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

Views and Opinions

Allies in Blunderland

PHILOSOPHERS have for a couple of dozen centuries been engaged in the search for what they have pleased to call the "thing-in-itself," and theologians have been engaged for a longer period in the search for God. Neither have succeeded in finding what they were looking for. This is not surprising, since neither would have recognized it if they had come across it; and both are as far off succeeding as they were when they started their search. But as a result of attempting to discover an unrecognisable something in an inconceivable world a curious reconciliation has been reached by some of the would-be discoverers belonging to both camps. It has been decided that the unknown God and the inconceivable "substance," which is the material out of which it is said the world is made, are one. But both agree that they do not know what this "reality" is like—the philosopher makes the statement with a little more certainty than the theologian—and both admit that it would not be of the slightest use if they came across it.

So with absolute accuracy one may say that the "thing-in-itself" is of no consequence in itself, it is of no value in itself, and it is of no use in itself. It is just a verbal heritage, a property that was created a long time ago before man had freed himself from his theological swaddling clothes, and which has been treated as an entail because few have had the courage to challenge it or to think out the problem anew. Its gravitation towards an identification with "God" is, in the circumstances, a natural development, and might even be dignified as an illustration of some such principle as "The Inevitable Identification of Absolute Inconceivables"; for God, in itself, is of no consequence in itself, is of no use in itself, and stands as an heritage from a dark and distant past.

* * *

Sheer Irreverence

I am quite sure that a great many philosophers will take this as a very irreverent, and an inexcusably

flippant way of treating such an ancient institution as the "thing-in-itself"; and the irreverence and the flippancy will be raised to the *nth* degree when the subject of such treatment is God. Yet what I have said is unquestionably true, and I hope to demonstrate this to the full. Certainly millions upon millions of men and women have passed through life without the slightest suspicion that there is such a thing as a thing-in-itself to be looked for. And those who have shown this peculiar awareness of something they can never meet are quite unable to indicate any use for it, nor do they show any greater understanding of things after adopting it than they had beforehand.

Exactly the same is true of "God." No man knows more of things after he has found God than he did before he discovered him. No one is able to show that he is better or wiser for believing in God, or that he is any way superior to the man who does not believe there is a God to look for. God and the thing-in-itself are an extraordinarily well-matched pair. They form a splendid couple, equally matched in their magnificent uselessness and unapproachable in their overpowering absurdity. It is small wonder they have been brought together as manifesting a fundamental identity.

The only ones to whom this superb pair are serviceable are professional theologians and a certain type of philosopher. The latter finds it makes for an easy life, and saves him from the imputation of Atheism if he talks of the thing-in-itself as though it were identical with the object of religious worship. The theologian puts on the air of a philosopher, and loudly proclaims the reconciliation of religion with science and philosophy by perpetually asserting that science cannot touch the "world of reality," that religion alone can bring us into touch with "reality." We are, apparently, living in a world that is not the real world, and it is religion which alone has the power of opening up this "real" world to us, and is able to explain that it in no wise resembles the only world we know. How on earth we are to deal with a world which in no wise resembles the world we know is a question that I am quite unable to answer.

* * *

A Confession of Faith

Now I believe in a real world, but it is the world I know, not one of which I can form no conception. I believe in a real "existence," but it is the existence I know, not an undiscoverable existence which, in the jargon of the metaphysicians is conceived *per se*, and which, to use another Abracadabrial formula is conceived in and by itself. I believe there is a very good and legitimate use for such words as objective and subjective, but it is not the stupid "objective" which is believed to exist outside my world of sensational experience.

I also believe in the use of such words as "Mind" and "Matter," not as standing for mysterious entities which underly phenomena, but as descriptive of categories of experience. I do not believe in these mysterious and inconceivable things, because I know they are the lineal descendants of the "essences" and "principles" of the medieval metaphysicians, and are, more remotely, descendants of those supernatural agencies that were once as thick as leaves in autumn, and which, whether used on behalf of religion or not, are the attenuated remains of gods and ghosts. In other words, I stick to the world I know. It is this confession of philosophic faith that I wish to make clear in what follows.

* * *

Making Science Absurd

It will, I think, help very considerably if I take one or two examples of the use made of this thing-in-itself, this world of "reality." Almost haphazard I take down from my bookshelves an interesting volume by that well-known bio-chemist, Professor Joseph Needham. In a chapter on "Materialism and Religion," he says:—

It would be extravagant to claim that the present-day scientific investigator sets down bits of *absolute truth* in his laboratory notebook, and armed with an infallible method, explores the *real structure of an objective world*. . . . To say that the functions of the kidney or the brain can best be described in a mechanical way is not to say that they are mechanical and nothing else. The biologist is not committed to any opinion as to what his animals are *in themselves*.

The italics are mine. I will leave the question of the "real structure of an objective world" for the time, merely noting these curious expressions. I am more concerned with the assumption that the brain or the kidney with which science deals are not, of necessity, the brain and kidney in themselves. If they are not that, what are they?

What is the brain "in itself?" It must, presumably be some brain that is different from the brain we know, otherwise it would be idle to attempt to distinguish between the two. But if the brain we know is like the brain in itself, then on what ground can we say that the one known is not the real brain? Or, again, if we are talking of two really different things, why give them the same name—different things cannot be the same, even in the scientific laboratory. And as we mean by a known brain something of a particular kind, with a particular function, why call the thing that is not of that kind a brain? How can we recognize, even in thought, one thing as like another when there is no resemblance between the two? So that, in the end, what Professor Needham is telling is that the thing we know is never the thing-in-itself and if that be true, then it follows that we should never know the thing-in-itself even were it to happen, because we only know a thing by classifying it with things already known. But as we are asked to believe that things-in-themselves are never like the things we know, it also follows that so soon as we know things-in-themselves, we cease to know them because by being known they cease to be what they are in themselves and become something else.

I know this sounds like a very special kind of Chinese puzzle written in Chocktaw for the benefit of Irishmen, but the fault is not mine. I am merely trying to reduce to intelligible terms an unintelligible proposition. The fault lies with those who, generation after generation persist in presenting a mere jumble of words as a scientific or philosophical proposition.

Scientists at Sea

In the circumstances it is not surprising to find Sir James Jeans, in the course of his Presidential address to the British Association, repeating the old-fashioned and quite meaningless statements that "we can never know the essential nature of anything," and that we are concerned "with appearances rather than with reality." These statements are true only so long as we use "reality" and "essential" in a sense that robs them of all significance and value. But if we use them in the only justifiable sense, and mean by "real" the things that are real to us, and essential as standing for factors that are necessary to the existence of any "thing," then Sir James Jeans' use of the words is in the highest degree nonsensical. If "real" is to carry an intelligible significance it must be our real, or the real as it exists in our world. In any other sense what I have said of the extraordinary jumble by Professor Needham applies with equal cogency to this presidential utterance of Sir James Jeans. The popularity of Sir James among a non-scientific class of readers, and also among theologians, reminds one of the explanation given by Charles II. of the popularity of a parson of his day—"His nonsense suits their nonsense."

But nonsense is like treason in one respect. If it becomes established it goes under other names and is treated with the utmost respect. How often have we been told and by how many well-placed men, that, "of course, we do not know what gravitation is in itself," or we do not know what life is in itself, and so forth? But, so long as we use these terms with any meaning whatever, we do know what life is and we do know what gravitation is. Truly, if we mean only that there is more to learn about gravitation and life, the statement is so much of a truism that it is hardly worth the making. But "life" is the name we give to express a special relation of an organism to its environment. "Gravitation" is the name given to the behaviour of particles of matter in relation with other particles of matter. There is not vital phenomena *and* another thing called life. There is not the reaction of matter on matter *and* another thing called gravitation. Gravitation is the movements of matter; the specialized movements of an organism is life. To believe in anything else is non-sense in the purest sense of the word. Mr. Bernard Shaw, with his life force struggling for expression, the theologically-minded scientist with his talk of a "reality" underlying the reality we know, are all repeating, in more sophisticated language the ideas of the savage with his personification of natural processes in terms of gods and ghosts. If it is said that our knowledge of things in themselves is partial at best, or that much of what we call truth may turn out to be error, or that there is much more to know about every thing, there should be no questioning of such obviously truthful statements. Neither was there any great necessity for the statements themselves. But to re-dress primitive superstition in the language of science and philosophy is surely to sin against the light—at best it is to exchange one absurdity for another.

But this type of error dies hard. Old thought-forms persist with even those who think they are altogether free from their influence. The soul of the savage reappears as the "principle" of the philosopher, the "Mind" that is not the mind we know is displaced by a "Matter" that is not the matter we know. And none to say with Jack Point, "Oh the pity of it."

I must leave an examination of the nature of this superstition of the "thing-in-itself" until next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Charles Southwell and His Colleagues

"They dwell apart, a calm, heroic band,
Not tasting toil or pain."—*Wm. Morris.*

"Pioneers! O pioneers!"—*Whitman.*

CHARLES SOUTHWELL'S name will always be remembered by Freethinkers as the first editor of the first definitely Freethought paper in the English-speaking world. This is not his only claim on our attention. During the stormy period prior to the birth of an organized Freethought Party in England, Southwell stood in the forefront of the movement. His eloquence, ability, and courage attracted the "Intellectuals," and drew on him the full strength of Orthodoxy, which was still mighty in our land. Living when he did, he performed a high and useful task, and his keen, bright sword played havoc with imposture and superstition.

