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Views and Opinions.

Notes on Bradlaugh.

A WELL-KNOWN musical critic said to me many years ago, that if I would attend a new opera and tell him the part I liked best he would at once know which was the worst thing in it. This was the only compliment I ever received on the unerring quality of my judgment of music and its consistency in practice. And, by the way, it is a compliment that his brothers in the craft did not always pay my critic. But I felt much as he did in connexion with the newspaper notices of Bradlaugh that were likely to appear. The activity of the Centenary Committee, the number of public meetings held right through the summer, the large number of letters sent to the papers by Freethinkers, the general publicity campaign carried on by the Committee, convinced newspaper controllers that Bradlaugh constituted "News."

But, as my readers well know, I prophesied what would be the general attitude of the papers when dealing with Bradlaugh. I foresaw that the one thing on which the newspapers could safely concentrate was the Parliamentary struggle. That fight has passed into history. No one questions that the House of Commons was wrong in what it did, as the House of Commons confessed the wrong done, by apologizing to Bradlaugh before he died. That affair was finished; it was not likely to arise again, and one could praise him for his courage, etc., with as little risk of offending anyone as one runs in praising Oliver Cromwell or John Ball. Moreover, it sounded very complimentary to Bradlaugh to dwell upon this incident in his career. To praise him for doing what nowadays no one condemns, and to leave other aspects practically untouched, would do two things. It would probably prevent the younger generation looking into Bradlaugh's opinions, it would, to the careless, give the writers of the articles an air of impartiality, while it would enable the deprecatory and fugitive refer-

ences to Bradlaugh's Atheism and Republicanism to assume an air of impartial judgment. It is the policy of the artistic liar who takes care to adulterate his lie with a pinch of truth, just sufficient to distract attention from the real nature of what is being said.

So I ventured on the prophecy that an attempt would be made to concentrate attention on the Parliamentary fight, and that the real Bradlaugh would run a risk of being buried in a quiet and respectable manner.

With few exceptions—which I have appreciatively noticed in these columns—this is what has happened. That and in addition, the perfectly stupid statement that "Bradlaughism" in the field of religion has no relevance to any existing situation. Even Colonel Wedgwood, the Chairman at the Trocadero Bradlaugh Dinner, presented Bradlaugh, where religion was concerned, as a mere unintelligent sentimentalist whose feelings were outraged by the crimes committed by the Churches. That is a pretty game, an old game, a safe game—when there is no one present to criticize the playing. Bradlaugh knew well enough that it was the lie of religion that was responsible for the crimes of religion.

* * *

Bradlaugh and Parliament.

I am not one who is likely to under-estimate Bradlaugh's work in any form. My feelings with regard to Bradlaugh compel me constantly to be on guard against committing an offence in the other direction. I am the last one to undervalue Bradlaugh's fight to take his seat, because that involved—not merely the constitutional issue of the rights of the constituencies, but the larger issue of the equality of opinions before the law. Neither am I likely to undervalue his efforts in securing the passing of an Act which enabled a Freethinker to demand the affirmation, and so made our Courts a little more intellectually decent than most Christians wished them to be. Nor do I question the value of Bradlaugh's work while in Parliament—his fight against privilege, against constitutional and legalized "graft," his stand for the rights of oppressed peoples. But, all the same, I do not intend to stand quietly by while the policy of burying the real Bradlaugh, is being carried out.

I will not do so because I do not believe that Parliament was Bradlaugh's proper sphere, or even his most useful sphere. I readily recognize the active worker in Parliament that Bradlaugh was; but all the same it would have been a thousand pities if Bradlaugh's energies had been increasingly absorbed, as they would have been, had he lived longer, in political affairs, which must have meant at least a serious curtailment of his work outside Parliament. To have seen Bradlaugh—the real Bradlaugh, the essential Bradlaugh—reduced to the level of a very hard-working member of the House of Commons, or even to

that of a Cabinet Minister, at the expense of his other work, would have been very much like Shakespeare giving up the writing of plays in order to become an efficient stage-manager.

Note that Bradlaugh's most valuable work was done outside Parliament. His influence on the religious ideas of his time was exerted outside Parliament. His work for Malthusianism, by some regarded as causing the most beneficial revolution of the nineteenth century, was done outside Parliament. His contribution to winning the freedom of the press was done outside Parliament, even the backing of the many thousands of honest men and women which enabled him to get into Parliament, was secured outside Parliament. Parliament at most could do no more than give Bradlaugh a *different* platform, it could never give him a *greater* one. Reforms are not made in Parliament, they merely pass through it. It is the control of opinion that is important. Parliament may dodge opinion, it may circumvent opinion, it may flout opinion or misrepresent opinion; it never creates it. When it is good it mirrors public opinion, when it is bad it strives to mislead, or keep opinion in chains. A man without public opinion behind him is useless in Parliament; a man without the courage to express the opinion in which he believes is ineffective in Parliament. It is the creator of public opinion that is the *master* of Parliament, and when a man such as Bradlaugh serves in the capacity of a Member of Parliament, he is exchanging the robe of the master for the livery of the servant.

Bradlaugh in Parliament was of greater "news" value than he was out of it. But his contribution to the broadening of thought, his success in implanting in the minds of multitudes the ideal of freedom of thought and speech, owe nothing to the House of Commons. His essential work was all done outside the House; the struggle with the parliamentary mob shortened his life by many years; and it is an open question whether even the reforms he was instrumental in gaining were not necessarily obtained at too great a price, when the cost was the shortening of the years of service he might have given to the task of moulding a public opinion that he never consciously misled and which he never in any case betrayed.

* * *

The Bradlaugh Dinner.

We publish elsewhere in this issue a brief account of the Dinner held on September 26. It was a fine gathering, and the speeches were of a very high order. Perhaps the palm ought to be given to Sir Gilbert Murray, for an address that was pitched at a very high level and well delivered. Another word is also due to Mr. George Lansbury. Mr. Lansbury has the courage of his opinions, whatever they may be, and although a man holding very strong opinions on religion—he would say, I expect, *because* he holds strong religious opinions—he has never failed to champion freedom of thought. His speech was modest, simple in structure, but transparent in its honesty and marked by real dignity. The two hours and a half given to the speeches passed without a trace of weariness on the part of the audience, and were brought to a fitting close by a strikingly effective speech by Bradlaugh's grandson, Mr. C. Bradlaugh Bonner. Mr. Bonner does not spend much of his time on the platform—which is by way of being a pity.

* * *

Save me from my Friends.

The one note that marred the harmony of the evening was supplied by the Chairman. The question of the Toasts had been carefully considered by the Committee and, bearing in mind the avowed Republican-

ism of Bradlaugh, it was decided not to have the toast of "The King." As a matter of fact, it is often omitted nowadays from public functions of many kinds, and is at best a half-hearted business. But quite on his own authority, and taking advantage of the accident of his position, the Chairman, Colonel Wedgwood, to the surprise of all there, suddenly burst out with "The King." The toast is of the automatic and unmeaning variety, and a large number stood with the Chairman before they quite knew what they were doing. A large number, who remembered Bradlaugh's rooted opposition to an hereditary monarchy, who bethought themselves that Bradlaugh had written *An Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*, and that he had treated with the most scathing contempt the Prince of Wales, afterwards Edward VII., remained seated. The situation was quite grotesque, and if the Chairman could have heard the nature of the comments even from some of those who stood to the toast, he would have been considerably surprised. The occasion was one of a Dinner given to Bradlaugh, the Republican. The Chairman in his speech eulogised the consistency, the moral courage of Bradlaugh. One of the toasts on the programme was "To the Ideal of 'Thorough.'" The irony of it!

The Chairman was given a programme by the Secretary. He was told that the Committee had deliberately omitted this toast. He was therefore morally bound, as Bradlaugh would have felt himself bound, either to carry out the arranged programme or to decline to officiate. He did neither. Once again, the dinner was in honour of Bradlaugh, who hated hypocrisy, who despised shams, who was loyal to his word in the letter and in the spirit. The toast which the Chairman stood up to honour was "Thorough"!

Let us suppose that Mr. George Lansbury, a Christian for whom I have the utmost respect, had been asked to take the chair, and suppose that he had insisted on saying Grace before Meat in opening the proceedings. What would have been the feelings of those present? The only thing that can be said is that it would never have arisen. Mr. Lansbury would have either kept faith with the Committee, or he would have refused to officiate. I have had many questions, written and verbal, asking me the meaning of it all. I have given one side. Colonel Wedgwood, may if he pleases, give the other in these columns.

* * *

Bradlaugh and the B.B.C.

When it was announced that there was to be a broadcast on Bradlaugh, I said that it would probably follow the usual lines of stressing his parliamentary fight, and either ignoring his Atheism or speaking of it in a slight and deprecatory manner. It must be remembered that the Centenary Committee wrote the B.B.C. asking that a speech might be broadcast by a representative of the Committee. That letter was sent on July 3. The B.B.C. replied on July 14, that it had already arranged for a broadcast to take place after the 9 o'clock news on September 26. I take the liberty of questioning whether this arrangement followed or preceded the letter from the Committee. In the former case it was obviously a case of hedging.

But whether the B.B.C. had agreed to the Committee's suggestion or not, it was practically decided that no censorship would be tolerated. The utmost concession would have been to supply the B.B.C. with a copy of what would be said, and the B.B.C. would have to take it or leave it. Personally, I cared very little which. Even public notice may be purchased at too high a price. I object to a censorship of opinion in any form. I am a follower of Bradlaugh, at least in principle, and it would have been a ghastly

joke for the Committee or myself to have raised public money for the purpose of commemorating the work of a man who fought a censorship of the press, fought also for freedom of opinion, speech and publication, and then to submit to the censorship of a speech concerning his career. If Bradlaugh can only live by thus selling him, then to be forgotten becomes an honour. I am hoping for a time when public men will have at least sufficient self-respect to decline to speak for the B.B.C. under such conditions.

