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

Views and Opinions

Our Freedom

RECENTLY we cited from the organ controlled by that pocket Hitler and champion film-clown, Sir Oswald Mosley, the declaration that Fascism stood for freedom. A sensible man would have left it at that; but the article went on to explain, and then it was clear that it was freedom as understood in Germany, of which country Sir Oswald's paper is a pronounced champion. In Germany Fascism attempts to found a new religion, and only comes to terms with Roman Catholicism because it must. In England it is enough to declare that "Fascism alone can save Christianity from disintegration." This can be done because "behind Christianity there will be the weight and power of the organized State." This will, of course, bring us back to the sixteenth century, or earlier, when only one form of religion was tolerated. Ministers of religion will be "entitled to hold their own political beliefs"—but since only political opinions that are in accord with the welfare of the State (as conceived by the gallant Sir Oswald) will be permitted expression, it does not appear to mean more than is in operation in Germany to-day. Above all, ministers of religion "must not attempt to influence their congregations (politically)." A preacher must preach religion (Nazi religion) not politics. And one may assume that if a preacher does try to teach his congregation politics, other than politics of the Nazi kind, the gangsters of the Fascist army will administer a proper Hitlerian "beating up" in order to indicate that only one kind of freedom is permitted in this tight little, bright little island that will then be ruled over by "Ozzy Mo" the First.

* * *

More Freedom

Another example, involving more important issues than those implied by this ridiculous Fascist movement, has recently arisen, and here Professor Harold

Laski is the principal figure. Professor Laski is a professor in the London School of Economics, which is part of the University of London. In the course of a visit to Russia Professor Laski gave a lecture, in which he is reported as saying that the gentlemen of England had a habit of altering the British Constitution when it suited their interests to do so. I am not now concerned with whether Professor Laski was right or wrong in what he said, or whether he was correctly reported. The issue is much larger than is implied in these considerations. Professor Laski is well able to take care of himself, and it is not the first time that an attack has been made on him by certain papers and certain individuals who are shocked that a Freethinker and a Socialist should hold a post in the London School of Economics, even though that institution is part of a university which owes its existence to Freethinkers who were anxious that one should exist in which all tests, save that of ability, were absent.

So papers such as the *Morning Post*, the *Telegraph* and the *Times*, have been asking whether it is fitting that a man holding the opinions Professor Laski holds should occupy a post in an English University. In addition to this the Principal and the Vice-Chancellor of the University thought it necessary to send a letter to the press, in which they state that the University is not responsible for the private opinions of any of its professors. No sensible person ever thought it was, although it is indicative of the quality of the freedom existing in our educational institutions that there should have been needed this declaration. But the more serious statement is made by these gentlemen that if Professor Laski is correctly reported, then the matter will be dealt with by the appropriate authority when he returns home. This means, if it means anything at all, that Professor Laski may hold any opinions he chooses so long as he does not give them voice. But if he holds strongly heretical opinions in either religion or economics, then he must keep them to himself both in public, and in his capacity as Professor in London University. As usual it is honesty of expression that is the real offence. Professor Laski may have whatever opinions he cares to have, but he must follow the example set by so many of our public men and say nothing about them. Heresy plus hypocrisy may count unto a man for righteousness. Heresy plus honesty will certainly open the way to trouble. The hopelessness of the mentality displayed by these critics and censors almost frightens one. They count it as a tribute to their magnanimity that they say they have no wish to interfere with the opinions of Professor Laski—so long as no one knows what they are. "Be honest," they say, "and you may be kicked out . . . Be a hypocrite and you may reap the highest honours." It is a rule of practice admirably adapted to bring the scum to the top.

Under Which Flag?

The issue here raised is very much greater than is implied in its reference to Professor Laski. It raises the whole question of the duty of the teacher, the freedom of the teacher, and, of necessity, the future of the pupil. Is it the duty of the teacher to educate or merely to instruct? Is his first and chief duty to those who appoint him, or to those who are placed in his care? These are important questions, whether we are considering the case of children or of youth. Take a teacher who is instructing a class in that somewhat amorphous thing, the British Constitution. Is he to satisfy himself by pointing out its beauties and enlarge upon its superiority to any other Constitution on the face of the earth, or is he to point out how easily it may be twisted to serve sectional interests, to become an instrument of oppression instead of security for all, and to give concrete illustrations of these important considerations? If he is a teacher of anthropology and recognizes, as all anthropologists must, that every religious idea can be traced back to the mistaken inferences of the primitive savage, is he to remain silent and permit his students to go out into the world filled with erroneous ideas? In a world where every institution is open to question, and is made the subject of question, is the school and the university the only places where they are not to be seriously questioned? To talk of the teacher's duty to those who appoint him or to the Government, is rubbish. His duty is to something more important and more permanent than either Governors or Governments. Both of these convert themselves into agents of obscurantism when they make it their business to see that a teacher does not open the eyes of his pupils to the tentative and experimental nature of every institution, from the throne downwards. A teacher's first duty is to his students, and the last thing that should be done, and the worst thing that can be done, is to make him the instrument of established ideas and institutions, with no other object in view than their perpetuation.

* * *

Why not Trust the Teachers?

As affairs stand it is taken for granted in most educational institutions that a teacher must hold opinions with which those in authority agree, or if there is latitude allowed, it must operate within not very liberal limits. First in the order of those affected are the teachers in elementary schools. Here they are supervised by local committees, whose education is not of the highest order, and sometimes is deplorably poor. A teacher's opinions may be suspect, and if they run to either religious or economic heresy he may find promotion impossible and his position difficult. The result is that scores of the better type are driven out of the profession, and others are prevented entering. Schools are staffed with a percentage of men and women whose incapacity for the serviceable training of those committed to their care is shown in the little value their tuition is to the pupils.

In the higher schools and universities the policy is a little more liberal because the material is not so ductile. Pupils whose ages range from twelve to sixteen or eighteen cannot be so easily controlled, but in the main the education given follows the same plan. The avowed policy of making education a ladder from the gutter to the university is carried out, but its aim is not exactly what those who coined the phrase desired. The object is to turn each pupil out a "good citizen," and in the official view a good citizen is one who accepts things as they are, and gives the powers that be the minimum of trouble.

It is an old story, but additional chapters are always being added, without any very great develop-

ment of the plot. Schools and universities, instead of being the places where new ideas are most welcomed are the last places in which they are heard. London University itself might never have existed had the older ones been less impervious and less hostile to new views. And if some people could have their way it is clear that London would become as much the "widow of sound learning" as was Oxford in the days of Bruno.

It is a truism to say that stupidity never learns, because it would not be stupidity if it did. But its significance is often overlooked just because it is self-evident. Otherwise we should note that our educational policy tends to keep out the best teacher and to let in the worst. In the dawn of civilization education was of necessity the task of the "Old Men of the Tribe." It was their duty to see that the tribal lore was handed down unchanged and to watch lest the feet of the young generation strayed into strange paths. Education to-day is still struggling to carry out the same policy. The Old Man of the Tribe is still trying to fill the rising generation with old ideas, and to prevent youth acquiring new ones. One day we may recognize what a costly folly this is. When that day comes we shall have learned to trust the teacher; and when we reach the point of trusting the teacher, we shall not be long before we learn to trust the pupil also. And I feel that the trust will be fully justified.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Wonder of Wilde

"Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn!
 Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light quick tears!
 Poor perfect voice, most blithe when most forlorn,
 That ring athwart the sea whence no man steers,
 Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears."

Swinburne.

A GENERATION ago literary London was a hive of genius, and of this band of brothers-in-art the name of Oscar Wilde stands out clearly from the others and attracts attention. There has been a distinct revival of interest in his works of late years, and, doubtless, this circumstance was assisted by the publication of a pocket edition of his writings.

Wilde's literary outfit was not large, but he displayed cleverly all his goods in the window. Neither an original writer, nor a deep thinker, he had unusual gifts of freshness of expression, and he absorbed other men's thoughts like a sponge. Walter Pater, indeed, reviewing *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, observed that it was the work of a "clever talker." This criticism is true of Wilde's dramatic works. The device of all his plays is actually thread-bare and common-place, and it is the brilliant and witty conversation which helps so materially their success. Wilde owed a great debt to such masters as Congreve, Sheridan and Sardou. In *The Importance of Being Ernest*, Wilde bettered his instruction and wrote a masterpiece, whilst in *Salome* he was fortunate enough to add a play to the repertoire of Europe, an achievement far beyond the reach of even successful dramatists.

Wilde's prose is one of his glories. It has none of Matthew Arnold's superb restraint, nor the elegance of Stevenson, nor the brilliancy of Meredith, but it is pre-eminently readable. There are, indeed, purple patches, and they are as enjoyable as Macaulay's word-pictures. They are so happily done that one forgives the heightened colour. That overloaded Oriental manner was, however, singularly effective in *Salome*, though Flaubert and the "Authorized Version" of the Bible were gutted in the process.

and used in almost every page. In prose and verse Wilde is most effective when he is most personal. For this reason, *De Profundis* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* must always command readers, who, perhaps, are not interested in his plays. Wilde himself considered his personality far more remarkable than anything he had written. It was an amazing and a truthful criticism.

