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

Views and Opinions.

**The Holy Bible.**  
The Mohammedans called Christians "The people of the Book," and the phrase was descriptive and exact. The Christian doctrines pre-dated Christianity; so did its mythology. The virgin-born saviour, the man made God by a ceremonial death, the conflict of the incarnated God with the prince of evil spirits, the final execution and resurrection, were all in existence before the Christian Church. But to the Western world at least, the Christian religion was a faith founded upon a book, not merely a record of sayings or doings, but a sacred book, something that owed its origin to the direct inspiration of the deity. The Christian Church took the Jewish Bible for its basis, it added another book in the shape of the New Testament, and it furnished the world with one of its greatest curses. It was bad enough when the interpretations of the will of the gods were made known to man through visions or through the utterances of oracles. Like the conscientious convictions of politicians these messages from another world could always be adapted to suit the occasion, and the history of both Greece and Rome showed, not only that these oracular utterances could be conveniently changed from time to time, but that they could be made to harmonize with a rather wide toleration and a progressive development of thought. In the absence of a "sacred" book absurdity was modifiable, and a toleration of sane thought was possible.

But with the coming of a sacred book and the foundation of an all-powerful church the situation changed. The Holy Bible of the Christian religion sanctified absurdities, legalized intolerance and moralized brutality. The Christian's Bible was not merely a treatise on religion, it was also an encyclopedia of science and ethics. All that men needed was to be found within the Bible. The work of the world was not that of investigation and discovery, it became

solely that of interpretation—of the Bible. Knowledge that lay outside the Bible was unnecessary—more, it was dangerous, since it might lead men to doubt the sacred book. For centuries the philosopher and the scientist worked with the prison or the stake as a probable reward for their labours. The habit of measuring the truth of a new idea or of a new teaching by the standard of its agreement with the Bible became so ingrained that even to-day it is powerful. Within the memory of men now living it was a serious thing to propound a teaching that did not agree with the fetish book of the Church. Evolution was denounced because it was contrary to the Bible. The question of marriage and divorce is discussed by large numbers of people on the basis of whether the proposals do or do not differ from the teachings of "Our Lord." We have gained considerable liberty in these and other matters during the past two or three generations, but the shadow of the Holy Bible still lies heavy on the world.

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Thus Saith the Lord.

Secure in its divine revelation the Christian Church went to the Holy Bible for its science, and astronomers and geologists; chemists and biologists found the "Blessed Book" in the way at every step they took. The astronomy of Copernicus and Galileo, the geology of Lyell, the biology of Darwin were bitterly opposed, not because the teachings of these men were untrue, but because they contradicted "Holy Writ." The Church went to the Bible for its medicine, crushed out the medical science of antiquity, and in its place substituted cures by faith, by miracles, by a hundred and one ways which fed the revenues of the Church, and made diseases, that science ultimately conquered, endemic in every country where the Bible held sway. It took from the Bible the demonic theory of disease, and men and women were tortured to the chanting of pious invocations that they might be rid of the devils which Jesus had told them could be cast out "In my name." It found in "God's Word" the command "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," and as a commentary on that text the squares of European cities blazed with the fires that were lit to burn men, women, and children charged with the crime of intercourse with devils. The Church found in the Bible the teaching that unbelief was the most deadly of crimes and belief the most powerful of virtues, and with sword and fire and prison and stake it burned and killed until it settled intolerance upon the European mind as one of its prominent characteristics. It found in the Bible the doctrine of the divine right of kings, a sanction for slavery, the teaching of the inferiority of woman, the subordination of this world to some fancied life hereafter. The story of European progress for the past fifteen centuries has not meant merely the discovery of truth; it has meant equally



the fight against the influence of the "Sacred Book" of the Christian Church.

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#### The Nemesis of the Jew.

Those who cling most to the sacred book suffered the most. Devotion to a stupidity generally carries with it its own nemesis. The Jew gave the world the Old Testament, with its "Thus Saith the Lord" as a bar to criticism and investigation. The Christian Church added to the Old Bible, the New Testament, and, to use a simile of Ingersoll's, they fitted each other like the upper and lower jaws of a hyena. The Christian lost no time in bettering the lesson the Jew had taught him. The Jew had been frankly intolerant in the name of his one God; the Christian added two more Gods and became intolerant in the name of moral duty and social health. The Jew had an exclusive belief, but he was not very anxious whether the rest of the world was saved or not. The Christian also preached exclusive salvation, but he gave it a form which masked its supreme vice and developed an elaborate tyranny to compel the outsider to come in. The net result of the Christian addition to the Jewish Bible was to moralize intellectual vice, and to inflict upon the people who gave the Church its "Sacred Book" a long drawn out persecution to which the world can offer no parallel. The Jew suffered from the evil he gave the world. If the Christian Church had intended to make the Jew suffer for, say, inflicting the Bible on the world it could have gone to work in no more deadly a manner.

Consider the present persecution of the Jew in Germany. Here he has been robbed, tortured, killed, not on account of his bad qualities, but as a consequence of his better ones. Jews are accused of providing a greater number of lawyers, doctors, scientists, artists, and men of letters than their numbers warranted. But men do not get medical or legal degrees because they are Jews; they must earn them by their ability. They do not take controlling positions in trade or finance because they are Jews; they must earn them and hold them. The Jew at the very best has to meet the Gentile on equal terms, and very often the dice are loaded against him. Quite apart from the indecent and pathologic brutality of the German persecution, it is a persecution of the better by the worse. It is also the nemesis that the Christian treatment of the Jew has brought with it. Forced to live by his wits, the Jew has survived by outwitting his persecutors—the only way by which he could survive. Christian policy segregated the Jew, and then found instead of the segregation destroying, it preserved him. Left alone there could have been no Jewish question anywhere, for there would have been now no Jew to form the material of one.

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#### The Boomerang.

But the Jew has also been hoisted by his own petard. What he gave the Christian in theory the Christian has given him back in practice. For note that the things which Hitler and his murder gangs are doing to the Jews in Germany in 1933 are at bottom based on the principles which the Jew taught the Christian. Hitler is striving to produce what he calls a pure Aryan race. But race purity is one of the foolish myths which the Jew has insisted on in his own case. Hitler says that Germans must be an exclusive people because they are a superior people. But the Jew was before him with his equally stupid doctrine of the Jews as a people selected by God, a superior people with their own customs that must not be neglected, their own peculiar laws that must not be infringed, their own dietary laws which even prevent a Jew sitting down to a meal in the house of a Gentile. Hitler

says that no German may marry a Jew or a Jewess. But this, again, is only another phrasing of one of the most rigid of Jewish laws. Hitler is intolerant and would have nothing done save by order of himself and his gangs. But it was the Jewish Bible which said that if a man tried to get a Jew to worship other Gods the tempter should be stoned to death, and it was the New Testament that promptly capped this by promising eternal hell after death. Exclusiveness, pride of race, the forbidding of intermarriage, these are things which the Jewish Sacred Book taught the world. It is not the religious sense of man that has been shocked by German outrages; it is the conscience of humanity that has broadened and become clearer in spite of the load of the "Holy Bible" it has had to carry.

It is nothing to say that Jews have often preached tolerance where the Christian has practised it. That is true. But persecution has some curious consequences. Often enough it preserves the thing it is intended to exterminate; it may also create a sense of value of the thing that persecutors deny their victims. The Jew has often enough been found preaching tolerance while holding on to a book which is the very essence of intolerance. But the credit for this is not to be placed with his religion or his Bible. The persecution he has undergone has led not merely to a pleading for toleration, but also to the growth of a respect for something to which his religion is foreign.

I began to write these notes intending to deal with two or three things which have recently occurred in connexion with the Bible. But my pen—or rather my typewriter—ran away with me, and the things I intended to say remain unsaid. They will keep until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Grimaces of Garbett

"I thought the Church of England boasted it was on the side of Liberty."—*Hannen Swaffer.*

"Religion is nothing but a trade."—*Dean Swift.*

LIKE quack doctors, the clergy have an uncommon knowledge of the sweet uses of advertisement. They like to take things easily, but they also like to patronize new ideas and humanitarian activities. The quack doctors use the latest scientific terms, and the clergy, not to be outdone, seek to hide the ignorance of the Ages of Faith behind a showy veneer of modernity. Nor is this all, for the clergy prefer to enter the political arena when the fighting is actually over, and share in the victories that were won by better men than themselves. Sham reformers, like those clerical opportunists, have never been wanting when all danger is over. Their function is to rebuke and insult the real pioneers, and to enjoy the social, political and financial profits of this most ingenious policy.

As an example of clerical bluff, it would be hard to beat a recent outbreak by the Right-Reverend Cyril Garbett, Bishop of Winchester. Referring to the subject of slum-clearance at a Ruri-decanal conference at Alton (Hants), he frothed like Jack Falstaff:—

I would have no more hesitation in exposing the owners of the unfit houses and slums than I would the owners of houses used for immoral purposes.

The Bishop being an instructed citizen of an educated nation should know better than that. There is always something exhilarating in the infatuation of an heroic ignoramus, but this holy simplicity of the Right-Reverend Father-in-God is overdone. Does Dr. Garbett never read the newspapers, nor travel beyond the narrow confines of his own diocese? Housing schemes and slum-clearance have been going on for a decade in all parts of this country, and the Lon-



don County Council has erected thousands of houses at Becontree and Downham which have been occupied for years. Preparations are actually in hand for a further ten-years' drive in London alone involving an extra total expenditure of £35,000,000, and the new scheme will provide better housing conditions for a further quarter of a million people. Yet the Bishop of Winchester likes to pose as a bold reformer, not afraid to challenge the wicked owners of slum property. Plenty of believers in Christianity are taken in by these tactics, and honestly think that the clergy have had a share in this humanitarian crusade.