I understand that the suggestion for a speech on Bradlaugh was submitted to a committee of Clergymen. They in their wisdom—and in their case it was wisdom—suggested five minutes talk on Bradlaugh's parliamentary career. The job was offered to Mr. S. K. Ratcliffe, a regular lecturer for the B.B.C., and he asked for ten minutes. That was eventually granted. Whether Mr. Ratcliffe's speech was given as written, or whether it was given after being toned down I do not know. I do know that although the time of the broadcast had been arranged weeks before, no notice of it appeared in the *Radio Times*. It was to have as little publicity as possible.

The speech was reprinted in the *Listener*, where it appears with a few unimportant alterations. It takes up barely two columns, allowing for the room taken by a cartoon. Of the two columns, about one column and three-quarters is taken up with an account of the parliamentary fight. That, as I have said earlier, is as safe a subject as a parson talking about the conversion of the Jews. His Atheism is never mentioned, but by way of substitute he is mentioned as "an enemy of religion," and also "the most formidable enemy of the Christian religion in this country." On the other hand, readers are assured by Mr. Ratcliffe that the atmosphere is so greatly changed that the "harsh encounters between religion and Secularism" no longer exist—when plenty of parsons are saying that it is the only fight that matters! There is also the information that the warfare of Besant and Bradlaugh on religion "belonged to their own time." It has no relation to ours, and young people who happen to have heard Mr. Ratcliffe may rest satisfied with the information that Bradlaugh was a great fighter for freedom, but that what he fought about is a very, very, old, old story, interesting only to historians and antiquarians, and therefore the young people may continue at their prayers and go to Church regularly.

Now I do not know whether this is Mr. Ratcliffe's lecture as he wrote it, or as it is after he had dutifully committed it to his pious masters. Mr. Ratcliffe is the only one who can tell whether he has said what he wished to say, or whether he is saying "his permitted say" concerning a man whom all the laws of England and the massed bigotry of the Christian world could not prevent saying what he wished to say.

But I promised when I ventured on speculating on what would happen in the Broadcast to apologize to the B.B.C. if I found I had misjudged this miscellaneous collection of irresponsible censors. Perhaps my readers will give me their opinion whether I ought to apologize or not?

But I must make one apology at once. This is for again taking up so much space in one issue of the *Freethinker*. My excuse must be that a number of things concerning Bradlaugh had to be said, and this is Bradlaugh Year. This must also be my defence against those kindly letters I have received from friends, in which they are "ragging" me for not taking some rest, and who are evidently anticipating an early breakdown. I can only say that I will take all the rest I can as soon as I can, and as soon as the rest that has to be done is done, I will take all the rest of the rest that remains.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Winter of Our Discontent.

"Eighty per cent of the people are outside the Christian Church."—*Rev. Thos. Tiplady.*

"Oh! take the cash and let the credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant drum."

Omar Khayyam.

SUNDAY is the weekly holiday, the one day in the week when working people, who include the overwhelming majority of the population, have a respite from the daily grind. Yet this day is the dulllest day of all.

Englishmen, bent on relaxation, on Sundays are compelled to take their pleasures sadly. In many places during the day there is a choice between the place of worship and the public house, between spiritual and spirituous intoxication. In many places now cinemas are open, and that makes the streets painfully "gay" to many of the devout.

Even the radio is involved in this gloom. Entire church services are relayed, and superstitious folks may make their selection from Church of England parsons, Romish priests, and Nonconformist ministers. The Sunday musical programmes are stodgy, and the attractive items as rare as plums in a work-house pudding. Bach's music and Bible readings are the high lights.

On the Continent, men, women, and children enjoy themselves on that weekly holiday. From Moscow to Madrid people attend music-halls, theatres, beer-gardens, circuses; they laugh and dance. The poor Englishman is also a man and a brother, yet he cannot do these things. His pastors and masters wish him to go to church or chapel. This he does not do, so he suffers in silence. The fact remains that he is robbed of his weekly holiday in the name of an Oriental religion in which he is not greatly interested. The thousands of half-empty places of worship prove this beyond cavil and dispute. Yet the poor man is cheated of fifty-two holidays each year.

The governing class supports Priestcraft in its dragooning of the pleasures of the people, but rich folks take particular notice that they themselves escape boredom. Sunday, for them, is the day for motoring, for golfing, and for the choicest dinner and supper parties. The West-End restaurants are fullest on the Sabbath. Yet these people when they sit in authority refuse to allow theatres to open on the weekly holiday, and only grudgingly permit cinema performances in a few towns after six-o'clock at night. In large areas of this country a self-respecting citizen has little choice between "the key of the street," and the open door of the public-house.

In the few summer months, thanks to the railway companies and motor-coach proprietors, the Killjoys cannot quite succeed in destroying the pleasures of a whole nation. In the long, dreary winter months, however, those few and simple pleasures are spoilt and hampered as much as possible. Few people realize the anomalies that run through our laws in consequence of the interference of the Killjoys. Hence the fact that at one minute past ten at night you may not buy a drink in one place, but if you care to walk some distance into another district you may buy as many as you like until eleven. Even a licensed victualler, who desires to improve his premises for the convenience of his customers, has to ask the permission of the licensing magistrates, and may well have it refused.

The present parlous state of Sunday rests upon that precious piece of legislation, 'The Lord's Day Obser-

vance Act, a purely ecclesiastical measure of Charles the Second's reign, which still disgraces our Statute Book. Under this precious Act, and later Victorian amendments, confectioners, newsagents, and tobacconists, are frequently fined in provincial towns for opening on Sunday. Even concerts held on that day are so hedged round with restrictions that they are often as boring as the abracadabra of the churches. One is astonished and amazed, not so much at the tyranny of the theologians as at the acquiescence of the working people themselves in such a state of affairs in which a whole nation is bounded in a nutshell at the bidding of a mere handful of priests, who take shelter under a Parliamentary umbrella.

Priests are past masters of camouflage. Observe how they pack the town's meetings on the Sunday cinema question. Nearly all such meetings have resulted in an adverse verdict, which the subsequent town's voting almost invariably reverses. So, with protest meetings. Their stage army is rushed from place to place as required and made to appear as if it actually represented local opinion. At Licensing Sessions the same game is played, but more discreetly, and fanatical teetotallers adjudicate on the same bench with hard-shell Tories, who regard working-people with as much sympathy as South-Sea Islanders. Far too often these mock trials are almost indistinguishable from theatrical performances.

What is really objectionable in the whole Sunday restrictions is that a whole nation is being dragooned and swindled out of its weekly holiday by a minority of Killjoys, who wish to perpetuate the clerical monopoly of that day. In the high and palmy days of the Christian Religion it was impossible to drive everyone to church. In the present time, when there are as many shades of opinion as there are days in the year, the very idea is silly.

In defence of their own monopoly of Sunday, the clergy pretend that they have the welfare of working people at heart. It is a characteristic piece of clerical camouflage. What the clergy think of the working-class may be estimated by the bare statement that they are, and always have been, among the very worst employers in the country. Organists, choristers, church-cleaners, and vergers, are notoriously ill-paid. Even their own curates have reason to protest against the greed of their saintly superiors. Teachers in church schools are the most badly paid in the scholastic profession, and the schools themselves the worst equipped. Indeed, there exists, for obvious reasons, a good deal of scepticism concerning the priestly patronage of Labour in any shape, political or social.

Why does the English working-man put up with all this priestly dragooning? The answer is that the priests are highly organized and the working-class is not. The position in this country is similar to that in the United States under Prohibition. A number of fanatics, skilfully organized, sneaked into a position of authority and held a whole nation captive for years. Here in England the Ministry of Health spends over nineteen millions annually in promoting the physical welfare of the nation. But no millions are spent in assuring the happiness of the people. The one thing is as important as the other. People wither and die of unhappiness as they do of ill-health. Happiness is the doctor's worst enemy.

The Christian Religion is like the skeleton at the feast. Its symbol is a dying man nailed to a cross. Its teaching is that life itself is a vale of tears, and it threatens all who reject its dogmas with an eternity of unhappiness hereafter. So long as priests enjoy

their present position of authority, so long will this terrible aspect of life be forced upon the people of this country. To this sorry end priests are permitted to levy a tax of ten-per-cent on agriculture; to draw mining royalties amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds. To this end they enjoy the proceeds of ground-rents, and revel in ancient endowments. The so-called Church of England, one only of many sectarian bodies, possesses property of the value of over one hundred millions, most of which is steadily rising in value. Indeed, whilst the nation is getting poorer, this Church is actually adding to its vast wealth. And all this mountain of money is being used to maintain a body of men whose doctrines are inhuman and uncivilized, and who usurp a place in the modern State as though they were of importance. The very laughter of the English people is partially stifled by these clerical Killjoys, beside whom undertakers are Merry Andrews. It is time to call this clerical bluff. There must be an end, and speedily, of the merest priestly mediocrity posing and posturing as magnificence, and bullying a whole nation in the sorry process.

MIMNERMUS.

The Miracles of St. Martin.

IV.

OTHER WONDERS.

FISH being needed for the Paschal Feast, and none having been caught either by Cato, the deacon, an expert hand, or by the trading fishers, Martin told Cato in the presence of Gallus and the rest to cast his net again, which he did and brought up a huge pike to the great joy of the brethren. (D. iii. 10).

A serpent having swum across a river to the spot where Gallus and Co. were sitting, Martin, who was with them, ordered it to go back, and it returned immediately. Whereupon he said, "Serpents obey me; but men do not." (D. iii. 9.) Once, when making an episcopal visitation, Martin, attended by Gallus and Co., met some hunters whose dogs were chasing a hare. Pitying the poor creature which was about to be taken, Martin ordered the dogs to stop, and let the hare escape. This they did without delay. (D. ii. 9).

On a day when Martin was absent, a dog barked furiously at Gallus and Co., thereupon, one of them exclaimed, "Silence in Martin's name," and forthwith the dog stopped in the middle of a bark, just as if his tongue had been suddenly cut off. The name of this thaumaturgist, who was present at the telling of the tale, was concealed at his request by the narrator. (D. iii. 4.)

