missed out this story because they did not see its value or because they thought it would be dangerous to Lazarus if they told it. They are the excuses generally given. Matthew, Mark and Luke do not tell the story because they know nothing of it. And as Luke was fond of the family at Bethany, it is strange that he knew nothing of this great event. It is a miracle that the thing should happen without Luke knowing anything about it. Further, we find in John a totally different sequence of events leading to the death of Jesus. In the other Gospels, it is the cleansing of the Temple that brings about the trial of Jesus. In John, it is the raising of Lazarus that forces the hands of the priests. The only conclusion that you can draw is that here at any rate history has been distorted in order to prove a point.

The first true Gospels were written many years after the death of Christ. John's Gospel was written at least a hundred years after the death of Christ. Christ left no writing behind, and the further you get away from him, the greater the miraculous element becomes.

There is perhaps no need to dispute the healing miracles. But then they are not miracles. All of them can be paralleled in the modern world. People with powerful personality can impress others to such an extent that healing results. That is especially the case where the disease is of a nervous character. There is no need to deny that Jesus had that sort of power. The only thing is that it was not miraculous.

In the case of what are called the nature miracles, turning water into wine and walking on the sea, they are told in one Gospel only, they spring from a credulous age, and they are out of line with what we know are the workings of the natural world to-day. And so we have to reject them. In the case of the story of Jesus walking on the sea, there is a good deal to say for the view that in the original form of the story, which was in Aramaic, Jesus walked on the sea shore.

Now we come to the really important stories. It has been said by many scholars that once you accept the miracle of the Incarnation, all the other miracles

fall into their place. That may be so. I do not deny it. But it is the miracle of the Incarnation that it is impossible to believe.

Nowhere does Jesus refer to his birth himself. Nowhere do his father and mother refer to it. If there had been anything out of the ordinary in his birth, it is impossible to believe that he knew nothing about it or that he said nothing about it. And if he had said anything about it, it is impossible to believe that his disciples did not hear and that if they heard, they did not record what they heard. The Gospels were written long after the letters of Paul. His letters are the first documents of the New Testament. He says nothing about the virgin birth. Which means that he knew nothing about it. Which means also that it played no part at all in the first Christian teaching. Neither is the story mentioned in Mark, which is the first Gospel. And the stories in Matthew and Luke are so different that it is impossible to believe that they can both be right. Also the quotation from Isaiah which lies at the basis of the story is wrongly translated. When it says that a virgin shall conceive, what is meant is that a young woman shall have a baby. And that is not a miracle. If it had said that an old woman would have a baby, there might have been a miracle in it.

Also it is obvious that all through the New Testament, there is a deliberate attempt on the part of the writers to make the stories of Jesus fit in with Old Testament teaching. They were out to prove that what was predicted of him came to pass. And often they distort facts to make them fit in. Matthew, for example did not understand Hebrew poetry, and so went wrong on more than one occasion. So much so that he made Jesus ride into Jerusalem on the backs of two donkeys. That is proof positive that he made facts fit in with theory. And when it is realized that in nearly every religion the founder is declared to be born of a virgin, it is not to be wondered at that the tale should be told about Jesus. The early writers were out to prove that Jesus was divine. That time-honoured way of bringing the son of God to earth was to make him be born of a virgin. And that is about all there is in it.

With regard to the story of the resurrection, it is again needful to put the story into its historical context and to show how it grew. The first story is that of Paul. He had a vision on the way to Damascus. So do many good men, but they do not always put it down to religious inspiration. But the point to be noticed is that it was a vision and that there was no visible appearance. Paul also puts all the appearances of Jesus on the same plane as that to himself. Which means that he knew nothing of a physical appearance, and that there was nothing about such an appearance in the first preaching of the Christian message.

Further, in the Gospel accounts there is a good deal of confusion. There is no reason given why people came to the tomb in the morning or who they were, or what they found. It is all so involved and unsatisfactory. There is such a difference between the stories that you are driven to the conclusion that, apart altogether from the strangeness of the story in itself, it shows clear traces of legend. The later the stories, the more miraculous they are. It is impossible to believe that the body of a man could pass through closed doors, could be in two places at once, and that it could pass through interstellar space. It is the crudest sort of legend. And it is time that men saw that fact.

H. T. FOWLER.

A Bulwark Against Revolt.

THE building of the Roman Catholic Cathedral, the laying of the stone of which has just taken place in Liverpool (June 6, 1933), carries with it much greater significance than its ostensibly religious one. It is to be an outstanding symbol, not only of the "faith" but, also, of opposition to social progress of every kind. The cathedral is to be both the symbol, and embodiment of magic in the modern world; the ever-present reminder of the vitality of beliefs which should belong only to bygone ages, and not to a time when scientific and philosophic thinking should be leading us in practical life in the direction of solving even our worst social problems.

In spite of all the kind words said about the poor by leaders of the priestly caste, who took part in the stone-laying ceremony, the Roman Catholic Church has not the least intention of emancipating them. The poor will be looked after in the future as in the past, by charity, and keeping them in their place. While the "charity" will, in large measure, be recovered by persistent collecting of pennies from such members of the poor who have a few to give away, if not to spare. Mansions in the sky will be offered as consolation for a life of poverty on earth.

Worse than this, the poor will not be taught that it is time they began learning to think and act for themselves, with the object of insisting upon and taking part in the reconstruction of society on lines that will ensure to all the essentials of life. A society in which there will be less and less exploitation of man by man, and a more scientific exploitation of the products of nature for the well-being and enjoyment of all!

Instead of this the Catholic Church will teach the poor and others, not the secret of, but the spiritual value and blessedness of her mysteries, sacrifices, sacramental rites, and magical ceremonies, to the end of keeping their minds enchained by superstition.

The more successful the Roman Catholic Church becomes the greater will be the bulwark erected against every form of worth-while progress. Scientific discoveries will be held in check whenever they are likely to be detrimental to the interests of the Church; and scientific thinking will be so discouraged that even those engaged in what are called the more exact sciences, will be prepared to reinterpret all "laws" to make them fit in with the doctrines of Catholicism, for the benefit of the greater number of believers. While the comparatively few intellectuals will find some consolation, if little morality, in the secret enjoyment of the doctrine of two-fold truth; and in holding any given scientific law to be false in theology and true outside of theology.

Perhaps this is granting a rather long lease of life to scientific thinking under the holy Mother Church, in the event of her becoming once again the most powerful factor in the life of Christendom. It would be to the interest of the Catholic Church if scientific thinking well nigh vanished.

Catholicism stands for the religious habit of mind; and the more religious she can make her devotees the better will she be able to kill the spirit of revolt. If the minds of the people can be captured and retained, and their hopes centered in all that a vast cathedral stands for, there is little likelihood of their becoming too dissatisfied with their lot on earth.

This was made quite clear by the Pope, when he discussed the new Catholic Cathedral of Liverpool with Dr. Downey.

According to the *Daily Mail* report of the interview (May 30, 1931) "the Pope spoke of the effects of the cathedral building and of the rising forces against

authority, the Bolshevism of the times, and of the general spirit of revolt in the world." He expressed his belief in religion as the only thing that could counteract the spirit of revolt and any attempt to overthrow authority.