What we know of Southwell's life is one of the romances of Freethought. Born in 1814, the year before the downfall of Napoleon, and the battle of Waterloo, he was the youngest of a large family, of thirty-three children. His father was a militant Freethinker at a time when heresy was a danger, and not a pastime, and when over seventy years of age married a handsome lass of twenty. Charles was the offspring of this unusual marriage of May and December. In his schooldays the character of the growing man revealed itself, for he was chiefly remarkable for playing truant, and for possessing a wonderful memory. When he left school, at the age of twelve, he had, to use his own words, "knowledge enough to puzzle pedants, and ignorance enough to disgrace a Hottentot." His subsequent life was one great adventure after another. During his comparatively short life he was orator, soldier, actor, Socialist, Freethought advocate, writer, editor, and prisoner for liberty of speech. At one period of his life he joined the Spanish Legion, formed for the purpose of assisting Queen Isabella to maintain her throne against Don Carlos. For two years this remarkable man consorted with this ragged regiment, and, in spite of loathsome surroundings, chronic starvation, and attacks of fever, he came through without serious damage.

On his return to England he built up a solid reputation by his oratory, rousing Freethinkers everywhere by his fervid eloquence. In 1841 he made history with the publication of *The Oracle of Reason*, the first periodical entirely devoted to Freethought propaganda. The literary tone of the paper may be estimated by the contents, which included well-written articles on "Symbol Worship," "The Theory of Regular Graduation," and "Is there a God?" The effect was tremendous. The clergy, from the Archbishops and Bishops to the country curates, were alarmed at this bold challenge, and threatened Southwell with all the rigours of the law. With a true soldier's intuition, Southwell hit back hard. Faced with imprisonment for publishing literary and philosophical articles, he met force with force, and the pages of *The Oracle* were laden with outspoken criticism of the Christian Bible and the clergy. The fight began in real earnest. On the appearance of the fourth number Southwell was promptly arrested, tried before Sir Charles Wetherell, and, in spite of a most eloquent defence, sentenced to a year's imprisonment, with a fine of £100. During Southwell's imprisonment George Jacob Holyoake edited the paper; and when he, in turn, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, Thomas Paterson took his place. "Bull-dog Paterson," as he was called, was audacity personified. He went to gaol, and his

speech for the defence was actually published under the caustic title of "God versus Paterson." George Adams and his wife, Harriet, stepped into the breach, each to be sent to prison. William Chilton succeeded them, and kept the Freethought flag flying to the bitter end, which was hastened by the heavy debts incurred in the continuous law cases and the heavy fines imposed.

The Oracle of Reason lasted just over two years; but during its short and stormy career it created a profound impression, which, in due time, led to the formation of a properly organized National Freethought Party. After his release from prison Southwell carried on a Freethought mission in many places, and ultimately settled in New Zealand, where he edited the *Auckland Examiner*. He died in 1860 at the early age of forty-six.

Southwell was a prolific writer, but most of his work was simply journalism. The most interesting of his books is *The Confessions of a Freethinker*, published in 1845, a candid and fascinating piece of autobiography. There is an elusive element in his short life-story. So much is vague that chapters of his career are blank. The few photographs of him have been described as unsatisfactory, and a biographer is reduced to inference. This much is certain. A brilliant and unfortunate man, Charles Southwell fought well and suffered much in the cause of Liberty.

Let us be quite fair to the memory of Southwell and his brave comrades. They were working men and women engaged in a desperate fight against Tyranny on behalf of the freedom of speech. Their struggle was a prolonged battle against truly enormous odds. As the little "Revenge" earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battle-ships of Spain, so these Freethinkers have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the tremendous Armada of Superstition. Christians sentenced the thinkers to prison, but the Freethinkers in turn, have brought the persecuting Church to the bar of Humanity. The clergy, still entrenched behind their money-bags, and buttressed by State support, no longer have solitary Freethinkers to deal with, but now have to face a compact army upon whose banner is inscribed the significant and soul-stirring word, Liberty.

MIMNERMUS.

Nazi and Clerical Fascism

"In matters of religion there can only be two clear logical positions. One, the completest submission of the intellect to authority: to some book, or church, or man. The other, the most thorough assertion of the right and duty of individual thought and judgment. These positions are so antagonistic that there can be no truce or peace between the defenders of the one and of the other. As Freethinkers we claim this right and duty of individual thought, the free and complete expression of the individual judgment. . . . We assert the right to think, and to tell openly and clearly all we can of what it is we think, and how we think it."

Charles Bradlaugh, "Champion of Liberty," p. 84f.

TO-DAY, this statement in all its fearlessness is perhaps more urgent than even at the time when Charles Bradlaugh wrote these words towards the end of the last century. Internationally, the Freethought Movement is being ruthlessly opposed by two powerful world movements which represent the most radical and systematized forms of despotism conceivable—Fascism and Catholicism.

The nature of Fascism is not difficult to comprehend, even to the dullest of minds. It is a system which ensures the perpetration of the will of its rulers

by means of the physical suppression of the rebellious. By threat of physical violence it forbids people to organize to protect and further the recognition of their rights, and crushes the organized or individual propagation of criticism and constructive thought. It seeks to mould the thoughts of this generation—and especially the youth—to ensure the willing submission of the next to the creeds and domination of Fascism. The system of Fascism itself—so grossly misrepresented under the title of leadership—assumes the inherent superiority of one class over another class and of one nation over all others.

The creed of Hitlerist Fascism was described by the German "Leader" himself in the following words:—

The great mass of the workers do not want anything more than bread and amusements. They have no appreciation for any sort of ideals. We aim at the selection of the new class of rulers, of those who are clearly conscious that by reason of their superior race they have the right to rule, and who will secure and maintain this rule over the broad mass regardless of consideration.

There is no other revolution than the racial revolution; there is no economic, no politic, no social revolution, but only the struggle of the inferior lower strata against the ruling superior race.

The Nordic race has a right to rule the world, and we must make this right of race the guiding star of our foreign policy.

And we must not forget the Fascist treatment of women as a subordinate stratum of society, possessing only such social "rights" as are bound up with woman's privilege to be the chattel of some man, and otherwise the necessary instrument whereby the men are produced for Fascism's conquering army. The race theory of Hitler is distinctive of the German type of Fascism. In Austria, the superiority of the ruling body is based on religious creeds. But let us first note the factor which is common to all forms of Fascism: the assumption of the unalterable supremacy of one group over the rest of humanity, and the securing of their domination by means of a system whose existence is rooted in the use of physical force. It is these fundamental considerations which show that Fascism, under whatever guise it masquerades, is completely antagonistic to the principles of Free-thought and as such must be decidedly opposed by the whole of the Free-thought Movement.

The unscrupulous brutalities of the Fascist régimes, although meriting the contempt and intervention of all right-minded people, nevertheless have an unfortunate tendency to distract attention from the essential issues involved. In this regard Austria is particularly worthy of mention. The justified publicity which was given to the February happenings in Austria was not directed sufficiently to the nature of the system in that country, and the forces in whose interests the repression was being operated. Many people even subscribed—and still subscribe—to the fallacious idea that the Austrian system was not Fascist, and that, on the contrary, Dollfuss' opposition to Hitler was based on the aversion to Fascism of the governing clique in Austria. The Governments of Dollfuss and his successor have been decidedly Fascist in their methods. In the violation of the democratic constitution and the legal rights of the Austrian citizens, it differed in no way from Nazism. It suppressed the Socialist and Trade Union Movements, and resorted to most despicable methods to compel trade union secretaries to hand over the money in their charge to the new Fascist organizations. The concentration camps functioned for the same purpose as did those in Germany. In spite of the Dollfuss pledge that no reprisals would be made against workers who

voluntarily surrendered after the February struggle, up to the end of June nine people had suffered the death penalty, six had been condemned to life imprisonment and 975 people have been subjected to punishment which involves 1050 years of prison existence, in most cases in violation of that pledge. These things coupled with a rigid press censorship and the suppression of all anti-Government propaganda prove conclusively the Fascist nature of the methods adopted.

In whose interests is Austrian Fascism being operated? Whose dictatorial will is behind the Austrian Fascist machine? As in Germany, it serves to ensure the continuation of the economic exploitation of the masses, and thus stabilizes the power of the industrial magnates and the landed aristocracy who financed it. But in Austria, as distinct from Germany, Fascism is being used to preserve class domination in other than the economic sphere, for it has become a powerful prop of the rule of the priesthood. The will of the Catholic Church is unquestionably supreme under a régime which has accepted the responsibility for the following events. Towards the end of last year, the Dollfuss Government suppressed the Austrian Free-thought Union, and its secretary was prosecuted for instigation to rebellion. It must be remembered that the Free-thought Union between the years 1919 and 1932 had so aroused the Free-thought conviction in sections of the Austrian people that 170,000 faced the social stigma entailed by public resignation from the Church in a clerical country during that period. Further, all non-Christian marriages have been declared invalid in Austria, and the children of such marriages illegitimate, unless a second "real marriage" in the Church displaces the civil marriage. The Christian Government has actually threatened employees with dismissal if they did not join the Catholic Church, and then has proudly boasted of the fact that 50,000 people had returned to the Church in a comparatively short space of time. It goes without saying that the "right of the parent" to determine a child's education (an inviolable principle according to English Catholics intent on pro-Catholic legislation in favour of their schools) has been violated without compunction, and that now all Austrian children are compelled by law to attend religious instruction in school. No wonder the Dollfuss Constitution contains in its preamble:—

In the name of God the All-Powerful from Whom proceed all rights, the Austrian people receive this Constitution for a Federal Christian German State on a corporative basis.

Thus the Inquisition period of the Catholic Church is being revived in Austria to-day, in order to stabilize Catholic power. The legislation of Clerical Fascism in Austria proves conclusively that the Catholic Church has not renounced the use of physical violence to achieve its end.

The opposition of the Catholic Church to the Hitler Government in Germany is not based on its antipathy either to the methods which are being adopted or to the purpose they serve in suppressing political freedom and upholding economic exploitation. The inclusion of prominent Catholics in the recent "cleanup" proves nothing of the anti-Fascist character of the Catholic Church. For the Church has already on Hitler's accession to power declared:—

... its sincere readiness to co-operate to its best ability with the new government which has proclaimed as its goal to promote Christian education, to wage a war against Godlessness . . . and to protect the rights of the Church.

