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• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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Views and Opinions.

Religion and the B.B.C.

ELSEWHERE in this issue we reprint a correspondence between our valued contributor, Mr. C. S. Fraser, and the B.B.C. The correspondence is interesting because it proves that at all costs the B.B.C. is determined to act as a bodyguard for distressed Christians. It means to do what it can to keep as many people Christian as is possible. Short of one Christian directly attacking another Christian the machinery of the B.B.C. is employed week after week to this end. A Roman Catholic may preach hell, a Salvationist may rave about blood and fire, professors of theology may propound all sorts of theories concerning the history of Christianity, lecturers may put in the most fantastic claims for the beneficial influence of the Christian churches on painting, sculpture, music, literature, and social reform, but no critically opposing opinion may be tolerated. The reply to any such demand—and thousands of such demands are sent—is that the B.B.C. gets numerous letters from subscribers expressing their appreciation; or that this is a Christian country, and things that would outrage the feelings of Christians cannot be permitted; or, as in the recent talks about the abolition of slavery, the work of the Abolitionists is calmly put down to the influence of Christianity, thus ignoring the fact that the Christian Bible sanctions slavery, that modern slavery was a distinctly Christian institution, that it assumed a more brutal and a more degraded form than did ancient slavery, that the Churches were amongst the last to liberate their slaves, and were the staunchest backers of slave-owners, that the largest slave-owning country in existence is the oldest Christian State in the world, and that very many of the most ardent Liberationists were not Christians at all. The B.B.C. has grasped thoroughly the truth that if people are to be kept Christian they

must be prevented knowing the truth about either the history of that religion or the nature of its doctrines. The lie of the microphone must be brought in to bolster up the lie of religion.

* * *

God and Evolution.

To use a journalistic catch-word, I was greatly, "intrigued" by the incident that set Mr. Fraser worrying the B.B.C. in the interests of fair-play. As an outcome of a wireless talk, someone asked Professor Julian Huxley why the tse-tse flies were created. He replied, "They were not created, they evolved." The question, presumably, was asked by some poor, befogged religionist who had been told that God was good and wise, and who could not reconcile goodness or wisdom with the creation of the tse-tse fly. Of course Professor Huxley might have ignored the question, but that would have looked cowardly. Or he might have said that the idea of either nature as a whole, or nature in its particular aspects, being "designed" was a primitive superstition dressed up in modern language, but that would have offended the godly folk who control the B.B.C. Apart from this consideration he might have replied that creation in the sense used by the religious person is a myth. For the religious sense of creation is not that which we have in mind when we speak of an artist creating a picture, or a builder creating a house. We mean someone who makes the materials as well as fashions the product. And that kind of creation must be everywhere or nowhere. We really cannot have a deity hopping in and out as he pleases, creating the humming bird and leaving the tse-tse fly to fashion itself. So the reply was they were not created, but (O, blessed word!) evolved. And I expect that many of the Christian listeners were satisfied that if Professor Huxley was not quite on the side of the angels, at least, he was not in violent opposition to them. But there was at least one listener who felt that the sanctioning of so un-Christian a theory as evolution ought not to have been permitted. So he raised a protest in the *Radio Times*, and in accordance with the policy of permitting any exhibition of ignorance or bigotry, so long as it is in defence of religion, the letter was published, while the one sent by Mr. Fraser was excluded. And I should not be surprised to learn that when Professor Huxley, in a dutiful and child-like manner, submits the manuscript of his next talk to the enlightened censorship of the B.B.C., all dangerous expressions will be properly amended.

* * *

God and Nature.

I think the editor of the *Radio Times* acted very wisely—that is, if he wished to keep his job. For if he had permitted the publication of Mr. Fraser's letter it might have led to a discussion on the issues raised therein. In itself, Professor Huxley's reply was just

bluff—excusable, perhaps, in the circumstances, but still bluff. His questioner was most probably a believer in God, who after listening to the havoc caused by the tse-tse flies wondered what purpose they served in God's best of all possible worlds. He was told they were not created—that is they were not intended to exist, they evolved, that is, they just happened. That reply would probably satisfy the enquirer, it does apparently satisfy many believers in God, who seem to think that if the direct action of God can be placed sufficiently far back, he can be relieved from responsibility for anything that occurs to-day. But there is no vital distinction between the act of a man who scatters abroad a quantity of disease germs, and one who plans a box which, filled with the same kind of germ, shall automatically open and discharge its contents in the middle of a city some fifty years hence. Delayed action, may be as deadly as immediate action; and because action which has the tse-tse fly as its product is of the delayed kind, it does not relieve from responsibility the one who set the process going. Our criminal law wisely assumes that a man is responsible for all the consequences that naturally follow from his actions, although in passing sentence the judge considers whether the knowledge is of a complete or incomplete character. On that principle we may pass unmitigated condemnation on the deity, or we may accompany the verdict of guilty with a recommendation to mercy on the ground that he did not quite know what he was doing, or was mentally unable to foresee the consequences of his action. That, however, interferes with the quality of the divine wisdom; so, on the whole, it is advisable to refer to the matter as vaguely and as indefinitely as possible. There is nothing like a fog to strengthen one's "spiritual vision."

* * *

Why Evolution?

If people will have a God, if they insist on finding some "plan of creation," and insist on applauding the wisdom and the skill of the plan, they must saddle the author of it with the responsibility for what occurs. You cannot have the tse-tse fly happening by accident and man appearing as part of the plan. In the structure of the tse-tse fly there is as much ingenuity displayed as there is in the structure of man. An earthquake is as much part of the plan as anything else. A God who sets things going and then sits watching to see what will happen, is in no sense different from a man who sets a number of stones rolling down a hillside wondering what, or whom, they are going to hit. To say to a believer in God that the unpleasant things are evolved is giving him just "dope." To call "God," as do so many of our modern apologists, an ideal that is evolved in the course of evolution, is hardly dope, it is just fooling. To exclaim in praise or glorification of a "life-force" as though life were something in itself, and could ever be more than a name attached to a given collection of properties, is just scientific nonsense. It is like glorifying heat apart from something that is hot, or colour as an existence apart from something that is coloured. To identify God with mere existence is absurd, since it is the characterization of existence, the personification of some part of existence that is essential to a God that is worth troubling about. All this was perfectly clear to religionists while religion could stand for intellectual men as something real. But when ethical considerations begin to play their part, when a knowledge of nature and of natural processes becomes common, then we are faced with a different state of things. These earlier religionists saw quite clearly and quite properly that if evolution were true the particular providence of God disappeared; it was

an ever-acting God that religion needed, not a God who set something going a long time ago and ever afterwards watched it go. And you simply could not have a providence which made its presence felt in the affairs of men, with a universe in which things moved to their natural procession without outside interference or guidance. These earlier religionists said plainly and truthfully that if evolution were true, God was expelled from the world. He was no longer necessary to its phenomena. The more astute of the present-day religionists discover that there is still a plan, though no one knows what it is or why it exists. God still operates although no one knows how or where or why. Thousands of parsons preach that God is with us still—because if he were not still with us we should soon be without parsons.

But, if there be a God, why, evolution, why, a plan? A plan is merely a way of getting somewhere or doing something that cannot be at once achieved. But there is no value, there is not even cleverness in taking ages to do something that can be done instantaneously. There would be no sense in taking a year to build a motor-car if one could cause one to appear at the word of command. On the hypothesis of God all that can be achieved by millions of years of evolution could have been achieved at once. A plan is only of value as a means of overcoming difficulties, but to create difficulties in order to show how clever one can be in overcoming them, is just about as wonderful as a conjuror bringing a rabbit out of a hat. The sole use of the performance is to fill the onlooker with wonder.

* * *

Keeping it Dark.

The question asked Professor Huxley, why are the tse-tse flies created, is one that never ought to be asked. It belongs to a psychological state when natural objects were believed to be manufactured objects, and when the manufacturer could, and should offer some ethical justification of his productions. But there is no "Why?" in nature, and there is no need to provide a justification for anything that exists. The one thing in nature is change, and evolution claims to be no more than a statement of the law of the change—that is the conditions under which natural changes occur. The attempts to prove that things in nature are good or bad, higher or lower, are all belated survivals of a pre-scientific type of mind. It is a type of mind that properly belongs to the temple, not to the laboratory. Its advocates are, or should be, priests, not scientists.

But I am not surprised that Professor Huxley did not attempt to uproot the fundamental fallacy that obsessed the mind of his questioner. The B.B.C. would not have liked it. Neither am I surprised that the editor of the *Radio Times* refused to insert Mr. Fraser's letter. The B.B.C. has published its avowed intention to do what it can to preserve Christianity, and how is this to be done if from the building which is erected "to the greater glory of God," there come forth letters which cast doubts on his wisdom or his goodness, or suggest that "God" may be a myth, and houses a number of men who fail to stand between the preachers of God and the public? Religions did not originate in criticism, nor are they perpetuated by questions. The halo that crowns the head of the saint is not shapen like a note of interrogation, but like unto a great round O; and the world over, that is expressive of non-understanding wonder. The B.B.C. is not seeking to create an open forum, but to perpetuate a closed mind.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Bolstering the Bandits.

"Clericalism is the enemy."—*Gambetta*.

"I don't believe in principle,
But, O I do in interest."—*Biglow Papers*.

It used to be said that Liberty never failed of its votaries. It is therefore astonishing to find that a popular daily newspaper, claiming to be Democracy's own mouthpiece, should so far forget its principles as to bestow its blessing upon one of the worst forces of Reaction.