Another time, as Martin was going the round of his diocese on a small ass, and in the garb of a wretched vagrant, a chariot filled with military men belonging to the fisc attempted to pass him, but the mules turned away from him and got mixed up together in their gearings. Enraged at this the men came down and gave Martin a severe tanning. Gallus and Co., who had been delayed, now appeared, and putting Martin on his beast went their way. The officers then re-entered the chariot and sought to depart, whereupon the mules refused to move, and although their masters beat them with the greatest ferocity, they remained like statues. The men at last guessing what was the matter inquired after the identity of the injured wayfarer, and having learned it, they

sprinkled their faces with dust, overtook Martin, fell at his feet, and implored his forgiveness, protesting that they might well have been more severely punished. Martin, who had foretold to Gallus and Co. the misfortune of his ill-users, freely forgave them, and set their beasts at liberty. (D. ii. 3).

Once, on seeing a procession with what, at a distance, seemed to be Pagan idols, Martin made the sign of the Cross, ordering the people to stop and to set down their burden. They were really only mourners conveying a corpse to the grave. In a moment, however, they were as if turned to stone, and then, when all their efforts to proceed were in vain, they spun round like tops, dropping the corpse. Martin, having discovered that the affair was an interment and not a religious ceremony, raised his hand again, and made them free to depart. (V. 12).

Martin rendered great service to the farmers around Sens, for by his intercession God kept away during twenty years the hail-storms which had previously devastated their fields. At the end of that period Martin died, and God, having no favourite to please, allowed the evil to return. (D. iii. 7.)

The presbyter Arpagius told Gallus the following story. The wife of Count Avitianus sent some medicinal oil for Martin's benediction. The vessel used had a globular body with a long narrow neck, which was left empty. As soon, however, as Martin gave his blessing, the oil began to increase; and, although on the way back it kept spilling all over the clothes of the bearer, the bottle was brimful of it when handed by him to his mistress. Gallus adds from personal experience that a glass vase containing oil blessed by Martin was accidentally knocked over on to a marble pavement by a servant, but, to the relief of the horrified spectators, it remained as free from injury as if it had fallen on a pile of the softest feathers (D. iii. 3). Martin, having secretly slipped off his sole garment, and no less secretly given it to a beggar, put on one that was rough and short, covering it with his clerical throw-over (*amphibalus*) before going into the church to celebrate Mass. Whilst there at the altar, a ball of fire surrounded his head, and ascended like the tail of a comet. The day was a festival, and the church was crowded, but only one of the presbyters, and three of the monks—Gallus included—saw what happened. Why the worshippers did not see it Gallus says is not his business to decide. (D. ii. 2).

One day, as Gallus and Sulpicius were sitting for some hours outside the closed door of Martin's cell, they were thrilled and stupefied by the sound of conversation within the apartment. When Martin came forth, Sulpicius, who was very intimate with him, asked him what had been going on, and with whom he had been conversing. At first the good man hesitated; but, as Sulpicius could get anything out of him, he finally, after binding them to secrecy, told them that he had been in company with Agnes, Thecla, and Mary; and then proceeded to describe the appearance of those ladies, and what they were wearing. (D. ii. 13.)

A certain monk, whose name Gallus conceals to avoid shaming him, sat down one day by his little stove with his legs stretched out at each side of it, and his naked loins exposed to its pleasing warmth. Immediately after this had happened, Martin, who was out of the room, exclaimed with a loud voice, "Who is polluting our little habitation with his naked loins?" Thereupon the conscience-stricken culprit half-dead with shame fled to Gallus and Co., declaring unto them his own misdeed, and Martin's power. (D. iii. 14). The Emperor Valentinianus, egged on by his

Arian wife, once refused the petition of Martin, and had him warded off the gates of the Palace. Then, after a week spent in sack-cloth, ashes, abstinence, and prayer, Martin was visited by an angel, who told him to go on to the Palace, for its gates would open of themselves at his approach. He went. The gates opened, no one opposed his entrance, and he reached the imperial presence. At his coming the Emperor was furious, and did not rise in his honour. But he soon had to abandon the throne with alacrity, for fire came out of the seat and burnt the part of him next to it. After this, it is not surprising to hear that he granted all Martin's requests ere they were made. Gallus, who relates the incident, says that it occurred before he joined Martin, but that he had it from faithful brethren who beheld it. (D. ii. 5).

Martin, who had no respect whatever for the piety of those who did not profess his own religion, never scrupled to violate their most sacred sentiments, but, according to his veracious biographer, Heaven blessed his ruthless methods. Thus we hear that at the village of Leprosum (sic) the inhabitants drove him away because he had attempted to throw down their place of worship which was very rich; and he halted in the locality fasting these three days in sack-cloth and ashes, till two angels, equipped for war, came and told him there was nothing to fear from his late enemies, and that he must return to finish off their temple; whereupon he went back, found the people standing in stupefaction around it, and took advantage of their condition to uproot its foundations and to make ashes of its altars and statues, after which they recovered themselves, and, instead of tearing him to pieces, solemnly accepted his creed. (V. 14.)

Another time, when engaged upon a like work of destruction, Martin bared his neck to a fellow who threatened to strike him with a sword, but the opposer no sooner raised his hand than he fell backwards to the ground and implored mercy. Another man, who attempted to stab Martin as he was smashing up an idol, found the sword vanish from his grasp. (V. 15.)

Once, when Martin had set fire to a most celebrated and ancient fane, a contiguous house was in danger of being devoured, whereupon he swiftly climbed the roof, and met the approaching flames which all at once turned back against the wind, sparing the house, but destroying the temple (V. 14). Again, after he had demolished a religious edifice, Martin desired to fell a consecrated tree growing near the ruin but the worshippers said they themselves would cut it down if he would catch it. He agreed. The tree, which bent naturally to one side, was then secured towards it with a cord. The monks away off turned pale when they heard the trunk crash under the axe, and saw it begin to fall upon Martin. Happily their fears were groundless, for with the sign of the Cross he turned the tree from his body, and caused it to go backwards and tumble among the astonished Pagans, who immediately embraced Christianity. (V. 13.)

Near the rude monastery which Martin inhabited after he had been made Bishop of Tours, there was, according to some authorities, a martyr's tomb. This, however, Martin doubted, and taking the brethren with him, he went to the spot and invoked the alleged martyr. A wild, sordid figure then appeared, and declared himself to be an executed robber. Oddly enough none save Martin saw the apparition, though all heard the voice. Martin prevailed and the altar at the tomb was destroyed. (V. 12.) Martin, who had much intercourse with angels (V. 21), once fell down the stone staircase, and retired to his cell covered with wounds. During the night, however, an angel ap-

peared to him and treated his injured body with such skill that next morning it was as sound as if it had not been hurt. (D. ii. 19).⁴⁴

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

(To be concluded.)

P.S.—On page 604, col. 2, line 36, for “deriving from” read “deriving benefit from”; and in footnote 43, for “taken from St. Paulinus” read “taken for St. Paulinus.”

⁴⁴ *The Kalendar of the English Church Union 1863* devotes nearly two and a half closely printed pages to St. Martin of Tours. The writer, evidently an accomplished scribe of the Oxford Movement, totally suppresses the fact that St. Martin was known as a thaumaturgist, and mentions nothing even remotely miraculous about him unless perhaps it be a dream which led to his conversion. This behaviour marks a sad fall in Christian veracity, for the eulogistic article on Martin, occupying more than a column in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* of 1797, says “He diffused the doctrines of Christianity among the heathens, destroyed their temples, and, (according to the writers of his life) confirmed the truth by an infinite number of miracles.”

Freethought in Wales.

I AM afraid it must be admitted that Wales is one of the “backward areas” so far as Freethought is concerned. The Calvinistic Methodist Revival in the eighteenth century swept the country from end to end, and a particularly strict and gloomy Puritanism settled like a pall over the land. The nineteenth century also witnessed several periodical revivals—in 1859 and in the early '80's, for instance. There was, again, the notorious revival, early in this century, led by Mr. Evan Roberts. Since then revivals have been conspicuous by their absence, although many ministers have, from time to time, prophesied that “another revival was at hand.” Like Glendower, they are quite anxious to “call spirits from the vasty deep,” but there are more sceptical Hotspurs in Wales than there used to be, who are asking, “But will they come?”

Individual Welshmen have, of course, been prominent in the Freethought movement from time to time. For instance—Robert Owen, and, more recently, the late Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and “Keridon.” But their activities were in a great measure confined to England. Yes, Freethought has been a very tender plant in Wales itself. No Welshman of note, residing in Wales, so far as I know, has avowed himself openly a Freethinker, or even an Agnostic.

Organized Freethought is almost non-existent in Wales outside Swansea and Cardiff. The Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. is bravely keeping the flag flying in the face of many difficulties. But the leaven was in the lump all the time, and indications of its working are becoming apparent. Several of the younger poets in Wales are quite “Naturalistic” in outlook. In fact, some of them have been dubbed “Pagans” by the keepers of the “Nonconformist conscience.” This new generation of poets is the product of the University Colleges and the Secondary Schools. And you cannot expect all educated men, in Wales or elsewhere, to keep their science and theology in separate watertight compartments for ever. It is difficult for those who do not understand Welsh to realize what a change has been wrought in this direction during, say, the last thirty years. These younger poets write, of course, in Welsh, and some of their poems, though heretical to a large measure, have been awarded some of the chief prizes at the Annual National Eisteddfodau in recent years. And, what is, perhaps, more significant, some of the adjudicators who awarded these prizes have been ministers of the gospel.

Welsh prose writers, on the other hand, have been more timid, or more careful than the poets in expressing their unorthodox views. (There is no “poetic licence” allowed in their case, of course). As a matter of fact several of our younger prose writers show a decided leaning towards Roman Catholicism. Some of our dramatists—and the drama is becoming quite popular in Wales—have, in a guarded fashion, “shown-up” the narrow-

-mindedness and the hypocrisy of the “unco guid.” But, on the whole, they have “played for safety.” The short-story writers are even worse from the Freethought point of view. I cannot recall a single Welsh short story that I have read which would cause a flicker of an eyelid by the traditional maiden aunt.