The present antagonism between the Catholic Church and the Nazi Government in Germany is due solely to the fact that the Catholic Church is not bene-

fitting sufficiently from the fruits of suppression.

The practice of the Catholic Church to-day, as through the centuries, has remained true to the Church's political theory, so aptly summarized in the editorial columns of the *Catholic Herald* :—

The Catholic Church is always prepared to come to terms with any Government in the world. Pagan, tyrannical, dictatorial, republican, imperial, monarchial, the Church makes no distinction. She is concerned solely for the souls of Her children.

We as Freethinkers are the historical opponents of Roman Catholicism because of its repression of mental freedom. In the words of a Freethought pioneer we believe : " There can be no thought if the freedom to think is warped and molested. There can be no knowledge if a Catholic censorship blots out the pages of the books from which we would learn. Thought and knowledge, these are the things we are protecting." The knowledge of the support and identification of Roman Catholicism with Fascism is important to us, however, in that it is a concrete example of the repressive nature of the Roman Church which can be understood in its crude physical form by people whose minds do not easily grasp the more subtle system of Catholic religion. The hatred of Fascism is widespread. Let us show the alliance of Catholicism with this despotic movement, and we have made it easier for many to question and doubt the value of an institution which up to now they have perhaps taken for granted. Thus we facilitate one step in the process of conversion from blind acceptance and obedience to reasoned thought and knowledge.

EDITH MOORE.

Two Prayer Books

THE Church of England would be rich if duplication of documents, Bibles and creeds implied wealth of thought. Since 1881 the Church has been perplexed rather than aided by its possession of a Revised Version of its Sacred Book. It cannot bring itself to dismiss the "Authorized" Version. It is "authorized," of course, by Parliament; nobody knows what its "Author" thinks. He may perhaps dislike both versions of His Holy Bible.

It is usual to say that if two documents contradict each other, one must be false, although the other may not be true. In the case of the "divinely inspired" Word of God, it is not safe to say that Jehovah "authorizes" even one "word" of "His Word."

A Prayer Book is different. It is not what God says to man, it is presumably what man says, or what some men think man ought to say, to God. The pious, and often very preposterous authors were only "inspired" in the same way that an eloquent talker is often said to be "inspired." Crudities and contradictions need disturb nobody; indeed they make a Prayer Book more human. Besides our Church has thrown aside a dozen Prayer Books in the few centuries of its existence. Revisions are always justifiable.

To-day the Church has two full and complete Prayer Books to boast of—if we can imagine anybody boasting of so dubious a possession.

To distinguish the volumes, it may be well to continue to call the older and "authorized" one the Book of Common Prayer, and the newer one the Book of Uncommon Prayer.

A Church-goer at present has to know which of the two books he must carry about on Sundays. A visitor to a seaside Church may find himself praying "differently" from his fellow-worshipper if he has

brought to a strange town his old familiar "Dearly Beloved Brethren" book.

A mourner at a recent funeral has expressed his annoyance. His relative was buried to a new tune. He expected to hear the usual (the "Common") service wherein the most melancholy pessimism is *such* a comfort to miserable Christians, who apparently like to be reminded that "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." He is also accustomed to a specially virulent part of St. Paul's polite arguments ("Thou Fool" is a typical phrase). Instead of which, our mourners listened to a lively, cheery little piece about "Our light affliction which is but for a moment." There is even a somewhat humorous change which mourners may be able to laugh over—later on. Instead of saying rather unkindly that "it hath pleased God to take" our poor brother, the Uncommon Prayer puts the boot on the other foot. Now we "commend our dear (and dead) brother" into God's hands, for all the world as if *we* had strangled him ourselves.

An enterprising publisher, Mr. Humphrey Milford, has thoughtfully issued a handy volume containing both the "Rubrics" as they are called. This word is typical of the absurd anachronism of the whole thing. It seems to be still necessary to address the Deity in the language current in England in 1662. God still spells "judgement" with the discarded "e"; Choirs are still "quires" in His sight; and He is still a Quaker, retaining the "Thee" and "Thou," and "curseth" and "remaineth."

Perhaps we are wrong to criticize. The "Revisers" know best. A non-existent Deity is appropriately addressed either in a dead language, as in the Catholic Church, or in obsolete forms of an existing tongue, as our Church does.

Whether the Uncommon Prayer Book is legal or not we do not know. It has been passed by the Church Assembly more than once. The House of Lords approved of it by a big majority, but the House of Commons twice declined to pass it. The King is often called the "Supreme Head" of the Church, but this book could not apparently reach the Supreme Head except through Parliament. Some Churches use it to-day, some do not. Some use it sometimes. Even the publisher, who surely ought to know more than we do, prints a significant warning, prominent in large type, saying :—

The publication of this Book does not directly or indirectly imply that it can be regarded as authorized for use in churches.

They add (in still larger type) what the Uncommon Prayer Book *would* have had as its title if it *had* been authorized.

The differences between the two books do not appear to be of the remotest value or importance either to the people who pray or the God who is addressed. The 1662 Prayer Book contains, of course, some fine phrases, which are reproduced in the Uncommon Prayer Book. The 1662 book was a compendium of nonsense from beginning to end, and deserved revision of a most drastic character. We wish that the new book offered even five per cent of greater wisdom.

The most interesting "Change" is an "Alternative Table of Lessons" (passages from the Bible to be read aloud in the course of the service). Some of these elegant extracts were so atrocious that they offended even a parson. The natural remedy, one would think, would be to cut them ruthlessly out, declaring that the Church now repudiates their villainess. This is something that "is not done" in Church circles. The old abominations are still available, and as long as any parson enjoys them or his congregation can stomach them, it is proposed to per-

petuate them. The Uncommon Prayer Book merely offers the more squeamish ones the chance to read more innocuous passages. It is done in such a way that the contemned texts *can* be thus "dodged" every time they rear their heads. But they are still there all the same.

The Catholic section of the Church wins all the "honours" easily. The new *Calendar* adopts many "Saints" not recognized by the 1662 Book, including Popes, Monks, Abbots and "Martyrs." Bishop Valentine is silently but effectually slaughtered. Bishop Ninian (of Galloway) is added. "Edward, King of the West Saxons" goes, and "Oswald, King of Northumbria" comes in. The Virgin Mary is called "Our Lady" on her "Annunciation Day" (March 25), but is still the Virgin Mary on her "Nativity" (September 8—year not given).

Childishness is as typical as the mustiness of the Uncommon Book, but in the old book we were at least spared such bad rhymes and worse tastes as this specimen of the religious "thought" of to-day:—

"From all ill dreams defend our eyes,
From nightly fears and fantasies,
Tread under foot our ghostly foe,
That no pollution we may know."

Those nasty lines occur in the new ritual called *Compline* (a service favoured by Anglo-Catholics, a sort of late-o'night service, after ordinary Christians are becoming human beings, tired out with the duties of the Day of Rest).

The Marriage Service, we need hardly say, is not wholly abolished. But "objectionable" words are omitted. It is now stated that marriage was "ordained" "for the increase of mankind," which reads almost as objectionably as the ancient words "for the procreation of children." It is no longer "a remedy against sin." The bridegroom is now not to "worship" the bride, but only to "honour" her, whatever that may mean. He is not to "endow" her with all his worldly goods, but only to "share" them with her (there is no suggestion that it shall be a fifty-fifty share, it may be only a ninety-nine-one arrangement). And woman need not any more swear to "obey" her husband.

In the case of the Funeral Service there is provided an appeal to the Bishop if the chief mourner has any dispute with the Cemetery Chaplain as to whether the corpse shall be buried with Common Prayer honours, or Uncommon Prayer. But although the new Marriage Service is equally the choice of an "Alternative Rubrick," no similar Court of Appeal is mentioned.

The "Commination Service" is improved in characteristic fashion: by using a different phrase for the 1662 "Curse" now in disrepute. Instead of "Cursed be"—we are to say (about Blasphemers, for example) "Them God shall judge." It reminds one of the choleric General who said to an offending musician (in the restraining presence of a royal visitor): "You—naughty—man, you know what I mean!" God will know what to do with these blasphemers and others.

While there is nothing important in any of the "revisions," some of the proposals are more amusing than others. The most laughable perhaps is the treatment of the Athanasian Creed. All the Creeds are absurd. To have three creeds is in itself utter nonsense. No intelligent church-goer believes any of the creeds in their 1662 sense, but nobody dares to propose any real amendment. Two creeds are to remain without altering even a comma. The spelling is left in the same obsolescence as the ideas.

But the whole church hates to use the Athanasian Creed. Why? Solely because it stipulates frankly the penalty attaching to unbelief. There is no sense

in Christians pretending that they repudiate the basic belief that "he that believeth not shall be damned." The creed of Athanasius was the favourite for centuries, mainly because he shouted aloud his dogmas, made them incapable of misconstruction, and proclaimed the fate awaiting unbelievers. Nowadays Christians still believe in salvation by faith, but "damned" is a damned naughty word, in the worst of taste.

The Uncommon Prayer Book therefore proposes to omit—not the Creed, but only the plain statement that "this is the Catholick Faith," and that if you don't believe it you will "without doubt perish everlastingly." They see none of the incredible fooleries of the creed, which are only more idiotic than the same statements in other creeds because here Athanasius "explains" them so unmistakably.

If the Uncommon Prayer Book is adopted, the clergy will have a number of options in regard to this Athanasian Creed. (1) Those priests who wish may carry on as before, swallowing it whole. (2) A priest who so desires may never use it at all. (3) Any priest may divide it up into given sections, omitting the parts he dislikes. (4) He may sing it, or recite it, or leave it to the congregation to do either or neither, in part or as a whole, sometimes, or at other times or never.