It was also the opinion of his Holiness that there is greater stability in England than anywhere else, owing to the English people having a religious outlook and consequently not being inclined to run wild. With the erection of such a symbol as the Liverpool Catholic Cathedral a revival of the spirit of faith and sacrifice could be counted upon.

Allowing for the fact that, for good reasons, England was being given "a pat on the back," and revolts and periods of "running wild" in the past were conveniently overlooked, there is an important truth to which stress is given in the Holy Father's statement. While the great mass of the people retain a religious outlook—they will remain safe as far as any attempt at a fundamental reconstruction of society is concerned.

Even if their bad social conditions cause them to ask for something better, they will be inclined to accept by way of reform considerably less than is required to put things right. The religious outlook of the people makes it possible for the religious type of reformer and leader to take charge, and direct events in the way they should go, even when the revolt is outwardly concerned with economic and social matters. While the "way they should go" is in the direction of obedience to authority, both political and ecclesiastical, working in the interest of the few, if the Roman Church is left to decide.

When the mind has been trained to a religious outlook, it is in most cases easy to transfer fear of God to civic and industrial life in the form of fear of anyone in authority. That is known to the Roman Catholic Church and, doubtless, the Church realizes what is not realized by most people, the fact that religious habits of thought persist with the majority of men and women and affect other spheres of life.

This is true not only of those who are definitely and self-consciously religious, but also of the indifferent and formally religious.

The great new Catholic Cathedral will act as a bulwark against revolt and progress not only because it will act as a focus to the minds of the more intelligent believers, but also to the minds of those who understand little about the doctrines of the Church, and in many cases care less. It will thus keep vital the religious outlook, to a degree that will meet the requirements of the Pope and his bishops.

It is significant that the Pope looks upon the future Catholic Cathedral of Liverpool not simply as a spiritual home for the faithful; not in its outward aspect as just a symbol of faith and sacrifice; but as in every aspect—the embodiment of the strongest bulwark against revolt for better conditions. That bulwark, as far as the Pope and his children are concerned, consists of religious ideas and the rites and ceremonies in which they are expressed. Keep the people busy with these things in the ways you think fit to authorise, and you can do almost anything you like with the people. Scientific thinking, especially about social relationships, is not likely to become a habit on a kind of mass-production scale.

This is especially so if religion is kept as near as possible to its primitive "magic" form, and magic plays a great part in the Roman Catholic religion.

The rites and ceremonies which took place in connexion with the laying of the cathedral foundation-stone were in large part but performances in magic. Set as they were in all their pomp and splendour, and accompanied by microphone and aeroplane, they pro-

jected into the modern world the mentality of the primitive magician. As he tried by magic to rid his people, and the place in which they lived, of evil influence, so did the representatives of the Pope and holy Mother Church.

The very procession, throughout the area immediately surrounding the cathedral site, was for the purpose of driving away all evil influences. Yet how many onlookers would think of it as being more than a spectacular religious parade, the object of which was to advertise the Catholic Church in general, and the new cathedral in particular?

With all this magic, there was the greatest Catholic miracle performance of all; the celebration of the Mass.

If we keep these facts in mind we should have little difficulty in justifying the Pope's claim that the religion for which the new cathedral is to stand is a bulwark against revolt. Not merely against revolt in the sense of a popular impulsive attack upon some existing institution, but against the steady and almost unperceived revolt of new ideas and their tendency to take form and shape in new institutions, if not rejected on being tested and found wanting by reason.

If the mentality upon which the existence of superstition depends can be maintained and made more widespread the bulwark against scientific development and social betterment will be reinforced.

Perhaps some idea of the required mentality can be derived from a few words of Cardinal Newman.

After giving a fairly long list of miracles accepted by Roman Catholics, as having been worked by saints and relics, Newman states the first principle on which a fellow-believer can accept any miracle related in support of his faith.

He says, "no miracle can be so great as that which took place in the Holy House of Nazareth; it is infinitely more difficult to believe than all the miracles of the Breviary, of the Martyrology, of Saints' lives, of legends, of local traditions, put together." Again, "if, through divine grace, we once are able to accept the solemn truth that the Supreme Being was born of a mortal woman, what is there to be imagined which can offend us on the ground of its marvellousness?" (p. 374) *Characteristics of John Henry Newman*, arranged W. S. Lilly.

This is a sound statement of the case. If able to accept the belief that God Almighty was born of a woman, there is no reason why one should reject any miracle that supports the faith, and comforts the believer. If all things are possible to God, then argument about a miracle or two is out of place. Simple belief is all that is required, and the mentality indicated by such belief is what is most needed by the Roman Catholic Church if she is to continue. Especially, if she is to wield more and more power throughout the world.

Such mentality means the negation of careful, clear-headed thinking, followed by the spread of superstition as the Roman Church widens its sphere of influence.

The building of cathedrals during the middle ages was only what could be expected; it was in keeping with the generality of men's thoughts. That it is possible, in the present time, to lay the foundation-stone of a great cathedral, not only with pomp and ceremony, but also with the approval of a goodly section of the community, should cause many of us to think. With all our science and our inventions are we fundamentally, as a society, quite as far away from the Middle Ages as we often believe ourselves to be?

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Acid Drops.

The Rev. Raymond E. Young, Minister of Sandwich Congregational Church, has announced that he is voluntarily resigning his pastorate. At a civic service last year he affirmed that it was not an un-Christian thing to drink a glass of beer. Since then he complains his position has become unbearable. He is 32 years of age and the prospect of spending his remaining years "trotting around trying to please and pacify disgruntled and petulant church-goers" is too much for him. He would rather earn his bread with pick and shovel. "The quarrelsomeness, the petty-mindedness, the vindictiveness and downright dishonesty of many church members nowadays is almost incredible." This is the attitude as well of Arthur E. Massey (Rev.), who writes to the *News-Chronicle* congratulating Mr. Young. He put in 25 years of service for the Church, threw it up and became a cowboy in Florida and Georgia. Mr. Massey was much happier when he got away from "the petty-mindedness, the vindictiveness and positive dishonesty which abounds in every religious congregation." Such plain speaking from the *Freethinker* would be only crude and ill-mannered, but truth will always possess these qualities to those whom truth annoys.

The Rev. E. A. D. Naylor, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Far Forest, Worcestershire, is another cleric who does not seem to think that the path the Lord has chosen for him is in pleasant parts. He went for a holiday to Bourne-mouth and attired in singlet and shorts, he looked out from his beach-hut and observed his fellow-clerics as they mingled with ordinary people such as you and me. When he got back to his living he wrote in his Parish Magazine: "I am thankful I know some clergy who are almost human beings in spite of their profession." This is a good example of what is called "damning with faint praise." But more crude truth was to follow. "I wonder why it is that the Clergy always look so doleful, even when they are taking their holidays? Some of them have just passed me, and, really, I never saw a more broken-down miserable looking lot in my life." We think we can afford to be more generous to the clergy than Mr. Naylor, and are prepared to claim that we have this week called attention to three clerics whose healthy humanity is beyond cavil.

Emil Bederwyck, with his wife and three children, had attended divine service at Nassau, New York, and was preparing to drive home from church. A heavy motor truck, having burnt out its brakes, roared down a hill-side into the village, and before the car could be steered to one side, the truck rammed into it and smashed it completely. Unfortunately Bederwyck was killed and his family all badly injured. Freethinkers are not superstitious or a succession of such facts might incline them to the belief that attendance at divine service is almost as risky as sleeping in a Number Thirteen hotel bedroom.