The *Daily Herald* has always wobbled upon the subject of religion. Commenting upon the topical Tithe question, the *Daily Herald* broke out as follows in a leading article (August 16):—

Because the *Daily Herald* stands for the abolition of tithes, some think its attitude in the present dispute is anti-Church. That is not the case. Repeatedly in our columns it has been stated that no settlement will be acceptable if it inflicts injustice on the Church.

So much was the Editor in earnest that in an earlier issue of the paper he published an article by the Bishop of Liverpool, defending strongly the position of the Anglican Church in the matter of tithes. Mind you, there is nothing wrong in permitting the bishop to state his views, but taken in conjunction with the *Herald's* known Churchianity, it is not without significance.

Even hidebound Tory newspapers defend the Anglican Church more modestly. They hesitate to talk of "injustice on the Church" in such a connexion, remembering the real wrong inflicted upon farmers by an avaricious priesthood throughout the centuries. For the collection of tithes, or "sacred tenths," is no novelty, but one of the hoariest of iniquities. Long before there was any such thing as the Christian Religion the priests of older faiths foreshadowed the methods of Chicago gangsters by promising "protection" whilst levying one of the most unjust of all taxes. This racket dates from the twilight of history to the present day.

The iniquity of the tithe-levy is "four square to all the winds that blow." And any church which carries on this evil tradition is concerned in the iniquity. It was a monstrous injustice in the days of the ancient Egyptians; it remains an act of grievous wrong upon English farmers to this day, although the scene of operation has changed half across the world, and the faiths are as different as chalk from cheese.

What is the matter with the *Daily Herald*? With Pecksniffian tearfulness, it snuffles of "the Church," and would protect this wealthy ecclesiastical institution at the cost of its own reputation. There are a hundred churches in this country, ranging from Catholicism to Christadelphianism, from Methodism to Mormonism. Why babble of "the Church" like a young curate delivering his first sermon? If the *Herald* desires to mention the Anglican Church, why not say so plainly?

The *Herald* actually wishes to assist this Anglican Church, in spite of the undoubted fact that this precious organization represents Priestcraft at its worst in this country. Listen to the plea of this Democratic organ:—

If the farmers are to pay less and the Church is not to receive less, who is to foot the difference? This is the problem which has obviously got to be resolved before any settlement is likely. It is pike-staff plain that things cannot go on as they are. The responsibility falls on the Government. It should appoint a Commission, not to shelve, but to solve and settle on the most equitable basis.

"The most equitable basis," indeed! If the farmers cannot pay this iniquitous tithe-charge, the suggestion is that the tithe should be commuted for cash provided by the British Government. This means, in plain language, that the burden will be shifted from the farmers to the ordinary taxpayers, but the burden will remain. O most impotent conclusion! If this is all a Democratic editor can get from his Socialistic principles, small wonder that he has to bribe readers to take his paper by means of sets of popular novels. For the *Herald's* attitude is but sheer flunkeyism.

The tithe question is by no means the only trouble associated with this Anglican Church. It is true that over three millions of money taken annually from agriculture in support of one religious organization is a gross imposition, but it represents only a fraction of the cost of this particular church to the nation. This Anglican Church draws other revenue from coal-royalties in Durham, ground-rentals in all parts of England, and from ancient endowments. The capital value of these properties cannot be less than a hundred millions, and much of it is yearly increasing in value.

Now, the *Herald* regards such things as coal-royalties and ground-rents with the greatest disfavour when owned by aristocrats, but dissembles its dislike in the case of this Anglican Church, which is one of the very worst offenders. It is all very puzzling, and requires some explanation.

This Anglican Church is not only a relic of Feudalism, but it is one of the most anti-Democratic forces in the country. Not only do its bishops impede all progress in the House of Lords, but the pages of Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates* show that it has done this thing for many generations. All of its sixteen thousand priests solemnly subscribe to the "Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion," which are as out-of-date as the stocks and pillory to which they bear such a marked resemblance. This Church is Royalist to the core, and only a few years back included in its official Prayer Book a special service in memory of "King Charles the Martyr." As it is, it continues to invoke supplications for individual members of the present Royal Family, and to offer prayers for wet and fine weather. Yet it is this particular Tory Church which commands the admiration and adherence of the *Daily Herald*. "Prodigious!" as Dominic Samson expressed it.

Is it commercial greed that makes the *Herald* so far abandon its principles? Does the Editor "tickle the ears of the groundlings" with the idea of promoting a huge circulation? If this Editor writes his pious nonsense, the while his tongue is in his cheek, then your hat flies off to him as an astute showman. But let him not flatter himself that he is a Democrat. It is far more probable, however, that he regards himself seriously, and is capable of admiring those leading articles bolstering this State Church, had they been written by another hand. His atmosphere is heavy with the emotionalism and sentimentalism of the Chadbands and Stigginses.

But is it not playing it a little low down on the readers of his paper thus to take advantage of their innocence and lack of experience? When the Education Act has run another half century, the readers of newspapers, perhaps, will cease to hunger for stale sawdust, and will prefer the bread of knowledge. Few worse misfortunes can befall a people than this of possessing a powerful ecclesiastical body in its midst that saps the very springs of Democracy, that permits mental and moral confusion, and that hinders the wheels of progress in the way that this

Anglican Church does. It is not the friend, but the enemy of Democracy, and must be fought to the death.

For this particular Church is opposed to the spirit of Liberty which animates the progressive peoples of the world. This Church is so anti-Democratic that no reform could ever make it palatable to real Socialists. It should be disestablished and disendowed, and the money used for far worthier purposes. The Anglican priests and their "Thirty-Nine Articles" represent but a sluggish backwater in the river of human civilization. The great river rolls on, and bears us further and ever further from the ignorance of the past, further and yet further from the shadow of Golgotha. Why does the *Herald* wish us all to retrace our steps, and support Reaction in its very worst form? The imposition of "sacred-tenths" has never been anything else than banditry.

MIMNERMUS.

Criticism and the B.B.C.

(The following correspondence is sent to us by Mr. C. S. Fraser. We think it will prove interesting to our readers.)

EXTRACT from "What the Other Listener 'Thinks,'" in the *Radio Times* of July 7, 1933 :—

Watch Dog.

No talks are more interesting than those of Professor Huxley, but I was astonished to hear him state last week, "People ask me why were the tse-tse flies created? The answer is—they were not created: they evolved." This is downright propaganda and should not be tolerated. There is nothing, of course, against discussion on the subject, but to take advantage of the microphone, well-knowing that a reply could not be forthcoming, is unfair.—*The Other Side of the Microphone.*

A letter addressed to the Editor of the *Radio Times*, dated July 8, 1933 :—

Sir,—I enclose herewith a letter for publication in the *Radio Times*. If, as I anticipate, you will decline to publish this letter exactly as worded, you would do me a favour if you would kindly forward it to the anonymous writer of the letter to which it is a reply, so that he may be made aware of the fact that there are at least two sides even to "the other side of the microphone."

The enclosure referred to above reads as follows :—

Sir,—Your correspondent, "The Other Side of the Microphone," accuses Prof. Huxley of downright propaganda which should not be tolerated, when he made the statement that tse-tse flies were not created, but were evolved. He also pointed out that this was unfair because it took advantage of the microphone, well knowing that a reply could not be forthcoming. I suppose that when priests and parsons are free to declare, explicitly and implicitly, every Sunday that "Jesus lives," or "God exists," your correspondent does not regard that as downright propaganda which should not be tolerated, and thinks it quite fair. It would, of course, never occur to him that there are thousands of people who agree with Prof. Huxley, and who regard the present bias in favour of free religious propaganda, which the B.B.C. tolerates with equanimity, as grossly unfair and wholly pernicious.

The *Radio Times* replied to the foregoing in a letter dated July 13, 1933, as follows :—

Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 9th July, we shall not be publishing the letter you enclose. Our rule about forwarding correspondence is to ask for a stamped envelope which we will address correctly and forward.

Letter to the Editor of the *Radio Times*, dated July 16, 1933 :—

Sir,—I am obliged to you for your letter of 13th inst., and enclose a stamped envelope as requested. I also enclose a second stamped, addressed envelope and would be glad if you could favour me with your reasons for refusing to publish my letter while admitting the one from "The Other Side of the Microphone." But please do not tell me that it is because you are afraid to hurt the susceptibilities of religious people! That reason can scarcely be justified, especially in view of your leading article referred to in my letter published in your issue for September 16, 1932—to which I would kindly refer you. [N.B.—In this leading article the Editor expressed his opinion that it was a bad policy "further to encourage the lamentable tendency to conceal the truth for fear of hurting other people's feelings."]

In view of the sentiments you then expressed and of the remarkable courage you displayed in publishing that letter—to which there was no effective reply, either from the B.B.C. or from any member of the public—may I be allowed to submit another and somewhat less obvious reply to your "fair-minded" correspondent, "The Other Side of the Microphone."

The following is the second letter submitted for publication :—

Sir,—Your correspondent, "The Other Side of the Microphone," complains that Prof. Huxley used the microphone unfairly to broadcast what he calls "downright propaganda which should not be tolerated," "well knowing that a reply could not be forthcoming." Might I be allowed to point out to him that the B.B.C. freely allows "downright propaganda" of the opposite sort to be broadcast at much greater length both on Sundays and weekdays, and that it prevents the expression of any effective reply to or criticism of this propaganda.

To this second attempt the *Radio Times* replied briefly on July 18, 1933 :—

Dear Sir,—Thank you for your letter of 16th July enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. We will now forward your original letter to our correspondent.

The reason why we are not publishing your letter is that we do not wish to continue this correspondence. It is altogether too slight an occasion to raise the issue of propaganda, religious or otherwise.