It was the terrible tragedy of Wilde's own life that gave real permanence to his writings. It is true that his plays received a warmer welcome in Paris and Berlin than in London, and that his poems achieved "the glory of a fifth edition" during his life. His earlier work was, however, but the outcome of a brilliant intellect. It was suffering that added the necessary human note. In *De Profundis* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, he wrote straight from the heart, and often with eyes full of tears. This ballad is as full of a haunting beauty of expression as a poem of Villon, but it is also a criticism of our penal code which is so unworthy of a great nation pretending to civilization. Listen to these lines upon a prisoner condemned to death:—

"I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye,
Upon that little tent of blue,
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by."

Then read this uncanny passage:—

"It is good to dance to violins
When love and life are fair;
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes,
Is delicate and rare;
But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air."

Stanza after Stanza has its haunting refrain:—

"Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word,
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword."

The same mastery of language is apparent in *The Harlot's House*:—

"That suddenly the tune went false,
The dancers wearied of the waltz,
The shadows ceased to wheel and whirl,
And down the long and silent street,
The dawn, with silver-sandalled feet,
Crept like a frightened girl."

In those spacious days of the Victorian era it was the fashion for poets to sing of the burden of empire. Years before Rudyard Kipling was heard of, Wilde had chanted:—

"For not in quiet English fields
Are these our brothers laid to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven months of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,
And others in the seas which are
The portals to the East, or by
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar."

In a fine sonnet he gave befitting praise to the Communists of Paris, "those Christs upon the barricades." When everything is forgotten about Wilde except a legend that he lived unhappily and died prematurely, there remain a few poems which will always be sure of a place in the anthologies of the future.

De Profundis was actually written in prison. The book is pathetic throughout, but some passages are unforgettable:—

To those who are in prison tears are a part of every day's experience. A day in prison on which one does not weep is a day on which one's heart is hard, not a day on which one's heart is happy.

In another passage he breaks out:—

Everything about my tragedy has been hideous, mean, repellent, lacking in style; our very dress makes us grotesque. We are the zanys of sorrow. We are clowns whose hearts are broken. We are specially designed to appeal to a sense of humour.

This pathos is almost unexpected from a writer whose earlier language for many years was a craft as much as an art, and related to carpets and wall-papers and objects of æsthetic interest, and not to life itself, with its burdens of sorrow, suffering, and death. The great river of life had flowed past the languid poet while he placidly watched its ripples, and repeated: "Experience, the name we give to our mistakes," or "Sleep, like all wholesome things, is a habit," or "Merely to look at the world will always be lovely." How little did this dilettante poet then realize that the day would come when he would be struggling for existence in the same river which had once excited his artistic admiration, and that art and æsthetics are the sorriest of all substitutes for human love and sympathy. He was like poor Heinrich Heine, who dragged his paralyzed limbs to the Louvre to see once more the incomparable Venus de Milo before sinking helpless on his mattress-grave, and, falling at her feet, seemed to hear her say that she could not lift him up because she had no arms.

MIMNERMUS.

Agricultural Influence on Progress

WHEN mankind acquired the art of cultivating the soil, a vast stride was made in human progress. Life remained precarious during the hunting, fishing and food gathering stages. But with the advent of agriculture a more permanent settlement became possible, and man entered a period of production and the accumulation of wealth. Part of his domesticated live stock capable of reproduction with the seeds and bulbs of plants reserved for future crops became capital in a truly economic sense, inasmuch as they were that part of primitive man's wealth set aside for the production of further wealth.

This striking achievement is realistically illustrated by Harold Peake, in his brilliant book, *Early Steps in Human Progress* (Sampson Low), a work to which attention has been already directed. "In his earlier condition," Peake suggests, "man had been thoughtless and thriftless, eating his fill and over-gorging himself when his hunting expedition had proved successful . . . for his food would not keep in an eatable condition, except under the system of cold storage that had only been possible under the long severe winters of the Ice Age. Now he was forced to become thrifty, for, if he consumed all his grain between harvest and seed time, no seed-corn could be left to supply him with the next season's crop."

This transformation in social economy led to various improvements. The grain sown in spring and garnered in autumn attached the husbandman to the soil. Even when the last sheaves were gathered, threshing was essential before the grain became bread. Moreover, the growing cereals had to be protected from trespassing animals of many kinds.

Agricultural implements became increasingly essential and a permanent habitation practically imperative. Accordingly, household utensils, pottery and improved methods of pounding corn now made their appearance.

Instead of inventing new appliances for farming purposes, Neolithic man adapted old implements to new uses. The digging-stick still utilized by the aborigines of Australia was one of the earliest appliances employed by prehistoric agriculturalists. With food gathering peoples, this instrument is useful in digging roots and tubers, as well as for unearthing and capturing burrowing animals.

As time went on, the digging-stick was slowly developed into a spade, and an interesting link between stick and spade was quite recently in use in New Zealand. This Maori tool was a pointed stick "to which had been fixed transversely a piece of wood, strongly bound with a cord, to serve as a foot-piece." Both in North and South America similar examples of transition types have been discovered among native races. The hoe, still used by modern farmers and gardeners, possesses a very ancient pedigree. This implement is still the leading and frequently the only tool of contemporary savage communities. In its cruder forms the hoe is a sharply-pointed implement, not unlike a pick. Wooden hoes of this type are still employed by several African peoples, and were lately in use with the uncivilized in many parts of the globe, and survived in cultured Sweden until comparatively recent generations. It is also interesting to note that: "The antler of the red deer with the butt tine left on, was used as a pick in England in the Neolithic Age, but not so much for tilling the ground as for excavating ditches in the chalk."

The hoe was still the leading agricultural implement in Northern Europe until the early centuries of our era, but in the civilizations of the South and East, it had long been superseded by the plough which was well known to Egypt for several thousand years. The plough, however, is an elaborately evolved hoe, and pictorial testimony to its conversion may be seen on an ancient Egyptian tomb. Swedish tradition also preserves the story of the plough's development from the primitive hoe. In ages remote, this transformation occurred. We are told that: "First of all, the wooden *hack* (hoe) was made much heavier, and dragged by men through the ground, thus making a long simple furrow. Then the implement was made in two pieces, so that the ploughman had a handle by which to steer, while the men had a pole to drag. The point of the *hack* was shod with iron, and lastly, a contrivance was added to enable a pair of oxen or mares to drag it."

Sickles, scythes and other farming appliances possess a similar evolutionary history. Digging and cutting appliances were once fashioned in wood, bone and stone, to be later superseded by copper and bronze, and finally iron and steel. The grains of rice, corn and other edible seeds were originally beaten or shaken out by hand, or trodden out by the feet of men or lower animals. In Rome, a threshing device termed a *tribulum* was utilized. This resembled a massive sledge with pieces of stone attached to its underside, and was weighted by drivers and then drawn across the threshing floor by yoked animals. In Cyprus a similar contrivance is still in use, and it appears probable that this device dates back to times preceding the destructive deluge of Eastern tradition.

Winnowing the grain from the chaff has also an instructive history. It is inferential that in prehistoric ages winnowing was accomplished by the breeze, the grain being thrown up in the air by hand. This dilatory method, however, was only possible in lands where the winds blew. So a fan was invented to ensure a draught, and this auxiliary was in evidence in Egypt in the very early days of the Old Kingdom, and the device has survived even in modern Japan. In

most advanced lands, however, the threshing and winnowing machine driven by steam, or perhaps electricity, has supplanted all earlier methods of transferring the grain from corn stack or barn to the granary, where it awaits its removal to the steam mill to be ground into flour for bread.

In his hunting days, man sought shelter from the elements and ministered to his few domestic needs within, or near, the entrances to caverns or contrived rude defences formed by wind screens or branches from adjoining trees. But, with a more settled agrarian life, and the care of his cultivated plants and domesticated animals, his roaming customs were curtailed, and it became necessary to secure more permanent dwelling places.

Even in prehistoric times a variety of habitations had arisen. Nor have all these structures been evolved from a common prototype. The style of shelter devised seems to have been determined by local circumstances, differences in climate, and the materials available for building.

So far as is known, the *teepee* shelter is now confined to America, although habitations exist in the Old World which closely resemble it. A tent formed by pole-supports with a skin covering, and rather high and circular in outline, within which a fire could be kindled, and where a little group of people could squat with their backs to the outside is a *teepee*.

This structure was light and readily transported, and might be folded up and carried as the wandering hunters went in search of game. Quite recently this form of tent was still in use in the Rocky Mountains. Its place of origin is undetermined, but it apparently arose in the Old World, and was later introduced into the New. In Southern Europe and Africa dome-shaped wattle huts were in use, which were seemingly modelled on the plan of the *teepee* tent.

Stone structures were erected at a later time. These were circular in shape, whose domelike roofs were the models of the true domes of still later centuries—especially those of ecclesiastical buildings. Sir Arthur Evans suggests that about 3,400 B.C. an African race, who were expelled from their native land by invading Egyptians, settled in Crete, and introduced their false-domed dwellings into that early centre of civilized life. But these structures were soon discarded, as dwellings for the living, but were treasured as resting places for the dead.

It is truly stated that volumes are essential in order to trace minutely the sources of architectural types. Many of these, however, have been worked out in wondrous detail. The story of the evolution of human habitations, as well as man's sacred buildings illustrates, in the main, an advance from the simple to the complex. Rude peoples are content with rough and ready shelters, but as civilization makes progress and the comforts, conveniences and even the luxuries of life gain an ever wider extension, dwelling places are erected provided with bath-rooms, electric light, and many other amenities undreamed of only a few generations ago.