No better example of the wonderful benefits which religion bestows on man could be shown than an incident which recently happened in Zubrohlava, in Slovakia. The pious villagers were celebrating Mass in their church when a violent thunderstorm broke out and, with the perversity which for some inscrutable reason the Deity shows, the lightning struck the Church three times. A terrible panic seized the worshippers, who made at once for the exit. The sequel exhibits a beautiful picture of religious fervour. Only four people were actually struck by the lightning and killed clinging to the altar rails. Twenty-seven women and children (no men) were either killed or fatally injured in the men's mad rush out of the church. They were horribly trampled upon. Perhaps some recent convert to the Divine Faith will send us his comments—if further comment is needed.

Those pious people who fondly believe that the only genuine Seamless Coat worn by Our Lord during his lifetime without changing, is to be found in Trèves, forget that there is another Seamless Coat equally genuine

in Argenteuil. This Holy Relic has had its steadfast defenders, and their claims as to its authenticity are just as invulnerable as those of Trèves. In fact, quite a big book, written by the Abbé Jacquemot, has been published about it and he shows how, as near as 1,000 years after the Blessed Resurrection, it was referred to by Holy Men as having been worn by Our Lord, as it is stained by His Precious Blood. They had no doubt about the Coat or the Blood, and therefore as it is seamless, and quite a large number of miracles have been performed through its aid, it must be genuine.

We think the best way to prove which is the original Holy Coat would be to get some of our recent converts to Catholicism, to institute a Holy Competition. A number of very sick people should be gathered together—all, of course, of the Faith. They should be brought in contact with each coat in turn. Whichever of the two Holy Relics performed the most cures would be adjudged the winner, and be labelled henceforth as the Only Real, Authentic, Seamless Coat worn by Our Lord during his lifetime. If the loser should also be responsible for some cures, then that would prove Our Lord must have worn it sometimes—perhaps when the winner was out at the wash (if that purely secular function ever was performed.) And if ever further True, Authentic, Seamless Coats worn by our Lord are discovered, we should be happy to suggest other brilliant ways of dealing with them. Will Catholics make a note of our willing help in the matter?

Although one of the chief claims made for the Boy Scout Movement is that it is quite unsectarian, the religious hierarchy has taken care that its pious claws should be firmly fixed in the movement. For example, there were 20,000 scouts gathered together at the recent World Jamboree in Godollo, Hungary. No fewer than 12,000 are Catholics, and they all made a special point of attending every possible religious function including the High Mass presided over by Cardinal Serebi. The other religious denominations were not so well organized, of course, but no Protestant or Jew was allowed to escape his religious devotions, and even Lord Baden-Powell himself seems bitten by the heavenly virus. "Get 'em young" is the slogan of all the Churches, and the unlucky scout and cub is made to believe it is impossible to do his daily good deed without a big dose of religion. We wonder what would happen and what the Chief Scout would say if one of the Scoutmasters was a Freethinker and "preached" his gospel to a crowd of boys in camp? Would it not be worth trying?

The "Pathfinders" (a native scout organization in South Africa), in the innocence of their hearts appointed three delegates to attend the European Jamboree. They were prevented leaving at the last moment by their Government, solely on account of their colour. We hear (on carefully selected occasions), that God made of one blood all the peoples of the earth, but it would have saved an immense amount of trouble if he had also made them of one skin. As it is we have black, white, yellow and brown, with the whites, at least, construing their colour as a badge of all the virtues and strutting about in a manner befitting a convocation of peacocks.

A note in a Catholic newspaper says that "An organization of militant Atheists known as the League of Freethinkers, has been dissolved by decree of the Austrian Government." It seems that the League "disturbed religious peace and decided in an unheard of manner the tenets, rites, and institutions of the Catholic Church." This gives a pretty good idea of what would happen, let us say, to the N.S.S., if Catholics were really in power in this country. The Catholic Church has never changed and never will. Death to liberty and expression of opinion contrary to itself has always been its motto. What a creed, what a Church! But the lesson is plain for Freethinkers—make converts!

The *Catholic Herald* informs us that Fr. Henry F. Hammer, preaching at St. Patrick's Cathedral, New York, on False Prophets, attacked "that type which is

honest and sincere in preaching its own doctrine, but pits his own puny intelligence against long-established institutions." "Puny," on the contrary, is the correct term to apply to an intelligence which assents to a doctrine because it is put forward by a "long-established institution." Roman Catholicism is not the only religious institution which is long-established. There are Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Buddhism and others, the last two of which are longer established, and which can also boast their millions of devotees. Faced with this fact, what must the puny intelligence do then, poor thing? Well it must note another fact, says Fr. H. F. Hammer. "Since the time the Christian Church was started, no power has been strong enough to thwart it."

The Roman Catholic Church has *never* been thwarted! There was once a very Christian Emperor named Constantine, who was personally honoured by the President of the Immortals with a special vision of the Cross in the sky. Constantine was no sluggard, but in his moments of leisure he managed a few murders, and convened Councils to decide what were the correct formulas by which a Christian could ensure salvation. He also did a bit of pioneer work in Sunday legislation. He built the first Christian City, which bears his honoured name; the first Christian Cathedral in Europe was built at Constantinople. And over that Cathedral for nearly five hundred years has floated the *Turkish Crescent*, the banner of the infidel Moslem. This is an example, and one is enough, of the Roman Catholic Church being thwarted. When a solemn papal conclave rules that the expression "to be thwarted" signifies "to get one's own way," Fr. H. F. Hammer will be discovered to have spoken the truth.

Mr. Frank Roscoe, speaking at the City of London Vacation Course in Education, said that a useful step to terminate any war would be to conscript all the "blood-thirsty magnates of the Church" as chaplains to the Army. A good move indeed if it could be carried out, but the militarists would never be sufficiently asleep to consent to such a plan. They know the value of a clerical chorus as fanners and fomenters of the war fever. In times of war, how long the non-combatants can be relied on to "egg on" the actual fighters, is always a point of critical importance to the army, and the Churches become, for once in a way, of vital interest to them. In the Great War to end war, "The Christian Churches were the finest blood-lust creators which we had, and of them we made free use," wrote Brigadier-General Crozier in *A Brass Hat in No-Man's Land*, and if any reader is anxious to obtain fuller information on this subject, Mr. Cohen's *War, Civilisation and the Churches* will give him all he wants.

The Bishop of Chelmsford has announced that he will accept no young man for ordination unless he undertakes not to marry without his consent "which will be rarely given during the first three years of his ministry." Well it is hardly likely that his consent will be asked for more than once for this is a monogamic country, but not being in the inner counsels of the Church some silent revolution may, for all we know, be going on on this point. We should advise any young cleric, who fails to get the Bishop's official consent, to lie him to a Register Office, where his clerical status will be overlooked, and he will be without a cavil effectually and unmistakably and lawfully married.

At a great Mass Meeting in Inverness in connexion with the August meeting of the Commission of Assembly of the Free Churches, it was agreed by all the clerics who spoke "that a return to the religion of their forefathers was necessary before prosperity would come back to the nations." If the audience could be prevailed upon to read Buckle's *History of Civilization* and learn exactly where Scotland stood when their religion was full-bodied, they would perhaps agree that even prosperity could be obtained at too great a price. The meeting reported a decrease in funds.