In answer to this, the following letter was sent on July 20, 1933 :—

Sir,—You will, I feel sure, appreciate my reason for smiling at the contents of your letter dated 18th inst. If the occasion was too slight to raise the issue of propaganda, religious or otherwise, why did you raise it in the first instance by publishing the letter from your anonymous correspondent? Or did this letter creep accidentally into your columns owing to the carelessness of some sub-editor who is shortly to be dismissed his post?

In view of the fact that you decline to publish a reply to that letter, have you any objections to my publishing the whole of this correspondence up to date?

A week later the *Radio Times* replied to the foregoing in the following terms :—

Dear Sir,—Thank you for your letter of July 20. We have no objection to your publishing this correspondence in full.

In reply to your query as to why we published the letter from our correspondent, "The Other Side of the Microphone," we would point out that this constituted, in our opinion, a justifiable comment on Professor Huxley's talk. It represented a certain attitude to scientific discussion, and its publication secured the airing of the two diametrically opposed views on the subject. Publication of your reply was not, in our opinion, justified by the interest likely to

be aroused by the material point involved, nor did we consider the occasion a suitable one for further discussion of the fundamental principle of the broadcasting of controversial opinion in our correspondence columns.

A Sunday intervened between this letter and the next, which was sent to the Editor of the *Radio Times*, on July 31, 1933:—

Sir,—Thank you for your letter of 27th July. I note that you consider the letter from "The Other Side of the Microphone" to be a justifiable comment on Prof. Huxley's talk, and that you published it because it secured the airing of two diametrically opposed views. In view of this I enclose for publication a similar letter which represents a certain attitude to unscientific discussion, and which (when published) will also secure the airing of two diametrically opposed views. If you will compare this with the letter from "The Other Side of the Microphone," the similarity between the two will doubtless strike you.

The letter enclosed for publication (the third to be submitted) ran as follows:—

Sir,—No talks are more interesting to some people than those of the Bishop of Durham. But I was astonished to hear him state last Sunday that the Anti-Slave Movement "was inspired throughout by the Christian spirit," and that slavery was "essentially incompatible with the principles of the Gospel." This is downright propaganda, as well as being utterly contrary to verifiable facts. There is nothing, of course, against a discussion of the subject, but to take advantage of the microphone well knowing that a reply could not be forthcoming is unfair.

On August 4, 1933, the *Radio Times* answered as follows:—

Dear Sir,—Thank you for your letter of July 31, enclosing a letter for publication, which we regret we shall not be able to publish.

And that is as far as the correspondence has gone up to date. Whether the words "we regret" is an indication that the Editor has been smitten by the remnants of his conscience, it is difficult to say. Personally, I doubt it.

C. S. FRASER.

The End of Jericho.

MATTERS which have heretofore been somewhat in doubt concerning the momentous capture and destruction of Jericho have been finally adjusted by no less an authority than Sir Charles Marston, J.P., F.A.S., etc., and this outstanding incident in ancient history having been disposed of the world may continue its revolutions with serenity and that poise of feeling which comes of perfect knowledge. Sir Charles informs us that: "We have definitely established the fact that Jericho was destroyed about 1400 B.C., instead of 1180 B.C., the conventionally accepted date, and it appears to have been destroyed just as described in the *Book of Joshua*."

This indeed is comforting news! It excites a thrill of wonder as to how the human race contrived to move along the centuries that are past bereft of such essential information. And it all came about in such a simple way by the use of a spade!

On turning to that great historical work known as the *Book of Joshua*, we find all the facts relating to the advance upon Jericho, the crossing of the Jordan, the blowing down of the walls with wind issuing from seven priests blowing through seven rams' horns, the capture and destruction of the city, and the massacre of its inhabitants, related in the most exact manner, repeated, reiterated, reasserted, and emphasized in various and sundry ways, in order that no man, even though blind and running, should fail to understand, or allow any part of the transactions to escape.

In a special advance interview the Lord informed General Joshua what was going to happen, detailing and repeating each manoeuvre at great length, and in a widely discursive manner; and when the operations began the several incidents were unrolled and enacted with meticulous precision. The General was informed that "as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest in the waters of Jordan, the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above, and they shall stand upon a heap." From which we understand that the waters which came down from above were not rain water, or cloud water, or fog water, or any kind of water except plain Jordan River water; and as this water was "shut off" from the other waters they should "stand upon a heap," which as clearly intimates what was about to happen as though it had been writ in mud.

A "heap of water" is generally understood to be a good deal of water, by some learned authorities designated as a "right smart of water," by others as a "whole lot," and out West in Missouri they sometimes say a "whole passel," meaning a "whole parcel"; and when waters of this kind mix and come together, or separate and flow upstream or downstream as the case may be, they are bound to "stand up" in order to make room for something else. Does the reader comprehend?

It all happened precisely as the Lord had told General Joshua it would. As soon as the feet of the priests that bear the ark "were dipped in the brim of the water, the water that came down from above stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the city of Adam." The waters acted in this peculiar manner because they were waters which had been manufactured and dedicated by the Lord to this holy purpose. Other waters might have acted differently, but these waters "stood and rose up upon a heap very far from the City of Adam." If the writer had told us how far it was to the City of Adam a great load of anxiety would have been lifted from our bosoms, but he left us in doubt, so that even unto this day no man can tell how far it is to the City of Adam.

As soon as the waters "stood up upon a heap" General Joshua gave the order to advance, and the charming Children of Israel passed over Jordan without wetting the bottoms of their socks or the hems of their shirts. During the passage the General set up twelve stones "in the midst of Jordan," representing the twelve tribes of Israel, "and they are there unto this day." Now that all doubt concerning Jericho and its fate has been dispelled, may we not hope that these twelve stones will be lifted out of the midst of Jordan and exhibited to a stiff-necked generation as final and irrefutable proof of the infallibility of all Scripture? By all means let us have the stones, and thus forever refute the sneers of Atheism.

In due time the city was invested, and for six days seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns, marched once around the city, blowing their seven rams' horns as they passed. The armed men went before the priests and the "rearward" came after in a perfectly natural way, and following these came the lovely Children of Israel, marching in silence; for they had been warned by General Joshua that no word should proceed out of their mouths, thus explaining the cause of their silence. If they had possessed other apertures for the emission of sound they would no doubt have made a noise and interrupted the solemnity of the show. But the Lord had foreseen this and with great wisdom had so constructed their physical apparatus that they could emit vocable sounds only through their mouths.

On the seventh day—being the Holy Sabbath—they encompassed the city seven times, the seven priests blowing their seven rams' horns seven times; and when the seventh trip was complete General Joshua commanded all the people to shout with their mouths and the seven priests to blow their horns with wind seven times, with an extra blast for good count, whereupon the wall "fell down flat." Being a decent sort of wall it felt that it could not do otherwise.

The people now rushed over the wall which had fallen down flat, and "utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." For so had the

Lord of all the earth commanded General Joshua to do. They were not to use the flat sides of their swords, or the dull backs, but the edge only, which had been made especially for carving purposes.

We are not told how many men, women and babies; sheep, oxen and asses, were slain that day with the edge of the sword, but I find by careful estimates of my own that there were an hundred and twenty and five thousand and six hundred and thirty. One or two may have escaped, but if so they never reported. In estimating sacred killings we must not be too exact as to space and numbers. If it looks good and you feel disposed that way, you may put a million men and women and oxen and sheep and asses in the space of thirteen acres, which was about the size of Jericho. Don't worry as to standing room—just jam them in and let them sweat. Turn loose your imagination and trust in Providence.

My estimate does not include the unborn children whom the Lord of all the earth had assigned to the general slaughter, because one slash of the edge of the sword across their mothers' breasts would account for them. In some cases there were probably twins, or even triplets, which might have added materially to the numbers so beautifully butchered that auspicious day. It was a perfectly elegant massacre, and increased the Lord's reputation beyond measure. He might have resorted to his usual methods of turning loose a hurricane, or a nice little pestilence, or he might have shaken things up with an earthquake; but on this occasion he preferred the edge of the sword. Variety lends charm to amusement, and there is nothing like the edge of the sword to give zest to a holy killing.

The only persons saved out of the population—born and unborn—were the charming Madame Rahab and her family, who were protected in recognition of her professional services to General Joshua's spies. The account intimates that her family was quite large, a considerable part of it being composed of her cousins and her aunts who assisted in her line of business and were highly appreciated by the cultivated Children of Israel.

All the silver and gold and precious vessels of brass and iron were consecrated to the Lord and preserved in his treasury, and were passed over to the holy priesthood for safe-keeping. The art of compounding brass was not discovered until fourteen hundred years after these interesting events, but that is not material. The brass found on this occasion was of the prophetic variety; but the common kind—just common brass—is more appreciated by the priesthood. Without it they could not carry on their profession.

It will be noted that the walls "fell down flat," not in heaps or tangled masses as they would have done in case of earthquake or the natural processes of decay and gravity. The stones should therefore be still lying flat on their sides, as they were the day of the great adventure, when they formed an easy and safe passage for the lovely Children of Israel, as planned by the Lord of all the earth. They should also have been sucked outwardly by the breath of the priests as they drew in wind with which to blow them over. If the walls had fallen inwardly they would have buckled up at the corners and angles, and even the wind of the priests could not have untangled them. Sir Charles should relieve our anxiety on this point by informing us what position the stones are in at the present time.

Searching for proofs of ancient killings by the Lord with a spade is peculiarly holy work. How comforting it must be in turning over the debris of centuries to find remnants of an old wall proving the truth of the divine slaughter of many thousands of men, women and children, and even greater numbers of lowing oxen, bleating sheep, and meek jackasses. The presence of the old wall, of course, leaves no room for doubt of the glorious truths of divine scripture, and the signal manner in which the Lord of all the earth manifests his love for his children.