Common or uncommon, this is essentially a handbook of superstition which may or may not have been in harmony with mass opinion in 1662, and to that extent may have been at least honest. But even in that age it was behind and not even abreast of human culture, morality, and logic. To rehash such benightedness with the unanimous approval of the church ought to be impossible in the present age. It would be inconceivable if men like Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge had the courage of their pretences.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Acid Drops

A pious contemporary reminds us, with a picture, that religious services are regularly conducted by the seashore at many sea-side resorts. At the same time we are reminded of the impudence of the pious in thrusting their stupid beliefs on people who do not want them. If a number of holiday-makers were to lodge a complaint, we doubt if the police would do anything in the matter. In this country, religionists are permitted to make nuisances of themselves without let or hindrance. This proves that England is still a Christian country.

A lecture was recently given in Norfolk by the new Vicar of Stiffkey, which dealt with the Customs, Habits, Language and Superstitions of Norfolk. Mr. Fitch made the lecture very entertaining by numerous stories of this interesting population. Witches are still actively existent. Aviation is not favoured by the masses, who regard it as "too bumptious to God Almighty." Mr. Fitch heard objections raised to stained-glass windows, by some natives who said, "Why not keep to plain glass just as God made it?" Summer-time is disregarded, the Norfolk peasant preferring what he calls "God's Time."

The Vicar of Stiffkey was lecturing about Norfolk superstitions, and did not therefore touch on more numerous and infinitely more harmful widespread superstitions. For a list of those we must refer our readers to the Bible and the Prayer Book. Many are added even to these. Norfolk itself can boast (if it is possible to boast of so benighted a delusion) of possessing a sort of Ideal Home Exhibition. It is the "Holy Cottage" at Walsingham. This is advertised and guaranteed to be "a genuine copy of the very cottage in which our Lord and His mother lived at Nazareth." Of course it would

be undignified to possess also the Carpenter's Shop where His Father earned the "dough." Joseph indeed must have had two homes. He is never mentioned in these stories. He was a sort of "illegitimate" parent.

One often hears the word "Shucks" in America. It is a Norfolk word, and means "Devils." Passion Plays were once popular in Norfolk even if they did not originate there. Mr. Fitch states that the oldest passion play known in the county was "The Tragical History of Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot," which gradually became abbreviated into the more familiar title, "Punch and Judy." The lecturer said that many, if not all, Norfolk farmers, still pay their rents twelve days later than the Gregorian modern quarter days (Twelfth Day instead of Christmas Day, etc.). Superstitions, including religions, are in the main a mere worship of all that is old because it is old.

A parson sometimes hits on the truth without knowing it. Thus, the Rev. J. E. Whincup, of St. John's, Herne Bay, frankly admitting that many churches are empty, and that there is a general decline in church-going, said, he thought, it was largely due to an impression that the Bible was out-of-date. The trouble was, he said, that many were like children who gave up all belief in fairy-tales or Santa Claus, and went to learn nothing better in a higher standard. What this parson catches a dim glimpse of is that many people perceive a strong resemblance between the fairy-tales of their youth, and the stories and beliefs of the Christian religion, and rightly conclude that the Christian creed is of no interest for the adult intelligence. This attitude is a quite healthy one, and socially useful. For it leaves the adult intelligence free to engage with Causes and Movements of more social advantage than religion, with its wastage of human time and energy in the unprofitable antics of praying and worshipping, and of begging favours from a presumed deity.

Many of the churches and chapels run a Sunday evening service at the local cinema or hall, and they invariably report how "encouraging" such services are. One candid reporter, however, volunteered this information: "I'm afraid that, as the service was inside the theatre, most of those present had come from the churches." The same could be said of almost all such services. But those reporting the progress of God's work usually have the wit to see how inexpedient it is to let the cat out of the bag.

"God helps us," says the Rev. W. J. Grant of Accrington, "not by altering things, but by helping us to bear them." As this journal has often said, the worst evil of religion is that it dopes its dupes into accepting conditions of life which ought to be intolerable. Slaves use their chains to break the heads of their saviours.

The Rev. A. E. Paine paints a "black picture" of Russia. He quotes Lenin's widow as saying that "Russian Protestants are worse enemies of the proletariat than the old Orthodox Christians." Mr. Payne says that recent atheistic propaganda in Russia is "unparalleled in its intensity, thoroughness, bitterness and universality." It annoys Mr. Payne that the Soviets oppose even his views. He tearfully objects to the destruction of "not only Christianity but all religion." "Even a very little one," as the young lady said.

Principal P. W. Evans has discovered the (to him) strange fact that the late Charles Haddon Spurgeon "never tired" of the "faith which he preached." It often happens that five-thousand-a-year jobs invariably produce similar "tirelessness." The present Minister of the City Temple, who is tirelessly riding in a good motor-car to attractive spots in Australia, has declared that the City Temple will have to use force to make him give up his job there.

Some preachers make a shrewd guess at what the congregation is thinking. The Rev. Reginald Gascoyne imagines them saying, "Is what the preacher is saying

really true, and does he really believe it?" We imagine that at least some of the more experienced give a negative answer to both the questions.

A pathetic note appears in the *Christian World* from an impecunious "brother." He says, "Have I no friends to help me?" And he answers his own question, "Yes, plenty of them. Beautiful hearts but poor pockets." But what does the brother want? Big pockets and no heart?

It is a lovely idea of some Christians to abolish all divisions in the religious ranks. Dr. A. E. Garvie predicts or hopes that "there must be but one religion." It is a fascinating dream for an Atheist to imagine which of the multitudinous religions of mankind would be "the" survivor. Would Jehovah and Christ resign, or the "True Prophet" (Mohammed and Joseph Smith and others all answer to this description) submit to be blotted out? You may be quite sure that underneath all this Christian pretence all Christians imagine that THEIR religion would be the Aaron's Rod eating up all its rivals.

A reader at a small "refined" seaside resort gives us an excellent specimen of how Sabbatarianism works against the common interest, even in regard to nuisances which everybody dislikes. Certain noises from loud-speaking machines and from aeroplanes flying low for advertising purposes have led to the usual demand for "a quiet Sunday." Consequently the two cinemas have been closed down, the crowds they would have entertained are much noisier on Sundays than on week-days, and although church-goers would in any case have escaped the "noisy noises" which provoked the Sanctimonious attack, these rasping loud-speakers still disturb all chance of a quiet read or rest six days every week. Nobody at all has gained anything by this narrow-minded conception of Sabbatarianism, except the Sabbatarian.

The anti-God movement, according to Mr. Frederic C. Spurr, is progressing by leaps and bounds, not only in Russia, but everywhere, including Great Britain. "It is rank folly to ignore it." Mr. Spurr traces its causes to the terrible misdeeds of the Russian Orthodox Church under the Tsars. He adds, as contributing causes, "the materialist interpretation of history and the intoxication produced by physical science." The former can hardly be called a "cause" of materialism, and, the latter is a meaningless phrase. Intoxication is a "spiritual" phenomenon, scarcely likely to be "produced" by learning facts about life. The real cause is that religion is being found out.

"One who has had much experience in the Indian Mission Field," tells the readers of the *British Weekly* how admirably religious "unity" can be secured. All that is wanted is for all religions to join together and become—Christian! How easy. It is like a burglar expecting to be welcomed when he comes to "unify" our property with his own—in the rest of the "swag."

Dr. James Black has written a book called *The Mystery of Preaching*. Our own feeling is that the real mystery is the Mystery of Listening to it. Another writer, John Scotford, says, "nothing would do more to improve the quality of sermons than a greater readiness on the part of listeners to walk out. You say this is rudeness. Is it any greater discourtesy than is shown by the speaker who keeps people there for the satisfaction of the speaker's egotism?"

A story of how a converted business man determined to live the full Christian life, is given, by the Rev. A. E. Whitham in the *Methodist Recorder*. This unnamed man had 400 employees whom he called together and told them all henceforth "to run that business as a Christian should run it." Probably he meant well. Possibly he

told them not to cheat or overcharge. He could hardly have told them to distribute the property amongst the poor, and if they caught a thief "lifting" a coat in the ready-made department they were to invite him to annex a few other garments also, to "give to everyone that asketh," and if a fellow called and made an assistant go for a walk during business hours he should go twice as far as asked. The fact is that in all probability Conversion meant "business as usual," and a hope that greater piety would increase the profits.

The *Methodist Recorder* reminds us that the old Methodists used to seek the guidance of God by the simple and easy method of casting lots. Wesley himself, we believe, often followed this way of finding out what God wanted him to do. It may not be ideal, but then few ways are half as conclusive as tossing a penny or putting a number of different solutions in a hat and drawing out one of them—after asking God to see that HIS bit of paper was the one we should draw. But, while the *Recorder* dare not condemn so sanctified a way, which it admits produced "sometimes marvellous appropriate results," it rather plaintively sighs "None of these methods are favoured to-day." All the same, we doubt if the newer methods whatever they are, produce equally "marvellously appropriate results." Prayer is a poor substitute for a decent dice box.

The Rev. George H. Firth asks, "Is Christianity played out?" No, is his answer, "I believe it is just being played in." And the proof? It is that he wonders "if ever there was an age in which young people were more devoted to the true, the good, and the beautiful." Mr. Firth is fairly right in his observation, but these tendencies of our young people is a certain proof that Christianity has ceased to influence them. In the ages of Faith, these tendencies were discouraged as the influence of the Devil.

The Rev. J. H. D. Dixon is by no means in agreement with some of our religious weeklies and parsons that the B.B.C. has proved a veritable god-send for religion. Being a Catholic, and therefore—in his opinion—a greater authority on the question than a mere Protestant or layman, he roundly declared, the other day, "You cannot broadcast a soul." To this magnificent piece of illumination, the obvious retort would be, nobody said you could. But Mr. Dixon continued by pointing out that God "is not to be regarded as listening-in to a loud speaker." But why not? We have heard many human speakers delivering the message to God far more brazenly than any moving coil. One can shut off the wireless set but, heaven knows, you can't always shut off a human when he is set thoroughly going in prayer.