Dr. John White at a meeting in Edinburgh of the Commission of Assembly of the Free Churches, called attention to the continual falling off in the contributions from congregations to some of the most important funds of the Church of Scotland. The financial position of the Funds for Foreign Missions, Home Missions and the Maintenance of the Ministry, was serious. Thirty new churches were required throughout the country, so the Rev. Dr. John White appeals for funds,

At the same time as these new churches are required, there is a fine new Church in Edinburgh, at the moment, going a-begging. This is the new Reid Memorial Church at the foot of Blackford Hill, erected by the will of a local wine importer, and accepted by the Church of Scotland, although they don't know what on earth to do with it. It was first decided to transfer the Fountainhall Road congregation to this Church, but this created such a hullabaloo that the Assembly had to change its mind. But the Fountainhall Road congregation is itself very much divided on the question, and the position we learn calls for careful guidance. We notice when these very human differences arise, piety, prayerfulness and special guidance count for just as much as in an unassisted gathering of the ungodly. Meanwhile, at any rate, the new Temple is doing no harm by its inactivity.

Dr. J. Scott Lidgett, in his annual pastoral letter of the Methodist Conference, says that owing to the new territories created by the increasing and shifting population there is an absence of religious accommodation, and because of that the people are sinking into paganism. Dr. J. Scott Lidgett asks for funds.

Fifty Years Ago.

In her recent work on *Summer Seas*, Mrs. Scott-Stevenson describes the following scene which she witnessed at Bari, on the occasion of a Russian pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Nicholas. "They (the pilgrims) were all dressed in a kind of uniform, the men in grey, bare-footed, with stiffs slung over their shoulders, on which were tied bundles of clothes and a pair of boots; the women wore blue serge skirts, grey jackets, and red handkerchiefs round their heads, and like the men, carried bundles, with a water-bottle and tin mug, on their backs. They were all slowly crawling up the steps with bleeding knees and torn, travel-stained garments, muttering prayers and endless litanies as they toiled upwards. On entering the church we saw a shocking sight, so painful that I hesitate to describe it. Four pilgrims were on their knees, with their heads bent down to the ground in the most unnatural attitude, their eyes shut, and the swollen veins standing out like cords from their crimsoned foreheads. A man walked by the side of each holding one end of a handkerchief, while the wretched penitent held the other, and was thus guided along the pavement. For a few seconds we did not realize what was taking place, but as they crawled onwards we noticed four marks like a dark ribbon behind them, and it dawned on us they were actually licking the floor! And such a floor! Thousands of only half-civilized human beings had been in the church since daybreak, as the tainted atmosphere but too plainly showed. For over eighty yards these wretched creatures kept their tongues on the rough pavement, over every pollution that came in their way. We were chained to our seats by horror and disgust, and in spite of ourselves stayed till they at last reached the altar steps and were permitted to rise. Their faces haunt me still; the small cunning eyes turning stealthily towards us, and as hastily turned away; the half-shamefaced, half-ferocious look; the coarse, dirt-smearred features, the matted heads of hair, and the lolling, lacerated tongues bleeding over their chins. And these were fellow-creatures, these benighted wretches, looking like scared wild beasts. What religion can that be which permits such a frightful exhibition, such a loathsome scene of human degradation?"

The "Freethinker," August 26, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

The Bradlaugh Centenary.

The reserved seats for the Bradlaugh meeting on September 23 are now all sold, but there are still some of the unreserved seats on hand. No more of these will be sold than the Friends' House can accommodate, but we advise all who wish to make sure of gaining admission to apply for their tickets at once. There will be a good list of speakers, and the meeting should prove a memorable one. The prices of the tickets are sixpence and one shilling each. They can be obtained either from the *Freethinker* Office or from the Secretary of the Bradlaugh Committee, 38 Cursitor Street, E.C.

We have the same advice to offer about the tickets for the dinner which is to be held at the Trocadero Restaurant on Tuesday, September 26. The price of the tickets will be ros. 6d. each. The chair will be taken by the Rt. Hon. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., D.S.O.

Mr. Cohen will be among the speakers at both meetings. Following the Saturday meeting he will leave for Leicester to lecture on Bradlaugh at the Secular Hall, he will attend a Bradlaugh Dinner at Leicester on the Monday evening, returning to London on the Tuesday to get the *Freethinker* ready for the press, and to attend the Bradlaugh Dinner in the evening. The following Sunday (October 1) he will lecture at Manchester on Bradlaugh, on the 8th he will speak on Bradlaugh at Glasgow, and on the following Sunday will speak in the Picton Hall, Liverpool—again on Bradlaugh. He may also address one or two week-night meetings in the interval. There will be his usual weekly writing to do, and whatever time is left over he may have to himself.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Volume will be ready somewhere about the middle of September. This will run to about 350 pages; it will contain numerous portraits and reprinted cartoons, and will be given away at half-a-crown per copy, postage being about fourpence extra. The publishers will be the Pioneer Press and Messrs. Watts & Co. Orders may be booked at once for this volume. It will form a handsome memorial to keep, and also be very suitable for presentation to a friend.

The proposed House of Commons' Memorial is for the moment held over. With the usual timidity of politicians, most of those in its favour were waiting for a sufficient number of members to put their names to the recommendation, and it is useless asking for permission to place the memorial within the House unless the request is backed by an adequate number of members. We can only wish the poor beggars more courage in the future. For ourselves we have never expected much from these politicians, and so are neither disappointed nor discouraged by what has happened. But those who think that the fight for Freethought has been won should learn aright the lesson of the occasion. We may be certain that Freethinkers will get all the rights and all the freedom they are able to demand. It should nerve to renewed efforts all who are worthy of the sacrifices made by men like Bradlaugh to advance the cause for which he worked so hard and so well.

A request was made by the Bradlaugh Committee for a Broadcast on or about the anniversary. In reply the Committee was informed that the B.B.C. was unable to accede to the offer of a talk by a member of the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee, but that it had made arrangements for a short talk on the life and work of Bradlaugh. The talk will follow after the second news bulletin. We do not care to prophesy as a rule, but in this case we venture to say that whoever is selected to give the talk will be someone who is quite safe, and that very little about the real Bradlaugh will be heard. If the talk is worth listening to, we shall be the first to offer our apologies and congratulations to the B.B.C. But we are no more surprised at the refusal of the B.B.C. to permit a responsible representative of the Freethought movement to broadcast, than we are at the fate of the proposed House of Commons' Memorial. And, again, we trust that Freethinkers will take the lesson to heart. The only forms of Christianity that are tolerable in a genuinely civilized society are dead ones. We must all do what we can to use the centenary in the way that Bradlaugh would have had us use it—to advance the Freethought cause. The Freethinker who does nothing to this end is unworthy of the heritage that has been bequeathed to him.