Every Christian family should be provided with a bright new steel spade to be laid on top of the gilded Bible in the parlour, as a memento of the loving-kindness of the great Jehovah.

W. S. BRYAN.

Nevada, Mo., U.S.A.

Acid Drops.

Mr. J. B. Priestly has undertaken to write a series of weekly articles on men and things. In his opening essay he says that his qualifications are that he is interested in men—real men, that he has perfect freedom of opinion, and is free from all economic and social bias. That is rather a large order, and might easily be disputed. But we can let it go, merely reminding Mr. Priestly that he is forgetting one thing and a very important thing. This is the newspaper for which he is writing; and this will apply to any newspaper for which he is writing. He will have complete liberty of utterance only so far as he does not write anything which the newspaper proprietor and editor thinks the public ought not to be told. If Mr. Priestly really wishes to test the matter for himself, and decide whether he is free from control, he can easily do so. Let him—never mind his real convictions for a moment—write a drastic criticism of the institution of an hereditary monarchy, or a straightforward attack on some fundamental religious doctrine, and then see whether he will be permitted by the paper that is employing him to say just what he thinks. He will soon find that he has all the freedom of movement that is possessed by a horse at the end of a rope. The rope may be long or short, the freedom of the horse to move is determined by the holder of the rope. If Mr. Priestly does not know that he will always have to write so as not to offend the owners of his paper, and if he does seriously oppose what they think it wise to tell the public, then he is much more stupid than we take him to be. If Mr. Priestly really wishes to speak to the public with complete frankness, he must start a paper of his own. But in that case, instead of being well praised and well paid he will have to write without pay, with praise only from a small and critical audience, and will have, in addition, to provide the expenses of his paper. Mr. Priestly has a lot to learn about the world and its ways.

The *Referee* publishes the information that the Franciscan Archaeological Expedition has discovered the tomb of Moses, on Mount Nebo. It is in a Church, dating from the fourth century. We understand that later discoveries have unearthed, in the tomb itself, the rod which Moses turned into a serpent, a sample bottle of the darkness that he spread over Egypt, a sworn affidavit of the narrative of the Exodus, and a copy of the certificate of his own birth, with the names of his parents attached, thus completely disproving the story that Pharaoh's daughter only found among the bulrushes what she had previously placed there.

The Pope has publicly expressed his disapproval of the treatment of the Jews in Germany. He reminds the German Government that Jesus was a Jew. The sentiment does honour to the Pope's humanity, but it casts doubt upon his orthodoxy. For if he believes what he preaches: as Pope, he is quite wrong. Or, as the lawyers would say, alternatively, he must trace descent on the mother's side only, and so believe in a Matriarchal system. For on Christian lines Jesus was only half a Jew. That is unless his reputed father, God Almighty, was also a Jew.

Just as we are going to press we notice that the above statements attributed to the Pope have been denied. This restores his orthodoxy at the expense of his humanity. Perhaps however the Pope agrees with Heine that it was the Jews who began the game of persecution. They gave the Christians their God and that was inviting reprisals.

On August 24, the Pope of Rome, while taking a ride in his nice new motor-car, experienced an accident. One of the tyres of his car burst:—

The Pope descended from the car, examined the burst, and then raising his hands above the burst tyre murmured a prayer. Gradually the rent in the tyre was drawn together until no break was visible. Then to the amazement of the onlookers the gradual inflation of the

tyre commenced, and in a few moments, without a hand being laid to the tyre, the car was once more ready for the road and the Holy Father resumed his journey.

At least, that is what we expected to see when the paper made this a news item. And from the Catholic point of view there would have been nothing out of place about it. But what happened was that the Pope "smilingly" descended from the car and stood by the side of the road while the tyre was being prepared in the ordinary way—just as though the Pope were the editor of the *Free-thinker*! As a stage manager Providence is a "slouch" and a "wow" and a "back-number," and doesn't know how to take advantage of a good opportunity.

Says the Very Rev. "Dick" Shepherd, in the *Sunday Express* :—

Nothing is stranger than the credulity, amounting to gullibility, of the average citizen.

We have an idea that the compositor has left out after "stranger" the words "nothing more welcome." It is perhaps Mr. Shepherds' faith in the gullibility of mankind that leads him to expect a great revival in religion. Credulity and gullibility are certainly topics on which parsons and gold-brick merchants are first-hand authorities. If he said "Man's capacity for religion is inexhaustible, his conviction that in this world of change and uncertainty his one certain thing is that God exists and will listen to the prayer of a humble and contrite heart," he would have been saying what he did say in the orthodox manner. Mr. Shepherd is rather unwise to blurt out the truth in this way. Truth crushed to earth will rise again, but it should be lifted very gently, not pulled up with a jerk.

Miss M. R. Lewty is the Secretary of the League of National Life, and she invites everybody who receives and does not desire leaflets or other "objectionable matter" on Birth Control (she is too frightened however to mention these two words) to communicate with her. What for? Does she imagine anything her pro-posterous league can do will stop the sale of contraceptives? We venture to assert that fifty per cent of Catholics use some birth-control method, and neither the fires of hell nor the denunciations of celibate priests will stop them. There is no compulsion on anyone to make use of contraceptives, but it is a piece of Catholic impudence to extend its activities against liberty of action in such personal questions. One consolation, however, is the League's absolute uselessness. Except among their own most illiterate members, have they ever stopped the sale of a single contraceptive appliance?

Of course in those parts of the world where the white Catholics are gods, so to speak, and natives, if not actually scum, just "natives," the priests have some power at least. In Karachi, India, the municipality "convened a meeting to discuss the proposed opening of birth-control clinics in the town." Catholics were horrified, and took immediate steps to squash the proposal. Hundreds of copies of a pamphlet against birth control were distributed, members of the municipality were approached and the result was a triumph for Catholicism. The municipality abandoned the proposal. Yet we still meet Freethinkers who solemnly assure us that the fight against religion is almost done. How will they explain this example of the power of the Roman Catholic Church?

The writer of a religious column in the *Manchester Guardian*, reviewing *Sermons of the Year 1933*, gives as his opinion that the present-day sermon is superior in many respects to the sermons of his boyhood, possessing amongst other things a "sterling quality" which particularly impresses him. Judgment on this point requires more knowledge of the subject than we possess, for it involves a habit of "sermon tasting," which we consider is neither stimulating nor in any other way remunerative. But it may well be true that on the aver-

age the sermon of to-day is a few points up on the sermon of (say) 50 years ago. The reason is in the main that the pulpit must either progress or perish, and the process which has been going on of "refuting" the teachings of Secularism by accepting them is bound to have improved to that extent the average value of the sermon. What that average value is, is of course quite another matter. "G.J." professes to find indicated in the modern sermon "the essential unity of Christianity," and quotes the Editor of the volume of sermons to the effect that it has been his constant desire to "show how Christ's apparently divided disciples can speak in unison." Well, given a strong desire and a power of selection from the myriads of sermons preached, anything can be shown. Without any special purpose in view a more casual selection would make clear in glaring fashion that any common unity of belief in what he calls the "central verities of the Christian Religion," may exist in hope or aspiration (and this only in some cases), but not at all in fact.

The Bredbury Urban District Council is in future to have its meetings preceded by a short prayer, delivered by a minister of religion. "We have done more foolish things than this," said one Councillor. This is possible, but is it necessary for the Bredbury Urban District Council to keep on trying to break its own record?

The celebrations of religiously-minded people never cease to be an unfailing source of entertainment. One of the speakers at the Modern Churchmen's Conference told a story of a small boy who asked leave to recite, in place of his usual prayer, a nursery rhyme "because it would amuse Jesus." This is quite the natural utterance of a healthy child, and as such deserves repetition. But what do you think is the thought suggested to the person who heard it? "He had in him the true spirit of worship." All we can say is, that we think it is a comment that might even amuse Jesus, and from all accounts, he took some amusing.

The *Methodist Recorder*, dealing with the abolition of slavery, says :—

It is well to recall that this emancipation of the slave was a religious act. From first to last, the force impelling its advocates and enabling them to persevere, was religious conviction . . . Indeed, it is generally agreed that the whole campaign in its inception, its conduct and its triumph, was the outcome of the moral enthusiasm engendered by the Evangelical Revival.

The shining record tells. We invite the *Methodist Recorder* (which records not, or records so unrecorderlike as 'tis but jerry recording), to read *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by Harriet Beecher Stowe. She shows there that the action of the churches in America was to suppress such anti-slavery feeling as soon as ever it manifested itself. This was true of the Presbyterians and the Baptists, but "worse has been the history of the Methodist Church." The Methodist Annual Conference in Georgia resolved that "slavery as it existed in the United States was not a moral evil." In 1860, when an attempt was made to induce the ministers of the Methodist Church to sign a protest against slavery, only 241 out of 14,000 would append their signatures to the document. Garrison described Wilbur Fiske, the President of the Methodist University, Conn., as "an abusive and malignant opponent of Abolition," and Lecky in his *History of England* points out that George Whitefield, the great Methodist Preacher, was an upholder of Slavery.

It was hard for the devout to be otherwise, when one's "moral enthusiasms" had not to be too lightly encouraged, but first of all had to be made to come in line with one's "religious convictions." The Bible counted in those days, and the appeal to chapter and verse was, to put it mildly, a discouraging experience to those with "moral enthusiasms." When some Christians are pointed to as being opposed to Slavery, all it means is that in their cases their humanity was so strong as to overcome such a handicap. Generally speaking, opposition to

slavery was considered, with much justification, to be an insidious attack on the principles of Revealed Religion. It was "infidel France" who first freed her slaves. It was Abner Kneeland, the "blasphemer," who found a hall for Lloyd Garrison in Boston, when every church, chapel and meeting-place was denied him. It was Ingersoll, the "infidel," who befriended Fred Douglass, the coloured Abolitionist Orator, when no hotel would take him in and no Christian give him a bed. It was Thomas Paine who wrote the first clear demand for emancipation in America. There was no Bible in their cases, no religious conviction, to act as a brake upon their humanitarianism.