The truth is that slums have always existed in all their foulness throughout the entire Christian era and long before. The priests taught men to look towards the golden streets of "heaven," and ignored the horror of slums and overcrowding on earth. Archbishops and Bishops themselves revelled in palaces; the lesser clergy lived in larger houses than their neighbours but they all overlooked the huts where poor men lay. The fight against these horrible social conditions of the masses was not taken up in real earnest until the dawn of the twentieth century, and the clergy had nothing to do with the movements. This present century, be it remembered, is the most irreligious of the Christian era. Churches are half-empty, and only ancient endowments, tithes, ground-rents, and royalties on coal, prevent the so-called Church of England from sharing the fate of some of its rivals.

The Bishop of Winchester in his speech, said it was the duty of the Anglican Church to interfere in politics. He had better have left that matter severely alone, for it recalls this particular Church's association with Parliament. The bishops of this Church of England sit in the House of Lords, and their votes have always been recorded in the pages of Hansard's *Parliamentary Debates*. From this record alone we learn how hopelessly priestcraft is out of touch, not only with democratic issues, but with humanitarian ideals. These men-of-God voted against admitting Nonconformists to University degrees, and against the removal of civil disabilities from Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. They opposed the introduction of Free Education, and voted against the admission of women to London Borough Councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in public, flogging women in prison, or the use of the lash in the Army and Navy. Even a modest measure for the provision of seats for tired shop-assistants met with their opposition. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working-classes have been opposed by these medieval and reactionary ecclesiastics, and their sorry political record is sufficient to carry its own condemnation.

There is a suggestion of Mr. Facing-both-Ways about the Bishop of Winchester. His heart bleeds for the dwellers in slums precisely when Parliament and the real authorities are tackling the problem of housing in real earnest—but not before. Slums are a dreadful blot on our boasted civilization, but their doom seems sealed. Militarism is a far worse danger, for the air is electric with rumours of war, and preparations for war. Yet the Bishop of Winchester wags an admonitory finger at those humanitarians who are seeking disarmament. We ought to make further reductions in our armed forces, says this professional follower of the "Prince of Peace." O most impotent conclusion! If this is all that a Right-Reverend Father-in-God can get from his two-thousand years' old creed, small wonder that it has failed, and failed utterly.

So long as men's theological conceptions remain radically unchanged, so long as no new Humanism flames into being with a passionate sense

of brotherhood, and a new scale of human values, so long will men seek peace in vain. The Christian Religion is a great illusion, fostered by the priests, and the clergy themselves fail invariably to get to grips with vital affairs. In this changing kaleidoscope of modern civilization the comforting tale that "God's in his heaven" leads nowhere, because the alleged deity is never seen, and the priests merely act as middlemen for a consideration. The deity is transformed at will to suit the occasion. In times of war he is depicted as the god of battles; in a period of quiet he is dubbed the "Prince of Peace." If a British Republic were declared to-morrow morning it is conceivable that the priests would alter the title of their deity from "King of Kings" to "president of presidents." line up and sing the "Marseillaise," and pass round the offertory bags.

Militarism is a most terrible curse. During the last world-war twenty millions of lives were sacrificed, and large tracts of the earth laid waste for years. The dead warriors represented the very flower of the manhood of an entire generation. What did the Christian priest do? Did they protest against this destruction of brains which might have carried on the intellectual tradition; or of the killing of men who might have enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and have discovered casements for human pain, and solutions for social danger? They did not. Instead, they blessed regimental flags, christened battleships, and prayed for the contending troops of the various armies. The women of Europe, "like Niobe, all tears," mourned their dead fathers, husbands, lovers, sons; and the army-chaplains, who had conducted services at a safe distance from the fighting lines, strutted around in officers' uniforms and drew officers' pay.

This world-war showed clearly and unmistakably the hypocritical nature of the priests of the Christian Religion. The failure of Christianity is too pronounced to be glossed over. The priests were too immersed in their own dogmas, too obsessed by self-interest, to see that Brute Force had usurped the place of Reason. It is the paradox of paradoxes that the woeful welter of preparation for war is once again going on in almost every corner of a world that professes to worship a deity who, at times, commanded his followers not to kill and to obey his precepts of non-resistance and forgiveness. Nor will matters be improved whilst Right-Reverend-Fathers-in-God raise their hands in warning against more armament cuts, nor whilst suave commercial travellers smilingly book orders for machine guns, torpedoes, poison gas, and all the other horrible weapons of carnage, which threaten the welfare not only of the nations, but of civilization itself.

MIMNERMUS.

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## Colenso's Jubilee.

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(Continued from page 702.)

*The Pentateuch Critically Examined* showed the idea of its Mosaic authorship to be utterly untenable. Moses himself was an unhistorical character; Joshua entirely mythical. The popular idea of biblical chronology was completely dispelled. The Book of Chronicles was not an historical narrative, but a complete fiction, put together for a special purpose. These were some of the conclusions arrived at by a purely internal criticism, by comparisons and deductions drawn from the plain texts of the books themselves. There were few that were original to Colenso; the same difficulties he admitted had occurred to many, and would occur to all who brought a fair and searching criticism to bear on the subject.



There is little that was proved by Colenso that is not accepted to-day by anyone who has even a theological reputation to value or uphold. But the Oracles of God spoke more clearly and very differently in 1862. Then Bibliolatry was rampant. A man like Charles Kingsley not only believed that all the incidents recorded in the Pentateuch were historical facts, but believed that the Hebrew Scriptures had "during three or more milleniums been preserved by special Divine interposition from mutilation, interpolation and correction." The principal of one of the most important theological colleges in the kingdom, the Rev. Dr. Baylee (another of the men, by the way, to be rescued from oblivion as a parson "who debated with Bradlaugh"), well typifies the then prevalent belief, in his "Verbal Inspiration":—

Every word, every syllable, every letter is just what it would be had God spoken from heaven without any human intervention. Every scientific statement is infallibly accurate, all its history and narratives of every kind are without any inaccuracy. The words and phrases have a grammatical and philological accuracy such as is possessed by no human composition.

The book proved a bombshell. It was in the first place the work of an unmistakable Bishop, one of those believed to be the special receptacles of that Divine Grace which had trickled down the ages through the agency of ecclesiastical rites, and emanating originally from the Son of God himself. The orthodox had devised by that time a fairly workable technique in dealing with those whom they were pleased to term "infidels"; these could be sneered at, persecuted, misrepresented and maligned, and it would be accounted to them for righteousness, any particularly vicious manifestations being simply attributed to excessive enthusiasm. There seemed little left to do in Colenso's case but to intensify the bombardment and bring in, in addition, the new charge of "disloyalty." It is peculiarly significant, however, to note that at the outset the entire machinery of the Church of England, as represented by its prelates, was directed towards the possibility of preventing the publication of Colenso's book. It was only when this concentrated effort failed that there commenced the campaign of "scurrilous and unscrupulous invective, unexampled in the controversy of this country, and almost in the history, miserable as it is, of religious controversy itself."\*

Bishop Welldon, in the *Times*, has just been reminding us of the state of theological erudition in Bradlaugh's day, and it is natural perhaps for him to feel for it both sympathy and respect. Mark how the repositories of the "Queen of the Sciences" acquitted themselves in dealing with Colenso. The Primate of all England (Archbishop Longley), raised his studious head from the tomes of theological profundity and found time to write that Colenso's objections were "for the most part, puerile and trite; so puerile that an intelligent youth who read his Bible with care, could draw the fitting answers from the Bible itself—so trite that they have been again and again refuted." He also classed the readers of his book "into three ranks or categories, the ignorant, the half-informed, and those who rejoiced in anything which can free them from the troublesome restraints of religion." Bishop Wilberforce (Oxford), spoke of his arguments as but "the repetition of old and oft-answered cavils."

Bishop Browne (Ely), charged Colenso with reckless and irreverent treatment of records "which have for 3,000 years been accepted as a true and heaven-inspired history." A declaration was prepared and

\*Dean Stanley at a meeting of the S.P.G. in 1880.

signed by 10,000 clergymen, to the effect that the Bible from cover to cover was the Word of God, and that the punishment in the next world was everlasting. Replies by the hundred poured from the press. One of the most weighty, in pounds avoirdupois, was the *Speaker's Commentary*, written by a convocation of most learned theologians. So very divine was this production, so far away in fact from such mundane things as formal or any other kind of logic, that no possibility of Colenso being right was ever entertained; it was special pleading from beginning to end. Of the quality of this spate of polemic, the writer of Colenso's life, Rev. Sir G. W. Cox, in his introduction, bears valuable testimony:—

Of the way in which the Bishop of Natal's work, taken as a whole, was received by those who felt, or declared, it to be their duty to oppose him, I have felt myself bound to speak with the utmost plainness. Wherever I have met with misrepresentation or evasion, shuffling, equivocation, subterfuge, or downright falsehood, I have not looked about for qualifying phrases which may tend to leave on the reader's mind the impression that a thing is not what it is. If in some instances this plainness of speech should seem to affect the personal character of any of his antagonists, the blame of it must lie on the evil of the systems which those antagonists have been resolved, at all costs of truth, honesty and Christian love, to uphold as absolutely faultless and perfect. The measure in which this fatal resolution threatens to sap the very foundations of morality in what is called the religious world, and has lured into falsehood men otherwise upright and honourable, is appalling indeed; and until this plague of unverity is arrested, it is vain to look for a healthier state of things.

This is plain-speaking, but it was to the honest cleric, naturally, that the honest Colenso appealed. The record tells that if the Christian Clergy of that day were burdened by the troublesome restraints of religion, the habit of truth-speaking was not one of them.