T. F. PALMER.

Dancing is condemned by the Bible. Those passages which mention it refer simply to a mode of religious worship in which the sexes were separated. Prayer or the reading of scripture, if introduced into any ball-room would break up the indulgence, and throw the participants into angry confusion. Imagine Christ, St. John, Paul, Wesley, Spurgeon or Moody taking part in a dance, even of the most "respectable" kind.

Dr. Guy Fitch Phelps in "Fifteen Points Against Dancing."

Scoop Them All In!

ALL great men in the past and the present were and are Christians without knowing it! That is the burden of the song of an egregious journalist, A. J. Russell, who is writing a series of articles for a Sunday paper on the Religion of the Great. In its issue of April 29, we are treated to the "story" of George Washington. Though the writer frankly concedes that none of Washington's writings mention the name of Christ, he claims that he obeyed Christ's rules—whatever they may be. Mr. Russell suggests one or two. One is the surrendering of ambition to patriotism; giving one's countrymen freedom in life and his "well treated slaves" their liberty at his death. It is all very conveniently evasive. But is it *right* for a Christian to have slaves? It is enough to make that intimate friend of Washington, Thomas Paine, explode with laughter in the Elysian Fields! Paine was described by a successor of Washington, whom the world accepted as an educated person with a knowledge of history as a "dirty little Atheist"—an expression which contains three lies in three words. For Paine was a man of fastidiously cleanly habits, he was nearly six foot high and he was a Theist—not an Atheist. It is not the Roosevelts who lose their rag about Freethinkers and their activities, who are the best friends of the cause of Supernaturalism, but the lowly Russells, who can ladle out the soothing syrup to Christian old ladies of both sexes. They are the fellows with the Sinaitic nerve who can sell you the balsam for your apprehensions about the advance of Rationalism! Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people. It is amazing how, like the ostrich, so many apologists for Christianity hide their heads. The stern stuff of realities is no meat for them. So the various Vineyards of the Lord are so many Fools' Paradises. For could there be any greater falsehood than the statement at the head of the article referred to viz.: "Divine Inspiration made Washington the Father of his Country"?

But this is the kind of supernal rubbish that goes down with the many-headed and the shallow-pated. Any kind of thing can be said so long as you keep on boosting the Glory of the Lord. And yet many of the sweeping assertions of pious journalists contain implications which, if perceived by anybody with half a brain, knock the legs from the brazen assertors. If "Divine Inspiration" made Washington what he was, what was it that inspired George III. and the ministers who supported him in the campaign against the American colonists? Was it *diabolical* inspiration? Washington was a humanistic pioneer of freedom against tyranny. And none of his writings mentions the name of Christ. But his compatriots who fought against him with the foulest and vilest means and methods always had the name of Christ upon their lips. George III. and his sycophantic advisers resisted the colonists with a persistence, bitterness and hatred which could only be breathed into their nostrils by the God of Battles—the everlasting Lord of Hosts. Yet the colonists were victorious! Tyranny in defeat is an ugly spectacle. But that the liberator should blossom forth as a tyrant himself is uglier still. No doubt there were commanders who fought with and under Washington, who claimed that their cause was divinely inspired, and that Christ was invisibly leading them. But as for Washington himself—none of his writings mentions the name of Christ. Yet the pious journalist must fasten upon the great man *some* kind of cooperation with the supernatural. Therefore, much that is maudlin and melodramatic is made of Wash-

ington's taking the formal oath when he was elected first President of the United States.

When Mr. Russell comes to write of the Religion of Charles Bradlaugh, he may even be able to get a great thrill of feeling out of the great Freethinker's way of taking the oath in the House of Commons! What are we coming to? Is the majority of the population of these islands going to justify Carlyle's jibe against it—"mostly fools"?

IGNOTUS.

The Ingersoll Memorial Defeated by Congress

THE press remains silent concerning the scene in the American Congress on April 16, when a Senate resolution authorizing the erection of a monument to Col. Robert G. Ingersoll was defeated by the objection of a representative from Michigan on the ground of Ingersoll's unbelief. The proceedings described below are from the *Congressional Record* :—

The Clerk called the resolution, Senate Joint Resolution 21.

Mr. Wolcott (of Michigan) : Mr. Speaker, I object.

Mr. Keller (of Illinois) : Will the gentleman withhold his objection?

Mr. Wolcott : I withhold my objection.

Mr. Keller : The request is made for authority to place a monument to Robert G. Ingersoll, one of the greatest orators of our country, and especially of my State, in the District of Columbia. Mr. Ingersoll is recognized the world over as one of the world's greatest orators, and I do not see any reason why this request should not be granted, and I would like the gentleman's reaction to the resolution if he does not object.

Mr. Wolcott : I do not hesitate to state the reasons I have for objecting to this bill. I do not object merely for the purpose of defeating the gentleman's resolution, and I would not object unless I had a sufficient reason. In my opinion, and in my study, and from a reading of Robert Ingersoll's works, I personally recognize that he was a great orator. He was a great writer. I personally have enjoyed his writings, but I do not think he was the kind of a man that we should honour by putting up a monument in the National Capital to his memory. Although a great many people think Robert Ingersoll was an Atheist, and that some of his writings were Atheistic, we know that before he died he partially repudiated his Atheistic utterances and agreed that there might be a Supreme Being. I do not believe it is proper to build a memorial to Robert Ingersoll in the National Capital as an example to the youth of this country that Robert Ingersoll's works should be used as textbooks to regulate their mode of living.

Mr. Speaker : I object.

Mr. Keller : This is not going to cost the Government of the United States anything.

Mr. Wolcott : It is not the cost I am objecting to.

Mr. Keller : If the people of this country think a man is great enough as an orator and thinker to deserve a monument to his memory and are willing to pay for it, why should they not have the privilege?

Mr. Wolcott : We are not particularly interested in a man's oratorical ability. It is what he says. I am interested in what the man says, not the way he said it. I would have no objection to the gentleman erecting a monument to Robert Ingersoll in his district, but I do not believe the National Capital is the place to erect a monument to an Atheist or any other unbeliever.

Mr. Speaker : I insist on my objection.

Mr. Wolfenden (of Pennsylvania): Mr. Speaker, I demand the regular order.

Mr. Wolcott: Mr. Speaker, I object.
Then the next resolution was called.

In its Manual, under "Consent Calendar," the House has the rule that a Bill like this, having been favourably reported, may at the desire of any member be placed on the Consent Calendar and be called up on the first and third Mondays of each month; and should objection be made to its consideration it shall be carried over without prejudice to the next day when the Calendar is called. The objection of three or more members takes the measure off the Calendar for that session of Congress.

Accordingly, in the House, May 7 (*Congressional Record*, p. 8449), these proceedings were had:—

The Clerk called the next resolution, House Joint Resolution 21, authorizing the erection in Washington D.C., of a monument in memory of Col. Robert Ingersoll.

Mr. Wolcott of Michigan, Mr. Eltse of California, and Mr. Jenkins of Ohio objected.

Mr. Keller (of Illinois): Mr. Speaker, I would like to have the gentlemen state their reasons for objecting.

Mr. Wolcott: I do not think that is necessary.

This ends the Bill for the present session of Congress. The rules do not permit of its coming up until the next, which sits in December. Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg of New York, who has followed the fortunes of the resolution in the House as told by the *Record*, comments:—

The strategy is apparent. Representative Wolcott got the two others to join him, and they agreed not to discuss. Mr. Keller's fight appears to have been perfunctory. A group from his home district pressed the resolution on him. He apparently knew little of his subject, else he would not have dwelt on Ingersoll's being an orator and left out all mention of his services to his country. In a popular assembly, service to human thought might not help.

The language of the Michigan bigot, Wolcott, is that he would object to a monument in Washington to "an Atheist or any other unbeliever," and his falsehood that Ingersoll, before he died, "partially repudiated his Atheistic utterances" is allowed to go unexposed in the official record of the proceedings of Congress. The youth of the country may need examples, but not the kind so set them by the Michigan representative, who is no able or intelligent liar, but just an ordinary exponent of religious misrepresentation and prejudice.

The course chosen by Congress defeats the Bill for a time; but will the believers in religious freedom allow the bigotry of a few or the indifference of many to defeat its purpose? If there is a spark of the old fire in us, the dishonour to Ingersoll and what he stood for should set it ablaze. This is a time for hot indignation and its expression in word and act.

Reprinted from the "*Truth Seeker*," July 1934

Bluntly, the position is this: the good old-fashioned English Sunday—the Sabbath, as it is called by a great many people, who do not seem to realize, first, they are not Jews, and secondly, that anyhow they are a day out in their calculations—is still being imposed upon large numbers of people, especially younger people, who no longer want the good old-fashioned English Sunday, any more than they want the good old-fashioned English side-whiskers, thick underclothing or heavy meals. It is imposed upon them legally and by force, and not by mere suggestion; and the reason that the imposition is still successful is that in most provincial towns the authority is largely in the hands of elderly men, who are not in sympathy with the devices of newer generations. And what these elderly men do not want, nobody else shall have.

"*English Journey*," by J. B. Priestly.

Acid Drops

The B.B.C., we note, are arranging for a series of eleven talks on "The New Christendom," designed to "survey the whole scope and aim of modern missionary enterprise." Prominent members of all the Churches will speak, and the Archbishop of York will bring the series to an end in July, 1935. Needless to say, the N.S.S. will not be invited to comment on the various speeches. Perhaps a criticism from the right angle, of all Christian missions, would result in the wholesale falling off of pious subscriptions, and it would be too saddening to think that a large number of missionaries might be out of a job as a result. So we must not complain if the B.B.C. are taking no chances. One soul rescued from Paganism for Christ is worth millions rescued from mere starvation. All will come right in Heaven!