Father Vincent McNabb has written a small book advocating a "back to the land" movement as a way out of present economic difficulties. His remedy may or may not be the best one in all the circumstances, but he finds "Biblical warrant" for his thesis. First there was the migration of Abraham from Chaldea, then the exodus of Jewish "brickmakers" from Egypt, and finally—though he does not consider Jesus exactly the greatest agriculturist the world has ever known, which is rather surprising—the fact that Our Lord lived in Nazareth, and that it was said of him "out of Nazareth have I called my son." Funny that the unlucky unemployed, without work and often without food, ready to take up anything to relieve their misery, should never quote these beautiful Biblical "warrants." We suspect that Father McNabb, as a good Catholic, was obliged to drag in the Bible somehow—or the Holy Father—to back up his thesis. Otherwise his scheme looks suspiciously like pure Secularism.

The Belgian labourer, Tilmant Côme, is still filling the press with news of his encounters with Our Lady at Beauraing, and possibly, the coffers of the Church from pilgrims, which is far more profitable. "Our Lady," said M. Côme, spoke to him in Walloon-French, and "it is quite impossible to get anyone to understand, even to grasp vaguely, Our Lady's splendour during the apparition," and when she left the grotto, she was "escorted by a huge multitude of angels." With Our Lady was St. Joseph, in a workman's dress, Christ stood above the Tabernacle, and there was the usual dove hovering over the group. We suspect there is something fishy about all this, as St. Peter, the first Pope, does not seem to have been invited, and this perhaps accounts for the fact that M. Côme is not believed by everybody. There are actually some priests who feel rather sceptical, and have written a pamphlet against M. Côme and denied the apparitions. They are bitterly attacked, of course, by the believers, and on the whole we give our weighty opinion that M. Côme, either saw all he said he did, Our Lady in all her splendour, St. Joseph, Jesus, the Dove, and all the angels, or else he's a prevaricator of the truth. Readers can take their choice.

Bishop McNulty describing his visits to Lourdes recently, declared the Mass there to be "an unforgettable experience." He assisted at four pilgrimages from London of 1,300 pilgrims, and another 400 came just as he was leaving Lourdes. The curious will, however, point out that in his account of his "unforgettable experience" published in a Catholic newspaper, he does not mention a single cure. 1,700 pilgrims, many of them sick, all believers, full of hope and religion, and not a single cure! What went wrong?

Commenting on a paper concerned with the "priesthood of the laity," and read at a Conference of Roman Catholic clergy and laity, a Nonconformist journal explains that:—

In no Church can the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper be celebrated without the participation of the congregation. Even if an authorized priest should say the words at which the miracle of transubstantiation of the elements is supposed to take place, there must be another of the faithful, who need not, however, be a priest, to say Amen to give it effect. Only so can the promised Presence, in whatever manner it is vouchsafed, be realized.

This is mentioned to serve as a reminder to Nonconformists "of the vital importance of the congregational

response at the prayer of consecration." To the ungodly, however, it will serve as a reminder of the remarkably close resemblance between Christian "magic," and that of the benighted savage in Central Africa. The essential ingredients are so very similar that one cannot help wondering what the savage has to learn from the Christian. In each case the mentality and the outlook is substantially the same. "Conversion" of the savage is merely a question of getting him to learn different formulas.

A Christian writer tells us that:—

The true Christian mysteries are not a secret muttered to the faithful people of God, but an awful revelation, the truth of which it is their business to proclaim before the eternal throne, in a glorious association formed and inspired by the Holy Spirit of God.

Out of this tangle of words we sincerely agree with one thing—that the Christian mysteries are certainly "awful."

The *Daily Express* recently had an excellent article, written by a lawyer entitled "A Lawyer's Case Against Tithe." He proves as clearly as can be proved that whatever services the Church used to give for which the payment was from tithe, the Church no longer gives any service whatever, and therefore is not entitled to be paid. A pious writer is very angry at having the show given away in this blunt fashion, especially as some two million people will read the article and agree with it, but he urges that "whatever may be said against the tithe, there is no question that it has been legalized by Parliament in the Tithe Acts of 1836, 1891, and 1925"—as if that settled the justice of the question. The writer continued by pointing out that it wasn't true the clergy did nothing for the tithe they received. "They still administer the Sacraments to their parishioners!" Words fail us in comment on this delightful piece of naïveté.

Fifty Years Ago.

FOOTE IN HOLLOWAY GAOL.

I PASSED through a heavy gate and through the heavier door, up stone stairs, to a room set apart for our interview at a distance. A moment's pause after I had been locked-in, and then the sound of the unturning of another key, the throwing open of another door, the firm step of my friend and his strong face visible at the regulation distance. He looked more worn and weary than when I last saw him, but as firm as ever. The nights and days and weeks are very long and unvarying. They have left the trace of their monotonous footsteps on his face.

Our talk was mainly on business. It is difficult to unburden your heart when official cars are waiting for its overflowing. Yet there were inquiries and kindly messages in regard to friend after friend. Not a word of complaint. Even the chafing at the enforced absence from public work was but hinted at. He is reading book after book, laying in stores of ammunition for the good fight against ignorance and blind faith in which he will a few months hence be taking his old part again. He has abandoned all hope of release. Indeed, I do not think he ever really indulged in much of that hope. He had estimated more accurately than some of us the cowardice and falseness of the Home Secretary. Even that official's lie about him only moved him to contempt. He was not astonished.

His chief concern next to his friend Wheeler is the paper and the magazine. Let every reader of the *Freethinker* imagine that he sees, as I did, the serious, anxious face, and hears the earnest voice of the founder of this paper speaking from within prison walls. We dare not give the paper back to him one whit less prosperous than it was when he, for a moment, relaxed his hold on the helm. During the next few months let all our exertions be redoubled on behalf of the *Freethinker* and of *Progress*, that we may not have even a reproaching thought in our hearts when we meet him and read his words once more.

The "Freethinker," September 2, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- A. McHARRIE.—Many thanks for order for record and paper, same have been despatched to the address enclosed.
- E. J. H.—Will you please call at the office; one of the books you require, through the kindness of a reader, is available for you.
- M. L. L.—asks our opinion of a "Wayside Pulpit," which decorates a church in his neighbourhood. It runs "Religion in the Head is like a Lifeboat on a Hill." Our only comment is that only a fool would think of putting either of them in such a place.
- GEO. DIXON.—Note your letter, and will inform you if there is any enquiry for a set.
- R. D. JONES.—The poem by W. J. Lamb which recently appeared in these columns is from some manuscript poems the author sent us before his death. It has never been published elsewhere.
- J. CLAYTON.—You acted quite properly in declining to submit to a police order that you should not commence your meeting before a certain time. A little courage, decision and politeness go a long way in the right direction, and you appear to have acted in the right manner. Pleased to have the news of your continuously successful meetings.
- URIC GAUCILLON (Oxford).—Thanks for pointing out the existence of two biblical Ananias which has led to the confusion in the paragraph you complain of. We make no claims to infallibility.
- W. WRIGHT.—Very pleased to hear from an old friend. We have and shall have our hands pretty full until the end of the year. But the work has to be done, and perhaps the Lord will spare us until we have got through what we have immediately in hand.
- NORMAN HAMBLER.—Sorry we have not the space for lengthy controversy on Atheism *versus* Agnosticism. Agnosticism rests, in its better aspects, on sheer confusion of two quite distinct questions, one belonging to religion and one to philosophy. A little knowledge of philosophy and an understanding of religion ought to be able to prevent anyone mixing the two things. So soon as the Bradlaugh issue is out of the way Mr. Cohen will redeem a long-standing promise and attempt to clear the ground by dealing with the many twilight terms that are in use in this matter.
- R. BARTLETT.—Thanks for article, but we regret that the form is not quite up to the standard. Your ideas are quite good, but a little more practice in the art of writing is necessary.
- H. C.—If a suitable hall could be obtained in Newcastle-on-Tyne, Mr. Cohen would be quite willing to speak on Bradlaugh in that city.
- G. BURGESS.—We were glad to see your letter in the *Referee*, exposing the Roman Catholic attempt to identify what is going on in Germany with the Spanish troubles. Of course, the real distinction, to a Roman Catholic is that in Spain education is taken out of the hands of the Church, in Germany the Pope has just made terms with Hitler. And a little persecution, more or less, never troubled the Roman Church.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9. All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

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

Sugar Plums.

We continue to receive congratulatory letters concerning our Ingersoll Centenary issue, and orders from the United States are now coming along. So soon as Mr. Cohen can find time the necessary additions will be made to the sketch of Ingersoll's life, and it will be re-issued in booklet form. The letters received from new readers of the paper give proof that in a handier form it may do more to rouse interest in Freethought.

Our next issue of importance will be the Bradlaugh Centenary number. This will be published on September 24. It will be an enlarged number, probably 24 pages instead of 16, and will be illustrated with portraits and cartoons. As usual there will be no increase in price, and we will, as in the case of the Ingersoll issue, send twelve copies post free for 3s.