In a letter written from England in 1863, Colenso points out that, with the exception of the Bishop of London, the Bishops, headed by the Bishop of Oxford, "have cut me dead." The Bishop of Oxford was Samuel Wilberforce, fairly well known in Church circles as Soapy Sam, and who will probably be remembered, for quite a long while yet, as the man whom Huxley pilloried before the British Association, telling them he would prefer an ape to such an ancestor. His friendship with F. D. Maurice (hailed very recently as "The first of the Modernists") terminated, this cleric writing that if he could not believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch he could not believe in God at all or in the "powers of the world to come." The reputation for liberality in theology seems to have been easily attained in those days. In 1863 a Committee was appointed by the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury to examine and report upon the Bishop of Natal's Criticism of the Pentateuch. Archdeacon Denison, the Chairman, distinguished himself by the following pronouncement:—

If any man asserts such things as are asserted in this book, Anathema Esto! Let him be put away. I have no doubt—at all events I hope—that there are many here who have not read the first part, and I am sure there are many who have not read the Second Part.

of the work, that is, which they had met to consider, and on which they were about to pass sentence! Colenso's restraint was remarkable. He had one obsession, and that was the Truth as he saw it. How he felt, can best be gathered by an extract from a private letter:—



Speaking generally the cowardice of men in England is something amazing. The truth will prevail, I doubt not; but it is painful to me how little love of truth there is among those from whom one hoped most.

The Bench of Bishops wishing to broadcast the benefit of that Guidance which, by the Divine Pleasure, it was their special prerogative to give, sent a Round Robin to Colenso asking him to resign his See. Only one signature was withheld from this document, that of Hampden, Bishop of Hereford. In view of the recent ecclesiastical decisions in the famous *Essays and Reviews* case, which established the permissibility of certain doctrines in the Church, Colenso considered himself not only justified in remaining, but he believed that by yielding he would be guilty of treachery to his convictions. Mortified by the result of this ecclesiastical judgment in England at that time, The Bishop of Capetown (Dr. Gray) said, "if he, Bishop Colenso, is tolerated, the Church has no faith, is not a true witness to her Lord. I am prepared to go through anything, and endure any loss in defence of the Bible as the Word of God, and of the faith once for all delivered." As Metropolitan, he instituted the trial of Colenso at Cape Town (which Colenso, being in England, did not attend), the result of which was that Colenso was deposed from his living, and declared, in the language of the Prayer Book, "a heathen man and a publican." They did not manage, however, to turn Colenso out of his Bishopric. The legality of his position was fully established in England and he remained, much to the chagrin of the Fundamentalists, Bishop of Natal to the end.

The learned divines were all at sea, as usual. It was Colenso who was right; it was William Ngidi, the Intelligent Zulu, who was right. In an emergency of this kind, the more dignified Clergy showed both fallibility and brutality. Those who are not hampered by theories of Revelation simply note the fact as one more illustration of a symptom which follows in the trail of real belief in the Christian religion. It is to such a paper as the *Church Times*, with its perhaps logical leanings towards sacerdotalism, that the Colenso case presents, or should present, a problem. It is difficult to understand how those who consider themselves liberal theologians to-day, accepting all the conclusions of Colenso's biblical criticisms, can refuse to acclaim Colenso as a Christian saint who pioneered the way to a clearer and truer form of belief. Why should the *Church Times* say "curious!" when they see Colenso's name suggested for honour in the year 1933? Far be it for us to come to uncharitable conclusions, but it may be that in the desire to bury Colenso there is hidden a much stronger desire to bury the part played in that controversy by the Church of England by Law and God established. Why should we be told indeed if there is any real joy in their hearts, that at the time of his death, "he had become quite insignificant?" There are the plainest of circumstances in connexion with the last years of Colenso's life to account for whatever elements of truth there may be in this statement; but they are not circumstances which detract at all from the high valuation of Colenso's sterling qualities. Rather do they heighten that valuation.

(To be concluded.)

T.H.F.

#### DESIGN IN NATURE.

Small Boy (to the curate at Sunday-school outing): "Please, sir, Miss Smith says will you go to her at once; she's a mug short."

## Bradlaugh and War.

LETTER in answer to an invitation to speak at a Peace Demonstration at Milan:—

January 5, 1889.

I am honoured by your letter of the 1st of January, which reaches me this morning, inviting me to take part in a great international meeting in favour of peace, to be held in your historic city on the 13th inst. Unfortunately, it is physically impossible that I could be present, as it has been for some time arranged for me to address three meetings in Manchester on that day; otherwise it would have given me great pleasure to personally co-operate in your most laudable demonstration, which I trust may be very successful. It is most terrible that at the close of the nineteenth century all Europe should be like an armed camp, and that the industry of the toiling millions should be so heavily handicapped in the struggle for daily bread by the enormous and constantly growing cost of the military equipments of the several countries. If the peoples of Europe could be induced to unite to compel permanent disarmament, the to-morrow of Europe might be happy indeed; but, unfortunately, national aversions, dynastic policies, and personal ambitions have all tended, during the last forty years, in the mischievous and disheartening direction of increasing readiness for war. I have always pleaded for peace. I hold war is a most fearful demoralizer of human kind. I congratulate your Committee on identifying itself with such a declaration for peace as your meeting proposes to make, and you may rely that any help I can give you in this country with tongue or pen will always be given against war and in favour of the settlement of differences between nations by international arbitrament.—Yours most sincerely,

C. BRADLAUGH.

## Images of God.

"THE proper study of mankind is man," wrote Pope. Philosophers of all ages have endorsed this dictum, but they have forgotten that old saying that too much familiarity breeds contempt. It would be instructive to hear the verdict of a completely unbiassed observer on man and his work. Probably the founder of Christianity wished his followers to have such an unprejudiced opinion when he advised them to become as little children.

But let us try and form such an opinion; to put ourselves in the place of a complete stranger to our world. If such a stranger visited the earth, his first thought would surely be: "What noble race of demi-gods resides in this fair star?"

Imagine his transportations of delight at the greatest and fairest of our achievements; the ancient civilizations of China, and India, and Japan; the Turkish, Arabic, and Persian civilizations of Western Asia; those of North Africa; and the brightest jewel in the crown of our fair earth, the brilliant European Culture, the glory and grandeur of Western civilization!

Think of his eager questions; his anxiety to learn the history of the rise of that mighty power that has made the name of Europe loved all over the earth, that has made the rest of the world earnest students of European art, literature, science, industry, and, above all, that quickening of the spirit that comes from the only true ideals, the ideals of the Christian religion. He would learn of its humble beginning of the message given to the chosen people—a people though lowly and even savage, a people without art, science, or literature—and yet vouchsafed a revelation from God himself!

How rapturous would be his praise of such excellent but humble people, and their still more excellent God! Would he not think this Earth, this tiny spot of dust, to be one of the most favoured in all the countless bodies of the universe? Can we, who are so familiar with its



greatness, splendour, and magnificence, can we judge of the effect on a stranger in our midst?

When this stranger reads of the message to mankind in the New Testament he would surely exclaim: "I know now why Europe is the moral leader of mankind; why the lesser-favoured races look upon them as their natural protectors and rulers." A glow of joy would kindle in his bosom at the unselfish generosity, the sublime indifference to self, the noble idealism, that makes the European sweat and slave in tropic suns and arctic snows, for nothing except the advancement and enlightenment of the backward nations. Sad it is indeed that custom has almost prevented us from seeing ourselves as we really are!

Our visitor would, of course, be interested in our daily life in Europe. He would be eager to learn of the joys of our existence. What exclamations of wonder and joy would break from him after surveying our industrial system! He would be conducted through our great works, the steel and iron works, the coal pits, the immense docks, the great factories. Surely he would be impressed by the superb organization and intelligence shown in furnishing a livelihood for our people? Would not the work of our bankers and industrial leaders convince him of man being the veritable image of God? And not a graven image either! He could hardly doubt it.

The spirit of Christianity peeps out in all Western Institutions. But there have been departures lately that must make many of the faithful uneasy. Take unemployment and health insurance. The sincere Christian cannot but feel that these two measures are not in accordance with the ideals of Christ as propounded in the gospels. Did not Jesus say: "Take no thought for the morrow." And the Christian was enjoined to observe the lilies of the field, "which toil not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these." Yet these two measures, and many more as iniquitous, have been foisted on Christian peoples, of this and other countries, in the name of progress. No wonder there is so much industrial unrest about. How different to the good old days when people took less thought and vegetated with the love of Christ in their hearts!

It is only in Europe that any effort has been made to humanize war. The Christian nations of Europe have held many international conventions to regulate war, and prevent the more barbarous practices. Before the great war, poison-gas was prohibited by international agreement; but unfortunately the way the war progressed made it impossible to keep the agreement, and poison-gas was, with great reluctance, introduced. To-day the prejudice against poison-gas has evaporated; and it is seen that poison-gas, properly used, is a distinct advance, rendering war less horrible and bloody. No longer will the bodies of men be torn and destroyed by shrapnel and machine-guns; the unfortunate victims in the next war will merely be wafted gently into the next world by breathing air mixed with a little gas. It will almost be a pleasure. What an advance on the old system of wounds and blood and mess! We have got bloodless surgery, and painless dentistry; now, thank God, we are going to have bloodless warfare.

But with all these advantages, it is sad to think that the Christianity of to-day is diluted with the stream of modern thought. Christianity is not what it used to be; perhaps it never was. Consider how happy was the life of the masses in the middle ages, when Christianity was supreme in all its pristine purity. Yet without Christianity we could never have attained the degree of civilization we have. Think of all the other religions in the world, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Hinduism, what have they done for the people who profess them? Christianity not only provides a sure passport to heaven, but it is a guide, thank God, to success in this life. The European Christian has obtained the best parts of the earth: "Blessed are the meek," said Jesus, "for they shall inherit the earth." The stranger would notice that.