Mr. Dixon did not think the doings of Noah and Naboth, Jehosaphat and Jonah, had much to do with real worship. But why limit the argument to some Old Testament heroes? Why not add the New Testament ones? Then again, religion is not, except for certain sects, based on the Bible at all. Millions of people have been thoroughly religious without even knowing that the Bible was in existence. But towards the end of his discourse Mr. Dixon let the cat out of the bag. "Many listeners to church services," he pointed out, "did not contribute to the collection, but did contribute to the B.B.C. This body, therefore, should, in strict justice, mete out to the churches and their officers a fair share of the collection money." Hear, hear! But is it not strange how this question of cash and religion simply cannot be separated?

The Bishop of Chichester has been presiding at a meeting of the U.C.C.L.W., which has the hearty support of the W.A.P.I.F.C. These initials stand for two Christian bodies, the Universal Christian Council of Life and Work, and the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches. The Bishop thinks

that all Christendom is with them, but one must be allowed to smile at such optimism—especially as some of the speakers are Germans, who have utilized the occasion for a vigorous defence of Hitler and Nazism. We were even told that "millions of Germans believe that Herr Hitler has been sent by God!" But why shouldn't pious Germans be just as silly as other pious people? Are not Christian clergymen "called," and is not the Pope believed to be God's Vice-Regent on earth by millions of the faithful? Why not give Hitler a halo and have done with it?

There is going to be a big pilgrimage of ex-soldiers of all countries to Lourdes. With that craftiness which is greater in the Roman Church than in other Churches, she is exploiting the stupidity and credulity of thousands of people in what she terms "the interests of peace." The unfortunate men, many of whom will probably be lame or halt or blind, will go in the hope of getting cured; and if nothing happens, they will be told that their prayers for peace to God have been wafted to heaven through the only priests, bishops and cardinals that God has authorized for the purpose, and that is holy work enough. This exploitation of ex-soldiers actually in the interests of religion, but ostensibly in the interests of peace, sickens one.

There are now over 1,600 churches more in England and Wales than 90 years ago. Allowing for the increase in population, this is surely far too many—especially as new ones are being constantly built. In addition, one must note that the Roman Catholic population has increased in the same time from 500,000 or so to nearly 3,000,000, and the number of converts to this religion is about 10,000 a year. These figures show that the Christian Church is by no means beaten in its fight with Freethought. There is hard work still before those who believe in freedom of thought and speech and science. The fight is *not* yet over.

The *British Weekly* gives its readers every week an editorial "Prayer." We often suspect that while ostensibly addressed to the Deity, the editor is "letting off steam" against his proprietor or some busy-body shareholder who is making him do something he would rather not do. Last week the pious editor prays that God will reveal to him some "way of life by which in secret" he "might be at peace." Or perhaps it is only that he would like another week or two at his favourite sea-side resting-place. We extend our sympathy.

Fifty Years Ago

BIBLICAL criticism has resulted in the scepticism of Strauss, Baur, Rénan, Réville, Colenso, Greg, Newman, Arnold, and the author of *Supernatural Religion*. Scientific criticism has revealed a huge gulf of contradiction between the Bible and the truths of astronomy, geology, and biology. And popular criticism, as conducted by such men as Thomas Paine, has shown the Bible opposed to morality and common sense. The plenary inspiration of the "blessed book" is almost entirely abandoned; to educated persons."

All other dogmas necessarily join in this process of dissolution. Hell-fire, Eternal Punishment, the existence of the Devil, Salvation by Faith and the divinity of Christ are all being fiercely debated. Matthew Arnold goes further: he drops miracles and sneers at the idea of a Personal God. All this discussion must lead to negative conclusions; it means throwing upon the Bible the light of Truth; it means that the Bible is dying through being found out. Like a polar ice-field, it was once whole and rigid; but the increasing warmth of discussion has slowly broken it up into flocs and bergs; and these melt away as they float down to the great sea of knowledge.

The "Freethinker," September 14, 1884.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412

TO CORRESPONDENTS

- T. H. DISLEY.—Sorry we have not the time to write what must be an essay in the form of a letter if we were to reply fully to your letter. Articles and notes on Faith Healing appear from time to time. But so far as these reported faith cures occur there is no more in them than takes place in ordinary medical practice every day in the week. The faith in a bottle of coloured water, or a magical potion can do all that is accurately reported as having been done by faith in Jesus.
- C. F. WORLEY writes that the story of the old lady who prayed that she might die on a Saturday night so that her first day in heaven should be on a Sunday, was actually true in the case of a relative of his. She prayed repeatedly that she might die on a Saturday for this reason, but death took place on Tuesday, so unless her journey was long delayed she arrived in Heaven on a Wednesday.
- H. H. MURPHY AND H. J. HASTINGS.—Many thanks for cuttings.
- D. DAWSON.—Naturally the *small* man looks for some way of earning distinction, and you have probably struck the nail on the head. We note what you say about "Acid Drops."
- J. HAMPSON.—You must not expect the editor of a daily paper to reprint a straightforward criticism. All the same it is well to keep up the bombardment.
- J.V.S.—We are trying to dispense some fog, but we are painfully aware that the number of people who have either the capacity or the inclination to carefully think out a knotty problem are few.

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

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Sugar Plums

Once more we call the attention of our readers to Bradlaugh Sunday. We hope they will turn to the last page of this issue, where they will find full particulars of the anniversary meeting, which is to be held at Brookwood.

At every meeting of the British Association there is a crowd of more or less well-known parsons that follows the Association round like a lot of hungry sharks waiting to pick up scraps on which they may feed. The Aberdeen meeting followed the general rule, and there was a spate of sermons on what we suppose must be called "Association Sunday," which were listened to by a number of tame scientists. The humbug of pretending to believe that the medicine-man has something of importance to tell the world has to be kept up, even though everyone knows that one of the most melancholy of facts is that science has had to devote so much of its energies to fighting religious fables.

Most of the preachers were obviously pleased with Professor Jean's statement that science was not able to tell us anything about either mind or matter in themselves. It is astonishing the praise a scientist gets from the clergy whenever he says something nonsensical. One preacher said that science was coming more and more to agree with religion in the belief in a personal God. That, of course, is precisely what science is not doing even at

the hands of its avowedly religious practitioners. What some *scientists* are doing is devising new formulæ better to express later knowledge. Of course, some of these scientists are unwise enough to state this new formula in terms of God, but that is no more than a remnant of superstition from which they are not yet freed. Religion dies very hard. Indeed. Mr. Cohen in his present series of articles, is trying to rid Materialism of a conception of "Matter"—a mysterious something that is not the "Matter" we know—which is no more than the ghost of a God. So we must not expect too much of professional theologians, or of working scientists who have not yet advanced to a sound conception of the nature of pure science.

After all, the authorities did not prohibit the Fascist meeting in Hyde Park in Sunday last, and we are very pleased they did not. Prohibiting meetings is a very dangerous kind of policy, and in the end the only ones who gain by it are those who aim at preventing anything with which they disagree. A counter demonstration was held, at the same time, by some anti-Fascists, but these, according to the paper reports, seemed more interested in "booing" the Fascists than in attending to their own movement. Left alone there is every reason to suppose that the demonstration of the British Branch of the German Nazi Movement would have been a very tame affair indeed. The calculation of one paper was that no more than 2,500 Nazis were present. The Fascist official calculation placed it at 5,000. Not a remarkable achievement in the circumstances. A demonstration of a large and orderly meeting preaching against Fascism would have been far more effective than a lot of people booing and shouting round Mosley's parading pantomimists.

The Study Circle, which for several seasons Mr. McLaren has so ably conducted, and so profitably for those attending, will be resumed at the Society's offices, 68, Farringdon Street, on Monday, October 1, at 8 p.m. Mr. McLaren will open with "Language and Logic" as his subject. All members of the N.S.S. are welcome.

Now that the lecture season is approaching, we hope every effort will be made to induce interested listeners to become, not only members of the National Secular Society, but also regular readers of the *Freethinker*. Active participation in the movement is not always possible, but we should like to see a thousand new readers of the paper made during the autumn. It can be done if only newcomers to Freethought will realize how much they helped by supporting what is virtually the only weekly militant Freethought paper now existing.

Meanwhile, we suggest that readers may help by sending along names of probable readers, with threepence in stamps to cover cost of postage. There are always possible readers of the *Freethinker* just round the corner, and an effort should be made to secure them. This will help the Cause, and it will help us. We are not going through these trying times without feeling the pressure, but we are not the ones to cry out without being compelled to do so. Still, there is an annual loss to be met, and the most satisfactory way to meet it is by raising the circulation of our only Freethought weekly.

The Stockport Branch of the N.S.S. is announcing a series of Freethought lectures by Mr. George Whitehead. His first address will be delivered to-day (September 16) in the Armoury Square, at 7.30 and the succeeding ones on each evening, up to and including September 21—at the same place and time. We hope all Freethinkers will make a special point of being present and bringing friends along. In this way not only will they be supporting our platform, but the Stockport Branch may get some new and active members. As usual, the *Freethinker* (banned in the Public Libraries) and other literature will be on sale.