But there are signs that the boycott of Freethought by prose writers will be lifted in due course. A little volume recently published is, in my opinion, a portent of change in this direction. The book is called *Gwyl a Gwawr* (“Darkness and Dawn”), and it is written by Mr. D. R. Williams, of Carnarvon, its price being 2s. 6d. It is a well-printed and neatly bound volume of 138 pages. [I may say, in passing, that new books printed in Welsh, notwithstanding their necessarily limited circulation, are, as a rule, much cheaper than new English books—publications of the Pioneer Press and the R.P.A. excepted. Why this is so, perhaps English publishers can supply the answer.] The book is a concise summary of the evolutionary theory of the descent of man, written from a frankly materialistic standpoint. There is very little which is really new in it, especially to those who have read the works of Darwin, Huxley, Keith, Haldane, and others. But, and here is its significance, nothing of the kind has been published before in Welsh. Having regard to the brevity of the book the writer has done his work remarkably well. The style is crisp and clear: very few technical scientific terms are used. And this latter feature will, no doubt, be considered the unforgivable sin of the author. The ordinary man in the cottage, the quarry and the coal mine in Wales will understand, and I hope appreciate, his effort.

A significant fact is that practically all the newspapers and periodicals in Wales have boycotted the book—hardly any reviews of it have been published. But, it is on sale in most of the book-shops. I know that “one swallow does not make a summer.” At the same time, summer does follow the first swallow.

HESGIN.

Acid Drops.

Nothing can justify the hysterical hooliganism displayed at the Shaftesbury Theatre on the occasion of the appearance in the caste of Werner Krauss, the German actor, who is said to be a Nazi. It is substantially no better than the pathologic brutalities of the Nazi governors of Germany. One cannot even be sure that Herr Krauss is a Nazi. That he says so is unconvincing in conditions where it is dangerous to say what one actually believes. But Art, Science, Literature are not to be confined to the narrow boundaries of nationalism. It is human and international, and it is an indication of genuine barbarism to think otherwise. The transference of outbreaks of barbarism from one side of a national boundary to the other, does not alter its character, although it may change its complexion.

Some excuse might be found for the behaviour of those in the Shaftesbury Theatre if the men on the stage were the rulers or administrators of Germany. But to vent one's indignation on every German who appears in public is too much akin to the hysterical stupidity exhibited by the public during the war, when German music was banned, tame scientists at the order of the war propagandists wrote that Germany had contributed nothing to science, the King changed his German name to an English one, and hotels refused to serve Germans. The German mania is expressed in the wholly unscientific terms of race, and whether we are talking of the mythical Jewish, British, or Aryan race, the attitude is equally stupid. “Race” exists only in a collection of characteristics which are acquired and developed by institutional and sociological conditions, and may be got rid of even more rapidly than they are acquired. To hate people in terms of race or nation, ignoring the fact that both include people of all shades of opinion and character is to get back to barbarism in thought. And Hitlerism is only putting the same thought into practice. The people who created the disturbance at the Shaftesbury were well on the way to becoming Hitler's followers.

So the chief Tshekedi has been restored to the office from which "Evans of the 'Broke'" deposed him. The High Commissioner and Mr. Thomas advised the King to sign the order cancelling his deportation and restoring him to his position, and the matter has thus far ended. The result has given satisfaction to most of the South African papers and most of those in this country. It is quite evident that the two white men ought to have been cleared out of the place long before, and that Tshekedi's action was forced upon him by the slackness of the White administration—which could be prompt enough with its stage-like display of guns and men when it was assumed that the "nigger" was asserting himself too much. One or two of our own papers bluster about the action now taken, placing the lives of white men and women in Africa in danger, but that represents no more than the fear which is displayed by "conquerors," and which is every now and then responsible for panic action that inevitably ends in greater trouble than it removes.

Meanwhile we note that nothing has been said about the statement of the Johannesburg paper that the annexation of Bechuanaland was contemplated some months ago, that it was about due, according to the time schedule, when the affair of Tshekedi transpired, and that Mr. Thomas refused to contradict the statement when it was brought to his notice. So we would advise our readers not to be surprised if fresh difficulties arise between Tshekedi and the administration, the annexation of the country following in due course—solely in the interests of the natives and of order.

The B.B.C. policy of "silence" on Sunday evenings between six and eight—when the Churches and Chapels are busy—has been altered, and a programme of light music is now substituted during these hours. Viscountess Snowden, who was formerly a governor of the B.B.C., denounces the change as "bad taste and very bad form." In this, Lady Snowden shows the weakness of quite ordinary folk in endeavouring to compound for their lack of anything approaching a decent principle by weird developments in the direction of "taste." Now there is little argument about matters of taste, as Lady Snowden knows full well. We daresay she manages to persuade herself that there is delicacy of feeling somewhere in her efforts to ensure that the subscribers to the B.B.C.—of all religions and none—either get the bill of fare chosen by its religious subscribers or none at all. A fig for this sample of good form! We prefer to retain a little principle.

In regard to the wearing of hats by women in churches, a very important matter to the Christian type of mentality, some one solemnly points out that for women not to wear a hat "is just slovenly indifference to form. A man takes off his hat, and a woman keeps hers on." For ourselves, we had a notion that the matter was concerned with something much more spiritual than good "form"—for instance, an ancient Jewish taboo. However, it is nice to know that the Christian God insists on his worshippers performing properly in accordance with the "form" he is supposed to have prescribed. A God like that is most certainly worthy of all the love, reverence, adoration and praise the truly religious person can manage to exude from his or her immortal soul.

A correspondent in *John o' London's Weekly* asks, "Is there a touch of humour in the whole Bible?" and rightly answers it in the negative. Humour has been read into it by profane writers in plenty, but that is another matter. Laughter and Religion have never gone hand in hand, for where there is laughter fear is not, and where there is not fear, religion is not. As for Christianity with the Man of Sorrows at its head, with its arterial roads leading to damnation, and its pathways leading to life eternal, the natural outcome was a race of miserable sinners passing on the good news in the shape of Watts' lachrymose hymns to little children. Henry Ward Beecher was an emancipated parson and it could therefore occur to such a man that "Robert Burns" was

a humorous suggestion for an epitaph for Ingersoll. He could say, and with unquestionable truthfulness, "If a man believes in the conscious torment of men in hell, then if he ever smiles, or gets married or goes into convivial company with jest and joke, he is a monster!" Yet Hell Fire is an integral part of the Faith once delivered to the Saints and all the perfumes of Arabia can never wipe it out.

One of the daily papers proffers the following piece of philosophy. "If you want the world to know all about you, tell the world yourself." This will be very stale counsel to the Churches in this country. From them there flows, year in and year out, a continuous stream of "news" to all the newspapers, telling the world all that Christians are doing and have done. The Churches certainly require no advice "to tell the world," nor any instruction in the art of self-advertisement. The joke is that newspapers, which rely for existence on the selling of advertisement space, print the Churches' self advertisement free, gratis, and for nothing!

The Rev. F. H. Freshwater conducted a service in Blackpool the other day for members of the theatrical profession. "I have found," he said, "more real Christianity among the members of the great world of the theatre than in any other class of the community. The Puritans used to dislike laughter, but the Church blessed the stage and rebuked those who considered it sinful and injurious." We love this distinction between the "Puritans" and the "Church"—as if both were not responsible for perpetuating the absurdities of Christianity.

But Mr. Freshwater had another dig—which rather contradicted what he had already said. "The practice of parodying clergymen on the stage," he declared, "was vulgar and an insult to God. I am profoundly thankful that we see little to-day of the stupid, silly stage parson. Personally I dislike that kind of thing, because a parson is the representative of God. Comedians should not try to get a cheap laugh out of God." We don't exactly see why not, but as a rule the cheap laugh was got at the expense of the poor deluded being who imagined he actually was a representative of God. And surely that is as funny as anything that anyone could imagine. Besides, stage parsons can be seen in actual practice almost in any church or chapel—or even in any street. We would love to show Mr. Freshwater dozens.

"Once upon a time," say the Catholic romantics who want to get back to the Church's "golden age"—but Mr. T. D. Barlow of Manchester paints a different picture, thus:—

There are some medievalists who would no doubt like to put us back to an imaginary and happy middle age, which indeed did, in fact, never exist except in their imagination. If people desire the medieval outlook and the medieval economy, they must accept the elimination of scientific methods used in surgery, medicine, and sanitation. They must be content to live in hovels, clothe themselves in the simplest of garments, and infinitely increase the physical misery of life, with an incredible impoverishment of everybody's material standard.

Still, if this state of affairs would enable people to better appreciate the Catholic "message" and desire the Catholic land of everlasting bliss, by contrast with earthly misery, then obviously a reversion to medievalism is sadly needed. It would certainly be a new "golden age" for priests—but for no one else.

The National Smoke Abatement Society have just held their annual conference at Sheffield. They wished to have a meeting in the Memorial Hall on Sunday, but the Sabbatarians successfully protested. They objected to having Mrs. Jast, of Bath, speaking on "The personal significance of the smoke problem," on the Lord's Day. Dr. des Voeux said he was sorry the Sabbatarians of Sheffield had not heard her speech. "They live in their

dirt," he said. "They glory in their dirt. They think it means money. They go to their churches to learn things which might do them good, but which could not possibly do them the good they would have gained by listening to Mrs. Jast's speech."

We simply cannot believe that there is anyone benighted enough in Sheffield to object to a lecture on this subject on Sunday. There must be a mistake somewhere. We have been reading the press more diligently than usual of late, and we find that the religious intolerance that Bradlaugh fought is entirely a thing of the past. Bradlaugh represented the "end of a phase." Christianity is now quite a clean, sweet and reasonable thing. We think the Christian opposition to Mrs. Jast's lecture on "The personal significance of the smoke problem," must have been based on a misunderstanding of its terms, and that they merely wished to register a protest at what they considered to be an ill-advised attempt on her part to revive a barbarous and loathsome belief in the lake of fire and brimstone.

As one of its "Parables of the Day," the *News-Chronicle* comes out with "The Christian to-day needs not only a sword but a spanner." The bearing of which observation, says our old friend, Cap'n Cuttle, lies in the application thereof.