IDRIS ABRAHAM.

## Acid Drops.

There is one item to which we ought to have called attention before, but it has lost nothing in the keeping. The Roman Catholic *Universe*, in its issue for October 13, prints a note on a meeting of "The Catholic Woman's Guild," held in Manchester. Bishop Hensaw urged Catholics to train themselves so as to "thwart the spread of militant Atheism," and a Mrs. Kemball stressed the need for Catholics to take their places in secular societies and permeate them with Catholic principles. We are not quite sure whether Mrs. Kemball by "secular" means societies such as Branches of the N.S.S., or merely societies of a non-religious character. But in any case the issue is the same. Catholics are to join a society for one avowed purpose, but actually for another. They are to profess to believe in the objects for which the society they have joined works, but all the time to work for its destruction. Well, so far as we know there is nothing markedly anti-Christian in this conduct. But we wonder whether people who give this advice have ever reflected upon such a phrase as "A living lie?"

Dean Inge is liked neither by rabid evangelists nor by rabid Anglo-Catholics. He is, of course, hated by Roman Catholics. The other day he said, "I cannot imagine that we shall go back four hundred years and grovel before an Italian priest." We are glad that Dean Inge used the word "grovel." Can any sight be more sickening to a normal man than a mass of people grovelling in front of a Cardinal or a Pope—or, for that matter before a statue of Mary or Jesus? What exactly is the difference between this kind of grovelling, and that performed by primitive savages before their witch-doctor? Yet a supposedly normal English journalist in a reputable Church paper actually complains of the Dean's use of the word "grovel," and adds, "This sort of thing is as deplorable as it is offensive!" Does he mean to suggest that the revolting sight of a crowd of men and women on their knees before a priest isn't "grovelling"?

When the Mayor of Southend walked to his seat in St. Mary's Church, Prittlewell, only half the congregation stood up. Canon Ellis Gowing, the Rural Dean, fortunately happened to be officiating, and he did his duty nobly as befitted a cleric of the Church of Henry VIII. "Did they not know," he rebuked the sitters, "that the Mayor was representative of the King?" No one knows to what depths of ignominy the English lower orders would sink if it were not for the guidance of the Dignified Clergy.

Apropos of the habit of modern people of attending church in any sort of attire (approved apparently by the Bishop of Exeter and the Dean of Canterbury), someone points out that it is "the spirit that matters." Nevertheless, he adds, it is open to question whether those attending in the spirit of worship to the King of Kings would be likely to do so dressed in clothing which they would not wear when offering personal homage to an earthly King or meeting anyone whom they desired to honour. This appears to assume that the "King of Kings" subscribes to, and approves of, the notion of the human animal that "homage" should be paid to earthly Kings, and that a certain style of clothes is the "right and proper thing" for doing homage in. That is rather unlikely, in view of the fact that God has ordained everybody to be born in the nude. It is arguable that the only proper way of doing homage to the King of Kings is to appear in one's birthday suit—just to convince God that one has not "dressed up" in order to impress him, as one might try to impress an earthly King.

Borrowed from *Punch* :—

DOUGLAS FINANCES.

Cemetery.—We have carefully considered the fees charged for opening and closing and bricking of graves and also prices charged for the sale of grave spaces, and



desire to call the attention of the Council to the advisability of referring this matter to the Public Amusements Committee for further consideration."—*Manx Paper*.

We often wondered how angels (bless their dear wings!) received the appellation of *Saint*. It seems, according to a Roman Catholic paper, that "The angels are addressed as *Saint Michael*, *Saint Gabriel*, etc., because they also were raised to a supernatural state by means of sanctifying grace (which made them holy or saintly), and by corresponding with this grace, the good angels now enjoy the Beatific Vision, which is the reward of holiness." Could anything be more sumptuous? We now realize that even angels in heaven have degrees of rank. Plain Gertie or Tommy Angel is all that is allowed there until they enjoy the Beatific Vision, when presumably God showers his birthday honours around, and thereafter some are called *Saint Gertie* or *Saint Tommy*. Roman Catholicism must be congratulated on once again laying bare the beautiful secrets of heavenly and angelic procedure.

On the banks of the Wade River in New Zealand, a new Gospel Ship is nearing completion. It has been made entirely by a Mr. Beavis. It is forty-one feet long and constructed out of woods obtained in the bush and cut and shaped by axe, saw and plane, and a chisel made out of an old file. For auxiliary power Mr. Beavis will instal a hand-driven propelling gear of his own design. On every timber he has cut out a text from the Gospel. He proposes to sail to Palestine shortly in this craft, and expects to be there in time to witness the fulfilment of certain biblical prophecies. We were in doubt about the seaworthiness of the craft until we were reassured by the carving of the texts. That was a brain-wave. In all kindness we would suggest that his chance of a pleasant voyage might be enhanced by adding a few swastikas to his decorations; and he mustn't forget a couple of black cats as travelling companions. Even then we still have a few misgivings as to his landing safely in Palestine. Should he do so, however, it is good to feel that he will be in any amount of time for the prophetic "fulfillments."

"A woman's crowning glory is her hair," must be a thoroughly pagan sentiment, for whenever a woman wishes to enter Church for communion with her Creator (who ordained that she should come into existence *sans* hat, *sans* everything), she is required to cover her head. True any improvisation will do, as we learn that one young woman, on being denied entrance to one of our large Cathedrals, promptly pulled off one of her stockings, and rolled it round her head. It sufficed. Such tomfoolery seems to be spreading, in other directions. The Wilneccote Burial Board have been recently preventing women from entering the public cemetery to pay respect to their dead on the grounds that they were hatless. The officials of this Board are without doubt pious, but their fundamental decency we doubt.

A new novel of Mary Borden, titled *Mary of Nazareth*, is having what is called a "good press." The *Times Literary Supplement* gives it high praise, and the publisher's announcement states that "not a single reviewer denies that it is a beautiful, sincere and moving piece of work."

Now let us hear what the *Catholic Herald* says about it:—

The reviewer of a novel on the life of our Blessed Lady, Ever Virgin and Mother of God, speaks of the "courage" of a woman who produced this vile attack on Our Lady's Virginity and Divine Maternity.

It will suffice to give our readers an idea of this product of a perverted brain, whose courage is a combination of ignorance and virulence. She says that Our Lady is not Virgin but the Mother of other children as well as of our Blessed Lord.

There are those who say, "we are heading towards Rome." It is good to feel that there are lower depths of moral degradation to which it will be necessary to sink before that unhappy event is consummated.

At the Annual Conference of Modern Churchmen, Canon Harold Anson spoke on "Creative Worship." He believes that when the rooks say, "Caw, Caw," they are "giving expression to worship." Perhaps so. In any case Christians say so when *they* are doing so! Canon Anson illustrates his point by referring to a pump in his vicarage grounds which has been useless and out of date over a century. But the Ecclesiastical authorities insist on this useless lumber being painted and maintained, although the water is supplied from other sources. Also says the candid Canon, "there are many churches where the clergyman has for many years felt that he has nothing either that he wants to say or people to hear. Yet he is obliged to preach twice every Sunday, and large sums of money are used in maintaining him in a position which he knows very well to be of little value to anyone."

Sir Raymond Unwin wonders why modern countries should be so uncomfortably crowded when there is endless room in the world. Perhaps one reason might be, we suggest, that modern Christian countries have endeavoured to put into effect the advice of Holy Writ—"Be fruitful and multiply." Incidentally, it may be added that the Roman Church is doing more than its share towards making modern countries "so uncomfortably crowded." Perhaps the uncomfortable crowding might be made passably tolerable, if the type of person which the Church encourages to multiply were not of such low mentality.

A correspondent in the *Universe* says:—

The Catholic Scientists exist; the difficulty is to know who they are.

Appropriate to this, we have before us a report of a speech given by Francis P. Garvan, before the Friends of the Catholic University of America. He refers to some statistics published in the *Scientific Monthly* by Drs. Lehman and Witty. It appears that whilst 20 per cent of the Church Membership in America is Roman Catholic, few of the 303, recognized as outstanding scientists, are known to be Catholics. Mr. Garvan says Messrs. Lehman and Witty draw false conclusions from the facts when they write "The conspicuous dearth of scientists among the Catholics suggests that the tenets of that Church are not consonant with scientific endeavour." He affirms the Catholic people are doing "splendid work" for science, and he "need cite only one example." The synthesis of commercial rubber is based upon the work of the Reverend Julius Nieuwland, an alumnus of the Catholic University. "Blow, blow, ye trumpets, bang ye brasses!" "Who are the Catholic Scientists," asks the *Universe* writer? Echo answers—the Reverend Julius Nieuwland.

Those who are, on the late Lord Birkenhead's advice, studying "invective," should see a leaderette entitled "Lansbury and Revolt," in the *Catholic Herald*:—

We have more than once or twice called especial attention to the subversive and infamous principles which this man tries to spread in the guise of zeal for religion and morality.

For he is nothing but a blatant political hypocrite.

He now wants young men to refuse to be ready to defend their country, and wishes a "general strike" against war.

And his attacks on Japan are wholly and entirely due to sympathy with Soviet Russia, the tyrant power of the world.

When we get inside the minds of these blatant humbugs, what whited sepulchres they are sure to be.

Notice what a good patriot the Catholic Church is in this our England. It is part of the policy of the Holy Roman Church to be good patriots in *every* country in which they are propagating their religion and their kind. It is one of their methods of ingratiating. And note how



cleverly the writer diverts possible criticism from "religious" quarters for any harshness of language, by carefully modelling himself upon the language of Jesus—"Gentle Jesus, meek and mild."