C.C.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- B. A. MILLICHAMP (Wednesfield).—Your cuttings have been useful. Thanks!
- A. SCOTTISH FREETHINKER.—Thanks for paper with marked paragraphs.
- N. A. PRASE (Limpsfield).—Florence Nightingale maintained a connexion with the Church of England all her life, but she had too independent a mind to accept any of the official creeds. She rejected with repugnance the idea of Eternal Punishment, she interpreted the Bible "like any other book," and her God was certainly not the orthodox one, but bore a strong resemblance to Florence Nightingale. ("My God is not the God of the High Church or the Low, he is not a Romanist or an Anglican, or a Unitarian.") She believed in "God the Father and in Jesus Christ, his best son." Mimmermus applied to her the term heretic, which is justifiable. "Heretic" must always be interpreted in terms of the prevailing orthodoxy.
- M. W. SMITH.—Pleased to hear from a new reader, and to have your high appreciation of the *Freethinker*. Thanks also for introduction to new readers.
- E. H. HASSELL.—Always pleased to hear from you. The Ingersoll issue was a great success, and appears to have given pleasure in all directions. The re-issue in booklet form will be issued as soon as we can find time to make the necessary additions. But our hands are very full at present—and the present threatens to take a big bite out of the future.
- D. H. KERR (Sydney).—We are afraid there is very small chance of our ever being able to spare time to visit Australia, much as we should like to meet some of our many friends there. Hope you will find the gramophone record useful in the way you suggest. Our regards to the ladies. We enjoyed meeting them on their visit here. Why not follow their example?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lecture notices must reach 51 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums.

A reviewer in the *New York Times* on *Religion in Various Cultures*, by Friers & Schneider, says some piquant things about Christianity in relation to other religions. Before the days of Max Muller and Herbert Spencer:—

Comparative religion was taught in some fashion in colleges and seminaries, but always to the disparagement of "paganism," and the glorification of Christianity; and many students may remember that comparative religion was hardly more than a naïve course of Christian apologetics. . . Sacred books are now all being translated. . . myths, legends, etc., are now classified, labelled and interpreted simply to show how religion, of whatever sort, takes its place in the economic, racial and cultural life of the people. . . we see how it originates in characteristic fashion, through fear, uncertainty, spiritual and intellectual and emotional maladjustment to a precarious world. . . and how, in the course of time, deities emerge, legends, myths and traditions develop. Every religion goes through a similar process.

This seems pretty clear, and it shows how the unbiassed historian, approaching the study of religion in a scientific spirit, is bound to come to one conclusion on the origin of religion, and that conclusion simply puts Christianity in its place as one of a crowd of religions, all based either on fear or on mistaken and ignorant ideas of the universe. But that such a book can be planned by scholars and published in New York, and that a reviewer is honest enough to admit its implications, shows that even in the face of the most reactionary and most powerful religion in the world—Christianity—truth will come out and vindicate the independent conclusions of many despised Freethinkers. Freethought gains its victories slowly perhaps, but always surely.

The *Basutoland News* contains an amusing sketch of the life of Major-General George Wolfe, who came out to Basutoland in 1884 as Assistant Commissioner. He was of the same family as the hero of Quebec, and was the typical choleric ex-army officer. He considered it to be part of his job to be most regular in church attendance, but he caused some embarrassment by making, during the sermon, such exclamations as "rot, rubbish, does not know what he is talking about," in what he took to be a whisper, but in tones audible all over the church. He always stopped outside the door to greet the people, and his remarks on the service were of this nature "Don't know what we all go to church for; all damned nonsense; same old damned story."

Three clerics called upon Mrs. Wolfe one day when the General happened to be at home. A sub-inspector showed them in and announced their visit. Immediately a loud voice was heard declaring: "I knew it! I knew there were parsons about! I smelt brimstone!" He was a most unsuitable man to have charge of natives and only stayed in Basutoland two years, leaving with a very bad grace. There was no farewell speech, if one excepts the gesture of putting his finger to his nose when leaving under police escort, and the remark, "That's what I think of Basutoland and its Government!"

Bradford saints will have an opportunity of hearing Mr. G. Whitehead, who will lecture there from to-day (August 27) until September 1. Full details will be found in the Lecture Notice column. Freethinkers desiring to associate themselves with the local movement

should introduce themselves to the Branch officials at any of the meetings; devils for work, both sexes, can be easily accommodated.

Bradford had the pleasure of a visit by Mr. J. T. Brighton last week-end. His two meetings held in the Motor Park drew big crowds and to the disgust of Evangelists on the same ground, he had a good hearing. He evidently made an impression; Bradford is two members better off by his visit.

The American Bible Society reports that for the first time for eight years the distribution of the Holy Bible dropped below nine million copies. The exact figure for 1932 was 8,067,000.

We regret that several communications have to be held over until next week owing to want of space. Among these is one by our friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, criticizing a recent review of ours of Miss Conquest's *The Naked Truth*.

The Philosophy of Prayer.

The Heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone
and
The Christian in his blindness bows down to—Vacancy.

WHY do human beings pray? The primal and primitive habit of going down on one's knees and bowing one's head is clearly evidence of a mental state which moderns describe as "inferiority complex." When priests and parsons say that man is essentially religious, it only means that many centuries of terrorism and subjection to imagined deities have retained in man that abject attitude—especially in times of crisis, stress or disaster—which puts him on his knees or makes him bow his head. The National Bard of Scotland had no use for this abject debasement of manhood. He sang triumphantly of the glorious human privilege of being independent!

A worthy old Scot—an Episcopalian and Tory of the old school—after a series of business misfortunes was out walking one day when he met with an accident and had his leg broken. A neighbouring parson called upon the sufferer in mind and body, and after some preliminary remarks had passed told the old man that he hoped he realized his accident was a dispensation of providence.

"What dae ye say?" ejaculated the patient sitting up in bed. "Div ye mean tae tell me that God Almighty gaed oot o' his way tae brak ma leg?"

"Undoubtedly I do," replied the parson.

"Aweel," retorted the sufferer, "a' I hev tae say is that he hed damt little tae dae!"

The parson fled. Prayer at the old chap's bedside did not seem to fit the case.

Why do people pray? Well, for various reasons. Some for selfish reasons—others for unselfish reasons—others again from a sense of need of relief from some trying experience. But from whatever motive, prayer is ever a grovelling attitude. And a creed that makes man grovel instead of holding his head erect, should be cut out, because of its degrading effect. Human elevation can only follow human emancipation. It is only the unemancipated who pray. Christians like camels receive their burdens kneeling.

Prayer is private and public. The former was commended by the founder of Christianity as the preferable method. But prayer is a big part of the parsons' "publicity stunt." We even have a variety of prayer books for public worship. Presbyterian ministers rather preen themselves on being able to do without them. Fine thing a good memory! But a Presbyterian parson soon finds himself repeating the same supplicatory phrases in his prayers Sunday after

Sunday. The simplest forms of prayer are probably "God Bless you," and "God Damn you." A little Scotch boy was in the habit of repeating the Lord's Prayer at his mother's knee. One night she told him before he began that she wanted him to make a little prayer of his own at the end. This is what he added, "And oh God give mother a better temper. Make her—." But that was as far as he got. As he used to say in manhood, "I can feel the 'dirl' in my head that I got from her hand yet."

A clergyman received a call to a church with a larger stipend. Some days after one of his elders met his little son on the highway and asked, "Well Johnny, is your dad going to leave us?" Johnny's reply was: "I'm no sure. Dad's in his study praying for guidance, an' Ma's upstairs packing the boxes."