Renan's Journey from Rome to Reason

(Concluded from page 549)

MUCH like Newman's, Rénan's mind dwelt largely in the past. In 1849, the French Government offered him a travelling scholarship, and he spent eight months among the libraries and art treasures of Italy. His archæological interests were strengthened during the stormy season of 1848. Hence, Berthelot's anxiety that his friend should relate "less about the monuments and more about the condition of the people." But this suggestion passed unheeded. Rénan seemed irrevocably committed to the study of departed times. He hoped that Rome would remain a melancholy if majestic ruin, and he deplored the day when the active life and sanitary appliances of ancient Rome would reappear in modern guise. "Should the fatal level of modern commonplace threaten this mass of sacred relics," he declares, "I would fain that the priests and the monks of Rome were paid to maintain within her ruins their customary melancholy, and squalor, and to preserve all round about them fever and the desert." Indeed, so classical were his interests at this time that his *L'Avenir de la Science*, a splendidly progressive work, then all prepared for the press, remained unpublished, and was not given to the world until 1890.

In five years Rénan had abandoned Socialism and Catholicism alike. His sister now returned from Poland, and she and her brother settled in Paris. Henriette had aged considerably during her absence, but it was a relief to remember that the family debts were paid. Domiciled in frugal apartments in the Val-de-Grace, where, as Madame Darmesteter tells us in her biography of Rénan, "There was room for them and their books; place for M. Berthelot to sit and discuss with them all things under the sun; a seat for such of Rénan's masters as would honour his home."

In 1852 various compositions strikingly distinguished by grace and charm appeared from his pen. Rénan's study of *Averroës* gained him his doctor's degree as well as a standing in the field of philosophy. In this work Rénan portrays the benumbing influences of orthodox dogma. He demonstrates the truth that Greek science, when it was treated as fixed and unalterable, precluded all possible progress both in Christendom and Islam. Truly enough: "The Arabs took the philosophy of Aristotle from the Syrian Christians, who had it from the Pagan Greeks. The Moslem Arabs bequeathed it to the Spanish Jews, who passed it on to the Catholic doctors of the Middle Ages, and Aristotle ended as a scholastic dogmatist of the Sorbonne!"

With the downfall of the Republic and the establishment of the Second Empire, political, scientific and literary expression were enchained. Despite the heavy hand of the censorship, however, liberal sentiments appeared in print. Reflections on misgovernment in earlier ages and other lands were soon recognized as covert criticism and attack on the administration of Napoleon III. For instance, the Augustan age was made the scene of evils then existing in France. A band of brilliant writers thus contrived to harass the authorities, while evading the powers of the censor. Rénan was of the company, and the public soon learnt to appreciate the irony, sarcasm and invective directed against the Government in the *Débats* and other pestilent prints. The writers were all in deadly earnest, their labours were those of love, and their remuneration was exceedingly minute.

Rénan now fell in love with the niece of Scheffer, the painter, and she soon became his wife. The marriage proved a bitter pill to Henriette, but with the birth of a child of the union, she soon became reconciled to the change.

The material prosperity of France now inclined the community towards the Empire. The Crimean Campaign was regarded as a laurel on the Emperor's brow, and Napoleon's subsequent intervention in Italy was acclaimed as a laudable endeavour to free that peninsula from Austrian domination. The Emperor became personally popular; he appeared far more progressive than his ministers. A general amnesty for political offences was proclaimed in 1859, although many exiled Republicans, including Victor Hugo, scorned to accept it. Court and Church had opposed Rénan's appointment to a professorship, but in 1860 Napoleon III. offered him the directorship of an archæological mission to Phœnicia, and as this involved no political adherence and was likely to advance the cause of science, it was accepted.

Accompanied by his sister, Rénan set sail for Beyrouth. This expedition proved memorable, as it led to the composition of his celebrated *Life of Jesus*, the work by which he is perhaps best known to the English-speaking world. Dwelling amid the Syrian scenes of Christ's traditional ministry and death, with a Greek Testament and a Josephus to guide him, the book was written. Although it is not taken too seriously by critics, the *Life* possessed undeniable charm and despite its many adulatory extravagances concerning Christ's pre-eminence as a moral and religious regenerator, the fact of his manhood is so constantly stressed that the biography gave mortal offence to the pious to whom Jesus was a god. Commenting on Rénan's statement that "Christ is the creator of the eternal religion of humanity," Madame Darmesteter, who was a valued friend of Rénan and his family, very justly says: "This is limiting the future. . . . On the lips of an unbeliever, so absolute an affirmation is more than incongruous—even a little exasperating. And occasionally Rénan reminds us of some inconsolable widower, who after the stormiest married life, waxes eloquent of the departed."

Still, everything in Christ's life is treated in purely natural fashion. For instance, the miracles resulted from a combination of credulity and love of wonder. They were also everywhere in evidence. He notes that, "In Samaria, a few leagues from where Jesus was, a magician named Simon acquired an almost divine character by his illusions." Plotinus, Apollonius of Tyana and several others also rose to fame as miracle-workers. "Jesus," proceeds Rénan, "was therefore obliged to choose between these two alternatives—either to renounce his mission, or to become a thaumaturgus. It must be remembered that all antiquity, with the exception of the great scientific schools of Greece and their Roman disciples, accepted miracles; and that Jesus not only believed therein, but had not the least idea of an order of nature regulated by fixed laws. His knowledge on this point was in no way superior to that of his contemporaries." (*Life of Jesus*, p. 189.)

Henriette was smitten with a mortal malady in Palestine, and her speedy death there was a sad blow to her brother. But time heals all things, and in 1862, Rénan was at last appointed Professor of Hebrew in the College of France. This important chair was one of Biblical criticism, and the heretic's election aroused a fine display of orthodox indignation. On the other hand, Rénan's acceptance occasioned uneasiness among his Freethinking friends. His first lecture in his new office drew an excited and expectant crowd. His concessions proved unimportant, and

he pointedly referred to Christ as a human creature. The children of light hailed the inaugural address as a victory for progress, but the children of darkness pronounced it a device of the devil. His later lectures he was compelled to deliver in his private study, and his professorship became almost nominal. Thus two years went by, when the Jesuits, the Empress and her priestly advisers constrained Napoleon to deprive Rénan of his chair.

Rénan prepared his *Life of Jesus* for the press, and it appeared in 1863. The work was in great demand, and 60,000 copies were sold in five months. Despite its admitted blemishes, for Rénan, when he wrote it, was inadequately equipped for his task, the work splendidly served the progressive cause. And when the author revised his book many improvements were made. In the fourteenth and subsequent editions marked changes were to be noticed. A volume entitled the *Apostles* succeeded; then appeared his *St. Paul*, which was followed by the *Antichrist*, the *Christian Church* and *Marcus Aurelius*.

In the light of later bloodshed on a truly titanic scale, it seems pathetic to recall the idealistic aspirations of Rénan for the establishment of a permanent friendship between Germany and his native land. This hope he fondly cherished, until the sinister season of July, 1870, when the Franco-Prussian War began, and then rapidly led to the defeat of France, and the downfall of the Empire. Yet, even in view of the ruthlessness of the conquerors, Rénan still clung to his faith in the humanizing influences of the land of Lessing and Goethe. He earnestly appealed to the leaders of German culture to prevent the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine, and to promote goodwill and co-operation between the two peoples. But Germany "wrote her answer in flames by the arson of St. Cloud." Prussia ignored his entreaties, while he became the target of scorn in intellectual France. With the siege of Paris the famished population was driven into a state of frenzy. The Commune was signalized by a repetition of the horrors of 1848, and once more the revolutionaries were worsted and overthrown.

Rénan lost whatever faith in democracy he ever possessed. The leaders of culture and science had allowed nationalism to override reason. He resumed his historical studies, and as he concludes his inquiry into the Origins of Christianity he speculates concerning Catholicism's future. Some of his forecasts have been fulfilled. He foresaw the Church's obstinate resistance to the reception of scientific discovery; her dogmatic accretions; and her zealous retention of the miraculous. Yet, he looked forward to the day when a far more enlightened spirit will reign within the Church itself. Possessing views widely comprehensive, the clergy will prepare the way for "a new Church, which, in its turn, for its time, shall serve the progress of the Soul, no less abundantly, no less vitally, than those elder altars which it shall inevitably supersede."

Rénan's last work was his brilliant *History of Israel*, which some consider his masterpiece. His health declined, and he suffered intense pain in his last illness, but he rarely complained. He knew that death was near, and he died in October, 1892. Apart from his royalist and clerical detractors, all France mourned his loss. He asked that his illness should not disturb the household, and that grief should be slight. To his wife he said: "I die happy. It is the most natural thing in the world to die: let us accept the laws of the Universe—the heavens and the earth remain."

T. F. PALMER.

"An Inquiry Into Spiritualism"

EVERY year sees a large number of books published about "psychic" phenomena, and interest in the subject of Spiritualism seems unending. To deal with such a controversial question exhaustively would require, not a volume, but an encyclopaedia, but Mr. George Whitehead has managed to get a good deal of information on the many aspects raised by the subject into his latest volume.* His closely packed chapters deal with ghosts, haunted houses, materializations, table-turning, automatic writing, spirit control, telepathy, clairvoyance, crystal-gazing, hypnotism, mediumship and fraudulent phenomena, and these are all treated in a spirit of fairness and toleration.

Indeed, one might complain that Mr. Whitehead has been rather too easily impressed by some of the evidence he presents. He admits that "Spiritualism has its roots in savage and infantile psychology," yet he deals with its modern manifestations as if a good deal of the testimony in their favour was quite or almost scientific in character. He claims, for example, that "no accusation of fraud has been satisfactorily substantiated with regard to either Mrs. Piper, Home or Margery." Well, of course, this all depends on how one looks at these mediums. Even on the reports of the sittings held with them, given by Mr. Whitehead, it is easy to show that they are open to the gravest suspicion.