Observe, in turn, how the Good Catholic bangs the patriotic drum in *America*. In the pamphlet by Mr. Garvan, referred to above, he asks his audience, and readers, to compare the actions of Mark Twain and Walter Scott as to paying their debts

with the present arrogance and immorality of Neville Chamberlain . . . The billions we will lose are nothing. The destruction of the sanctity of all contracts, international or domestic, is a serious thing, and will inevitably follow, but the destruction of the moral standards we have received from our fathers and from our Church, and which it is our obligation to pass on to our children, unsullied and unstained, will surely threaten the loss of our immortal souls.

*Catholic Herald*, please copy!

What is required, says a Liverpool reader of the *Daily Herald*, is a generation of young people who will know why they vote. One is rather sceptical about that requirement. What politicians of all schools of thought really want is a generation of young people who can be persuaded to vote in a particular fashion. Certainly, none really wants a generation of young or old people, who are independent thinkers with the capacity to discriminate between rival catch-cries. Politicians of all schools seemed to have learned something from the Christian religion and Church and carried it into politics. They endeavour to get accepted the notion that their particular nostrum is the whole truth, and that every other is "wicked" untruth. They also strive to inculcate intolerance and hatred towards the politicians and party and creed professed by their opponents. Looking at the antics of our politicians, great and small, no one could say that the Christian religion had had no effect on them.

We admire Dean Inge's latest heresy! Writing on "The Church in the New Testament," he makes a bold suggestion: the family of Jesus "did not believe in Him while He was still alive. In spite of this, their kinship with the Founder gave them a great position, and there was even a possibility that kind of Khalifate might have been established in the family of Joseph and Mary. They became a reactionary element in the Palestinian Church."

The Catholics will love the Dean more than ever now. Fancy the surviving Apostles, willing to "square" the B.V.M. and her hubby—who were incorruptible sceptics—turning up at the local church committee meetings to pour ridicule on the suggestions of St. Peter. "He was our son and we ought to know," must have been an unanswerable challenge to theories of the divine origin, and resurrection of "our own boy, Jesus."

Anglo-Catholics are never tired of denouncing Protestants in no unmeasured terms, and so they are particularly indignant (or pretend they are) with Hitler's latest Christian organization. Although he is a good Catholic, "he has planned to make the Protestant churches a branch of the civil service," under Herr Muller, a bigoted and fanatical anti-Semitic jingo. Hitler declares this church is "the Church of the German Christians—that is to say, Christians of the Aryan race." Naturally the "genuine" Christians in Germany, and particularly those who are not Protestants, are making feeble protests, and claim that no Church can be truly Christian which "excludes converted Jews." It is all a pretty kettle of fish, and ought to prove to even our mildest Freethinkers, that never more than now is the necessity of militant Freethought propaganda.

Our pious contemporary, the *Church Times*, gives a striking example of the utter uselessness of Jesus Christ in modern life. On the whole of its leaderette page in

the current issue, which deals (and often very well) with the political situation at home and abroad, and other leading issues, there is not a single mention of "Our Lord and Saviour." We wish some thoroughly orthodox Anglo-Catholic would explain of what use is a God or a Saviour who does absolutely nothing? Or One to whom it is useless to refer to when dealing with the complex problems facing civilization to-day?

"The Bishop of Durham," says a lady Buchmanite, dealing with his recent attack in this silly movement, "cuts no ice in the Groups." Of course not. No amount of ridicule prevented the Salvation Army from roping in hundreds of thousands of converts—and, of course, millions of pounds from the truly faithful. The sillier the cult, the more tenacious are its believers, and so far, if Dr. Buchman is making converts, it is only from those who are "genuine Christians" in the first place. What chance would he or any of his followers have with Freethinkers? How many "Unbelievers" follow him? What is the good of talking about a "London Crusade," if the only converts are Christians to begin with? The truth is, of course, that revivals of any kind merely bring back a few straying believers to the fold, and make no impression whatever in those who are really outside. And all "revivals" eventually die—as indeed, all religion must in the end.

## Fifty Years Ago.

JOSEPH SYMES VISITS FOOTE AND RAMSEY.

I WAS permitted to see the prisoners the full regulation time; but what a sight! Only our faces were visible to each other, and we were kept from four to six feet apart the whole time. There is an apparatus fitted up for the purpose in one room of the building. Stalls are arranged along a short passage, in appearance outside like the separate baths in a public bath-room. The cell they put you in is square, the side opposite the door consisting, for 2ft. 6in. or so from the roof downwards, of a stout wire grating. A similar grating constitutes the roof, which was not high enough to permit me to stand upright. On my left hand was a window, and in front of the grating two boards approaching each other to within eight inches or so, furnished an aperture through which you could look out of the cell into another aperture just like it, two or three feet off, and through that aperture into a cell somewhat like your own, only without a grating, in which you saw the face and bust of the friend you were visiting. The only communication possible is confined to language; nor was speaking very audible at times, I perceived.

Now what had I done, thought I, to be treated like this? I gave up my living more than eleven years ago and plunged into poverty for conscience' sake. And since then I have uttered and written only what I honestly thought, and what I deem to be of service to my fellow men. "The very head and front of my offending hath this extent; no more." And my friends: what have they done? They were not only treated with the same indignity to which I had to submit; but they have been shut up in that building, denied what real men most value—their liberty—for many months. I was permitted to leave when the regulation time was up; they were compelled to remain. And what have they done? Just what honest men in their position could not help doing. They are imprisoned because they were too honest to please the hypocrites in Church and State. Foote and Ramsey are suffering because they told the truth. They deserve honour and recompense; they are treated like felons. Honest men did not send them to prison; an honest Government would long since have released them. Only roguery, malice and hypocrisy could punish them for what they did.

The "Freethinker," November 4, 1883.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**B. L. BOWERS.**—The cuttings are not without interest. We may point some moral with them should the opportunity arise.

**"SANDY" CARMANGAY.**—We are sending on two Secular Burial Services; also will continue with the paper. Thanks for good wishes.

**G. F. LAWS.**—Book sent. You sent enough to cover the postage. Pleased to hear from you.

**DAVE SMITH.**—We still have some copies of the Ingersoll Volume in hand, but we advise a speedy application in case we cannot repeat the offer.

**W. A. ELVIDGE.**—Thanks for books, which we found most useful. *The Naked Truth* has been forwarded to Mrs. Elvidge.

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

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

The National Secular Society's Office is at 52 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

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

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

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

Sunday afternoon last provided wretched weather at Hull, but in spite of this there was a good audience to listen to Mr. Cohen's address on "Charles Bradlaugh." There was no mistaking the interest taken in the address, and the lecturer received quite an ovation when he sat down. Mr. Gould, Secretary of the Hull Sunday Society occupied the chair, and introduced the speaker in a brief speech that was admirable both in tone and matter. A very good summary of the lecture appeared in the *Hull Daily Mail* for October 30.

Now that the Bradlaugh Centenary meetings are now nearly at an end, it is pleasing to report that the meetings and other functions have had the effect of definitely attracting attention to the Freethought movement in this country. A greater interest is being taken in the N.S.S. by both existing members and also by outsiders. We hope that all readers of this journal, whether members of the N.S.S. or not, will not fail to take advantage of the moment.

Our notice of the new edition of *Infidel Death-Beds*, in last week's issue was very curt, and as a consequence inadequate. In addition to a number of notices of noted Freethinkers who have died since the last edition of the work, and some who were omitted who ought to have been included, Mr. McLaren has added an entirely new section, the Christian and Freethought

view of death, and the conception as held by the Greeks, Romans and other peoples of antiquity. There is also a short chapter "Some Christian Death-Beds," which will be found both interesting and entertaining. The work is well printed on good paper and cloth bound. The published price is 2s. By post 3d. extra. It is a book which on account of its biographical and bibliographical importance should be in the hands of every Freethinker and of as many Christians as possible.

We are glad to hear that a crowded hall welcomed Mr. McLaren on his visit to Manchester on Sunday last. His subject was "A Freethinker's Interest in World Politics," and we are not surprised to learn that his address was listened to with the deepest interest and appreciation by those present.

Unfortunately no preliminary notice of Mr. McLaren's visit appeared in these columns. This is entirely the fault of those who should have sent the notices to this office. We cannot be expected to know by some kind of instinct what lectures are arranged, and where lecturers are going.

The Lecturer to-day (November 4) at Manchester, will be Mr. S. Cohen, who will speak in the Clarion Cafe, Market Street. The subject will be "The Intellectual Crime of Religion." The lecture will commence at 7.30.

Some splendid work is being put in by the Glasgow Secular Society, and local Freethought is gaining notice and strength in consequence. Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak in the McLellan Galleries, on Sunday, November 19, and a Social in connexion with the visit will be held in the D and F Rooms, Glasgow Cross, on the Saturday evening, November 18, at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Rosetti will be present, and is looking forward to spending an enjoyable evening among old and new friends. Tickets 2s. each, can be obtained from the local secretary, Mrs. J. D. Macdonald, 149 Stanmore Road, Glasgow, S.2.

A Stockton-on-Tees saint suggests that Freethinkers in the area should get together for mutual intercourse, and possibly the formation of a Branch of the N.S.S. The idea is a very good one, and we wish that Freethinkers all over the country would see to it that their district is represented in the Freethought world by a Branch of the N.S.S. Mr. A. Forbes, 1 Page Terrace, Norton, Stockton-on-Tees, will be pleased to receive communications from any local Freethinkers willing to assist in that area.