We strongly urge our readers to do their very best to get this issue into as many new hands as possible. Its preparation involves a deal of labour and expense. That is our end of the work. But there are our readers at the other end, we want them to do more than merely read what is written and to say how pleased they are afterwards. We want them to do something, and to do it on a scale that shall bear lasting results. At least a thousand of our readers should within the next week send for twelve copies of the Bradlaugh issue. It means an expenditure of three shillings, which cannot be considered an extravagant expenditure on either the *Freethinker* or the cause it represents; and the circulation of this extra number of copies would mean an increase of strength to both the paper and the Cause it serves.

But the orders should be sent without delay in order that we may be prepared with our printing order. Waiting till the number is printed to send along for more copies will not do. We must know before publishing day. Those who do not care to undertake the distribution of the extra copies may send along their postal order or cheque to us, with list of names and addresses to which the copies are to be sent, and we will attend to it at this end. The National Secular Society is not merely the oldest Freethought organization in the world, it is Bradlaugh's own Society. We are the heirs and the representatives of the Bradlaugh tradition. We ought to show by our bearing and by our action during this centenary year that we are worthy of our inheritance.

The lecture campaign in connexion with the Centenary of Charles Bradlaugh (September 26) will be opened with an address in the Birmingham Town Hall, on Sunday, September 17, with a special lecture on Bradlaugh by Mr. Chapman Cohen, President of the National Secular Society—the organization founded by Bradlaugh in 1866. A very energetic lecturing campaign by Mr. Cohen and others will be carried on all over the country.

We hope that every Freethinker in Birmingham will bear in mind Mr. Cohen's meeting in the Town Hall, and do his best to advertise it among his friends and acquaintances. The Town Hall is a very large building, and on this occasion we should like to see it packed to the doors. It can be if Freethinkers will put their backs into the work. The subject of the lecture will be, of course, "Charles Bradlaugh."

Our list of Mr. Cohen's engagements in connexion with the Bradlaugh Centenary meetings was incomplete as given last week. Mr. Cohen's first lecture on Bradlaugh will be as stated above in the Town Hall, Birmingham. He will be speaking at the Demonstration in the Friends' House, Euston Road, on Saturday the 23rd; in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, on September 24; at a public dinner at Leicester on September 25, and at the dinner at the Trocadero Restaurant, London, on September 26. He will lecture at Manchester on October 1; at Glasgow on October 8; and after a debate in Glasgow, on October 9, may visit Edinburgh on the Wednesday or Thursday. Liverpool will be visited on October 15 and Stockport on October 16. Other week-night meetings may be arranged later.

The North Eastern Branches, by their outdoor activities, have been causing some fluttering in the clerical dove-cotes. Lectures at Morpeth by an N.S.S. speaker have been followed by an open-air address by the Rector, Canon Davis, who spoke for fifty minutes on "Science and the Bible." We congratulate the Branches on this proof of their activity, and we know we can rely upon them to see that the Morpeth population will continue to have the Secular gospel effectively presented to them.

Freethinkers in the West Ham area looking for an enjoyable Sunday are invited by the West Ham Branch N.S.S. to take part in an outing to Broxbourne on September 10. Train leaves Stratford (Main) Station, L.N.E.R. at 9.55 a.m. Cheap Fare 1s. 9d. return. Lunch to be carried and tea will be arranged at the Bull Inn, Broxbourne, at 4 p.m. An occasional outing is a useful feature in Branch activity, and should receive the support of members and friends of the movement.

A Religion of Murder.

"The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness."

Shelley, "Queen Mab."

"A RELIGION of Murder," is the title of the first chapter, in the recently published book by Colonel J. L. Sleeman, entitled *Thug: Or a Million Murders*. (Sampson Low, 8s. 6d.) In this is narrated the story of the Indian religion of Thuggee presided over by Bhowani, or Kali, the Black Mother, the goddess of destruction. She is represented as a black figure with red eyes and hands, a loathsome sight with matted hair, fang-like teeth, and face and breasts besmeared with blood. No better historian could be found to record the discovery and suppression of this terrible religion than Colonel Sleeman, for he is a grandson of Major-General Sir William Sleeman, who first revealed the existence of this murder cult, and was afterwards entrusted with the enormously difficult, and dangerous task of suppressing it, which he accomplished after many years of strenuous hard work, by the special department he organized for its suppression, during the period 1830-45.

Up to 1829 a few arrests of Thugs, of an accidental character, had been made, but Thugs were regarded, by the authorities, as Dacoits, or associations of criminals for the purpose of murder and robbery. The Thug was looked upon as a man rendered desperate by privation, who took to the road, and strangled people to escape detection. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Says our author: "Sleeman's revelations proved them to be for the most part men holding responsible and respectable positions, model citizens, husbands and parents, who spent their holidays in murdering everyone they met regardless of motive. It was found that they divided up their

area of operations in much the same manner as a pack of hounds hunts a particular bit of country."¹ Many Thugs were discovered to be occupying semi-official and even official positions in direct touch with those in authority, and there was no really serious desire to suppress Thuggee on the part of many leading Indians themselves. Says Col. Sleeman:—

Thuggee was a hereditary profession, the sons of Thugs being taught their craft by skilled leaders who led them by easy stages to the point of murder, so that they came to look on Thuggee not only as a legitimate means of profit but also as a pleasant pastime. . . . The absence of motive for their murders: the fact that they never murdered near their own homes: the splitting up of the gangs and the return to respectability after a comparatively short period of absence: their secret language and signs: the support and patronage they obtained from those who benefited by the murders they committed—who asked no questions, providing their palms were well oiled: their respectable appearance and pleasing manners: the reputable, if fictitious reasons given for their absence, had all combined to keep Thuggee secret for centuries and now made its suppression one of the most difficult tasks which an Englishman has been called on to undertake.²

It was also a most dangerous one, for to these skilled murderers an assassination meant nothing, and Col. Sleeman is of opinion that if the courage of the Thugs had equalled their cold-blooded cruelty, neither Sleeman nor his assistants could have survived a week, nor Thuggee been suppressed. There is no doubt that the terror inspired by these professional murderers, and the fear of reprisals, were the main reasons why no attempt had ever been made before to suppress the Thugs; for we find that Thugs caught in the act of murder, by some Rajah, or native ruler, were soon at liberty again. "Centuries of experience," says Col. Sleeman, "had enabled the Thugs to build up an organization so secret in character that, in their estimation, it was impregnable. And when they first heard of the suppressive measures which were to be taken, they were amused, for, as they said, attempts to suppress them had been made before and had not succeeded, and this attempt was also doomed to failure."³ In this they were mistaken, for the British courts could neither be bribed nor intimidated.

Judge Sleeman, in examining the infamous Buhrami, who averaged two murders a month during a period of forty years, and afterwards turned king's evidence, put the question to him, "Nine hundred and thirty-one murders!" repeated the judge in incredulous tones. "Surely you can never have been guilty of such a number?" "Sahib," replied the benevolent looking native standing before him, in a quiet voice tinged with a note of pride, "there were many more, but I was so intrigued in luring them to destruction that I ceased counting when certain of my thousand victims!" No one, says Col. Sleeman, "looking at the mild and pleasant Thug on trial, could have realized that he was a member of an organized band of the craftiest assassins ever known, whose suppression was to prove a gigantic and dangerous task, and Judge Sleeman came to see that the Thug was "not so much a murderer, as a man brought up in a faith which regarded the killing of men as a legitimate sport, both praiseworthy and lucrative."⁴ However he spared no efforts to bring them to the gallows.

Many theologians tell us that conscience is the voice of God in our hearts, directing us to act rightly,

¹ Col. J. L. Sleeman: *Thug: Or a Million Murders*, p. 107.

² *Ibid*, pp. 107-8.

³ *Ibid*, p. 109.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 2.

and punishing us with remorse when we do wrong. The Thugs, however, were never troubled in the slightest degree by this divine monitor. Says Col. Sleeman of Bulram :—

If the onlooker had hoped to find on the old Thug's countenance some signs of remorse for a life spent almost entirely in treacherous murder, he would have been doomed to disappointment, for the old man positively beamed with pride and reminiscent delight while the story of his ghastly past was drawn from him by skillful questioning, literally smacking his lips when recounting some particularly atrocious deed which had necessitated the exercise of great cunning and inhuman deceit.⁵

The Judge asked Bulram whether he had never felt remorse for murdering in cold blood after luring them into a false sense of security and confidence by a pretended friendship. "Certainly not!" replied Bulram; "Does not the hunter of big game enjoy the thrill of the stalk, the pitting of his cunning against that of the animal, and pleased to see the animal dead at his feet? How much more then the Thug, who has not merely to contend with the instincts of the wild beasts, but intelligent men, often heavily armed, and well aware of the dangers of the road. Cannot you imagine the pleasure of overcoming suspicion," continues Bulram: "during days of travel in their company, the joy in seeing suspicion change to friendship, until that wonderful moment arrives when the *ruhmāl* completes the shikar—this soft *ruhmāl*, *sahib*"—here the old man exhibited a strip of coarse yellow and white cloth, the Thug colours,—"which has terminated the existence of hundreds. Remorse, *sahib*? Never! Joy and elation, often!" "As our historian observes: "Bulram, however vile, was sincere in his belief that he had been engaged in work, not only pleasurable and profitable, but, in addition, productive of great merit hereafter." Just as, in exactly the same manner, the inquisitors tortured and burned heretics, all, as they thought, in a good cause and with God's approval.