With our American Debt still to pay, every means of increasing our national revenue is of value and, conversely, everything which tends to decrease it, is to be deprecated. Our Postmaster-General is responsible for a system of registration of letters and parcels which does its work well, and the return from its minimum charge of Threepence is quite a handsome one. The Roman Catholic Church, with that callous disregard for the welfare of any state which it does not control, has devised a means of insuring the safe delivery of letters which does away with the necessity of registration, and transfers any profit made from the State to the Holy Roman Church. All one has to do is to send a shilling to the Franciscan Missionary Union, Edinburgh, who will send you in return 100 St. Antony Guide Stamps, and if you frank your letters with these in addition to the postage stamps required, St. Antony will see that your letter gets to its destination. There are two things that Free-thinkers must never forget about Holy Mother Church. One is that the things of the spirit are rarely without price, and the other is that there is nothing superstitious about Catholics.

The Oxford Group Movement is creating consternation in the Church of England. On the one side we have those who view with alarm the decrease in Church Funds, and the fall in Church Membership and, in their panic, are willing to adopt any fantastic method likely to mend matters. The other section represents the more staid and far-seeing elements in the Church, with some respect for its dignity and more than a suspicion of the transience and barrenness of such revival movements such as the Oxford Group Movement represents. The Archbishop of Canterbury takes the first point of view; the Bishop of Durham the other. Dr. Hensley Henson is a man of parts, and he knows, at times, the value of militancy. He enters the lists against Buchmanism as a Deliverer, and his weapon is a sword.

This is a summary of the Bishop's indictment of the Oxford Group movement:—

Its teaching is gravely suspect; its achievements denied; its scandals lushed up; it is boomed and boosted by American advertising methods; its main card is but "spiritual exhibitionism"; the religious excitement generated quickly evaporates and "the darkest shadow on the movement is the trail of moral and intellectual wrecks which its progress leaves behind."

The Primate of All England, on the other hand, appears to be in favour of "leaving everything to Frank." Even the keys of Heaven and Hell are to be handed over (temporarily) to Frank Buchman; also the funds for carry-

ing on the good work. Holy Mother Church, "obedient to one head," smiles at the plight of the Church of Henry VIII. Whatever errors the Roman Catholic Church may fall into, it has never yet made a mistake so gross as to allow any palm but one to grasp the filthy lucre.

Holy Year Celebrations go from glory to glory. Tens of thousands of pilgrims flocked to Turin to have a glimpse of the Holy Shroud. This is a piece of rough linen in which the body of Jesus was wrapped, and on both the back and front of it can still be seen the imprint of a human figure. The Vatican speaks of the shroud as genuine, but on such matters they do not claim to speak with "infallibility." To them whatever is useful is true. Should the shroud require mending the Queen of Italy or one of her daughters performs the task—and sews upon her knees. God likes this. Twenty-eight bishops and five princes figured in the procession, and it was escorted to the Cathedral door and exhibited to a crowd of 25,000 pilgrims in the square—all on their knees. God likes this.

Signor Mussolini and his Government were represented by the Count de Vecchi. Members of all the orders of chivalry were present in glittering uniforms. Princess Marie José and the ladies of the Court wore black, with black lace mantillas. They bore candles in their hands. God likes candles. The ceremony terminated with the reading of a Papal Bull, pronouncing sentence of excommunication upon anyone who should touch the relic. God would be annoyed.

What need is there for further witnesses? Is it not plain that we are no longer moved by a piece of scarlet? Matthew Arnold and his cultured colleagues have done their work, and we live in an age of sweet reasonableness. There are even signs of clarity of thought. There is one Church which knows where it stands and what it is driving at. How could the great Huxley have descended to the level of a soap-box Hyde Park orator and described these magnificent, palpitating Papistical functions as "tom-fooleries—nothing but mere fetish-worship—in forms of execrably bad taste, devised one would think by a college of ecclesiastical man-milliners for the delectation of school-girls?"

Fifty Years Ago.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE has been giving evidence before the Royal Commissioners on the working of the Education Act in Victoria. Contending that the Act develops irreverence in children, and cuts the bonds of wholesome discipline, he gave the following startling illustration, which we hope is very exceptional: "One of the most esteemed and respected clergymen in my diocese—probably the most eminent now taking duty in the Church—went to one of the principal schools in the city to give religious instruction. He called upon the class to read a passage of scripture. They read it. He then asked them to close their books, and they closed them with a vengeance! They shut the books and then shied them at his head. Not all the children, but a very considerable proportion of them. No book hit him, but he said they rained about him on every side and strewed the floor all round him. Now I say, without the least hesitation, that such an act as that would have been impossible in any part of England with which I am acquainted. If a man went down to teach a set of street arabs in a low quarter of London where such instruction had never been given, the children might be capable of such a thing; but that a highly-respectable and well-known clergyman should, when teaching a number of children constantly habituated to the discipline of a school, have the books shied at him, would be absolutely impossible. The event of which I speak occurred just after the State school had closed, and the clergyman felt himself perfectly powerless to restore order."

The "Freethinker, October 7, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ.

EDITORIAL:

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.**—R. S. Finney, 108.
- M. SIMON.**—We have looked for your excellent letter in the columns of the paper to which it was sent, but without seeing it. It has either not been inserted, or it has escaped our notice—probably the former.
- F. HOEY.**—Thanks for memoranda. It will come in useful for our Bradlaugh notes, or for the reprint of the Bradlaugh and the Ingersoll articles, which we intend issuing in an enlarged form about Christmas.
- "ASTONISHED."**—Priestcraft and Kingcraft began together and they will probably die together. Bradlaugh's own words regarding kings nowadays were profoundly true—"If they do nothing they are 'good,' if they do ill, loyalty gilds the vice till it looks like virtue." There is no need to wonder what Bradlaugh would have done in such circumstances, we *know* what he would have done. If we do not, then we do not know Bradlaugh. But you must not blame the committee. We deal with the subject in "Views and Opinions."
- A. FORBES (Stockton).**—Glad you consider yourself repaid for your long journey to attend the Centenary Meeting. You must not misjudge Mr. Lansbury, who was prevented attending owing to a confusion of dates. He had a political appointment on the 23rd, but was at the Dinner on the 25th, where he made a very effective and straightforward speech.
- F. GIBBON (Ilford).**—The *Herald's* Roman Catholic customers must be catered for somehow, and the problem of commercial journalism is how to manage this, and at the same time displease the least number of possible readers. Circulation justifies anything. Thanks for information re the Stamps of St. Antony.
- R. PARKER (Glasgow).**—Glad to have your letter, and hope you will take your own advice and not overdo it. The writer in the *Glasgow Evening News* is quite correct. It was Bradlaugh who, in August, 1886, called attention to the enormous quantities of refuse deposited near the mouths of Lochs Long and Gail by the Clyde Trustees and a Chemical Company, and he kept on raising the matter until the nuisance ceased.
- W.A.W.**—Posters sent, pleased to learn the *Freethinker* can be obtained from Mr. Sefton, Boundary Road, Port Sunlight, Cheshire. Will local readers please note.
- J. BRODIE.**—The fallacy lies in speaking of "One existence" as a substantive existence, if it means no more than the sum-total of existence. If "one existence" means an existence apart from the existence we know, then we are back again with a form of the god-idea disguised. If we mean by one existence, existence as a whole, then it is as well to say that all we know is phenomena and their permutations. Mr. Cohen may write on the whole subject so soon as he can find time.
- H. WHATMOUGH.**—Pleased to learn of Mr. Clayton's successful debate. He is doing very useful work.
- P.V.M.**—You have overlooked the fact that in this particular case the Missionaries did stand up for justice to the Bechuanaland Chief.
- R. SPEARS.**—The Rev. Brewin Grant was a choice specimen of the clerical blackguard, and his portrait indicates it. Bradlaugh took him far too seriously.
- H. SHELLEY.**—Thanks. Will find a place for it presently. We appreciate your congratulations on both the meeting and the Bradlaugh number of the *Freethinker*.
- J. CLAYTON.**—Pleased to hear that you find the Bradlaugh issue useful. One day we should like to do a sketch of the history of Freethought in the first fifty years of the nineteenth century, keeping strictly to the popular side, to which justice has never yet been done.
- C. E. GOUGH.**—Glad you enjoyed Saturday's meeting. The discovery of your chance acquaintance is quite remarkable.
- 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."

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 8) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Woodside Public Hall, Glenfarg Street, Glasgow, at 6.30, on "The Real Bradlaugh." Judging from some of the pictures of Bradlaugh that are being presented to the public there is need for the *real man* being kept to the front.

On Monday evening (October 9) Mr. Cohen will hold a public discussion with the Rev. Mr. McQueen in the Berkeley Hall, on "Secularism or Christianity." Admission will be by ticket, 6d. and 1s. each. Mr. James Maxton, M.P., will take the chair.

There was no mistaking the success of Mr. Cohen's meeting at the Piccadilly Picture House, Manchester, on Sunday. The building is one of the largest and handsomest of its kind in Manchester, and not far short of 2,000 people listened with the utmost attention and an obviously sustained interest to an address of over an hour and a half's duration. This was no small compliment to both the subject and the speaker. Mr. F. E. Monks occupied the chair, and his opening remarks were pitched in the right vein as an introduction to the subject of the lecture. The stock of the Bradlaugh issue of the *Freethinker* was quickly exhausted, and probably some hundreds of extra copies might have been sold had they been present for disposal. But it was a great occasion, and the Committee of the Branch must have felt well repaid for its efforts.

Dr. Carmichael of Liverpool will be the lecturer for the Manchester Branch at the Clarion Cafe, Market Street, to-day (October 8) at 7.30. His subject will be the "Black Death," illustrated by lantern slides. We strongly advise those who have not heard Dr. Carmichael to make a point of being present. Those who have heard him will need no urging.

In addition to the B.B.C. broadcast on Charles Bradlaugh in London, there was one given on Bradlaugh on the 29th in the Midland Regional programme, and it was a good one. We deal with the London Broadcast in "Views and Opinions." The Midland one was on altogether a better level. It gave a better view of the whole man, and made no attempt to bury the essential Bradlaugh under cover of the Parliamentary struggle. Of course, what we have said of the censorship in London applies equally to censorship in the Midlands, for we presume it exists equally in both places. But either the speaker was less timid in his presentation of Bradlaugh, or the Committee was less rigorous in its censorship. Anyway it was by far the better of the two.