The prayee (to coin a word) is determined by the belief of him who prays. Thus there are various columns of prayers going up day by day from different parts of the surface of our little Earth to various Deities. And, of course, few coincide and many contradict each other. The Olympian Recording Angels of the twentieth century must have a busy time. Their staffs will however now be larger and probably they have typewriters, dictaphones, wireless and so forth. A Christian clergyman once spoke of prayer as telephoning to God. It is rather baffling to think of the old gentleman being called up by about fifty million or so applicants simultaneously.

Our State Churches are great on periodical "National Prayer Days." Perhaps the same practice is followed in other countries. The futility of national and public prayer, as well as its utter grotesqueness, was demonstrated during the Great War. Each of the belligerents claimed to represent the true God of the Universe. What patriot but pictures his particular God as thinking in and speaking the language of his own country? So to the British Christian, God is British; to the French Christian, God is French; to the German Christian, God is German; and so on. In the case of Russia, alas, it is a case not of "Ring him up," but "String him up!" This has made many of our orthodox Britons very sad. A mad world, my masters, a mad world! But perhaps the "Poers abune" are madder still in another sense!

IGNOTUS.

The Miracles of St. Martin.

(Continued from page 541.)

APART from the above information furnished by his friend Paulinus, little is known of Severus, except what occurs in a score of lines devoted to him by Gennadius in his Supplement to Jerome's *Illustrious Men*.¹⁴ Gennadius, who introduces himself at the end of his work, says that he was a priest at Marseilles, and that he had sent some of his works to Gelasius, Bishop of Rome,¹⁵ whose primacy is known to have lasted from A.D. 492 to 496.¹⁶ Gennadius mentions the Aquitanian origin of Severus, his noble ancestry, his literary attainments, his love of poverty and humility, his intimate connexion with Martin and Paulinus, and his authorship of certain works. Then we hear that, when old, Severus was ensnared in the Pelagian heresy, but escaped from it, and thereafter kept silence in order radically to amend the fault contracted by speech. In the Codex Cusanus a note adds that he died in the time of the Emperor Arca-

dius,¹⁷ which means before A.D. 408, date of this Emperor's death.¹⁸ But, according to Augustine, who terms him "a man strong in learning and wisdom," Severus was still alive at Jerome's death,¹⁹ September 30, A.D. 420.²⁰ As a writer Sulpicius Severus is famed for possessing a Latinity far superior to that of his age. Joseph Scaliger terms him in respect of style, "the purest of the ecclesiastical authors"²¹; and Barthius another of the older critics aptly calls him "the Christian Sallust."²² He is artistic as well as literary, and may be said to have written with the grace of a Frenchman long before the birth of French literature. His works dealing with the present subject are:—

I. *The Life of St. Martin*.²³ This is addressed to his "very dear brother Desiderius."²⁴ It is brief and incomplete, whilst about four-fifths of it are occupied with miraculous events. It was certainly written in Martin's life-time, for Sulpicius in a letter to his friend, the deacon Aurelius, tells him that, after they had parted at dawn, he himself meditated upon solemn matters, especially his sins, until, worn out with grief, he took to his little bed; that later on, in the light and disturbed sleep of the matutinal hours, he saw St. Martin approach, greatly glorified, and with that small book which he had written about him in his right hand; that he embraced the knees of the saint, imploring his benediction, which was most benignly imparted; that he had not had enough of the sight when St. Martin was carried up to heaven, whilst a violent effort to follow him brought about his own awakening; finally, that he was barely aroused before receiving news from Tours of St. Martin's decease.²⁵ In a letter to the Presbyter Eusebius we find Severus declaring that several monks who were with him on the previous day then reported that his "Life of St. Martin" was studiously and joyfully read by many people.²⁶ Elsewhere he introduces a speaker who says that the above memoir had circulated throughout the world, being demanded at all libraries and of all booksellers.²⁷ This was no vain boast, for Dr. Karl Halm asserts that "there is scarcely any library of importance which does not contain (MS.) copies of the little work."²⁸

II. Three Epistles addressed as follows:—

1. *To Eusebius*.²⁹ This man, then a presbyter, afterwards became a bishop.³⁰ Sulpicius in his *Life of St. Martin* had told how the saint once defied the peril of fire, and how, to save him from destruction the flames turned back against the wind.³¹ Someone, however, was then objecting to the truth of this story on the ground that Martin had lately (*nuper*) got burnt. Sulpicius, relying upon information fur-

¹⁷ Gennadius cited in Halm's *Sulpicius*. Praef. xiii.

¹⁸ Liebenham's *Fasti*. Bonn, 1910, p. 123.

¹⁹ Aug. *Epis.* 205.

²⁰ *The Calendar of the English Church Union*, 1863 (September 30.)

²¹ *De Emendat. Temp.*

²² *Adversar* xlix. 4.

²³ *Vita Sancti Martini Episcopi et Confessoris*. It has 27 chapters and in the present edition occupies 28 pages, less the bottom parts filled with textual variations.

²⁴ The forty-third Epistle of Paulinus begins thus, "To the holy and truly venerable brother the most desired Desiderius." Therein he mentions "the blessed man of God, our brother Severus." (1, 2.) Migné refers this letter to A.D. 405.

²⁵ *Epis.* ii. The introduction to the edition of *Sulpicius* published in 1665 at Amsterdam gives an incomplete quotation from Augustine's 205th Epistle, out of which it may be gathered that Sulpicius related to the writer a vision experienced by himself and three others at Tours in connexion with the simultaneous death of Jerome at Bethlehem.

²⁶ *Epis.* i. 1. ²⁷ *Dialogue* i. 23. Cf. iii. 17. ²⁸ *Praef.* viii.

²⁹ *Epistula Prima ad Eusebium*, pp. 138-141.

³⁰ *Dialogue* ii. 9.

³¹ *Vita* 14.

¹⁴ *De Viris Illus.* Leipzig, 1879, p. 80.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 112. ¹⁶ Haydn's *Dates*, London, 1889, art. *Popes*.

nished or confirmed by Martin himself, rebuts the cavil with great indignation, telling Eusebius that, although the garment of Martin was burnt off his back, he himself escaped unhurt; and that whilst Martin's trivial loss was caused by spiritual neglect in a moment of confusion he effected his escape in a way, and under circumstances which greatly redounded to his glory.

2. *To Aurelius the Deacon.*³² This is the letter wherein he relates how that very morning in his unquiet sleep, St. Martin had appeared and given him his benediction; and how he was barely awake, when the news came from a distance of Martin's death. The rest of the letter is composed of eulogy and lamentation.

3. *To Bassula, a venerable Relative.*³³ He playfully reproaches this lady for pilfering his manuscripts by means of his secretaries; and asks how his recent letter to the deacon Aurelius came into her hands, though he himself was at Toulouse and she was at Treves. He had received from her a complaint that the above missive did no more than mention Martin's death, when it should have given a full account of his passing. Sulpicius replies that he had intended it for none save Aurelius, and that she had better apply for the details of Martin's last days to those who were with him at the time. Nevertheless, if she promises not to read the present letter to anyone he will tell her what he has heard about the matter. He then relates how the aged Martin visited a certain place to restore peace among the clergy; and how, when this end had been attained, Martin, fulfilling his own prediction, fell into rapid decay and died an edifying death in the presence of his grief-stricken brethren. The letter ends with a grandiloquent account of Martin's exequies.