Take the case of D. D. Home and the question of his "levitation." In the only fairly clear report by witnesses like Lord Adare and his friends, it describes Home floating from one room into another in the *moonlight*. The moon was almost negligible on the day given—at least no one could have seen anything by its light; and many other circumstances go to show this was a case of fraud. The other "hundred" cases cited by the most credulous writer who ever devoted his great talent to Spiritualism, Sir A. C. Doyle, have not even the support of the names of the witnesses. Moreover, were any of these "investigators" really equipped for their job? Were not most of them hopelessly incapable of such investigation? Mr. Whitehead should have mentioned that Bradlaugh sat six times with Home and *nothing* happened. We are not surprised. But even Mr. Whitehead is obliged to refer to "dupes galore, like Livermore, Owen and Mrs. Lyon, who have parted with thousands of pounds frequently to enrich exposed charlatans."

Is not Home, who had never been "exposed" one of the "charlatans" referred to? Was he not forced to disgorge a large sum of money, which he had wheedled out of Mrs. Lyon, and, in consequence, was scathingly denounced by an English judge in a court of law? Mr. Whitehead gives the evidence fairly, both for and against Mrs. Piper, and surely it is absurd to say she was never "exposed" in the face of the distinct declaration of Andrew Lang—"When 'possessed' Mrs. Piper would cheat when she could . . . she would shuffle and repeat what she had picked up in a former sitting," and so on.

As for Margery, all one can say is that Mr. Whitehead is far more prone to accept the "evidence" in her favour than seriously to examine it. Houdini bluntly proclaimed it "all fraud," and Mr. Whitehead's comment on that great illusionist, possibly the greatest who ever lived, and a firm disbeliever in "spirits," is that his tactics were "boorish," and he himself "unfitted for any investigation requiring tact and judgment." Houdini had very little patience indeed with blatant fraud, and he certainly scotched more than once the possibility of "phenomena" happening, much to the anger of "Walter," the "control" of Margery. But we are more than a little surprised to find that no mention is made of the pamphlet by E. E. Dudley, published in 1932, which exposes once for all one of the most humbugging frauds in the history of Spiritualism. Here we get an account of the gentleman who supplied "Walter" with the famous thumb-prints with which so many, including great investigators, were so tremendously impressed. The thumb-prints made by "Walter," from Summerland, and the thumb-prints made by Mr. Kerwin on this matter-of-fact planet of ours are carefully

* *An Inquiry into Spiritualism*, by George Whitehead. 10s. 6d. John Bale, Sons & Danielsson, Ltd.

compared in photographic enlargements, and Mr. Dudley declares, "that the prints which for years have been proclaimed as the right and left thumb-prints of Walter, are in fact the right and left thumb-prints of a man now living." This exposure should definitely place Margery with Florrie Cook, Valiantine, Slade, and all the other fraudulent mediums.

Mr. Whitehead believes both in telepathy and clairvoyance on evidence which by no means satisfies other investigators; but his reasons are well worth considering. Incidentally, he seems to confuse Robert Houdini, the celebrated French conjurer, who died in 1871, with Harry Houdini, the American illusionist, whose great hobby, just before his death, a few years ago, was exposing fraudulent Spiritualists. He did this so successfully that a great cry of relief went up to Summerland when Spiritualists heard that Houdini was no more.

The chapters on trick "phenomena" show how easy it is to dupe people who expect spiritualistic happenings, though here again one must use caution as to the methods suggested. For example, in spirit photography, Mr. Whitehead says "a plate may be washed so as to serve for repeated exposures, but unless the washing process is complete, old impressions will mistingly mingle with the new ones." Unless Mr. Whitehead has got hold here of some process quite new, most practical photographers would burst out laughing at the idea of "washing out" exposures. He says of one of the most fraudulent of all spirit-photographers, that he "desires to say that no imputation of trickery is here made against Mr. Hope." Hope was repeatedly exposed, and Mr. Whitehead is far too kind. And again, it cannot be too often repeated that because a medium has not been exposed, it is no guarantee that he or she is genuine. Almost all "genuine" mediums have been exposed at one time or other—it is only a question of waiting long enough or getting the right kind of investigators. However, it is only fair to state that one must expect some faults in a big book dealing with such a variety of topics, in most of which the writer is forced to depend upon the experience of others.

For those readers then, who wish to get a lucid account of the many aspects of Spiritualism without going at first-hand to such standard writers as Podmore, Hodgson, Myers, Lodge, Doyle, and many others, as well as to the proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research, Mr. Whitehead's *Inquiry* fully justifies its title. It is excellently documented, and can be recommended as a first step in the study of a very controversial question.

H. CUTNER.

Discussion at Blyth

As one result of Mr. J. T. Brighton's lecturing visit to Blyth, a discussion took place on September 3, between Mr. Brighton and the Rev. Schofield. It was intended that the debate should be held in the Clifton Hall, but that not being available it was held in the Market Place, from a wagon. There was a huge crowd, and the chair was taken by Mr. Yarrow, a local solicitor, who carried out his part of the proceedings in an admirable manner. Mr. Schofield had himself chosen the subject for discussion, but at the last moment decided that he could not open the discussion. Rather than forego the debate Mr. Brighton led off with a well-reasoned speech. Mr. Schofield made little attempt to reply, but said he was not going to deal with secondary Atheists, and proceeded to cite Julian Huxley and others, with Professors Eddington, Jeans and Lodge, to prove that science supported the idea of God. Mr. Brighton had little difficulty in disposing of this kind of reply, and several times had both the chairman and the audience laughing at the difficulties in which Mr. Schofield was getting himself.

Mr. Brighton, unfortunately had to cut his speeches short in order to get back to duty in the mine. But he has the satisfaction of knowing that to the many friends he has already made in Blyth, he has added many others by the discussion. Mr. Schofield will probably find himself in some difficulty to explain many of the admissions he was forced into making and some of the incautious statements he put forward.

J.G.B.

American Notes

THIS time it is my duty to record the death of two prominent American Freethinkers, Hon. Charles S. Thomas, Ex-Governor, and former United States Senator from Colorado, and Maynard Shipley, President of the Science League. Gov. Thomas was an outspoken Rationalist, and independent in politics. He died at the age of eighty-four. He was a friend of Ingersoll, delivered a eulogy of him when he died in 1899, and in 1925, when a tablet was unveiled on the site of the old Ingersoll home in Gramerey Park, New York City, he came east for the purpose of paying a tribute to his old friend. He was Governor of Colorado 1899 to 1901, and United States Senator, 1913 to 1921. Before retiring from the Senate he made a remarkable speech, which was widely quoted. He referred to the evils of the church being united with the State, and pronounced Herbert Spencer "the most profound political and philosophical thinker of his generation." He gave orders before his death that his remains should not lie in state at the capitol, and should be cremated. Few such honest and outspoken men in American public life.

* * *

The death of Maynard Shipley removes one of the most active men in Rationalism in this country. Born in 1873, he had graduated from Leland Stanford University, and all his life was a teacher and popularizer of Science. When the fundamentalists became active in 1924, and threatened the liberty of teaching in the United States, Mr. Shipley organized the Science League to combat them. This society was composed of College Professors, modernist ministers and others, who saw the peril in the flood of anti-Evolution laws, which the fanatics were thrusting at the State legislatures. While the Society had not a Rationalist platform, Mr. Shipley was a thorough one, having no use for gods, christs, or the supernatural at any time, or in any place. He was always on the watch tower with a keen eye on the enemies of our liberties. Seven years ago he published a splendid book, expressing the follies of fundamentalism, entitled, *The War on Modern Science*. In a hundred or more years, when antiquarians look over this book they will exclaim, "What fools there were in those days!" I was not personally acquainted with Senator Thomas, who, at four score and four years was gathered up like a sheaf fully ripe, but I did know well Maynard Shipley and his wife who writes under the name of Marian Allen De Ford. Both were indefatigable workers for the cause of enlightenment.

* * *

The churches of Green River, Utah, did not see why they should pay for the water used on their premises. Mayor H. C. Gallagher thought they ought to pay—in fact that they must pay; and pay they did, for the City Council passed an ordinance that all churches must pay a water tax of \$24 a year. Then arose a Rev. R. M. Stevenson, a Presbyterian sky-pilot, who broke into the local paper, denouncing the Mayor for using his civil office for the purpose of propagating his anti-religious views. He did not stop here, but he applied to the Attorney-General to see whether the Mayor could not be impeached and removed from office, "for crime, misdemeanor, malfeasance, and oppression in hindering, delaying and opposing the free exercise of religion." These were enough to convict quite a number of men, but the Attorney-General told the inquisitorial gospel sharp, that he must place his charges in legal form and present the evidence. A terrible thing to compel pulpit pounders to be honest and pay their debts!

* * *

By the way, "Bible banging" has just become an offence in the United States. In Philadelphia, Attorney Francis M. Smith, at a hearing in court, became excited, and in his enthusiasm slapped the Bible used to swear witnesses. He was fined \$10 for disorderly conduct. He has appealed. If a precedent is established, will it also apply to the preachers?

There is nothing in this country so utterly debasing as the truckling of the regular newspaper to the church. True, there is not as much flattery of religion as there used to be, when every little editor thought it was his duty to defend religion and sustain the glory of God. But they are afraid to print anything flatfooted against it. For instance, in a certain city I sometimes write for the press. There, but one paper, and that a Socialist journal, will print my articles intact, without emasculating the paragraphs containing my strongest arguments. The editors seem to know when to cut out the sections that really tell something. So are our sources of information polluted.

FRANKLIN STEINER,

Secretary American Rationalist Association.

Chicago, Illinois.

The Book Shop

THERE is a shimmer of heat playing like lightning over the numerous brown grasses of a parched open space, and in the distance two yellow-hammers are calling to one another from graceful birch-trees, having silver columns that were never used in the building of Solomon's temple. A little nearer to a shady spot under an oak tree, the stonechat is playing musical solos for nothing. The limping flight and twitter of a bird passenger in the air says plainly that the voyager is a linnet. One of the yellow-hammers, whilst beautiful white clouds are sailing from the north-east, has commenced his modest song, "A little bit of bread and no cheese." For his choral effort he has now chosen the crest of a gorse bush, where brown pods to the observer are Nature's clock of the seasons. The luscious golden browns of sorrel adorn a bank of bleached grasses, and the artistic urge is to catch this enchanting moment. Round the star-like bloom of the bramble copper butterflies flit lazily, and the skylark is now niggardly with his song which only lasts about a minute and a half. Liquid and limpid notes tumble from the blue sky, and the wood warbler is more sparing with his happy little song of "Chip chap chivvie, choice and sweet."