We do not know whether there were broadcasts from other stations. Perhaps some of our readers would let us know if any others were given. We should like to have a full record of them.

One of the best things said of Bradlaugh was said by the *Sunderland Echo*: "Bradlaugh's best commemoration will be the preservation of Britain's freedom amid the general collapse elsewhere." And one of the worst was said by Councillor Butterfield, of Northampton. He said that if Bradlaugh were alive to-day "he might be Prime Minister of the present Government."

Following his lecture at Liverpool on October 15, Mr. Cohen will speak at a Bradlaugh meeting held in Stockport, at the Town Hall, on October 16. The Mayor of Stockport will preside, and Lt.-Colonel Malone and Mr. Philip Oliver will also speak. The meeting will commence at 7.45. Reserved seats at 1s. each, may be obtained of G. Burgess, 98 Athens Street, Stockport.

We are asked to announce that the Metropolitan Secular Society has arranged to hold its meetings this season at Reggiori's Restaurant, King's Cross, every Sunday evening during the winter. The first meeting was held on Sunday last, October 1.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. B. A. Le Maine had a good audience on Sunday last, to listen to his lecture on "Christianity and Intolerance." Hopes were expressed by many present of another visit from Mr. Le Maine at an early date.

From the *Daily Mail* we learn that the Christian Protest Movement, among the chief members of which are the Duchess of Atholl, the Earl of Glasgow, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Viscountess Rhondda, etc., lodged a protest with the Society of Friends against the letting of their hall for the Centenary Meeting on September 23. If these mental nondescripts had their will there would be precious little liberty of thought or speech left in the country. It is not known what reply was made to the protest.

We continue to receive many flattering letters concerning our Bradlaugh issue. Several have asked whether we could not prepare similar issues of other great Freethinkers—and we have been congratulating ourselves that it will take a hundred years before the bi-centenary comes, and counting on having a good rest in the interval. A very old friend, Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey, whose membership of the Society dates back to 1879, and who frequently acted as Chairman for Bradlaugh when the latter visited Plymouth, writes:—

I feel impelled to say how delighted I am with it, and how grateful the Freethought Party as a whole should be to you for your critical appreciation of our great leader. It is a great piece of work you have done in the writing of it, and your generosity in giving it away for a three-penny bit ought to be the means of procuring for it an enormous circulation. I am sorry you did not know Bradlaugh personally, and I am proud that I met him on many occasions, and that when he came to Plymouth I took the chair for him on several occasions.

Dr. S. M. Morton says:—

A thousand thanks for the Bradlaugh issue. The Freethought Party should be proud of you and it. It is brief without being scrappy, enthusiastic without being uncritical, appreciative without being slavish. The two portraits "The Price of Victory" deserve to be reprinted as a plate fit for framing with letterpress indicating its significance. It is the finest sketch of Bradlaugh I have read. But why not give us a full-length biography of the great man?

We take that as a suggestion that as we have little to do we must be hard-pressed to fill in the time.

Mrs. F. Walters, daughter of the late G. W. Foote, writes:—

Your Bradlaugh number was very fine, and all Freethinkers owe you an immense debt of gratitude for your untiring work for the liberation of mankind.

I must also congratulate you on your splendid speech at the Friends' House last Saturday. As I see the fight for freedom and how it should be waged, it was Bradlaugh's fearless and uncompromising attitude towards superstition and intolerance that was the most important part of his life's work, and no one could stress that better than you.

That is quite enough flowers from a rather large bouquet—at least for this week.

Our Plymouth friends open their Autumn-Winter Session to-day (October 8) at 7 p.m., in the Large Hall, No. 6, First Floor, at Plymouth Chambers, the subject being "Charles Bradlaugh's Centenary." We hope the Branch will have the full support of all Freethinkers in the City and District.

We have received a copy of a new—the eighth—edition of Mr. F. A. Hornibrook's *The Culture of the Abdomen*. (Heinemann 6s.). We all know the tag that an apple a day will keep the doctor away, and we are assured by those who have tried it that an exercise a day on the Hornibrook system is far more certain. The exercises recommended are very simple, and take but little time in the doing. There are numerous plates, so that there is no fear of misunderstanding. The issue of eight editions of this work is alone sufficient indication of its merit.

The Bradlaugh Commemorative Dinner and Re-Union.

It is difficult to imagine what the great Iconoclast himself would have said, had he been able to see the distinguished assembly gathered together at the Trocadero Restaurant on September 26 last, in honour and remembrance of his birthday one hundred years ago. It would not be unfair to suggest that he would have been more than surprised. All his life he had been a fighter, and almost all his life he had to face hatred, obloquy and opposition. Not, it is true, from many of the working classes who adored him, or from lovers of liberty all over the world, who recognized in him their own champion. But from those who called themselves Christians or Royalists or Tories or Liberals, who hated Freethought and free speech and a free press, Bradlaugh received the fiercest antagonism, and even if people reluctantly agreed with him on one of his many-sided activities, they violently denounced all the others.

Time, it is said, heals wounds and works wonders. It took six years of parliamentary work to prove to an unwilling House that Bradlaugh was perhaps the greatest private member of his generation, and it has taken forty years to recognize in him one of the most formidable champions of liberty this country has produced. And this was the dominant note of the gathering at the Trocadero. All sorts and conditions of people were there. They disagreed with Bradlaugh in this or in that. They were sorry he said this or did that, but without exception they honoured him as few men have recently been honoured, for his championship of Liberty—that liberty for which so many people also fought, that liberty without which civilization must inevitably fail.

All men and women who possess intellectual clarity must agree to differ on many questions, and Freethinkers specially, but militant or not, it was indeed a splendid tribute to the greatness of Charles Bradlaugh that so large a gathering could have been brought together, and that so many excellent speeches from famous people should have been uttered in his honour. And—perhaps most interesting of all—was the large number of men who had known Bradlaugh in the flesh or even had only spoken to him or seen him once. How proud they were, and how we, who never were so lucky, looked up to them as heroes!

It must have been a great evening for Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner also, tinctured only with regret that her father's great friend John M. Robertson, should not have been there. For neither wavered an instant in their devotion during the long years since Bradlaugh's death. By pen and word they perpetuated his memory, and these Centenary celebrations have proved not only that Bradlaugh's work was not forgotten, but also that his influence has never been stronger than at the present time.

The number of guests was a large one, but both the reception and dinner were splendidly organized. The Rt. Hon. Josiah C. Wedgwood, M.P., D.S.O., was in the chair, and with him were many distinguished men and women, including Lord Horder, Lord Snell, Sir John Hammerton, Prof. Gilbert Murray, Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. W. R. Sickert, A.R.A., Mr. Chapman Cohen, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, Mr. Vivian Phelps, Dr. Alfred Cox, Mrs. Janet Chance and many others—with, of course, Mr. and Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner. On the other tables could be seen many familiar faces—members of the N.S.S. the R.P.A., and the Ethical Societies, together with friends and sympathisers, and

it would be fair to say that they all were heart and soul with the speakers of the evening in honouring the memory of a great man.

The dinner itself was an excellent one, thoroughly enjoyed by all present. When over, the Chairman then called upon Lord Horder to move the first toast: The Past: "To the memory of Charles Bradlaugh and his services in the cause of Religious, Political and Social Reform." Lord Horder's fine and appreciative speech dealt principally with Bradlaugh as a Malthusian. When the time came for him to strike a blow not only for the cause of what we now know as Birth-Control, but also for the freedom of the press—the right for the poor to obtain information which the rich could get at any time, he struck effectively. The Knowlton pamphlet, which he championed, Lord Horder thought a feeble affair—neither Mrs. Besant nor Charles Bradlaugh liked it—but they fought for a great principle. Lord Horder then read out a number of quotations from Bradlaugh's famous speech at the trial in 1877, and commenting upon it, said he was amazed at the thoroughness with which the subject had been studied. All objections—omitting those of religion—had been met and disposed of by Bradlaugh. His handling of debatable points left scarcely anything to add even after fifty years and his cogency and clear thinking showed how he had got to the bed-rock of the question. It was the spirit of Charles Bradlaugh, the Champion of liberty, we were toasting to-night. The Chairman, in thanking Lord Horder, asked those only to rise, in drinking the toast, who personally knew Bradlaugh. He thought that what would have delighted Bradlaugh most, was that the work he stood for was still going on. It was a motto for us—to carry on. But though much of his work had been won, freedom of speech and of the press, much had still to be done if we followed in his footsteps. The Chairman added that he thought Bradlaugh's Malthusianism was wrong, and that it was more a question of the land and raw materials being shut off than of the growth of population. He thought Bradlaugh a religious man, like Harry Snell (the most religious man in the House of Commons), and that Bradlaugh did not dislike religion as much as cruelty and injustice. He regarded emotion as dope, and had no sympathy with the comfort and consolation of religion. He saw immense changes in his own life time, and it was said of him that in his old age he had become Conservative. If that were Conservatism, he hoped that they were all Conservatives. He had served his ideal to put an end to injustice, to open any and every small portal that lead to freedom, self-determination, and self-expression.

Lord Snell, who supported the toast, in a clear and incisive speech, said that they did not lament that Bradlaugh died, but rejoiced that he lived. They rejoiced for the work he did, and for his inspiration for them. These celebrations had come at the right time for these were anxious and troubled days. It is right that they should remember the quarry whence they were hewn. We are heirs not merely to his gifts but to his example.

What Bradlaugh destroyed was inimical to human progress. Lord Snell added that if he had believed in the religion of Bradlaugh's day he would have been afraid to live. He first saw Bradlaugh when he was sixteen, and his extraordinary influence has been an abiding one—in fact he was more and more convinced of the essential sanity of what Bradlaugh stood for. Lord Snell gave some interesting particulars of Bradlaugh's personal characteristics—his passion for punctuality for example. He concluded by quoting some

fine words which were used of Bishop Colenso, adding that Bradlaugh's name was in the sure keeping of impartial history.