There is to be a pilgrimage of ex-service men to Lourdes in September. We trust some of the genuine hopeless cases will be taken as well. We should like to see a few dozen miracles performed in the curing of the blind, the maimed, the paralytic, the mad—those immensely sad results of the "war to end all wars." It would be interesting to know how many badly wounded ex-soldiers Lourdes has really cured? How many, full of hope, have visited Lourdes without the slightest result? Is it not a scandal that this mummerly should be tolerated at the expense of the sick?

For example, a recent pilgrim to Lourdes, a lady, who appeared in excellent health three months ago, found she was suffering from cancer. What a magnificent chance for Our Lady! Alas, the poor woman died at Lourdes, of cancer. So as to soften the blow for other pilgrims, the authorities claim "that when a patient dies at Lourdes, Almighty God grants the consolation of a cure." One woman is allowed to die, and two other women (in this case) "are very much improved." How beneficent of God—especially as no "miracles" are yet claimed for these women. The fraud of it all sickens one.

Although (we believe) Roman Catholic processions have been forbidden in this country for many years, they are gradually being introduced wherever there is a chance. The other day, at Stavelly in Derbyshire, one even attracted "immense crowds of non-Catholics." What a knowledge of human nature is behind the wily old Church! How cleverly she is, slowly but surely, ingratiating herself into our daily life! The old Protestant spirit—that determined enemy of the Scarlet Lady—seems to be dead. It is dead even in debate, for any Jesuit priest will make mincemeat of the average Protestant parson now-a-days. Perhaps the Protestant parson who really could debate, has "gone over," and become a Jesuit. What a religion!

People will ask inconvenient questions, and editors have to answer them, but we note that the editor of a Catholic weekly is in a bit of a stew over the several heads, relics of St. John the Baptist, in various churches. Obviously only one can be genuine, as the suggestion that they are his heads at different periods of life cannot be taken seriously. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* also finds that "much uncertainty prevails; their discrepancies in almost every point render the problem so intricate as to baffle solution." We should have thought a gentle reminder to St. John himself by the Pope would have settled the question. Or why not try the old dodge of putting all the heads under the altar one evening, praying through the night and the genuine head should have jumped on the altar by the morning—if the Pope really is what he claims to be. Still a multiplicity of heads is better than none; and the faithful don't mind.

"The reality of Hell Fire," we are told by a Catholic journal "has never been defined by Pope or Council, but it is certainly contained in Holy Scripture, in the

Fathers, and it is practically the unanimous teaching of theologians." For this relief, much thanks. We are delighted to have such authoritative corroboration of the reality of Hell-Fire. We have always objected to these genuine flames being but a "state," or having been put out by science and are in favour, for true Christianity, of the absolute reality of Hell-fire.

The Anglo-Catholics are opposed to mixed marriages. Like the Roman Catholics, they strongly object to an Anglo and a Roman marrying; and they even have as strong an objection to an Anglo and a Nonconformist getting married. As for a marriage between "a faithful communicant and an unbeliever," this is the greatest sin of all. Perhaps in the last case such a union is not desirable; marriage is a difficult job at any time, and religious differences play havoc with love and friendship and even affection. However this may be, to find marriage between members of different Christian sects strongly deprecated is wonderful proof of Christianity being "love."

Bishop Barnes is liked neither by Roman nor Anglo-Catholics—and his recommendation of a book by the Rev. R. D. Richardson, in which the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are both denied, is landing him into hot water. He was asked by an Anglo-layman, the other day, whether he would consider the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Apostle's Creed, as the "authoritative criterion of orthodoxy in the Church of England?" The Bishop soon showed that "certain clauses" in these creeds were completely out-of-date, and "are matters of great difficulty when we face them frankly." Whether the Bishop does face them frankly we do not know, but he certainly believes in the Incarnation, and "that Our Lord was in very truth the Son of God." If he can believe these things we simply cannot see why he boggles at things equally silly and incredible in the creeds. How beautifully Christians manage to accept or reject things in their religion as they think fit or explain away the difficult points. Christianity is a nose of wax more than ever these days.

Dr. Norwood, of the City Temple, London, is at present enjoying a holiday in New Zealand. In case anyone thinks he is not working hard, he writes that "I have a Motor-car at my disposal, and I speak over the Radio once a week, so at least I am not idle." Referring to rumours that he is not returning to the City Temple, he adds: "I should need to be THURST out . . . I take for granted I have years to spend there yet."

A correspondent to the *Daily Express* is extremely worried. "Why cannot we have," he dolefully asks, "a great religious revival in England?" His reason is that brand new and original one, "the men in the pulpit have lost touch with the masses." The idea seems to be that if they had kept in touch with the masses, the masses would have crowded into the churches as they do into the cinemas. We advise this correspondent to be a little more up-to-date. The real and chief reason why the Churches no longer have a pull on the masses, is because people are no longer dominated either by the fear of heaven or hell. They don't care a tinker's button for the glories of Paradise or the intense fires of the Infernal Regions. They want a good time *here* and *now*—work, play, decent surroundings and food—in other words, what is meant by Secularism. Religious Revivals are almost dead in this world.

One of our readers is good enough to send us a page from the *Elim Evangel and Foursquare Revivalist*, which is a good illustration of the way people lie where prayer is concerned. It seems that a Convention was being held, and the meeting-place was decorated with flowers. Among these was a beautiful bunch of carnations, given by one of the members. They were given by a "brother," as an act of thanksgiving. It seemed that this "brother" was growing flowers for a show at Derby. But when the flowers were unpacked, owing to

the heat, the flowers were drooping. So were the flowers of others exhibitors. But this brother "commended them to God" in prayer. Result! The flowers of the other exhibitors soon withered, but those that had been given God to look after, were as fresh at the end of the week as when they were sent in. God had kept them alive so that "the necessary business of taking orders might be concluded." We do not know the name of this Brother, but we fancy that his middle name is Munchausen. But a man who can lie like this ought to enter the Diplomatic Corps.

Archdeacon Storr is another of the many "Christians" who has dared to approach the Archbishop of Canterbury with the plea that "further steps should be taken in the matter of intercommunion between the Church of England and non-episcopal Churches." The presumptuous Archdeacon is promptly sat upon by the *Church Times*, which, representing Anglo-Catholicism at its highest (or lowest), tells him that "this might mean, in practice, the administration of Holy Communion at Anglican altars to unbaptized persons," and, horror of horrors, "the reception of so-called Holy Communion by members of the Catholic Church of Christ, from the hands of ministers, not only unconsecrated, but themselves, possibly, unbaptized." We certainly could fancy no more awful event happening than an unconsecrated minister (and unbaptized to boot) handing the consecrated wafer to a Nonconformist who might swallow it. But why need the wafer, in these circumstances, change into Jesus? Why should it not resolutely refuse?

Father Thurston, S.J., has just written a book on the "apparitions" two years ago, at Beauraing, in Belgium. It will be remembered that, near the shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes, one of a party of children saw there "a strange luminosity." Later Our Lady herself came and spoke to the children, and told them she really was the "Immaculate Virgin," and that she wanted them to be very good. This was followed by the miraculous cure of a confirmed cripple, and something like 1,700,000 people visited the shrine—which resulted, one must add, in "apparitions" of Our Lady appearing in a large number of other places all over Belgium. Father Thurston analyses these "apparitions" with a very strong bias to believe, of course, and most regretfully comes to the conclusion that they are "not proven." Alas, the virus of unbelief seems to have penetrated the good Father—or is it perhaps, that it would be better for the Church to limit good business strictly to Lourdes? Competition is not always good for the soul.

The Rev. Eric Graham, M.A., "finds that the priestly ideal is Our Lord himself. No one was ever so readily and graciously accessible, so fully in contact with men of every kind; yet all the time He was wholly dedicated, wholly sinless, always discerning and following the will of the Father, and his face was set steadily to go up to Jerusalem." This gives a wonderfully true and perfect picture of the Jesus who said: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," or "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," or "cast into the fire that never shall be quenched," and many other equally gracious sayings. Still, the majority of Christians are content to hear preachers like Mr. Graham, and as they never read their Bible, believe what they are told; so *heil* Jesus!

The Dean of Canterbury, welcoming 3,000 "pilgrims" to the Cathedral, as well as the Mayor and Corporation and many other near-by Mayors, said: "The pilgrimage has wakened many, who were unconscious of it, to the suffering of their fellow-men, and the terrible facts of unemployment." Words almost fail us here. Are we to understand that crowds of people were unaware or almost unaware of the unemployment in their midst, and that not till a "pilgrimage" to our Cathedrals was instituted, did they wake up and learn all about it? But "curiouser and curiouser"—the Dean went on to say that "people have been led to say their prayers who

have not prayed before"! So that, though the Churches have fulminated about the lack of prayer in the country for centuries, and our papers have published for years harrowing tales of unemployment—crowds of "pilgrims" are just beginning to pray, and to realize there are actually people out of work in England! Has the Dean himself yet awakened?

According to the Bishop of Peterborough, "visitors to well-known churches" often ask, "where are the men? What are they doing? Why are they lying in bed while their wives and daughters kneel to receive the Blessed Sacrament?" Well, *we* should compliment the men and deplore the infantile attitude of their wives and daughters. Perhaps the ladies, when they grow up, will—as they often do—imitate the men. But we are glad to agree with most observers that our Churches almost always have women worshippers and far, more rarely, men. And it is a phenomenon which attracts attention in most parts of the world.