In the columns of the *Nottingham Journal*, Mr. W. B. Columbine, thus acknowledges his personal debt to Bradlaugh:—

During 1874 or 1875 I heard Bradlaugh lecture on, "Is the Bible True?" For some time previously my mind had been gravitating more and more towards religious unbelief, urged along by the writings of Darwin, Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, and even by sceptical leading articles in old *Nottingham Journal*, but all these utterances were indefinite and indeterminate, and I could find no sure foothold either for or against Christianity. Bradlaugh gave me the certainty I was looking for, and that lecture marked a turning point in my mental life. He knew what he meant and said it. He brought the whole subject down from the Olympian heights of science and philosophy to the bedrock needs and perplexities of the average man in daily life. The clouds and darkness of hesitating utterances and polite evasions melted away before the thunder and lightning of Bradlaugh's oratory.

In du Maurier's famous novel, *Tribby*, there are several passages which would imply that the author was far from being orthodox. But as it is often unfair to credit a novelist with the sentiments of his characters, we wondered whether any reference would be made to du Maurier's religious views in his only published biography, by Mr. T. Martin Wood. This writer quotes Miss Sichel's *Life and Letters of Alfred Ainger*—Canon Ainger being a life-long friend of the great *Punch* artist. "They were akin," she says,



"yet had strong differences . . . Ainger was the French Huguenot and du Maurier, the French sceptic . . . Both men were gifted with an exquisite kindness . . . du Maurier was the keener and clearer thinker of the two. He had the wider outlook and the fewer prejudices."

Which is not surprising if du Maurier was a French sceptic. His editor on *Punch*, Sir F. Burnand—a Roman Catholic, by the way—said of du Maurier, that "his religion was that of his French *confrères*, you will find it in the artistic sketches of the men and women in *La Bohème*." This is rather vague, but had du Maurier's religion been a religion, it certainly would have been blazoned out by his friends.

As it is, living in the hypocritical and typical English puritan atmosphere of Victorianism, the famous writer and great artist that George du Maurier proved himself to be, was perhaps forced to some reticence on questions of religion, but the truth about his opinions was well known to his intimate friends, and he himself settled it for those who have eyes to see in those exquisite lines which conclude *Tribby*:—

A little work, a little play,  
To keep us going—and so, good-day!  
A little warmth, a little light,  
Of love's bestowing—and so, good-night!  
A little fun, to match the sorrow  
Of each day's growing—and so, good morrow!  
A little trust that when we die  
We reap our sowing! And so, good-bye!

## Annie Besant and Religion.

### I.

It was on August 30, 1891, that Annie Besant delivered her last speech to the members of the National Secular Society. She had been their comrade for over sixteen years. She had shared with them privation, obloquy and insult. She had also shared with them the glorious gospel of Freethought and all that it connoted. Her magic voice and beautiful presence, her wonderful oratory, her grasp of detail and extraordinary power of putting her subject so that the least lettered of her audience could understand, and finally her devotion and help to Charles Bradlaugh during some of the most difficult years of his life, had made her perhaps the most beloved of all their leaders. She had appealed to their heads, but the appeal went also to their hearts, and it was their hearts which almost stood still in the deathly silence which ensued as she said:—

You have known me in this hall for over sixteen and a half years. You have never known me to lie to you. My worst public enemy through the whole of my life never cast a slur upon my integrity. Everything else they have sullied, but my truth never; and I tell you that since Madame Blavatsky left, I have letters in the same writing and from the same person [*i.e.*, from a Mahatma]. Unless you think that dead persons write—and I do not think so—that is rather a curious fact against the whole challenge of fraud. I do not ask you to believe me, but I tell you this on that faith of a record that has never yet been sullied by a conscious lie . . . It may be said, "What evidence have you besides Mme. Blavatsky's statement?" My own knowledge. For some time all the evidence I had of the existence of her teachers and the existence of those so-called "abnormal powers" was second-hand, gained through her. It is not so now; and it has not been so for many months; unless every sense can be deceived, unless a person can be at the same moment sane and insane, I have exactly the same certainty for the truth of these statements as the fact that you are here. Of course you may be all delusions invented by myself and manufactured by my own brain. I refuse—merely because ignorant people shout fraud

and trickery—to be false to all the knowledge of my intellect, the perceptions of my senses, and my reasoning faculties as well.

I have purposely given this extract from her speech—which brought tears into the eyes of many of her old friends—because it more or less gives the keynote, in my opinion, to her long life. She had joined the Theosophical Society two years or so before. The glamour of Madame Blavatsky and the *Secret Doctrine* had overwhelmed her. And when Madame died, the letters which the old lady had received, "precipitated" from the Mahatmas, the "Masters" in the wild recesses of Thibet, still came to Mrs. Besant in exactly the same handwriting which she knew so well. They were still being "precipitated" by occult power, and Mrs. Besant was as certain of the fact as she was of her own self. She was absolutely right, and she always was at any point in her long and, whether we like to admit or not, wonderful career. And if at any time afterwards, she was proven to be wrong—for she admitted later, for example, that the Mahatma letters had been written by W. Q. Judge—she always had definite excuses. It was to truth that she swore allegiance—"the one loyalty to truth, I must keep stainless," is how she put it. And perhaps she always felt that—at any one moment—she never swerved from that loyalty.

It was religion in some shape or form that was ever present to Annie Besant. Her father was certainly an unbeliever, her mother was Church of England, and Annie was educated by a sister of the famous Captain Marryat, in some kind of Nonconformist Calvinism. At the age of fourteen she commenced "to haunt church services," as one of her biographers notes. "She knelt before the altar rail thrilled at being part of the pageant. She brought to her confirmation all the pent-up ecstasy of her lonely girlhood. The Bishop touched her bowed head and passed on. She burned and shivered as under the touch of a celestial lover." (*The Passionate Pilgrim*, by Mrs. G. M. Williams). She preferred the high-church service and would even worship before lighted candles in her own room as before a shrine. She even fasted and performed penances—like self-flagellation. And it is a curious fact that she even emulated so many of the love-denied nuns and female saints by praying to a kind of mystical bridegroom, Christ. Here is one of her prayers:—

Oh that I could embrace thee with that most burning love of angels. Let Him kiss me with the kisses of His mouth, for thy love is better than wine. The King hath brought me into His chambers. May the sweet and burning power of Thy love, I beseech thee, absorb my soul.

The curious association of adolescence and religion was thus exemplified in Annie Besant (*née* Wood), and it is by no means certain that a good deal of her subsequent life was not motivated by sex-disappointments. Her ardour in the many movements which claimed her was quite likely merely sublimation, but, of course, quite unconsciously so.

At all events her marriage to the Rev. Frank Besant was a tremendous failure. She entered it with a rare ignorance of the marriage state, its duties and obligations and contact with this typical mid-Victorian parson gave her no peace of mind. Religion, and particularly Christianity, in practice, seemed on quite a different plane than when seen through the eyes of a young adolescent girl on her knees alone before a shrine. The mystic Christ, the Beautiful Bridegroom of female saints, seemed to dissolve into a mere magic word, at whose sound the evils which surround us ought to disappear, but do not. The Rev. Mr. Besant, instead of being a Christian saint, turned out



to be rather a very ordinary husband with the kind of vision which distinguished mid-Victorian men generally, and clergymen in particular. A parson's wife had "duties," and Annie seemed to be particularly ignorant, not only of them, but of a good many things she ought to have known also.

For my own part, I cannot altogether blame Mr. Besant for the subsequent tragedy. He did his best according to his lights, and Annie hers, according to her light. We are too apt to infuse 1933 "advanced" thinking into purely domestic problems of the '70's of last century. It must have been a terrible shock for Mr. Besant to find his wife with ideas of her own far in advance of her surroundings or his own clerical vision. He could not understand her constant religious questionings. Was Christ divine? Were the Gospels in harmony with each other? Was hell a reality? Was the Atonement true? Cannot we see how such questions must have shocked a thorough-believing parson steeped in the Victorian tradition. Can we blame him if he tried to be firm with his young and rebellious wife?

And so the inevitable happened. First, Mrs. Besant went to see the Rev. Charles Voysey, the Theist, who also had rebelled against the Church, and he introduced her to Thomas Scott, who, while also a Theist, was an extremely broad-minded heretic, and the publisher of a large number of Liberal-Theological pamphlets which, though often strongly anti-religious, always had an air of respectability about them never surrounding those issued by any militant Freethought body.

It was just the kind of atmosphere Mrs. Besant had pined for, and before long she was writing some pamphlets of her own and published by Thomas Scott in his famous series. At the same time she was not without doubts about her own doubts, and so she decided to consult Dr. Pusey. Needless to say, Dr. Pusey was horrified at her "blasphemies." It was her duty to accept the Church's teachings without question; it was not a woman's duty or right to question at all. That was, so to speak, the last straw, and Annie Besant wrote her pamphlets and horrified her husband when he saw they were "by the wife of a beneficed clergyman." The first was *On the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth*, and a copy was sent to Walter Besant, her husband's famous novelist brother (he had, in conjunction with James Rice, just written *Ready Money Mortiboy*), and who was, according to Annie, himself a sceptic. He kicked up an awful row, in which poor Frank Besant saw perhaps for the first time, the direful consequence of marrying a woman with a mind of her own.

It must not be thought that this pamphlet was written without some previous training. Mrs. Besant had read assiduously and avidly, all the theological literature she could lay her hands upon. Whether at the same time she also read definite Freethought works, I cannot tell. She does not mention any in her *Autobiographical Sketches*, except Renan's *Vie de Jésus*, and it is obvious that this work must have influenced her as it deals with the same subject. She read Strauss later, and also Scott's *English Life of Jesus*, together with Spinoza.