The Rt. Hon. George Lansbury, M.P., was the next speaker. He commenced by pointing out that he was not there because he agreed with Charles Bradlaugh, but because he believed in the right of Freethought to think what it liked, write what it liked and speak what it liked. He felt that when the more brainy person had finished there was still something more to be said. Mr. Lansbury saw Bradlaugh many times—as a youth though he wasn't always able to understand him. The first time was in 1876, when medical students tried to break up one of his meetings, and the second time, when he was flung out of the House of Commons, with Annie Besant imploring the people to restrain themselves. Mr. Lansbury thought we all wanted Bradlaugh's enthusiasm for unpopular causes—he was a doer as well as a talker. Bradlaugh did tremendous work for India as well as in other things, and Mr. Lansbury concluded by saying how thoroughly he respected the memory of Charles Bradlaugh for his magnificent services to the cause of real freedom.

It was Prof. Gilbert Murray who proposed the toast, The Future: *To the Ideal of Thorough*. He said he first saw Bradlaugh when he was thirteen years of age, and later shook hands with him at St. James' Hall. Prof. Murray said he was to talk of the Future but he was not really able to do it—the only person who could was sitting near him (Mr. H. G. Wells), but he was glad they were celebrating Charles Bradlaugh, the dogged and indomitable fighter. There were two attitudes which one could take, the conscientious party agent who said I must conciliate the people and the one who said there are helpless people voteless—I must be their voice. The latter was the type represented by Bradlaugh, and it was the type wanted for the future. His point of view was that of the knight-errant rather than that of the political agent. He thought it rather interesting that whilst many people got it definitely through their religion, Bradlaugh got it, not in spite of, but through and because of his whole-hearted rejection of supernatural religion. Bradlaugh was always ready to play his part wherever he found oppression, and so we find him in France, in Italy and in Spain. Bradlaugh was exposed to the most persistent slander, and held up to the horror of the young. But he lived it down, and became one of the most respected members of the House of Commons. Prof. Murray recalled two incidents—one when Bradlaugh, in 1876, was nearly killed by a gang of ruffians with metal pipes, because of his unorthodox views—the kind of thing which is happening now. The second was when Bradlaugh took his side in 1871 with the new French republic. At that moment "the world's most fearful curse is its armies, and our cry is for peace," and the words are as true at this moment as they were then. What we want is Bradlaugh's motto, "Thorough"—that when we sign treaties we should carry them out, that our political maxim should be that our yea is yea, and that our nay is nay.

Mr. Chapman Cohen in following, said he supported the toast with considerable pleasure, "Thorough" was the key-note of Bradlaugh's life. Had he been less thorough than he was he might have escaped many of the storms in which he figured. Had he been less conscientious than he was he might have gone to the House of Commons, taken the oath as others had done, without protest, have become a well-known member of the House, and then have passed into the oblivion that most of its members reach, and which so many of them deserve. There was about

Bradlaugh a certain simplicity and directness that was characteristic of so many great men. It was there in his early days, and it was there in his last days. As Walt Whitman said of his *Leaves of Grass*—"Whoever touches this book touches a man," so one might say of Bradlaugh. "Wherever one touches him one touches a man." He never paltered with his opinions; he never asked whether an opinion would pay; it was enough that it was in his opinion right. If Thomas Carlyle added a chapter to his *Sartor Resartus*, he thought he would recognize in Bradlaugh an incarnation of that spirit of revolt which underlay much of the progress of the world, and of that reasoned discontent which used one advance in order to affect a further one. We lived in times when Autocracy posed as the friend of Democracy, and when despotism functioned in the name of freedom, and none knew how soon one may be called upon to protect the freedom that Bradlaugh gained. If we can when that moment arrives remember that Bradlaugh lived, if we can then recall what Bradlaugh did, that he never hid his faith, and never trimmed his speech, we may enter the struggle with greater promise of success. And if we go down in that fight we shall at least bequeath to our descendants a heritage of great worth.

The last speaker was Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Bonner—who commenced by saying that after all the speakers they had had he felt even more helpless than he did last Saturday night. Speaking for his mother as well, he wished to say how moved they were at the speeches just heard, and how they appreciated everything that had been said of his grandfather. He missed one man—the late John M. Robertson—who all through his life was the most brilliant and intellectual and charming of his heroes. It was a sad blow when he died. Mr. Bonner criticized some reporters, who by taking a bit of a speech here and another there, and piecing them together, made out "interesting" results. Bradlaugh's work was not purely negative. Even his Atheism was something positive. The Chairman had overlooked his work for land reform—for Bradlaugh believed that if the land were properly cultivated, the workers would be better off.

Mr. Bonner thought if anybody wanted a brief survey of Bradlaugh's life and work, he knew nothing better than the twenty pages of last week's *Freethinker*. Bradlaugh's election device was Education, Equity and Humanity, and no man was loved more than he in Northampton. The Chairman had said that each speaker found in Bradlaugh the thing he liked best, and speaking as a schoolmaster, Mr. Bonner pointed out that Bradlaugh always said the working man required further education, which was the first thing on his election address. After giving examples of Bradlaugh's efforts to further education, Mr. Bonner concluded by urging that there was no finer motto than "thorough."

Dr. Alfred Cox, for the guests, proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman. He also had seen Bradlaugh, and remembered how nothing too bad could be said against him. He did not believe Bradlaugh was without sentiment—certainly his daughter, whom he knew so well, had it. She must be proud of the honour given to the memory of her father this evening. The gathering then broke up, slowly and perhaps a little sadly. It had been a big day in the history of Freethought, and those who were pleased most were those militant Freethinkers, the members of his own Society, who had fought side by side with him, who never wavered in their allegiance to him, and who were still proudly carrying on his magnificent work for human freedom.

H. CUTNER.

"Powder and Shot."

"BACK to the Bible, bread and beer." So runs the caption to a paragraph in the *Daily Telegraph* of September 2. For the *Daily Telegraph* is one of those papers whose editorial policy is framed to hoodwink the public with regular doses of religious propaganda. It is remarkable that during the industrial depression the profits of the Brewing industry has shown comparatively slight decline compared with those of most other industrial undertakings—excepting, of course, the armament industry. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the British nation finds it exceedingly difficult to give up such a long-established habit as beer-drinking, even in a time of unparalleled economic distress. But not so difficult, however, has it been for them to give up the habitual reading of the Bible. For, whilst we know that the Brewers will always cry "Back to beer" so long as there remains one sober man in the country for any length of time, it is highly significant that they cry "Back to the Bible," too. It cannot be denied that the British people in these days turn more readily to such works as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* for knowledge and guidance, and in that respect are less dependent on "God's word." So that if it is not for profit that Christians read their Bible in these days, it must be for pleasure of it. Since there can be but little pleasure to be had from such a pastime, compared with the countless other diversions offered by civilization, the reading that is done must be proportionately small. Why, even Freethinkers who were ever the most diligent scholars in Bible lore pay scant attention to this book from which they squeezed less sense than nonsense for their own diversion. But it does not follow that because the British nation no longer studies the Bible so assiduously as it was wont to do it is necessarily Atheistic. It only suggests that as an opiate the Bible has lost potency. An alert intelligence is no longer taken in by Bible "stories," but one that is stupefied by alcoholic excess certainly can be, a fact to which any Salvation Army captain will testify.

Are we then to believe that the Churches have now sought the aid of the Brewers' Institute in order to increase the circle of diligent Bible readers? Or is it that the Brewers have discovered in the Bible an advertising medium for their product besides providing the kind of stupidity which leads the wayward into intemperate habits? We cannot help feeling that there is a more subtle motive behind it all. The industrial classes amongst whom unemployment, low wages and poor housing have produced a terribly debilitating effect are undoubtedly in a state of social unrest. Short of direct repression with the aid of the armed forces, what are their masters likely to do to avoid trouble? It is not the first time that they have based their reliance on "Beer and Bibles." The history of the last century, shows how extensively these twin evils have been deliberately encouraged in order that the working man might be deprived of his birthright without causing a civil commotion. At the present day the Brewers are spending enormous sums of money in rebuilding their "houses." The bright garishness of the average public house in the poorest parts of British towns contrasts only too temptingly with the insanitary houses in which the very poorest live. It is an undoubted fact that the standard of living of the British working man is now steadily declining. Every month witnesses an increase in the numbers of the class whose only bright spot in life is the public house, and who are finally the victims of Christian charity. It is on these people that Christianity, backed by the Brewers, batters. Soup kitchens and outings, reading rooms and prayer meet-

ings, self-help leagues and "hope" are the most practical dispensations which God gives to the unemployed via the Christian Churches. A shallow compensation indeed, for the dirt, disease, ignominy, despair and hunger which is the common lot of thousands of men, women and children to-day.

And why do the clergy allow themselves to become the tools of unscrupulous Brewers? As the following cutting shows, it must be because they fear that to take any other course would probably bring unemployment to them if it cannot be explained by the ethical basis of their religion:—

Rev. Alva J. Shaller, liberal minister of the influential Unitarian Church in San José, California, has been dismissed by his board of directors following his protests against police treatment of strikers. Shaller objected to the rough handling of cherry-pickers on strike for a living wage, and his summary dismissal without notice followed. He is a Harvard graduate, and had been pastor of the church for three years.

The World To-morrow, September 14, 1933.

The treatment that has been meted out to Shaller is a salutary warning to those parsons who dare to interfere with the will of their real "Master."

In the main, however, the clerical apologists for the "Beer and Bible" social system are lending their aid to the strenuous efforts of the Government to maintain the equilibrium of the national resources for the benefit of those who have got most of them. As in the case of the Bishops at Merseyside, which, it is reported, has declared for Christ. We quote from the *Manchester Guardian* (September 14, 1933):—

During a ten days' "Merseyside for Christ Crusade," organized by the Anglican Church, the Bishop of Liverpool, it is expected, will address the spectators at the Everton and Arsenal football match on Saturday week, and a crowd of boxing enthusiasts at the Liverpool Stadium on the following Thursday. The Bishop of Chester will address the Tranmere Rovers and Chesterfield football match, and there will be a meeting for actors and actresses at the Empire Theatre. At the opening of the Crusade, after "services of commission" in Liverpool and Birkenhead, there will be "processions of witness" led by two bishops. It is expected that 10,000 people will take part in the Liverpool procession. There will be 50 choirs, about 200 lay readers, 200 "Crusaders," and a large number of clergy and church officers. All kinds of societies, such as the Mothers' Union, the Girls' Friendly Society, and the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts, will be represented, and there will be music by six bands. The procession will pass through the principal streets, and after a short service and an address by the Bishop in one of the City squares, will enter the Cathedral.