Discussing the recent decision of the Methodists not to admit women to the Ministry, the *British Weekly* admits that "the arguments against, seems to rise little higher than a fear of putting men out of their job." The women are offered the usual consolation by the Rev. S. G. Haywood, "the women of Methodism are finding openings in every other direction," except in the Methodist ministry.

Splendid news from the Congregational Front. At the Theological Conference of Congregationalists, Principal Micklem announced with due solemnity that "God, through His Spirit, has a new and authoritative word for our day." If it is true, we make an easy guess at the one "Word" which God would use—it is "Peccavi."

The *Herald* recently had two paragraphs, separated but possibly not entirely unconnected. One item states that since 1833 some M.P.'s meet for prayer and scripture reading. Four paragraphs and six lines of heading are given to "news" about this insignificant idiosyncrasy of a few political nobodies. The *Herald* says the names of those attending are "kept secret," and "Mr. George Lansbury will attend a luncheon to-day," obviously to *advertise* its anonymity. By the way, it is said in the same "newspaper," that the total attendance at this parliamentary praying orgy, on the previous day (Tuesday) was three! The other paragraph recalls the case of a praying M.P. named Ward, who had estates in two counties, and devoted his prayers to asking God to spare these two counties from fire and earthquake.

We should really like to understand, however much we disagreed with, Dean Inge's latest pronouncement that, "As Christ came to reveal the Father, so the Holy Spirit has come to reveal Christ." We hope we are not burlesquing the retired Dean, but we take up the tale and continue the sequence: the Bible comes to reveal what the Holy Spirit means, then come the priests to reveal what the Bible means in the house that Jack built. But what do the priests mean? We have a shrewd guess, and it is not encouraging. And, after all, as we do have to solve for ourselves this final problem, why may we not start at the beginning and do without God, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, Bible, Church and priest? In any case we have to do *SOME* thinking somewhere.

We learn from the *Literary Digest* that some religionists never know when the world has had enough of their follies. The Temperance, Prohibition, and Public Morals Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church is starting all over again to press for a restoration of Prohibition in America. Six months after its repeal, Mr. Sheppard, co-author of the original Eighteenth Amendment, has tabled a Resolution in Congress designed to re-establish one of the most disastrous laws ever passed. Bishop

James Cannon, still banished from his church for financial irregularities, is leading this forlorn hope of a fanatical sect.

Dr. David Trout, speaking at the Annual Child Welfare Conference in Iowa, U.S.A., defended Gulliver's Travels, Baron Munchausen, and similar "fairy" tales, on the ground that "tall tales are not lies to children." On the other hand he thought it "very unwise to teach a child to say prayers or to give a very young child any conception of a God in the sky."

A case of "prayer versus work" is reported from the Indiana corn district. A congregation, mainly of farmers, had gathered to hear the Methodist pastor pray and preach. A sudden blasting wind swept through the fields, scattering the "shocked" corn. At once the common sense of the farmers prevailed over their superstitious reliance upon prayer. All the congregation rushed to the fields, collected the sheaves that "God" had scattered, re-shocked them—and then had a feast to celebrate man's triumph over the powers of heaven. To add to the interest, the pastor himself neglected his job, closed the church, and helped in the really "good" work of this strange Sabbath.

Christians must spend a considerable portion of their time in substituting new meanings for the ancient words of the Bible. A writer in the *Methodist Recorder*, worried by "the mystical words of the Master," gives a novel interpretation of Luke xxii. 36, "He that hath no sword let him sell his garment and buy one." He imagines that Jesus was preaching a sort of nudism of the soul. What He "really meant" was that by casting away "the cloak of reserve in which man wraps his real self, by that means they must become possessed of the sword of the spirit." The Disciples, to whom the words are alleged to have been said, did not so understand Jesus. They promptly got a couple of genuine steel blades, sharp enough to snip off a man's ear. Talk about calling a spade a spade! Christians call a sword a breath of wind.

The *Christian World* has unearthed an amusing advertisement in *The Education Gazette*, for a Schoolmaster. One of the requirements is "Member of a congregational church, and one with Christian principles preferred." We laugh too. But, come to think of it, what is this "Christian principle." Is it something so definite that it "places" the one who says he accepts it? We think not. It is about as definite as saying as the Liberal Church of America says, "We believe in the United States," without saying whether "we believe" they are right or wrong.

Fifty Years Ago

THE doctrine of the full and complete efficacy of death-bed conversion, and of salvation by faith at any moment, is thoroughly in accordance with the teachings of Scripture. Christ himself forgave the dying thief upon the cross, and promised that he should sup with him that very night in paradise. Christianity is indeed a comfortable religion for criminals. Belief at the last moment ensures salvation. Credulity is the supreme virtue. All other virtues are but as satellites shining by its reflected light, or even dragging the unenlightened, unbelieving soul into the infinite abyss of perdition and despair. The evil that Christianity has done in distorting men's ideal of morality is simply incalculable. On the one hand it terrorises men and women out of their common sense, and consecrates infinite malice as divinest justice and benevolence, and on the other hand, it regards crime as nothing if sanctified by a *credo*, and lovingly pets and enthusiastically blesses the godly villain, while placidly ignoring and abandoning the dead and buried victim for whom no further hope or opportunity remains.

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

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Sugar Plums

We don't know whether the following may be taken as an indication of the revival of religion, but it is interesting to find the Council of the Church Union passing the following resolution:—

That the Council of the Church Union notes with grave concern the rapid growth of Secularism, and the serious nature of the attack which is being pressed from many different quarters on Christian faith and morals, and is convinced that while it is necessary to defend the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England whenever they are attacked, a cessation of ecclesiastical controversy is urgently required on all sides in order that the Church may be set free to devote itself to the primary work of conversion and instruction.

That resolution is both cheering and threatening. It is cheering because the Church, after first of all attempting to out-argue the Secular movement, next tried the policy of comparative silence and persistent boycott, and sought to cheer up its followers by declaring that Secularism died with Bradlaugh. Now the position is getting very serious, and Christians are generally warned that unless they sink their differences and hang together there may soon be a general "gaol delivery" and a wholesale execution.

The warning is a serious one, and one that Freethinkers should take to heart. Hitherto we have gained enormously by the divisions of the Christian sects. Convinced and determined Freethinkers represent but a minority of the population, and it has gained many of its triumphs because it has been able to fight the enemy in detail. But the situation will be very different if there is established a close union between the various Christian bodies. We are not looking, even then, for any spectacular triumph on the part of the religionists, but it will make our work more difficult. Freedom and Freethought are delicate plants, they are of comparatively

modern growth, and it cannot reasonably be said that they are so hardy that they cannot be, temporarily at least, choked by the forced growth of weeds. We hope that those Freethinkers who are taking their position as something too well-established to be weakened will take the lesson to heart. The National Secular Society is here, the fighting *Freethinker* is here. We hope that all will take the hint, and not have cause for lamentation when it is too late.

Mr. G. Whitehead will take a long hop from Glasgow to Swansea and commence meetings on the sands at 7 p.m., to-day (Sunday) and for the remainder of the week at 7.30 p.m. Mr. Whitehead reports excellent meetings in Glasgow, Paisley and Edinburgh, including a debate with a Wesleyan minister. Mrs. Whitefield gave valuable assistance and was conspicuous in energy and enthusiasm.

Mr. J. Clayton's meetings at Preston have not only been very successful, but have also inspired some of the local saints towards reviving the N.S.S. Branch there. That in itself is sufficient testimony of the good work being done by Mr. Clayton. All that is now required is an enthusiastic and reliable local saint to undertake the preliminaries to the revival of the Branch. For the present further details may be obtained from the General Secretary, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

We are pleased to note that Mr. Belloc's anger at the term "Roman" Catholic, a term, he contends is an insult, has had a vigorous reply in the *Universe*, from the pen of that fine scholar and redoubtable controversialist, Dr. G. G. Coulton. Dr. Coulton, armed with unimpeachable Roman Catholic authorities, proves that these almost always use the word "Roman." In fact, he convicts Mr. Belloc "of partisan history evolved from his own inner consciousness," a delicate piece of phrasing, which could be reduced to more simple terms. It is astonishing that the Roman Catholic champion should so hate the word "Roman," when obviously his sect is covered all over with the odour of Rome, and has been governed for at least 1800 years, from Rome. Perhaps he would rather it be called the "Papist" Church? Why not?

A Martian Examines Christianity, by Arthur Levett, (Watts & Co., 2s. 6d. net), puts the case against religion in a novel, if not actually a new, way. There are thirteen chapters in which the visitor from Mars discusses God, Prayer, Sin, the Bible, etc., with a committee consisting of a Modernist, a Roman Catholic Priest, a Rabbi, and a Fundamentalist. Whether these people will recognize the arguments in favour of their own beliefs, may be a matter of opinion; but Mr. Levett does his best to put their case against the Freethought one, and needless to say, the latter has invariably the best of the argument.