III. *The Dialogue.*³⁴ In the printed editions this is divided into three parts, but in the MSS. it has only two divisions. Here are the outlines. Once when Sulpicius and his friend Gallus, who was very dear to him both for his own merits and for the memory of Martin whose disciple he had been, were together, a man named Postumianus³⁵ to whom Sulpicius was greatly attached joined them unexpectedly, having just returned from a three years absence in the Orient. He gives some account of his travels, and relates a number of miracles performed by the hermits of the Thebaid.³⁶ Upon ending his narrative he declares that it is the duty of Sulpicius to recompense him by gratifying his ardent desire to hear of Martin's deeds. Sulpicius refers him to his book on the subject. Postumianus in reply produces the little tome adding that it has been his inseparable companion on all his peregrinations; but, that, nevertheless, it does not suffice because he yearns to know of the many things which Sulpicius admitted having left out for fear of fatiguing his readers. Sulpicius replies that if all were told, Postumianus would see how far inferior to Martin were the saints whose doings he had just reported. It would be better, however, thinks Sulpicius, if Gallus were to furnish the account, because

he must know what his master did, and because he really ought to communicate something, since of his two interlocutors, one has given a written narrative, whilst the other has made an oral statement. To this Gallus consents with excuses. These preliminaries bring us up to page 180, where, according to the present arrangement, begins the second division of the Dialogue. Here Gallus, restricting himself to the episcopal part of Martin's life, and beginning from the time when he joined Martin upon leaving the schools, proceeds to credit him with a dozen miracles, and with sundry actions not of a miraculous kind, some of which to-day would be regarded in all enlightened quarters without any of the admiration bestowed upon them by their revering narrator. At page 198, a visit from the presbyter Refrigerius, and still more the close of day, bring this section of the Dialogue to an end with a promise from Gallus to take up his tale on the morrow. The third and concluding portion of the work³⁷ is begun by Sulpicius calling upon Gallus to finish his narrative. Sulpicius and Refrigerius already know the facts, but never tire of hearing them repeated, whilst as for Postumianus he must be told them in order to carry them back with him to the Orient. Gallus is about to begin, when four other clerics, then three more, and then another (all duly named) hurry up to hear his story. Many laics are said to be at the gate, asking for admission; but it is decided not to admit them because they come more from curiosity than from piety. Gallus then relates a score of miracles, and two or three natural facts. As the sun goes down, Sulpicius requests him to stop, and enjoins him to take a written account of what has been said in order that he may distribute it wherever he goes in Italy, Greece, Numidia, Egypt and Palestine, not forgetting to leave a copy with that great and good man Paulinus.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be continued.)

³⁷ pp. 198-216.

For Our Youngsters.

A CHAT ABOUT RELIGION.

EVERY religion is very much like every other religion. This fact is not clearly seen by most people. The reason is partly because every religion pretends to be quite different from all others. Also, religious people fight fiercely over their smallest differences. People think that their own religion is different, because so few of them know anything about any other religion.

Every religion calls itself "unique." It says "ours is the one and only true religion."

Sometimes people speak of "the religion of doing good," of "morality as a religion," and of "the religion of humanity." This is like talking about "the war of ideas," "vegetarian beef-steak," or "German silver."

A religion without God is not what people mean when they talk of religion. In the main all the religions of the world have worshipped a God of some kind. And as we have no idea of what a God looks like, we have had to use the forms of beings and things we have seen, even if we exaggerate their size, their power and the number of their arms and legs in order to make them into gods.

Generally speaking, a god is just a very large, tall, clever man. Not always good, although no believer thinks the god he worships is of bad character. If he thinks other gods are bad, but (if he is civilized) he knows that any man who behaved as his own god he has would be very bad indeed.

But God is not always a man. The sun is worshipped as a god. All sorts of animals, birds and reptiles are gods to some religions. Mountains and other natural objects also. And men with human bodies and animal faces are made, and worshipped even by those who make them.

³² *Epistula Secunda ad Aurelium Diaconum* pp. 142-145.

³³ *Epistula Tertia*. It begins, however, *Sulpicius Severus Bassulae venerabili parenti salutem* (pp. 146-151). Some MSS. have the Caption *Epistula Severi Sulpici ad Socram Suam Bassulam*, "Epistle of Severus Sulpicus to his mother-in-law Bassula." Paulinus applauds Severus for having "chosen as an eternal mother, a mother-in-law more bounteous (*liberaliorem*) than any parent," and credits him with possessing a "holy mother-in-Christ." (*Epis.* v. 6, 19). Elsewhere (*Epis.* xxxi.) he refuses to "our venerable sister, Bassula."

³⁴ *Sulpicii Severi Dialogus*. (pp. 152-216).

³⁵ A Postumianus is mentioned in the Epistles of Paulinus as a bearer of correspondence between Severus and Paulinus. *Epis.* xvi. 1; xxvii. 1.

³⁶ pp. 152-175.

Sometimes these Gods speak, sometimes they write books, sometimes they "inspire" the priests of their religion to tell their people what the gods wish them to do. The records of what the Gods have "communicated" to mankind are called "Sacred," "Scriptures," "Bibles" or "Revelations."

In most cases these "Bibles" contain legends—stories telling, for instance, how the world began. In the Bibles you often find whatever wisdom existed amongst the people of their day. There is also a mass of moral teaching—the morals of the tribe or nation, and the age, in which these Bibles appeared.

Of course some religions and some Bibles are better than others. If Christianity claimed only to be the best of the religions, its claim would have to be rejected because it is not true. But Christianity, like all religions, pretends that it is the only true revelation of the only true God.

Yet all its feasts and fasts—from Christmas to Whitsun—are well-known in earlier religions. The birth of its "Saviour" was on the very day of the Sun's birthday in the Roman Calendar. Persia, Babylon and Egypt had exactly similar "Saviours" born at the same period of the year.

The image or picture of the Virgin and Child was as familiar in Egypt and India before the Christian era, as it is to-day in Italy or Ireland. Only the names change. Isis and Horus, or Devaki and Krishna, or Mary and Jesus—they are essentially the same.

New religions attract a very small number of believers, and are nearly always only a branch of the ancient religions.

Old age is the chief factor in the popularity of religions.

Our newspaper men, our police, and the teachings of modern science help to expose some of the lies which in earlier days might have been acceptable.

We must still be on our guard. It is quite easy even now for new religious frauds to succeed if they do not run counter to Christianity.

A belief in the spirits of dead people taking part in the activities of the living can flourish because no church denies its possibility. Faith—"healing," and an actual disbelief in the existence of disease can still do great harm. But these amount to nothing at all compared with Christianity itself.

Newspapers, the educated classes, and even many of our scientific masters of thought, probably all of them complete unbelievers, continue to write (not so often to talk in private) as if religion were true.

We must look to the youngsters in our movement to be brave and frank. Let the Christians tell their lies to their own followers, in their own buildings, in their own journals. But in the school, in the shop, in the street, in the newspapers and on the wireless we ought to do all we can to make people ashamed to believe in silly harmful and false statements.

Religion cannot make the false true, but it can and does make truth costly, and falsehood profitable.

UNCLE GEORGE.

Religion Put to Use.

The old Roman view of religions was that they were all, to the people, equally true, to the philosophers equally false, and to the magistrates equally useful.

It is interesting to notice that this attitude appears to be returning in Europe, where religion is once again being employed as an instrument of governance.