In addition to special meetings for parents, for women, and for young people, many open-air meetings will be held. Two hundred specially trained "crusaders" will address business men outside the City exchanges, dock labourers at the dock gates, and workers near their factories. The "crusaders" are to come from all parts of the country.

"The approach will be in quite simple and easily understood English," the Bishop told me to-day. "It will be beneficial to us to translate our opinions and convictions into language quite easily understood by the people. We are going to say that the only way out of our international and economic troubles is that we should all approach more nearly the way of life shown us by God through Christ. Half a century ago people regarded industrial exploitation and slums as inevitable, but the public conscience now revolts against exploitation, hopeless poverty, and the disgrace of the slums."

The Bishop, whichever one it was who said it, may well believe that "the public conscience now revolts

against exploitation, hopeless poverty, and the disgrace of the slums." Even that of the Minister of Health has become almost vocal, if one can judge from his declaration on the hoardings. But for our part we should prefer to see some active hands, feet and brains itching to cleanse the nation of its social sores, and preparing for revolt now in an active sense in preference to letting the public conscience continue its meandering voyage of a thousand years and more to the same end.

G.F.G.

Nineteen Centuries Ago.

[In this essay Mr. Duffer, whose innumerable literary engagements have prevented its earlier appearance, discourses with his usual vivacity, veracity, and eloquence upon the divine happening of nineteen centuries ago; an event that made the world and society the pure, clean, peaceful, happy and successful concerns that they are to-day. The abolition of war, poverty and crime is, according to Mr. Duffer, the direct, divine and inevitable result of the crucifixion.]

Like other inspired penmen, Mr. Duffer does not stop to explain how this happened. Why should mere facts hold up his torrential eloquence?

Suffice it for his readers; he knows by direct intuition; by God-sent inspiration. It is not for us to question how or why. It is surely enough for us to listen to his rhapsodic eloquence in awe, reverence and gratitude. In the following article he is at once erudite and simple, direct and profound, pious and honest.—V.B.N.]

YEARS ago, in the sweet-scented days of my pious and innocent childhood, when true Christians had large families, and were proud of it, and small incomes, and somehow "managed" on them, even though the whole family went short of food, we used to attend meetings in the remote Northern hamlet that had the honour to give birth to the future prophet of Fleet Street.

Some time I will try to paint the delight of those days; their innocent and holy pastimes, their stern Northern purity, their cast-iron Sabbatarianism, their rigid morality. But these sweet themes must wait.

On the Sabbath—a real, sound, thorough Scottish Sabbath, with three cold meals and fourteen hours of fervid prayer, praise, and propaganda for Jesus—we used frequently to sing a hymn that I have often since recalled with an emotion bordering on tears; it began:—

There is a fountain, filled with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

In all Pagan literature there is nothing to equal that, I think, for sheer beauty.

Is it not a perfectly exquisite thought that by the mere process of being washed in the blood of the Lamb of God, wrung-out by the hand of God, and hung up to dry in the Garden of Paradise, our souls are cleansed, and our lives renewed, in the sight of Him, without whose express and divine sanction not a sparrow falls to the ground, and not a cinder falls upon the doomed hide of the damned sinner?

It was the death of Our Blessed Lord, so well-authenticated in every detail, and in our days confirmed by such masters of erudition as the late General Booth and the present Bishop of London, that caused the moral revolution that is known as Christianity. Our Blessed Lord not only *conquered* sin; he *invented* it.

To Him and to Him alone is due that blessed knowledge of eternal damnation (a doctrine nowadays, alas, too much neglected) that has provided spiritual consolation to generations of true Christians and sound believers.

Think, dear reader, for a moment what this means. It was Christianity, as taught by Our Blessed Lord, that revealed to mankind the fact that, with very few exceptions, the whole human race is damnation-worthy.

Nineteen hundred years ago humanity carried-on, as happily as a pagan society *could* carry-on, without troubling itself in the least about its immortal soul.

With the advent of Christianity, the true faith (my own faith, in fact), things became different. The whole world became spiritualized; love, health, happiness, cleanliness, life itself, became subordinated to the true spirituality (my spirituality, in fact) expounded by Our Blessed Redeemer.

The few centuries of dirt, ignorance, bigotry and beastliness, the few hundred million lives blasted by fear, harried by torture, and ended by murder, are as nothing to the spiritual truths (my truths, in fact) engendered by Christian Faith.

The ignorant pagans, wise in their own conceit, had concern only for their secular affairs; their philosophers were merely wise men; they were not inspired. Compare, for instance, Epictetus and Jeremiah. Compare Marcus Aurelius with Habbakuk; and you will possibly realize, prayerfully and reverently, all that the Hebraic-Christian-Catholic-Protestant creed has done for the world.

The wretched and benighted Pagans, lukewarm to spiritual enlightenment, indifferent to angelic visitations, seldom—indeed, never—showed enough interest in divine concerns to torture each other on points of doctrine, to murder one another by way of proving their zeal for the True Faith, and pleasing their deities (such as they were) at the same time.

Christianity, the divine Revelation of the only true God (my own God, in fact), changed all that. We have to thank Our Blessed Lord, God's only-begotten Son, and his almost-equally-blessed disciples and followers, for no less than fifteen centuries of social tyranny, mental darkness, sexual suppression, international disorder and spiritual enlightenment. Where should we have been without that spiritual enlightenment? There have been attempts, I know, to undermine the True Faith (my Faith, in fact); but is it in accordance with the divine will to deprive—or even to seek to deprive—spiritual beings like ourselves of the hope of a heaven of everlasting idleness, the prospect of a hell of everlasting fire, the knowledge of a God whose vigilance in detecting "sin" is equalled only by his power of inflicting sentences of indeterminate—and, indeed, unending—penal unservitude?

Reason, common sense, public safety and political considerations demand that our holy and national creed (my own creed, in fact) be retained to maintain the extreme purity of our national morality, the unrivalled efficiency of our fighting forces, the servile subordination of our civil services, the modest humility of our working classes.

For, be it well digested, our national and divinely-founded religion (my own religion, in fact) is not merely absolutely true; it is superlatively useful; it makes the Ruling Powers of the universe a limitless Scotland Yard, with God the Father in supreme command (the Trenchard of Eternity, if I may venture the term), God the Son as Chief-Inspector, and the Holy Ghost as Leading Crime-Investigator.

With God in the skies, Lord Trenchard at Scotland Yard, the Lower Orders kept in their place, and myself as Avenging Angel of the Sunday Press, I feel that Society has nothing to fear.

All these unquestionable blessings, be it remembered, are due directly to the unique and miraculous event of nineteen centuries ago, when, by divine sanction, God Almighty's Son and Heir was publicly

executed by the Communists, revolutionaries and anti-Dufferites of their day.

All divine and earthly honour be paid to Our Blessed Lord (my own Lord, in fact), without whose divine assistance Society would crumble into bits, the earth would cease to revolve, and the universe come to a sudden end.

Without Christianity and a Christian audience I should be nowhere; now I am all over the place. And that is why the Divine Event, as the late Lord Tennyson called it, of nineteen centuries ago was indispensable to the world, mankind, society, and the sensational portion of the popular Sunday Press.

Jesus paid with his blood, and we, who follow him as closely as business permits, have been well-paid ever since. That is why Christianity is worth while.

SWAGGLIUS DUFFER.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON,

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. F. Aveling, D.Lit.—"Personalism—A Psychological Standpoint."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 9, Mr. P. Goldman—"Man and His Environment."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Buxton Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.30, John Harrison—"The Hitler Atrocities."

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove, Hammersmith): 8.0, A Lecture. *Freethinker* on sale.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, October 8, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, October 9, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, October 12, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Chestnut Grove, Balham Station): 8.0, Thursday, October 5, Mr. C. Tuson. Alivell Road, Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, October 6, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Brockwell Park, 3.30, Sunday, October 8, Mr. L. Ebury. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, October 11, Mr. E. C. Smith.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and Wood. 6.30, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine, Tuson and others. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood. Thursday, 7.30, various speakers. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, October 8, F. W. Smith and S. Burke—"An Infidel Looks at Woolwich." Plumstead, Corner of Edge Hill and Herbert Road, 8.0, Friday, October 13, F. W. Smith and S. Burke.

COUNTRY,

INDOOR.

ACCINGTON (King's Hall Cinema): 6.30, Sunday, October 8, Mr. J. Clayton.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council Schools): 7.0, Miss M. Marsh—"My Impressions of Soviet Russia."

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Sunday, October 8, Mr. Reggie Day—"The New Psychology." From Monday evening, October 9, and rest of the week, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak in the open. Further details to be had at Sunday's lecture in Godwin Cafe. Members please attend.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Bernard Shaw, Charles Bradlaugh and Christianity."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Woodside Public Hall, Glenfarg Street, Glasgow, Near St. George's Cross): 6.30, Chapman Cohen (President of the N.S.S., founded by Charles Bradlaugh): "The Real Bradlaugh." Admission Free. Donation Tickets.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Janet Chance—"The Cost of English Morals."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Picton Hall, Liverpool): 7.0, Sunday, October 15. The Winter Session will be opened by Mr. Chapman Cohen with a lecture entitled—"100 Years of

(Continued on page 663.)

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(Continued from page 662.)

Freethought: Charles Bradlaugh 1833-1933." Doors open at 6.30. Reserved seats 1s. each.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street): 7.30, Dr. C. H. Ross Carmichael—"The Black Death." A lantern lecture.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Large Hall, No. 6, First Floor): 7.0, "Charles Bradlaugh's Centenary."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Central Hall): 7.0, Sunday, October 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Charles Bradlaugh."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.0, Miss E. Moore.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON MARKET 8.0, Wednesday, October 11, Mr. J. Clayton.

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