Mr. Levett makes the committee angrily discuss various interpretations among themselves, and cleverly shows how violently they often differ and get themselves tied up in a knot. The Martian is fond of bringing up discrepancies and contradictions in the Bible which the Priest claims, "have been satisfactorily cleared up by our trained theologians." He also is not afraid to attack the "moral" precepts of Christianity and the "character" of the Christian Saviour. In fact, the Martian, after showing there is nothing so foul as "everlasting torture" in Judaism, comes to the conclusion that Jesus is "a thousand times worse than the old god," which will certainly not be approved by many "reverent Rationalists." Finally, the Martian shows how in Mars, they have "no monstrously cruel god to fear; no tyrannical god to worship, propitiate, or flatter in the hope of securing salvation for our own selfish personalities. We have no churches, no sects, and no religious creeds to sow dissension and create strife." Lucky Mars! Mr. Levett's little book may help, one day perhaps, to bring about the same happy conditions on the Earth.

On the Apocryphal Gospels

II.

THERE are nearly, I think, 100 "uncanonical" gospels, epistles, acts, etc., which have either come down to us entire, or in part, or are mentioned or cited by the Church Fathers and other ancient Christian writers. Some of them are at least as old as the "true" gospels; others are undoubtedly late compilations. But here again one must ask, why should a gospel written in the third century be considered "uncanonical"? Because it must have had the "genuine" ones to go by? But what about Matthew, Mark and Luke? Is it not a fact that modern critics insist that there was some document, some *Logia*, or sayings of Jesus recorded by his loving disciples, which form the basis of the New Testament gospels? Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all drew from this common source. In fact, Luke expressly says so, or at least, admits the existence of other gospels:—

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us . . .

Not that much reliance can be placed on this introduction or on the first chapter of Luke generally: for one has only to glance at the footnotes in the Variorum Bible to see how Biblical critics disagree among themselves as to which part is "genuine," and which is not. For them, it all depends upon which of the Codices they rely as representing Divine inspiration. But for those curious to know whether our Authorized Version in this matter agrees with the *Codex Sinaiticus*, I may as well say it does not. Verses 9 to 20 are actually omitted. Dean Alford thinks these twelve verses did not originally form part of Luke's Gospel—they probably formed an early "supplement by which the mutilated or unfinished close of Mark was completed." I mention all this to show that even the "canonical" gospels were edited and re-edited, and that the greatest uncertainty must exist as to what actually was the "original" text. And that is just the position of the Apocryphal gospels. Nobody knows, or can know, what was the original text of all these pieces, when or where they were written, or by whom. Any text which we now possess may have been written comparatively late, but is this the form in which it was originally written?

The truth is that almost every Christian community must have had its own gospel written by some "divinely inspired" being, who actually could read and write. It was based on hearsay, or on some copy of another gospel, and supplemented by the lively imagination of the writer if he had any.

Gradually, as the various Churches became more closely dependent upon each other, they came to use one gospel more than another. Perhaps some of the communities never had their own gospels, and so had to make use of what they could get, and if Matthew, Mark or Luke got in first, that, of course, was the "genuine" gospel. And if one of these was not available, the "elders" of the Church promptly manufactured one. Were not Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John manufactured in the same way?

Even if one has to admit that John stands, so to speak, on its own, it still was manufactured. The Jesus he depicts is surely a figure of pure imagination. Does even the most pious scholar nowadays admit that the speeches put in the mouth of Jesus represent, as nearly as it is possible, his actual words? Are not most critics in agreement that these speeches have been *manufactured*?

When our learned Biblical critics have to deal with the various gospels, epistles, acts, letters, etc., in the New Testament Apocrypha, it is interesting to find them admitting the wholesale fraud and deceit practised by the early Christians—not, it should be added, by the poor, unfortunate and humble followers of Jesus, but by those who were in a position to impose their will on the various communities. I have referred to the Rev. Jeremiah Jones as one of the best writers on the Canon, in spite of the fact that he lived in the early eighteenth century. He is obliged to admit that:—

To make testimonies out of forgeries and spurious books, to prove the very foundation of the Christian revelation, was a method much practised by some of the Fathers, especially Justin Martyr, Clemens Alexandrinus and Lactantius.

What a glorious character he gives these divinely-inspired early Christians! Then there is B. H. Cowper, a famous Christian controversialist of last century, who edited an edition of the Apocryphal Gospels as a sort of offset to Hone's work with which he, like Dr. Salmon, was very angry. Cowper says:—

Ancient industry and invention went even further, and produced sundry scraps about Herod, Veronica, Lentulus and Abgar, wrote epistles for Christ and his mother, and I know not how much besides. No difficulty stood in the way; ancient documents could easily be appealed to without necessarily existing; spirits could be summoned from the other world by a stroke of the pen, and he made to say anything; sacred names could be made a passport to fictions, and so on *ad libitum*.

Mr. Cowper would have had great difficulty in showing that these words did not apply to the "canonical" gospels. These are appealed to even in this day, just as the old Christian Fathers and their more faithful disciples used to appeal to the *Protevangelium* or other "uninspired" gospels.

The Rev. Dr. Giles, whose *Christian Records* has always seemed to me a most convincing Freethought work, does not like the Christian Fathers. He says:—

"The writings of the Apostolic Fathers labour under a more heavy load of doubt and suspicion than any other ancient composition, either sacred or profane."

Yet almost all these people, Polycarp, Irenæus, Ignatius, Justin and the others are constantly quoted as confirming our "canonical" gospels when their writings are just as full of quotations from the apocryphal ones—which is why, of course, they labour "under a heavy load of suspicion." Why is it they were unable to discriminate between the two sets of writings if one of these was unmistakably genuine and of divine authority? There can be only one answer: there was no difference between any of the "sacred" writings except individual opinion.

The *Letter* written by Jesus himself to Abgarus, King of Edessa, quoted and vouched for by Eusebius, is a precious example of a bare-faced forgery. Yet it was considered quite as "divine" as the "true" gospels. Then there is a *Hymn taught secretly by Jesus to his Disciples and A Book of Magic*, in which Christ shows "the Art whereby he wrought his Miracles." There is even a letter written by Jesus dropped from Heaven in the sixth century. All of these were believed as quite genuine—and so they are, quite as genuine as Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John.

When Mariolatry came to be more and more pronounced in the Roman Church, quite a number of books were published as coming from or about her. They have interesting titles: *The Book of the Virgin Mary and her Midwife*. *The History and Traditions of Mary*. *The Book of Mary Concerning the Miracles of Christ*, and *the Ring of King Solomon*, and even a work on *The Progeny of Mary*.

There are *Acts, Gospels and Revelations of Peter*, to say nothing of his *Doctrine, Preaching*, etc.

There are *Gospels* of James, others of John, Bartholomew, Philip, Thomas, Thaddeus, Matthias, Paul and Barnabas; and any number of "spurious" *Acts*. And there is even a *Gospel of Judas*, which, as it is mentioned by Irenæus, must be quite early second century. Unfortunately, no fragment of it has been preserved.

A glance at some of the most amusing parts of a few of these wonderful gospels ought to prove that they are certainly not much sillier than our own divinely-inspired gospels. But I must leave that for the next article.

H. CUTNER.

Hardly Cricket

"The Bishop and his call to prayer has made it plain that we cannot depend upon God either to prevent a drought or to end one when he is asked to do so. And if we cannot depend upon him to manage so simple a thing as the weather, in the name of all that is sensible, what is there that we may safely place under his control?—Mr. Chapman Cohen in the *Freethinker*" of July 1.

MR. EDITOR, Sir,
Does it ever occur
To you that you sometimes go too far,
When enthusiasm
Creates a chasm
Twixt what things seem and what they are?

On July the First,
You had a burst
Of cruel satire on Jehovah;
You counted Him out
Because of the drought,
As good as said His days were over.

Again and again
He'd failed with rain,
And this in spite of bishops' pleading;
So without ado
You dubbed Him "through,"
Without a saving clause conceding.

But you forgot
To consider what
Might well explain the Lord's evasion.
He might have thought,
That He really ought
To save the rain for a better occasion.

Without a doubt,
As things turned out,
This evidently was the reason.
Why, in your zest
You forgot the Test!!
Oh, Sir, it's nothing short of treason!

Yes, England's cricket,
On Headingley's wicket
Plainly incurred God's disapproval.
So He hurried round,
And flooded the ground,
And saved the Ashes for the Oval.

And now you see
It's clear that He
Had kept the rain till it was needed.
So you'll agree
A full and free
Apology should be conceded.

TWINKLE.

The "Praise of Folly"

(Concluded from page 477.)

ERASMUS calls the monks "a sort of brain-sick fools," who "seem confident of becoming greater proficient in divine mysteries the less they are poisoned with any human learning." Monks, as the name denotes, should live solitary; but they swarm in streets and alleys, and make a profitable trade of beggary, to the detriment of the roadside mendicants. They are full of vice and religious punctilios. Some of them will not touch a piece of money, but they "make no scruple of the sin of drunkenness and the lust of the flesh."

Preachers are satirized likewise. They are little else than stage-players. "Good Lord! how mimical are their gestures! What heights and falls in their voice! What toning, what bawling, what singing, what squeaking, what grimaces, making of mouths, apes' faces, and distorting of their countenance; and this art of oratory, as a choice mystery, they convey down by tradition to one another." Yes, and the trick of it still lives in our Christian pulpits.