Fascists and Nazis are not now concerned as to whether the faiths they force on the young, and try to belabour into the heads of adults, are true and derived from divinely inspired writings (especially since all books by Jews are banned as un-German).

Italy has revived Catholicism, although Mussolini has declared that Christianity would probably never have spread across the world, if it had not been centred in Rome—a statement to which the Pope raised objection.

Germany will employ two mutually hostile creeds, Evangelical Protestantism—though Hitler is a Roman Catholic—on paper—and Catholicism, where that cult comes easier.

Doubtless a few other religions would be roped in if they had enough followers.

Ludendorff talked of reviving the old Norse creed as one fitter for warriors, but of that, little has been heard.

Napoleon coquetted with the Mohammedans when he was in Egypt, and some say King John of England did the same, but that his advances were spurned by the Moors in Spain.

It is a very ancient trick of statesmen to employ religion—any religion—as dope for dupes, if only the people can be made to believe that "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Romans xiii. 1), a most convenient doctrine for all governments!

To the Fascists or Nazis, religion is no longer a question of saving souls but of national solidarity—a kind of moral mortar to consolidate crowds.

And this, like most of their notions, is merely a revival of the very ancient idea of the worship of the State, and almost, of its Dictator—but they cannot quite achieve that; and it must be left to a Roman Emperor to have made even his horse a consul; and himself, an ass, by such a decree.

Religion, in its latest aspects, no longer directs, but is prescribed by governments "mixing it with human inventions and making their own authority a part." (Paine: *Age of Reason*, p. 119.)

It is now used as stimulant and narcotic; like alcohol. But that is not living faith, only governmental expediency.

TAB CAN.

Correspondence.

THE BRADLAUGH CENTENARY, FRANCE AND THE B.M.A.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When we meet in September to celebrate Charles Bradlaugh's great work for human dignity and happiness we shall be able to record a notable recent advance both here and abroad.

A group of plucky and mercifully modern fighters in the British Medical Association have secured a promise from their governing body to consider the law relating to abortion, and to report definitely on the desirability of setting up the Committee which that governing body shelved last winter.

Meanwhile, in France, the Chamber of Deputies has accepted a resolution sponsored by the Communist Party Group in the Chamber, and set up a Commission of Public Health to consider not only the reform of their present abortion law, but a wide and bold programme of eugenics and sexual statesmanship, comprising contraception, maternity protection and systematic biological education on Soviet Russian lines. Real light from the East!

Freethinkers should note Lord Dawson's curious plea for inaction, at the B.M.A. assembly. He maintained that public opinion was not yet ripe for an enquiry definitely opposed to Christian moral standards. But other representatives of modern medicine refused to burn incense to the superstitions which have been the age-long enemies of human achievement, crippling and wasting power and joy and beauty and knowledge, to the mentally and sexually healthy; and they won that round.

F. W. STELLA BROWNE.

FREETHOUGHT AND ATHEISM.

SIR,—Everybody dislikes dogmatism—even the dogmatist, when he finds it in someone else. But "Hope" is wrong to equate a definite position with dogmatism, and a confession of ignorance with freedom of thought. A definite position is one that is clearly defined and

clearly definable. Dogmatism, on the contrary, is characterized by an inability and/or an unwillingness to define, coupled frequently with the assertion that definition of a particular issue is impossible. Furthermore, who is not familiar with that type of mentality which masks its dogmatism with the mock-humility of a confession of ignorance? "I confess I do not know," say such persons, implying "And since I do not know, I deny that you can know more than I do."

"Hope" seems anxious to exempt the term "God" from the usual tests of reason and experience. But why? He claims that its "real meaning" corresponds to a variety of terms applied to "the limit of conscious thought." But what is this "limit," and where is it situated, if anywhere? To me such a "limit," and such terms as "The Absolute," "The Unconditioned," etc., are verbal abstractions as empty of meaning as "The Utter," "The Unregulated," or "The Square-root of a Smell."

I cannot compel "Hope" to make a study of the functions and limitations of language, nor to read the articles which I recommended to his notice. But perhaps he will read John Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding*; Jeremy Bentham's *Theory of Fictions*; and Ogden and Richards' *Meaning of Meaning*. He may then begin to discover the network of nonsense which mere words are capable of weaving round our reasoning.

C. S. FRASER.

Obituary.

WILLIAM FREDERICK AMBROSE.

By the death of Mr. William Frederick Ambrose, on the 16th inst., Freethought in Woolwich has lost one of its oldest supporters. Deceased was seventy-two years of age, and had been a Freethinker nearly all his life. He remembered the stirring days of Bradlaugh and Foote, and had been a reader of the *Freethinker* from its first issue. During the past twelve months he had suffered acutely from an internal complaint, but his interest in the cause never flagged. The funeral took place at Plumstead, on Saturday last, when the Secular Burial Service was read by Mr. A. D. McLaren.

MR. JOHN BLUNDELL.

THE new Derby Branch of the National Secular Society has lost one of its most respected members by the death of Mr. John Blundell, at the age of seventy-eight. Mr. Blundell had been a staunch Freethinker for over forty years, and his enthusiasm for the Cause was as keen as ever. He was greatly interested in the *Freethinker*, and bought and distributed a number of copies each week. The estimation in which he was held by those who knew him was shown by the number of wreaths sent by friends and relatives. He had always expressed a strong desire for a secular funeral, and the service was read over the grave by Mr. H. V. Blackman, at the Burton-on-Trent Cemetery on August 8. Local Freethought has lost one of its most ardent supporters, and many have lost a very sincere friend.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, August 27, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2, 8.0, Thursday, August 31, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, August 27, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, August 27, Mr. C. Tuson. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, August 28, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, August 31, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, August 27, Mr. C. Tuson. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, August 30, Mr. L. Ebury. Chestnut Road, Balham Station, 8.0, Thursday, August 31, Mrs. B. Grout. Aliwell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, September 1, A Lecture.

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, Mr. Saphin.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. C. Tuson and E. C. Wood. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Platform 1, Messrs. B. C. Wood and B. A. Le Maine. Platform 2, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt and E. C. Saphin. Wednesday, 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 27, S. Burke—"Civilized Savages." "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, August 30, F. P. Corrigan. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, September 1, S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET: 7.30, Thursday, August 31, Mr. J. Clayton.

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (On the Motor Park, Bank Street): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening, from August 27, to September 1 (inclusive). All members please support.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.30, Tuesday, August 29, J. Cecil Keast—"Reply to Clergy."

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.30, Tuesday, August 29, Mr. J. Clayton.

CRAWSHAWBROOK: 7.30, Wednesday, August 30, Mr. J. Clayton.

DERBY BRANCH N.S.S. (Nottingham, Council House Square): 7.30, Thursday, August 24, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. Derby (Market Square): 8.0, Sunday, August 27 and Tuesday, August 29, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Dunn Square, Paisley): 7.30, Saturday, August 26, R. Buntin. West Regent Street, 7.30, Sunday, August 27, Mrs. Whitefield and R. Buntin.

HETTON: 7.0, Monday, August 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.0, Mr. Allan Flanders.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

OXFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (22 St. John Street): 7.0, Sunday, August 27, Mr. T. Tunstall—"Astronomy."

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, August 26, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, August 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, August 27, Mr. J. Clayton.

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CHAIRMAN—CHAPMAN COHEN.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £..... free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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