Mrs. Besant's first essay reads maturely. There is no trace of the amateur; that marvellous fluency which distinguished her speech is apparent in all her writing. It has not the music of Foote, nor the poetry of Ingersoll, nor the direct blunt statement of Bradlaugh. Mrs. Besant could saturate herself with a subject and then reproduce it in her own way through her mind with wonderful facility. In any case, this first essay is a great achievement for a parson's wife of twenty-five years of age. She knew the various arguments

which Christians use to prove the divinity of Jesus, and most effectively demolished them. She showed the impossibility of deducing the claim that Jesus was in reality Jehovah from anything said by his contemporaries; she proved that the Jews always denied that Jesus was the subject of prophecy in the Old Testament. She contrasted the "miracles" of Jesus with similar ones performed by Elijah, Elisha, Joshua and Moses—who were not "divine," thus disposing of the proofs of the deity of Jesus through "miracles." She points out that the treatment meted out to his mother by Jesus, "jars upon an attentive reader," and his attitude towards opponents "was marked with unwarrantable bitterness." She examines his own sayings and claims and proves that "his knowledge was limited and was therefore human, not divine."

There is no support for the Christian theory in the teaching of the first three gospels. He referred to God as "Your Father," or "Our Father," and "there is none good but one, that is, God"; and says Mrs. Besant, "We find Jesus praying to God, relying on God crying in agony to God, asking why God, his God, had also forsaken him." He could not be on his own showing the God he prayed to, and therefore was not divine.

H. CUTNER.

(To be continued.)

## Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

### XIX.—THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION.

DURING the last year or two, there has been a disposition in many newspapers, of a rather definite political flavour, to conduct a quiet "tendencious" campaign against the private member's right of putting "Questions" to the House. Every now and again little paragraphs have been appearing laying down the fact that the printing alone of such questions costs annually so many thousands of pounds, and suggesting that it would be better to have the loquacity and inquisitiveness of the private member curtailed, when economy is so all-important and when there was so much more important business to attend to. There is some danger here of another valuable liberty being filched from us; a danger made possible by public apathy, but which those who are obsessed with the all-importance of their own political panaceas, and the relative unimportance of anything else, are unfortunately doing everything to assist.

The Parliamentary Question in Bradlaugh's skilful hands became a potent instrument for reform. Every question, however innocent it may have sounded, brought to light and tended to right some "privilege," some injustice, some public nuisance or scandal. Bradlaugh went fishing, noticed a pollution of the waters, and the result was that the habit of dumping refuse in Loch Long and Goil by Chemical Companies came to an end. Bradlaugh read a handbill and a "Grand Conservative Fete" was not after all enlivened by music from the Band of Her Majesty's Dorsetshire Regiment. Bradlaugh opened his mail and from all over the country letters were read complaining of the abuse of officialdom, the illegalities of Employer as against Employee, the misdeeds of Magistrates, Coroners, Financiers and others, and if they contained matter which the State could help to mend, Bradlaugh would take care that the House of Commons heard about it. They heard about it not once, but kept on hearing about it until the abuse was righted or mitigated. Though it must be admitted the Bradlaughian question was very soon recognized to be of the type not easily swept aside, and they were soon almost uniformly treated with both respect and (relative) despatch.



It is unnecessary to give samples from bulk from Bradlaugh's questions; the difficulty is to find any that do not serve as illustrations of his vigilance and of his acute sense of propriety in every matter which involved constitutionalism or where public bodies or private individuals abused their powers, in which the State could rightfully interpose. It is useful, however, to point out that Bradlaugh suffered in his day the exact treatment that is accorded to-day to those who voice inconvenient subjects; the "free press" played ducks and drakes, as far as it was feasible, with his activities. In the *National Reformer* for April 4, 1886, the following statement appears:—

I understand Mr. H. Fowler, answering my question as to the overpayment to the Duchy of Cornwall, to admit my allegations of fact, but it is not easy to get the matter against the Duchy of Cornwall properly ventilated. All the London papers, except the *Times* omitted the question and answer on Friday, and the *Times* only gave it in part; while Monday's question and answer are suppressed by every one of the London, and also, I believe, by all the provincial papers.

Things are no different to-day. The same happened with a vital question asked by Mr. Lansbury on the occasion of the Russian trial of the Vickers' employees. That gentleman asked in what respect the Russian system of not allowing foreign counsel to represent prisoners differed from English procedure. Our Free Press did not approve of the question.

Bradlaugh's work in the House of Commons, in Debates, on Committees, in helping forward, in a thousand and one ways, what he considered to be desirable legislation, was colossal. Well may Morley say he was the greatest private Member of his time. And another way it was clearly shown was by the value he attached to the private members' right of putting Questions to the House.

T.H.F.

## Is Priestcraft Dead?

ONE has only to study the pontifical utterances of Church Leaders, and to contemplate their arrogance as dictators, to realize that the answer to this question is in the negative. But with the advance of knowledge and the enactment of secular restraints they do not now dwell so much upon the ambiguities and absurdities of their "sacred" books.

It is after all but a small circle of persons in any religious communion which determines what is and what is not to be proclaimed from the pulpits of that communion. That small circle consists of the "bosses" of the communion. Though the wrath of God is not emphasized as it was 100 years since, the rank and file of preachers by their sermons leave it to be inferred that there is a hot time in store for the unbeliever after death. Implicit in every evangelistic address is the warning, "Wait till you come to die!" Christian propaganda is always reinforced by lying stories of the deathbed repentances of Atheists. Many ignorant and credulous persons, who never take the trouble to enquire and think for themselves, believe that Voltaire, Bradlaugh and Ingersoll embraced the Cross of Calvary on their deathbeds.

A great phrase in use with present-day theologians is "spiritual values." By this it is intended to convey that all enlightening, elevating and purifying influences can only derive from the Christian faith. Every effort is made to belittle the work of great Secularist authors and teachers by contrasting it with the pretended assurance and certitude of a supernatural Revelation. It is accepted by all Christians

that if Christ be not divine, Christianity as a religious system falls to pieces. That is to say, Christianity can only stand on the assumption of Christ's miraculous incarnation, actual existence and visibility in the flesh as a human and divine being "who knew not sin," his performance of miracles, his Crucifixion, Resurrection and subsequent Ascension to the right hand of Almighty God.

But do Judaism and Mohammedanism claim no spiritual values? Surely they do! The Monotheist and the Unitarian really have more justification from history and tradition than the Polytheist and the Trinitarian. And there have been theists like Thomas Paine, who, while rejecting as supernatural and infallible the sacred books of all religious systems, and founding their conception of the God of the Universe upon the teaching of Nature and Natural Laws alone, have realized the importance of "spiritual values," though not in the limited and restricted sense and understanding of the Trinitarians.

For after all that is what it comes to. The Christian idea of spiritual values is limited and restricted. Beauty, goodness and truth have ever been the quest of the greatest human minds. These things are the true spiritual values in the pursuit of which humanity may become invigorated and happy. The modern religionist, however, occupies himself in going about and plastering up at the entrance to avenues which he conceives must not, according to his precious faith, be explored, ominous notices bearing the legend: "No Road this Way."

The "simplicity as it is in Jesus" is so simple that a separate body of men set apart to proclaim the Gospel of Salvation through Christ to their fellow-beings have to spend several years in some theological seminary to equip themselves for that task by learning Hebrew and Greek, and indulging in metaphysical speculations. The more capable ones who "get into the know" may later on be associated as bosses with their teachers who combine the function of spiritual instructor with that of political intriguer, and who trim the sails of their denomination to secure as big a share of social power as possible. A Bishop of the Church of England lately stressed the importance of religion being regarded as a social and corporate thing as well as a personal thing. That is to say, people may be converted in units or tens, twenties, hundreds or thousands. Priestcraft plays cunningly upon the mob instinct; and in point of fact the "authority" of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist and Congregational Churches is established by the ruling of the majority of the herd. And these bodies are the most insistent on bringing the secular power more and more into line with their pre-conceived ideas as to how the country should be governed. They are for ever appealing to the "temporal" power to give effect to their notions of what ought to be; and shouting from platforms that Parliament must do this, and Parliament must do that. State Churches can, of course, use more subtle means to keep themselves dug in; and do not have their emissaries clamouring at popular meetings. But the fateful thing is that the average politician is so docile in his submission to the religious pulpiteer.

The priest and parson must cater for public support like the veriest showman. Piteous appeals from simple believing laymen are often to be read in the correspondence columns of the Press, pleading that the old Gospel should be preached with all the former fervour instead of literary and philosophical essays. These are bad days for the fundamentalist, especially in fashionable Nonconformist Churches which are graced (or disgraced) with clever, up-to-date, polished, well-read ingratiating Higher Critics; gentlemen who hold forth so charmingly in the drawing-rooms of



successful soap boilers and beef importers; and who have such efficient means of securing the faith (or subservience) of the proletarians who boil the soap and man the cattle ships!

A Scriptural writer says somewhere, "And the poor have the Gospel preached unto them." Was this "wrote ironical" one wonders, for at any rate the Christian Churches of to-day don't get beyond doing anything more than that for the poor, far less giving any efficient service in helping to clear up the world's economic mess. Any one who is honest with himself must confess that on an international survey the predominant thing that strikes the eye is, on the one hand a wealthy greedy minority, and on the other a poor uninstructed fawning majority—too insensible in mind to the fervent calls of a small section of their number to be up and doing, because dulled and deadened by an age-long acceptance of the deliverances of priests, who promise a squaring of accounts beyond the grave.

IGNOTUS.

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### "Omniscientists."

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(Concluded from page 708.)