"Good old tun-bellied divines," and others of the species, come in for their share of raillery. They know that ignorance is the mother of devotion. They are great disputants, and all the logic in the world will never drive them into a corner from which they cannot escape by some "easy distinction." They discuss the absurdest and most far-fetched questions, have cats' eyes that see best in the dark, and possess "such a piercing faculty as to see through an inch-board, and spy out what really never had any being." The apostles would not be able to understand their disputes without a special illumination. In a happy phrase, they are said to spend their time in striking "the fire of subtlety out of the flint of obscurity." But woe to the man who meddles with them; for they are generally very hot and passionate. If you differ from them ever so little, they call upon you to recant; if you refuse to do so, they will brand you as a heretic and "thunder out an excommunication."

Popes fare as badly as preachers, monks, and divines. They "pretend themselves vicars of Christ." Reference is made to their "grooms, ostlers, serving men, pimps, and somewhat else which for modesty's sake I shall not mention." They fight with a holy zeal to defend their possessions, and issue their bulls and excommunications most frequently against those "who, at the instigation of the Devil, and not having the fear of God before their eyes, do feloniously and maliciously attempt to lessen and impair St. Peter's patrimony."

Speaking through the mouth of Folly, the biting wit of Erasmus does not spare Christianity itself. "Fools," he says, "for their plainness and sincerity of heart, have always been most acceptable to God Almighty." Princes have ever been jealous of subjects who were too observant and thoughtful; and Jesus Christ, in like manner, condemns the wise and crafty. He solemnly thanks his Father for hiding the mysteries of salvation from the wise, and revealing them to babes; that is, says Erasmus, *to fools*. "Woe unto you scribes and pharisees," means "Woe unto you wise men." Jesus seemed "chiefly delighted with women, children, and illiterate fishermen." The blessed souls that in the day of judgment are to be placed on the Saviour's right hand "are called sheep, which are the most senseless and stupid of all cattle."

Nor would he heal those breaches our sins had made by any other method than by the "foolishness of the cross," published by the ignorant and unlearned apostles, to whom he frequently recom-

mends the excellence of Folly, cautioning them against the infectiousness of wisdom, by the several examples he proposes them to imitate, such as children, lilies, sparrows, mustard, and such-like beings, which are either wholly inanimate or at least devoid of reason and ingenuity, guided by no other conduct than that of instinct, without care, trouble, or contrivance.

"The Christian religion," Erasmus says, "seems to have some relations to Folly, and no alliance at all to wisdom." In proof of which we are to observe: *first*, that "children, women, old men, and fools, led as it were by a secret impulse of nature, are always most constant in repairing to church, and most zealous, devout, and attentive in the performance of the several parts of divine service"; *secondly*, that true Christians invite affronts by an easy forgiveness of injuries, suffer themselves like doves to be easily cheated and imposed upon, love their enemies as much as their friends, banish pleasure and court sorrow, and wish themselves out of this world altogether. Nay, the very happiness they look forward to hereafter is "no better than a sort of madness or folly." For those who macerate the body, and long to put on immortality, are only in a kind of dream.

They speak many things at an abrupt and incoherent rate, as if they were actuated by some possessing demon; they make an inarticulate noise, without any distinguishing sense or meaning. They sometimes screw and distort their faces to uncouth and antic looks; at one time beyond measure cheerful, then as immoderately sullen; now sobbing, then laughing, and soon after sighing, as if they were perfectly distracted, and out of their senses.

But perhaps the worst stroke of all against Christianity is the following sly one. Folly is said to be acceptable, or at least excusable, to the gods, who "easily pass by the heedless failures of fools, while the miscarriages of such as are known to have more wit shall very hardly obtain a pardon."

Did space permit, we might give several extracts from the *Praise of Folly*, showing that Erasmus could speed the shafts of his satire at the very essentials of religion, such as prayer and providence. Were he living now, we may be sure that he would be in the van of the Army of Liberation. Living when he did, he performed a high and useful task. His keen, bright sword played havoc with much superstition and imposture. He made it more difficult for the pious wranglers over what Carlyle would call "inconceivable incredibilities" to practise their holy profession. Certainly he earned, and more than earned, the praise of Pope.

At length Erasmus, that great injur'd name,
(The glory of the priesthood and the shame!),
Stemm'd the wild torrent of a barbarous age,
And drove those holy Vandals off the stage.

Erasmus was, in fact, the precursor of Voltaire. Physically as well as intellectually, these two great men bore a certain resemblance. A glance at the strong, shrewd face of Erasmus is enough to show that he was not a man to be easily imposed upon; and the square chin, and firm mouth, bespeak a determination which, if it did not run to martyrdom, was sufficient to carry its possessor through hardship and difficulty in the advocacy of his ideals.

—Reprinted.

G. W. FOOTE.

EXPERIENCE TEACHES

We have learned much by the time we are able to distinguish between those who admire, and those who flatter us; and between those who pity, and those who despise.

Twelve God-Fearing Men

A CHRISTIAN Scientist's wife allowed him to die without whatever aid might have been afforded him by calling in a doctor. She was quite rightly censured by the Coroner for neglecting to obtain the best scientific advice within her reach.

Medical science is not perfect, of course, and people die—even after a doctor has done everything that his knowledge and skill can prescribe. But whatever criticisms may be passed upon the profession, one can safely say one thing. Whatever limitations individual doctors may display, the profession is fundamentally scientific, and doctors are subject to a high standard of knowledge and practice.

The Coroner struck the right note when he referred to "so-called Christian Science." No religion has a right to call itself a "science." The main difference between religion and science is that science finds its theories on knowledge, and submits its claims to readily available tests. Results must be satisfactory or the theory does not claim to be established. Religion accepts its remedies by other than rational means, and says "though it should slay me (and others) yet will I trust it."

The Jury gave a commonsense verdict, but added a rider stating:—

The jury are very disgusted at the attitude of these four so-called Christian Science practitioners, especially in not calling in medical aid when they realized their so-called prayers were useless, and especially with the witness Miss Marsh, whom we severely censure, and we claim to be God-fearing men."

This jury consisted of ordinary muddle-headed Christians. They live in a scientific age, but they are unscientific. They condemn those whose acts offend common practice, without for a moment understanding why mankind has forsaken the ancient practices.

"God-fearing" is a meaningless term if it does not imply a belief in a "Spirit" interfering in human affairs. If these jurymen are Christians they believe in the Bible sources from which the "disgusting" tenets of the Christian Scientists and other "peculiar people" are derived. Whether "disgusting" or not they are based on the Epistle of St. James v. 13-15. A frank repudiation of the Bible is much to be desired. It is more than a little "disgusting" when Christians turn and rend those who attempt to carry out honestly the plain teachings of a Bible they all profess to believe.

It will be noted that the God-fearing jury are specially disgusted because the widow did not call in medical aid "when they realized" that the pious prayers, etc., were useless. Apparently the God-fearing twelve admit that such prayers are effective otherwise, in other circumstances, and perhaps in some diseases, and always up to a certain point. It is like the Old Testament God who conquered all Israel's ordinary enemies, but "could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley because THEY had chariots of iron." (Judges i. 19).

The general belief amongst all the God-fearers of to-day is that Prayer and all other Bible remedies for human ills ought still to be used. God ought to be feared (and obeyed) as in pre-scientific ages—but not quite so exclusively. God can "drive out" a whole host of little unimportant things. But even a cold ought not to be left in His hands too long. Anyway, if the patient gets better at once, God has done it. God-fearing and God-obeying have been all the care needed.

But when it is obvious that the case is a serious one, scientific treatment is required, and it then becomes

"disgusting" for anyone to continue trusting (or fearing) God. A doctor must be called in as soon as the temperature rises. Secular science is not certain perhaps—there may come a time when hope is completely gone—when indeed the patient is "in God's hands"—but until then, nothing is farther from the Christian's intention than to rely on so desperate a remedy as "God."

Not only these God-fearing jurymen, but even the most peculiar of peculiar people will not follow "God's Word" in all the absurd, illogical, or impossible "divine" laws. If seventh-day observance is a divine command, not less it was "commanded" on the self-same occasion to the same people that they should "surely kill" their own son, daughter, wife or brother if guilty of heresy (Deut. xiii. 9). Some Christians are heretics enough to disobey this, and the Second of the "Ten Commandments" which forbids photography.

They even disobey more sensible commandments, leaving to an Atheist the enactment of a law to enable Christians to obey their own God's commandment, "Swear not at all," which is not only Jehovah's, but Christ's own demand on all who pretend to be followers and believers.

But it is as easy as it is stupid to claim to be "God-fearing," so long as fear of God is confined to the non-essential. It requires no courage to conform to everyday scientific practice, and at the same time to defend ancient superstitions only when nothing depends on their validity.

Of course it is encouraging to find kings and priests relying upon medical and hygienic science, but it is deplorable to find that simultaneously they

"Roll the psalm to Wintry skies,
And build them fanes of fruitless prayer."

Prayers For the Sick, and Thanksgivings to Almighty God for cures which have obviously required all the skill of modern science, prove how strongly superstition is still entrenched.

It is vastly unsatisfactory to find a government neglecting scientific irrigation and failing to provide by the aid of science an adequate water supply, while Prayers for Rain are still relied upon. Our God-fearing jurymen are not the only people who feel "disgusted" about this and a large number of similar samples of the unscientific mind in a scientific era.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

"What I Believe"

The recent wireless talk in the above series on "Rationalism," by Professor Julian Huxley, contained some useful points. Personally, however, I had hoped to hear a brief exposition of the main lines of evidence on which the Secularist position is based. This, however, did not eventuate. And it may be useful, by way of stock-taking, to attempt a short summary of the chief reasons why we reject all theology, as well as all the other notions variously called supernatural, occult, mystic, transcendental or metaphysical (in the root-meaning of the word)—that is to say, all ideas and beliefs which do not arise from or are not substantiated by actual experiential knowledge and the use of reason.