Come live with me, and be my love;
And we will all the pleasures prove
That hills and valleys, dales and fields,
Woods or steepy mountain yields.

Who was Christopher Marlowe's love? Elusive as the dark lady of the sonnets, perhaps mythical as Helen of Troy, possibly some artistic creation of the poet who never lived and moved in a world still beautiful. The goddess Flora for ever waits with outstretched arms to greet the wanderer lost in a maze of mechanical contrivances, and still unable to see that speed is only speed. Mr. Walter Elliot, Minister of Agriculture, in our opinion a giant amongst pygmies, is talking a foreign language to most of his confrères, when he writes that it is from the country that sanity has its origin. He did not say that sanity emerged from the spate of uniformed two-legged beings now littering the earth, nor did he indicate that sanity emerged from the cathedrals of England, whose pathetic efforts to take round the hat for the unemployed prove that they are not within speaking distance of the problem grounded in an understanding of economics. The particular activities of most churches now make a suitable frame for the picture of lunatics at large, who prosper on the results of scarcity. Our novelists who have never yet succeeded in making virtue attractive are presented with this idea free gratis, and for nothing; that they can do for mankind with only a smattering of understanding of the trouble, what Dickens did for England up against the bulwarks of Bumbledon.

Walking along a London street with a friend, who is also a lover of good books, we were chatting about the English methods of muzzling

well-known men who spoke their minds. There was a little twitch to the left by my companion—he had seen a row of books on sale outside a furniture shop. It is a habit—in the hope of finding some precious pearl beyond price. Later I was looking in a bookshop window—books which belonged to the late Augustine Birrell were for sale, and I remembered a passage in an essay by that most human and delightful writer; it was entitled, *Book-buying*. He says, "All the best books are necessarily second-hand. The writers of to-day need not grumble. Let them 'bide a wee.' If their books are worth anything, they too, one day, will be second-hand." And his essay, found in the Everyman edition, "A Century of English Essays from Caxton to R. L. Stevenson and the later writers," bearing on the scattering of libraries concludes, "They will form new combinations, lighten other men's toil, and soothe another's sorrow. Fool that I was to call anything mine." The only constant thing in life is change; this is expressed much better by Heraclitus, and if life is all thought, then good books are as near to life as a man's shirt is to his skin.

Nearly all Jefferies' books are on my shelves after being read and re-read and to be read again. A late acquisition, *Field and Hedgerow*, however, was a find. Events social, political and evolutionary cannot be ignored by the thoughtful, although they may be dismissed as merely containing a larger measure of stupidity than usual. Each individual must live constantly in the atmosphere of the right of free speech. The newspapers, or nuisance papers, as Senator Murphy on the music-hall describes them, must be read—*between the lines*, for, with rare exceptions they do not touch human life with mental health much less truth. Events, in my opinion, are forcing the thoughtful to more self-reliance, a narrowing of the forehead for three parts of the Irish Stew of how wonderful we are—when how to get a bucket of water for the country is a conundrum for a statesman. It was with special joy that I opened *Field and Hedgerow*, and found in the first essay, "Hours of Spring," the following confirmation of my own independent thinking. Of an old labouring man, asking for work in winter, he writes, "He was struggling against age, against nature, against circumstance; the entire weight of society, law, and order pressed upon him to force him to lose his self-respect and liberty. He would rather risk his life in the snowdrift. Nature, earth, and the gods did not help him; sun and stars, where were they? He knocked at the doors of the farms and found good in man only—not in Law or Order, but in individual man alone." If man allows himself to be caught up with trunk murders, assassinations, war, aeroplanes in the sky as thick as flies, and the hell-broth of a press deeper in poison than utter depravity, let him talk for two minutes with his neighbour, or on some bank in August in the country contemplate the glowing colour of a clump of trefoil, and let him trust in himself more than ever if his own species be slandered by the newspapers that are uproariously Christian.

C-DE-B.

I was trudging through Richmond in my blue smock-frock, and my red gaiters tied under my knees; when, staring about me, my eyes fell on a little book in a bookseller's window, on the outside of which was written, *Tale of a Tub*, price threepence. The title was so odd that my curiosity was excited. I had the threepence, but then I could have no supper. In I went and got the little book, which I was so impatient to read, that I got over into a field at the upper corner of Kew Gardens, where there stood a haystack. The book was different from anything I had ever read before, it was something so new to my mind, that though I could not at all understand some of it, it delighted me beyond description; and it produced what I have always considered a sort of *birth of intellect*.

William Cobbett.

Correspondence

ANIMISM

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You say one must understand "*why so many theologians find it advisable to express their animistic ideas in the language of philosophy.*" I am an animist, and I assure you that if I ever use the language of philosophy, it is neither "*to purchase ease*" (which a violently anti-Christian animist is rather less likely to find than an Atheist) nor "*to claim a rationality which is not mine.*" It is simply because no other language is available for the purpose.

A column earlier you say "*to the primitive mind there are no natural forces to control . . . there is a series of personified powers.*" Exactly, here you state the animist case as well as it can be done in so few words. But you don't say why you reject it. I doubt if you could.

"*It is so difficult to get these taboos set on one side.*" Don't try. Extend them. If every electron is a god, and every human body a regular pyramid of gods, with the temporary owner at top and a few trillions of electrons at bottom—in fact, if the world is wholly composed of gods, *everything* is sacred.

"*The food grows, but it is due to the spirit of the corn.*" Quite right; the grain is a god; his habits are fairly regular. Are your "*knowable and controllable forces*" any better as guides? they are certainly less intelligible.

On the "thing-in-itself" I quite agree with you.

C. HARPUR.

Obituary

MR. B. A. LEMAINÉ

WE regret to record the death of Mr. B. A. LeMaine at the early age of fifty-four. Mr. LeMaine was well known in London as a speaker on Freethought. For about twenty-five years he had carried on continuous lectures in Hyde Park, varied with visits to other parts of London, and occasional visits to the provinces. These meetings were carried on right through the year, and in all sorts of weather. No one worked harder in the open air, and his labours, one may imagine, often involved a neglect of his business.

Although almost invariably in good health he became conscious of some severe bodily pains a few months ago, and on taking medical advice, it was decided to remove him at once to hospital. There an incurable complaint was diagnosed, and after nearly five months of suffering the end came on September 6. At his own request Mr. Le Maine's body was cremated at Golder's Green, on September 10 last, before a large number of friends, although but very short time was permitted for the news to become public. Mr. Rosetti gave an address, paying tribute to the many years' service Mr. Le Maine had given to the Freethought Cause, a service that was unpaid by anything but the satisfaction felt in the work done.

ANNIE HARDING

At nearly seventy-four years of age, Annie Harding, the dearly beloved wife of Robert Harding, of Upper Holloway, London, died on September 6, after many years of gradually increasing illness. A Freethinker during the whole of the fifty-two years of her married life, Mrs. Harding lived a life of devotion to high principle that would put to shame many of those who imagine themselves to have divine assistance in their efforts towards rectitude. She has left a glowing example and a cherished memory to her sorrowing relatives.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON:

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Gerald Heard—"Planning: Its Possibilities and Limitations."

OUTDOOR.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, September 16, Mr. W. P. Campbell Ewerden. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Mr. E. Bryant. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, September 17, Mr. P. Goldman. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, September 20, Mr. P. Goldman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.0, Sunday, September 16, Mr. P. Goldman. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, September 18, Mr. C. Tuson. Stonhouse Street, Clapham, 8.0, Wednesday, September 19, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, opposite the Library, Water Lane, Stratford, E) : 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.30, Sunday, Mr. W. B. Collins. 3.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins, Saphin, Tuson and Hyatt. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Collins and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Collins. *Freethinker* on sale outside Park Gates, and Literature to order.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON MARKET : 7.0, Sunday, September 16, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Square) : 3.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Evolution and its Social Implications." 7.0, "Christianity or Morality."

BLYTH (Market Place) : 7.0, Monday, September 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BURNLEY MARKET : 7.30, Tuesday, September 18, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street) : 7.30, Mr. R. T. White. Millar Street, 8.0, Mr. R. T. White.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street, and Park Road) : 8.0, Thursday, September 13, Messrs. A. Jackson and C. McKelvie. Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, September 16, Messrs. D. Robinson and W. Parry.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE : 7.30, Friday, September 14, Mr. J. Clayton.

MORPETH (Market Place) : 7.0, Saturday, September 15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NELSON : 8.0, Wednesday, September 19, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade) : 3.0, Members' Meeting. Bigg Market, 7.0, Mr. A. Flanders—A Lecture.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Wouldhave Memorial) : 7.30, Thursday, September 13, Mr. A. Flanders.

STOCKPORT BRANCH N.S.S. (Armoury Square) : 7.30, Sunday, September 16, to Friday, September 21, Mr. George Whitehead will speak each evening.

SUNDERLAND (Gill Bridge) : 7.0, Sunday, September 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEESIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place, Stockton) : 7.0, Tuesday, September 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

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

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

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For those who care to indulge in an eight-mile walk, a train will leave Waterloo for Byfleet at 9.55 a.m. Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Bonner and Mr. A. Bonner have kindly consented to act as guides for the walking party if formed.

Those who wish to join either party must write Mr. C. BRADLAUGH BONNER, at 38 Cursitor Street, E.C.4, not later than September 20.

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