Neither did robbery form the principal motive for killing, for wretchedly poor men, not worth sixpence, constantly appear in Thuggee records. The *Ruhmāl*, said to have been bestowed on her devotees by the goddess herself, with strict orders that no blood should be shed, was thirty inches long with a knot at the extremity and a slipknot eighteen inches from it. Secretly trained from boyhood, the Thug attained to the highest degree of skill in his profession :—

Each Thug had his particular job to do: to one fell, the task of throwing the *ruhmāl* around the victim's neck, to others the task of seizing arms and legs and giving those scientific wrenches and cruel blows at vital parts which ensured his being brought down at the psychological moment. These arts were continually practised by the Thug in his off-duty moments, fathers teaching sons this foul work with parental pride, until all engaged in a Thuggee expedition became so expert that they could strangle their victims with the maximum of adroitness and in the minimum of time. Their art was carried still further, for other Thugs were specially trained to bury and conceal the murdered bodies with such skill that the ground beneath which they rested appeared undisturbed. In the heyday of the organization, these experts could bury the body within half an hour, with such success that even the Thugs themselves could only find the graves by reference to landmarks.⁷

As to the number of victims to Thuggee, the total will never be known, a million, figures in the title of Col. Sleeman's book, but he thinks the total

"probably nearer three millions than one,"⁸ seeing that: "the estimate of a million murders is based upon one-fourth of the area of the country over which the Thugs operated, and for one third of the period only during which this hideous faith is known to have existed."⁹ This religion is known to have existed for three hundred years, and probably for five hundred; and in all that time God never indicated his disapproval of what was being done in the name of religion! It will be said that Thuggee was a superstition. Yes, but what excuse would have been accepted if the Thugs had been Atheists?

W. MANN.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 232.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 236.

Theological Antagonism to Hygiene.

FROM prehistoric times contagious and infective diseases have been attributed to supernatural causes. Even in cultured communities, such as those of classic Greece and Rome, this misconception prevailed with the common population. Among the Israelites the belief was universal, as their Scriptures clearly demonstrate. The plague which desolated Israel in the days of Aaron was stayed only when the high priest had placated Jahveh with prayer and sacrifice. Similarly, when David numbered the people, and the incensed divinity sent a pestilence which destroyed 70,000 of his chosen children, burnt offerings were essential to turn Jahveh's indignation aside. The divine origin of disease in all its many forms thus became a settled doctrine throughout Christendom, and all sanitary safeguards were treated as mischievous and misleading, right down to modern generations.

As the celebrated physician, Sir W. Osler, remarks in his *Evolution of Modern Medicine*: "The attitude of the early Fathers towards the body is well expressed by Jerome. "Does your skin roughen without baths? Who is washed in the blood of Christ needs not wash again!" Or, as Tertullian asserted, "Investigation since the Gospel is no longer necessary."

During the unchallenged supremacy of the Church, earthquakes, eclipses, epidemics and other intermittent phenomena were always ascribed either to God, or his adversary Satan, and the alarm arising from this morbid belief greatly aggravated the evils of plague and famine when these appeared.

The state of filth in which Christendom wallowed for more than a thousand years seems almost incredible. The refreshing bath so highly appreciated by the Pagan Romans completely disappeared from Western Christendom. Outside Moslem Spain, sanitation was unknown. The modern proverb that "cleanliness is next to godliness" would have been scouted as a pestilent heresy.

Doubtless the Oriental teaching that the humiliation of man's bodily framework adds to God's glory, served to strengthen antagonism towards hygiene. For Eastern asceticism had been embraced by the Church. The great sanctity of many saints is closely associated with their inordinate craving for filth. The Breviary of the Western Church stresses the holiness of St. Hilarion, who never washed himself in his life. St. Anthony is exalted because his feet were never clean. And so on through a lengthy list of shining, if unwashed, saints, until we reach St. Simeon Stylites, whose person and surroundings were so unspeak-

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 4-5.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 6.

ably loathsome as to occasion wonder, astonishment and nausea, even in the malodorous age he adorned with his piety. Indeed, so firmly linked were faith and filth that the compilers of the *Lives of the Saints* note with satisfaction that at a time when certain monks desired to cleanse their skins "the Almighty manifested his displeasure by drying up a neighbouring stream until the bath which it had supplied was destroyed."

No marvel then, that when in the fourteenth century, the Black Death desolated the earth from far Eastern Asia to North-Western Europe, mortality and religious mania were so dreadful. *Merry England*, as some profess to regard this peerless period, was devastated by this dire visitation in 1348-49. This Plague returned in 1361 and in 1369. The Black Death was so named from the dark spots and tumours which appeared on its victims' bodies, and assured their speedy death. All appeal to relics, all prayers and processions proved abortive, and perhaps a third of Europe's population perished in utter misery.

The terrible death roll of this far-flung epidemic was one only of its consequences. Religious excitement developed into unbridled sensuality and other forms of perversion which defy description. The flagellant mania of the period, in Germany and elsewhere, constitutes one of the most remarkable perversions of mankind. A positive orgy of lasciviousness prevailed, and a dancing epidemic ran riot in Central Europe in which insensate leaping, reeling, and uncontrollable raving were conspicuous characteristics. In fact, insanity everywhere reigned. Amidst this wave of theomania—to borrow a term from Maudsley—the customary bonds of social life were broken. As one writer tells us, "friend deserted friend, and mothers fled from their stricken children, and the demoralization showed itself in many cases in reckless debauchery. Elsewhere perverted Christian zeal led to frightful persecution of the Jews, as at Mayence, where 12,000 Hebrews were believed to have been massacred."

Contemporary English scribes, including Langford and Chaucer, chronicled the terrors of the time, while Boccaccio penned a vivid picture of the ravages of the pestilence in Florence.

One may imagine the frantic appeals to heaven in an age so benighted. Nor was the financial factor neglected, for the opulent poured their treasures into the coffers of the Church. Land and money passed extensively into clerical possession, and churches, abbeys, shrines were enriched on an enormous scale. White declares that: "The whole evolution of modern history, not only ecclesiastical but civil has been largely affected by the wealth transferred to the clergy at such periods. It was noted that in the fourteenth century after the plague, the Black Death, had passed, an immensely increased proportion of the landed and personal property of every European country was in the hands of the Church. Well did a great ecclesiastic remark that, 'pestilences are the harvests of the ministers of God.'"

With cesspools and midden heaps infecting the streets of the leading European cities, the universality of soil-closets, and the general absence of decently clean water, added to the insanitary habits of the community, there need be little wonder that the death-rate was so appalling. For, we must remember that every rank in society from Popes and Princes to peasants, seldom or never washed.

So late as the seventeenth century, the pestilence constantly reappeared in London, but with the dawn

of the eighteenth its ravages became less. Doubtless the fierce conflagration of 1666, which succeeded the terrible epidemic so graphically described by Defoe, destroyed many sources of infection. When London was rebuilt, wider, better drained, and ventilated thoroughfares replaced the stinking courts and alleys of the earlier Metropolis. The water supply became purer and more plentiful, and several maladies long prevalent, such as dysentery, began to wane. Meanwhile the clergy were offering special prayers to mitigate the evils of uncleanness. Some ascribed the epidemic to Sabbath-breaking, profanity, and similar sins. On the European mainland and in the New World the story is the same. A disease which swept away large numbers of the American Indians was actually welcomed in pious circles as the Almighty's method of preparation for the settlement of true Christians in the country.

In France, the Plague was exorcised by means of fetishes, so recently as the eighteenth century, while in priest-deluded Austria the scourge was met with prostration before the images of saints or by appeal to monks specially gifted with power to expel the demons causing the disease. For to consult a qualified physician was deemed impious in districts where cowled charlatans abounded. The mortality was consequently enormous, but it soon declined with the progress of sanitary science.

In days when the plague was stayed in Catholic lands by witch-burning, exorcism, religious processions, prayers, and presents to the clergy; in Calvinistic Caledonia, periods of penance were appointed, and wizards were put to death. Despite the healthy climate of Scotland, the dreadful dirtiness both of dwellings and people proved greatly conducive to the spread of disease. In those dark times, the ordure or other refuse which is now carried away in sewers or incinerated, accumulated and festered outside the houses or was cast into the courts and wynds. Although thirty serious epidemics depopulated Scotland in the course of four centuries, a naturally highly intellectual people were so bemused with superstition that no rational remedy was utilized. The ministers declared, and their flocks believed, that these direful visitations resulted from sin, and the death penalty in its most agonizing forms was inflicted on those whose alleged shortcomings had brought God's vengeance on the land.

Pioneers strove to enlighten the people, and an attempt was made to cleanse the Edinburgh streets in 1585, but neither the secular nor spiritual authorities lent any support. In 1700, fire, the ruthless purifier, burnt down much of Edinburgh, and the Town Council of the Capital City interpreted this conflagration as "a fearful rebuke of God." Yet, with the destruction of the ancient pest-houses, and other nurseries of disease, it was remarked that the maladies and mortality of the modern Athens had markedly diminished.

T. F. PALMER.

A TOLERANT APE.

Auntie had taken Bobbie to the Zoo, and the little fellow's interest was captured by a particularly ferocious-looking ape. "Isn't it like Uncle Tobias?" he exclaimed in a loud whisper.

"Hush!" said his aunt, much shocked. "You mustn't say such things."

For a moment Bobbie looked scared. "But it doesn't understand, does it?" he asked anxiously.

Our Public Authorities and the Problem of the Slums.

In the number of the *Freethinker*, dated July 30, Mr. Chapman Cohen, the Editor, quoted from a recent work by Miss Joan Conquest entitled *The Naked Truth*, in which certain revelations of the horrible conditions under which great masses of the very poor are said to exist in various parts of London, are made known from the inside by Miss Conquest, who got her information in the capacity of a Nurse and a journalist. Mr. Cohen confessed that he did not know how bad these conditions were until he had read Miss Conquest's book; but when he had read her book he was satisfied that she had proved her case; that she as a nurse was enabled to get information that would be denied to others. She alleged "that she had seen the inside of houses in which families of six, eight, and ten people slept, ate and performed all the functions of nature in one room"; further, she alleges that she saw human beings "sleeping three and four in a bed without regard to sex or age or relationship, rooms with the walls reeking with damp, floors broken, beds filthy, places over-run with rats and we did not know these dwellings were owned by religious associations which carefully collected funds for the benefit of tenants so that these same tenants may repay the said Association the enormous rents demanded."