Our first line of argument is based on common sense and miscellaneous, ordinary knowledge. And this, in Christian countries, consists largely in pointing out the primitive simplicity and ignorance, the contradictory statements, the suggestion of exploded ideas (witchery, necromancy, etc.) and other objectionable features displayed in the Bible. And as this book is still by many believed to be "true" and "inspired," and in view of the widespread efforts made to rehabilitate it as such, it remains necessary to continue to draw attention to the points. To these we have to add the plain contradiction,

in the later parts of the work, of all available knowledge and experience by the assertion of virgin birth (really spirit-human procreation), god-men, bodily resurrection, ascension, and so forth.

(2) Our next line of attack is the scientific one. Beginning, so far as the modern period is concerned, with the physical discoveries of Galileo, Kepler, Newton and others, it was gradually shown that all phenomena were natural, orderly and inevitable. Thus "the gods were banished from the skies," as well as from the earth; miracles became incredible; the notion of altering events or things by faith, prayer or other "religious exercises" became as futile as production of such effects by magic; and transubstantiation of any kind was put in the same category as the transformation of a person into a werewolf, a "changeling," and the like.

The further advance of astronomy and geology then demonstrated the natural evolution (in the physical sense) of stars by a process of heating and cooling; of the formation from our "ancestral star" of the solar system; of the cooling of the earth, accompanied by the innumerable changes due to upheaval, subsidence and denudation, until its present condition was attained. Thus all notions of supernatural or other occult creation, control and guidance became unbelievable.

The progress of palæontology established the great age of the earth, and, in conjunction with biology, the fact that organisms were not created, but that they have naturally evolved. And to this psychology has contributed by showing that the mind, as well as the body, has advanced through the evolving animal series until its present condition emerged. And though we cannot directly prove that no such thing as "soul" or "spirit" exists, it has become clear that the whole bearing of the organic sciences is opposed to the conception of spiritism, as well as to that "dualism" which regards mind as an entity separate from or independent of the body.

Here, therefore, we note the sufficient negation of spirit, and consequently of immortality. These facts and considerations negate the belief in virgin birth and a mass of allied doctrine, as well as the belief in supernatural "purpose."

(3) The third line of evidence for secularism comes from anthropology, which amply confirms the principle of human evolution, and establishes the fact that civilized mankind has everywhere risen from a savage, semi-animal condition. Hence there was no "first man," no primal innocence or moral or other perfection, no "fall" into a general condition of depravity, no "deluge" or other general destruction of mankind; and therefore the notion of supernatural "redemption" was rendered entirely vacuous.

Again, the branch of this science which, in conjunction with ancient history, deals with the development of knowledge and ideas shows that the transcendental beliefs now (though decreasingly) held in the more enlightened countries of the world, are mere continuations (with modifications) of those which arose before man possessed sufficient knowledge and power of reflective thought to arrive at correct conclusions—except on simpler matters connected with his practical activities. Indeed, it is fully evident that his magical and spiritist beliefs were wholly dependent on his ignorance and his inability to apply simple tests of their validity. And, following on the fall of Greek and Roman rationality and the establishment of Christianity, this defect permeated European society for an additional two thousand years or so; and the people became again in bondage to old traditional ideas.

Here we note the destruction of the special prop of Christianity, and some other religions, viz., "revelation," "inspiration," all forms and varieties of divination and prophecy, together with mystic experience, exaltation, etc.—in so far as any of these postulate any cause other than obsession with certain old ideas which are maintained by the constant and ubiquitous suggestion of religion and other occultry.

This interpretation is, of course, strengthened by the fact that all such notions—indeed, all extra-natural beliefs—wane in approximately equal step with the spread of education, that is to say, of interest in and of knowledge of ordinary, natural things, accompanied by that

increased power and habit of logical thinking which results from systematic mental training.

(4) In the next place, we point out the effect of religious belief on individual and social life, including intellectualism and morality. The importation into Christianity of the ancient Hebrew exclusiveness, fanaticism, and neglect of natural knowledge and enquiry, together with the earlier, semi-barbaric matter of the Bible, are clearly responsible for the final overthrow of Greek and Roman naturalism and rationality. We may well accept Harnack's view that the fall of the Roman Empire would have occurred even without the barbarian attacks and triumph, because of the "contempt of reason and science," which "leads to barbarism because it results in the crassest superstition, and is exposed to all manner of imposture"; and this, of course, was combined with "the renunciation of this world."

Then followed the long, dark period, during which large numbers of the more active, inquiring, independent and rationalistically-minded people were imprisoned, tortured, burnt and massacred. And this, together with the later opposition to science (which inevitably conflicted with fundamental Christian dogma) and to education, hindered progress enormously. We also point to the obvious fact that, during the last hundred years or so (neglecting certain features that may be regarded as effects of the Great War), the notable advance of government, law and morality has been in general proportion to the decay of religious belief.

(5) We have further to note the great harm that has been worked by authoritarianism, and the tendency to fixity of idea, belief and practice in an evolving world. The unquestioning and final acceptance of what has been "declared" by anybody in an earlier and comparatively ignorant age inevitably results in the neglect of inquiry, and also in the perpetuation of exploded ideas which would otherwise have been relinquished much more rapidly—as, for example, belief in and obsession with the "hereafter," the disappearance of which is a necessary condition of adequate attention to and successful effort in dealing with real affairs, whether intellectual, moral or social.

It is not meant that the above exhaust the possible lines of attack. But they seem to be the most fundamental, direct and destructive of supernaturalism and other occultry.

J. REEVES.

Obituary

MICHAEL STEDMAN

We regret to announce the death of Michael Stedman, which took place under tragic circumstances on July 26. Although 71 years of age he was a keen motor-cyclist, and while on the road at Chelmsford, Essex, he came into collision with a pedal-cyclist and received injuries from which he died. He was a Freethinker of long standing, and a regular reader of the paper. As an engineer he had had considerable experience in South Africa. The cremation took place on July 30 at Golders Green, where a Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti. To the grief-stricken widow we offer most sincere sympathy.

MAN AND GOD

If it is true that man creates God in his own image, it is no less true that for religious devotion he must remain unconscious of that fact. Once he knows that he has created the image of God, the reality of it vanishes like last night's dream. It may be that to anyone who is impregnated with the modern spirit it is almost self-evident that the truths of religion are truths of experience. But this knowledge does not tolerate an abiding and an absorbing faith. For when the truths of religion have lost their connexion with a superhuman order, the cord of their life is cut. What remains is a somewhat archaic, a somewhat questionable, although a very touching, quaint medley of poetry, rhetoric, fable, exhortation and insight into human travail.

"A Preface to Morals," by Waller Lipmann.

REGULARISING DEGRADATION

In England the aristocracy destroyed the promise of such a development (the Movement in France which restored the status of the peasant) when it broke the back of the peasant community. The enclosures created a new organization of classes. The peasant with rights and a status, with a share in the government and fortunes of his village, standing in rags, but standing on his feet, makes way for the labourer with no corporate rights to defend, no corporate power to invoke, no property to cherish, no ambition to pursue, bent beneath the fear of his masters and a future without hope. No class in the world has so beaten and so crushing a history, and the blazing ricks in 1830 once threatened his rulers with the anguish of his despair, in no chapter of that history could it have been written, "This parish is at law with its squire." For the parish was no longer the community that offered the labourer friendship and sheltered his freedom; it was merely the shadow of his poverty, his helplessness and his shame. "Go to an alehouse kitchen of an old enclosed country, and there you will see the origin of poverty and poor rates. For whom are they to be sober? For whom are they to save? For the parish? If I am dilligent, shall I have leave to build a cottage? If I am sober shall I have land for a cow? If I am frugal, shall I have half an acre of potatoes? You offer no motives; you have nothing but a parish officer and a workhouse!—Bring me another pot!"

From "The Village Labourer" (1760-1832)
by J. L. Hammond and Barbara Hammond.

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LONDON.

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BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCHES N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, August 5, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, August 9, Mr. C. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.30, Sunday, August 5, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, August 7, Mr. P. Goldman. Stonhouse Street, High Street, Clapham, 8.0, Wednesday, August 8, Mr. E. C. Smith.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood and Bryant. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Collins and Hyatt. Platform No. 2, Messrs. Saphin and others. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. Campbell Everden. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood and Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Two Lectures.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET : 7.0, Sunday, August 5, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLYTH (Market Place) : 7.0, Tuesday, August 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BURNLEY MARKET : 7.30, Tuesday, August 7, Mr. J. Clayton.

COLNE (Bottom of Spring Lane) : 7.30, Wednesday, August 8, Mr. J. Clayton.

HIGHAM : 7.45, Friday, August 3, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street and Park Road) : 8.0, Thursday, August 2, Messrs. D. Robinson and C. McKelvie. Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, August 5, Messrs. J. V. Shortt and W. Parry.

MORPETH (Market Place) : 7.0, Saturday, August 4, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH (Bigg Market) : 7.0, Mr. Alan Flanders.

RISHTON : 3.15, Sunday, August 5, Mr. J. Clayton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Would Have Memorial) : 7.0, Wednesday, August 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

STOCKTON (Market Place) : 7.0, Tuesday, August 7, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND (Gill Bridge) : 7.0, Sunday, August 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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THE National Secular Society was founded in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

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SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

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