FATHER KNOX thinks that you may draw from history any "moral" you please. Perhaps you can if you are prepared to distort the matter in order to bolster up your ready-made assumptions. This practice is, of course, notorious among Romanists. Professor Coulton in *Romanism and Truth*, proves this abundantly from the correspondence or other writings of Roman Catholics themselves, the charges amounting to garbling, invention, deceit and mendacity. "In certain cases," wrote Lord Acton to Gladstone, "It is made a duty to lie"; and he did not do much to soften the blow by adding, "But those who teach this doctrine do not become habitual liars in other things." The most comprehensive and devastating statement, however, is that of Desjardins, a French priest, who roundly asserted that the more competent a scholar is reputed to be within his own community the more justification there is for suspicion of his real scholarship, and that the higher you go in the hierarchy the less you can trust a man's word where the interests of his denomination are concerned—one reason being that the said hierarchy bestows the chief prizes on the subservient. All this recalls Hilaire Belloc's preposterous notion that "true history is history written in accordance with Catholic Philosophy."

We can, however, point to one principle, germane to the present discussion, which has been sufficiently established to command the assent of practically all historians and other thinkers who are fairly free from bondage to ancient and medieval superstition. In the words of Professor Bailey, of New York, "There is one issue which we may take as definitely settled . . . religious toleration. We are all agreed that Plato and Augustine were wrong in making unbelief a punishable crime." This plain truth, however, is not accepted by Romanists.

In an earlier book Father Knox had the audacity to tell us that when Roman Catholics claim religious liberty in this country they are appealing to our principles and not to theirs, and (2) that if and when they are in sufficient majority they "will not shrink from repressive measures in order to perpetrate the secure dominion of Catholic principles among their fellow countrymen."

To what length Father Knox would go we can only surmise. But we know that Thomas Aquinas, the "Angelic Doctor" (whose philosophy was a few decades ago recommended by the Pope as a basis for the theology of the Romanist clergy), tried to justify the savagery of the death sentence for the heretics: "As the civil power puts to death forgers of false money and other criminals, so may the Church still more clearly take away the life of one who corrupts and falsifies the faith by which alone eternal salvation may be obtained." We

know also that this savage feature appears in papal Bulls, and that some highly-placed Roman Catholics still advocate it.

In a book published only twenty-three years ago, and specially commended by the Pope, Cardinal Lepicier declares with much circumstance that "heretics" and "heresiarchs," must be put to death. And in spite of attempts at concealment in Protestant or Rationalist countries, there can be no doubt that the doctrine is included in the "principles" of the Romanist Church. The conclusion is in accordance with the blunt statement of Lord Acton (a Roman Catholic) that "he who accepts the Primacy with confidence, admiration and unquestioning obedience must have made terms with murder." (For further information on this point see Coulton's *The Death Penalty for Heresy from 1184 to 1921 A.D.*)

This ancient Hebrew and medieval Christian barbarism will probably have to be fought systematically in this and some other countries, as also will the preposterous claims to the superiority of the church over the State, to the control of all education, to the censorship of literature by means of the *Index of Prohibited Books* and so on.

As is well known, the number of Roman Catholics in this country is increasing; and as a result of their opposition to birth control the (proportionate) increase is certain to become much greater, with, of course, a parallel increase of voting power. A bishop has already boasted that Romanists can turn any election by their votes. Their schools and pupils are also constantly multiplying, so that more and more of our future citizens are being intensively trained in an especially gross system of superstition and its degrading accompaniments. The "Vigilance Committee" is working for the alteration of the matter contained in history text books, and is bringing pressure to bear on local education authorities to use only books which give—on various topics—the partisan Romanist account. We are also informed that Roman Catholics are everywhere trying to get our ordinary Press under their control.

It is quite clear, therefore, that we are faced with "a concerted attack by methods of intrigue against the habitual liberties of Englishmen," an attack which is rapidly becoming a general menace to intellectual and moral progress, and to the rational direction of our political and social life. Our motto in the struggle must be the incisive exclamation of Voltaire, *Ecrasez l'Infâme!*—Crush the Infamous Thing.

J. REEVES.

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## Correspondence.

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### THE BRADLAUGH CENTENARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Having attended the Bradlaugh meeting at Friends' House, and read several accounts of the dinner, I am mainly impressed by the fact that most of the speakers had very few opinions in common with Bradlaugh. Bradlaugh had four intense convictions. He was an Atheist, a Malthusian, an Individualist, and a Republican. The chairman at the dinner, Col. Wedgwood, seems not to have held any of these opinions. I doubt if Mr. Lansbury holds any, or Professor Murray. Lord Snell is certainly neither a Malthusian nor an Individualist, and I am not sure where he stands on the other points. The general impression left by speeches is that Bradlaugh was a very fine man, but did not show much judgment in choosing his opinions.

The Committee should have tried to get speakers who actually agreed with Bradlaugh. I particularly regret, for two reasons, that his Individualism was unrepresented. First, there was no point on which he entertained deeper convictions. The only speech I heard him make was devoted to that subject, and it was impossible that any man could have spoken with more intense conviction. His two debates with Hyndman aroused as much attention as anything in his life.



My second reason is that he brought out points of supreme importance which are constantly ignored. His favourite argument was that if the State owned all printing presses, freedom of the press would be an impossibility. This has been proved to the letter by our experience of broadcasting. Here we have a government monopoly which absolutely excludes freedom of discussion. It equally excludes it in Russia and Germany, the only difference being that the subjects allowed to be discussed vary in different countries. A monopoly of any means of expression makes discussion impossible. It may be inevitable that somebody should monopolize broadcasting, but it is certainly not necessary that the State or anyone else should own all the printing presses or public halls. Such a proposal is utterly reactionary, and it is a pity we no longer have a Bradlaugh to drive home such points. I speak without prejudice, as I am in favour of many changes of a socialistic character.

R. B. KERR.

[We quite appreciate Mr. Kerr's feelings, but the object of the Centenary Committee had in view, was to unite in the proceedings not merely those who agreed with Bradlaugh in any or all of his opinions, but also those who admired him for his devotion to principle and his unconquerable courage in upholding what he believed to be right.—Ed. *Freethinker*.]

## National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD OCTOBER 27, 1933.

THE President, Mr. C. Cohen in the Chair.

Also present: Messrs. A. C. Rosetti, Clifton, Le Maine, W. J. W. Easterbrook, Ebury, McLaren, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted, and the Monthly Financial Statement was presented. New members were admitted to Birmingham, South Shields, Blackburn, W. London Branches, and the Parent Society.

The President reported that meetings addressed by him at Leicester, Manchester, Glasgow, and Liverpool, had been exceptionally well attended. Lecture reports from Messrs. Brighton, Clayton and Whitehead were also noted.

Details connected with Newcastle, Bradford, Stockport, Swansea, Sunderland, Derby, Brighton, South London, Fulham, N. London, National Peace Council, and East Lancashire Rationalist Association were dealt with. A proposal for further advertising the N.S.S. was discussed, and adjourned until next meeting, pending further enquiries. Preliminary arrangements in connexion with the Annual Dinner in February, 1934 were sanctioned. The meeting then closed.

Next Executive Meeting November 24.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

## Obituary.

SUSAN ROLF.

THE remains of Susan Rolf were cremated at Golders Green Crematorium, on Monday, October 30, 1933. Death took place on Thursday, October 26, through heart failure, following asthma and bronchitis. Her age was 70 years. She survived her husband, George Rolf, by a few months, his death, as recorded in these columns, took place on April 4 last. Both were thorough Freethinkers, with a lengthy membership in the National Secular Society, which brought them into much active work on behalf of the Freethought movement. In later years they became members of the Parent Society at Headquarters, and were members of that body till death. As in the case of her husband, also cremated at Golders Green, a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti (Secretary, N.S.S.)—"The Ethics of Persecution."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Gerald Heard—"Is Pacifism Possible?"

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, November 6, Mr. E. A. Wilson—"Eugenics."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.30, Gilbert A. Foan—"Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?"

#### OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (The Grove, Hammersmith): 8.0, Mr. E. T. Bryant.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Aliwell Road, Clapham Junction): 8.0, Friday, November 3, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. Wood and Tuson. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Messrs. Collins, Hyatt and Bryant. Wednesday, 6.30, Messrs. Collins and Wood. Friday, 6.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, S. Burke—"God Makers."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0, Mr. Earnshaw—"Problems of the Age of Plenty." Members bring your friends.

BURNLEY (Labour Rooms, Grey Street): 7.30, Tuesday, November 7, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Peoples' Hall, Delamere Street, Chester): 7.0, H. Lancaster (Liverpool)—"Charles Bradlaugh."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, A Discussion—1914 to 1918. A Retrospect—Mr. Jack Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. R. C. Garry, M.B., D.Sc.—"The Place of Physiology in Education." *Freethinker* and other literature on sale at all meetings.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury—"Christian Cant."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, The Ven. Ananda Kausalyayana, Bhikkhu, Maha Bodhi Buddhist Mission, London—"Buddhism and Secularism." As this is the first visit of a Bhikkhu to Liverpool, all friends are invited to come along. *But come early.* Doors open 6.30.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Hall 5, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. Anderson—"Faith v. Reason."

PRESTON BRANCH: 7.0, Sunday, November 5, Mr. J. Clayton—"Friends of Soviet Russia."

SEAHAM HARBOUR BRANCH N.S.S. 7.30, W. H. Copeland—"The Scientific Idea of Force." For members only.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Central Hall): 7.0, Sunday, November 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HETTON (Assembly Room): 7.30, Monday, November 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Labour Hall): 7.0, Tuesday, November 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Co-op. Hall): 7.0, Wednesday, November 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Charles Bradlaugh."

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (Central Hall, Lower Hillgate): 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Nationalism, Internationalism and Freethought."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, Mr. A. Flanders.



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