Now this reads all right as a journalistic stunt; but it all goes on the assumption that the "London County Council" knows nothing of the existence of such slums, and has done nothing to mitigate or remove such evils. Is such an assumption credible? If it were, Miss Conquest's book would be a terrible indictment against the criminal incompetence of the officers of the County Council.

What were the Inspectors about, to allow such evils to exist without action? And what were the Borough Councils doing all the time? Did their Sanitary Inspectors remain inactive? Or did they bring hundreds of cases before the magistrates for fines and punishments? I am well aware that you cannot get overcrowded slums in populous districts removed without difficulty. You have got to find homes for the dispossessed slum-dwellers somewhere. But that is part of the work of a Borough Council. Even when slum-dwellers are turned out of their tenements for refusing to pay rent for a lengthened period, their friends and neighbours put up a desperate fight to prevent their being turned out in the street with no shelter at night but the street or the poor house.

It is alleged that Miss Conquest gained all the information contained in her book through being a nurse. But has a nurse a right of entrance to insanitary houses solely on account of her calling? She has no more rights of entrance than any ordinary person unless she attends under the direction or co-operation of a Medical Officer of Health. But was it in this capacity that she attended? And did the doctor make a report of the conditions under which these people were existing to the Borough Council and, if so, with what result?

As an old member of Camberwell Borough Council I should have wanted to know what action the Council proposed to take following such a report.

Now a Sanitary Inspector has a right of entrance to any house, or tenement on his district where he suspects insanitary conditions. Does Miss Conquest allege that such inspectors neglected their duties and failed to report such cases of horrible conditions, of

overcrowding, of filth, and of glaring immoral conduct among the tenants in such dwellings?

Miss Conquest maintains that a larger amount of such overcrowding and horrible conditions exists to-day in certain slums of London of which she has knowledge, than has ever existed before. On this point I have no hesitation in saying that Miss Conquest is absolutely and entirely wrong—and her statement is monstrously and ridiculously absurd.

If, however, Miss Conquest merely means that while local authorities have made many improvements in other directions, they have been rather backward in removing slum areas in poor districts, I agree with her; but then the workers must live near their employment and as, of course, landlords take advantage of this fact and let their houses out in tenements, to get higher rents, slum conditions gradually develop; and this can only be remedied when other areas are cleared, and the people take advantage of the dwellings erected under the new housing schemes.

But just for a moment turn to some of the slum conditions that existed in Southwark fifty years ago.

In 1880 I was appointed "School Attendance Officer" of the "London School Board" for one of the divisions of Southwark. In 1881, with the sanction and approval of my superintendent, I showed Geo. R. Sims, the well-known Journalist and Dramatist, over my district, which was one of the most overcrowded and insanitary areas in London; and I subsequently assisted Mr. Sims with material for his work entitled *How the Poor Live*, first published in a journal called *The Pictorial World*, and illustrated by Fred Barnard the well known artist who illustrated the works of Charles Dickens. Mr. Sims, Mr. Barnard and myself investigated conditions in other parts of Southwark and the work was sold in thousands. I have no hesitation in saying that the sanitary conditions of London at that time were ten times worse than they are to-day; and were a perfect scandal to the local authorities. But then there were no Borough Councils and no County Councils in existence at that time, but only the old vestries. The County Council came into existence ten years later and the Borough Councils later still. But since the existence of these two bodies, the sanitary conditions of London have improved immensely, and London is now one of the most sanitary places to live in, in the country, despite the great growth of population. When I commenced my work in 1880 I found that thousands of children in London up to the age of thirteen had never seen the inside of a school; to-day all the children over the age of five are on the rolls of some elementary school, or if not, are away on account of illness, or for some other reason. I find the Sanitary Inspectors are most attentive to their duties, and are doing all that is possible to avoid overcrowding. The great increase of population among the poor is the real difficulty; they will not adopt birth control methods, and the children, apart from their school life, are left to play about in the street and get dirty and verminous—but I am quite satisfied that the Borough Councils and London County Council are doing a splendid work, and that the sanitary condition of London was never better than it is to-day.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The art of life is more like the wrestler's art than the dancer's, in respect of this, that it should stand ready and firm to meet onsets which are sudden and unexpected.—*Marcus Aurelius*.

Life in Lesu.

If we believed what missionaries told us we should regard the natives of the South Sea Islands as little more than beasts, whose only joy in life is to listen to missionaries preaching.

Luckily we have people like Dr. Hortense Powdermaker, who after spending many months in the Melanesian Archipelago, has published through Messrs. Williams and Norgate her *Life in Lesu*, a volume which although costing 15s. is worth very much more for it is frank, truthful and scientific.

She begins with a description of the island and its daily life, and then describes the individual and social life of the native from birth to death, dealing with everything from work to sex, and from education to religion.

She tells us how children learn by observing, and that the child is lucky inasmuch as "he has not had held before him one type of behaviour in economic transactions or some other aspect of life, only to learn later that it is not the actual practice. These Melanesian children receive a realistic type of education."

One wishes that the education of our own children were on such a high level of common sense.

When Miss Powdermaker described a Christian marriage the natives were shocked, and one compared it to the mating of pigs, and she herself compares the native religion to the Christian religion when she adds in a footnote (page 304):—

Exactly how the ghosts are to assist I was unable to find out, and the natives seem to have no theories about it. They call upon the ghosts to help them, but exactly the way the ghosts are to do this, is no more clear to the Melanesian than the exact way in which the Lord is supposed to bring about the answer to an earnest Christian's prayer is plain to the latter.

The author points out distinctly (page 306) that there is little difference between religion and magic for "the individual lives in a world which he cannot completely understand and control, and it is to this perplexing phenomenon that he must make an adjustment, the form of which is determined by his particular culture. Magic and religion both give him the necessary security against the uncertainties of human existence."

In her summary Miss Powdermaker sees little difference between the Melanesian and the white man, for although our knowledge may be more complete it is only a matter of degree. "We have recourse to prayer, psychologically kin to magic, when we need confidence. We too have our origin myths embedded in such institutions as the Church."

Finally Miss Powdermaker holds out little hopes for those people who believe the native can become a Christian. She admits that if the priests can catch them young they might be able to mould the child into pattern, but the Melanesian has his own beliefs, which give him the same kind of security which a devout and unquestioning Christian has.

"Even the newly missionized native, so far as I could observe, is not a heretic. His Christian beliefs form a superficial and upper layer laid over his own beliefs, which are not denied. The two systems simply exist on different levels and neither meet nor conflict."

No doubt this statement will not appear in any missionary society's report, but those who believe in reading worthwhile books such as *Life in Lesu* will remember it.

BAY.

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed, but it returneth.

Shelley.

The desire of appearing clever often prevents our becoming so.—*La Rochefoucauld*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Sunday, September 3, Mr. L. Ebury. "Salmon and Ball," Cambridge Road, E.2, 8.0, Thursday, September 7, A Lecture.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove, Hammersmith): 7.30, Sunday, September 3, Mr. B. Bryant. The Grove, Hammersmith, 7.30, Tuesday, September 5, Mr. C. Tuson.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 3, Mr. B. Bryant. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, September 3, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, September 4, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, September 7, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, September 3, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, September 6, Mr. H. C. Smith. Chestnut Grove, Balham Station, 8.0, Thursday, September 7, Mr. C. Tuson. Alliwell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, September 8, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Regents Park): 3.0 and 6.0.

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

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

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, September 3, Mr. F. W. Smith. Mr. S. Burke—"That Great Lying Church." "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, September 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, September 8, Messrs. S. Burke and F. W. Smith.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASHINGTON (Grand Hotel): 7.0, Friday, September 1, Mr. Allan Flanders.

ASHINGTON (Grand Hotel): 7.0, Friday, September 8, Mr. T. Holliday—"Science v. Religion."

DERBY BRANCH (Keir Hardy Hall, Sacheverel Street, Derby): 5.0, Sunday, September 3, Debate Mr. A. A. B.Sc. B.A. (London Mosque) v. Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. (N.S.S.)—"Is there a God?"

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 7.30, Tuesday, September 5, Mr. Keyes.

CROOK (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, September 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DERBY BRANCH N.S.S. (Nottingham, Council House Square): 7.30, Thursday, August 31, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc. Derby, Market Square, 8.0, Sunday, September 3, and Tuesday, September 5, Mr. H. V. Blackman, B.Sc.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Dunn Square, Paisley): 7.30, Saturday, September 2, Mrs. Whitefield and R. Buntin. West Regent Street, 7.30, Sunday, September 3, Mrs. Whitefield and R. Buntin.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, September 3, Messrs. C. McKelvie and D. Robinson. Grierson Street, 8.0, Monday, September 4, D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, September 7, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Shortt.

NEWHIGGIN (Bridge Street): 6.30, Sunday, September 3, Mr. Bradford.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.0, Sunday, September 3, Mr. T. Holliday and Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, September 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (The Pier Head): 7.0, Monday, September 4, Mr. Flanders.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.30, Saturday, September 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (The Green, Southwick, opposite War Memorial): 7.0, Friday, September 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Lambton Street, 7.0, Sunday, September 3, Mr. Allan Flanders.

The Secular Society, Ltd.

CHAIRMAN—CHAPMAN COHEN.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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.

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