

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

Boosting Religion

GREAT is the power of advertisement. No business can reach very large proportions without it. The quality of the article advertised is really of secondary importance. A newspaper or a patent pill, a monarch or a film star. Given adequate advertising and the public will bite at anything. More than one great man has owed his position mainly to advertising. Lloyd George has told the public that the only use for Lord Kitchener, who was turned out as a national idol when the war commenced, was to adorn a poster. Someone had to be picked out for the purpose of advertising the army, and Kitchener filled the bill. And in the case of Lloyd George himself, while he might well have gained success ultimately, that he achieved it when he did was largely due to the efforts of a journalistic friend, who afterwards became a stern opponent. A good advertising agent may to-day receive a larger income than Britain has ever paid its greatest scientists or writers. Yet advertising is one of the oldest of the arts used to win over the public. Modern times has only managed to give it an eminence it never before achieved. Crowned heads cannot afford to ignore it.

* * *

The Great Advertiser

The *Church Times*, in its issue for May 3, puts in a claim that is worth a little notice. It says:—

If one were asked to name the oldest, the best equipped and most consistently successful publicity organization in the world, it would be no exaggeration to reply, the Catholic Church. From the day when it received the last command of the ascending Master, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature," publicity has been a prime responsibility of the Church. Centuries before the modern "publicity merchant" had his first beginnings the Church was mistress of a publicity technique which has never been surpassed. She can afford to smile when, from time to time, she is told how greatly she would benefit if she would but emu-

late the methods of the sky-sign and newspaper advertising.

I agree thoroughly with what is here said. The Church has always been one of the greatest advertising agencies in the world. In its methods it can beat the business advertiser hollow. But the comparison is not, after all, quite fair. The Church has had advantages which the business man has never had, and it has practised methods that the business man dare not adopt. Business men have to find the funds for advertising, even though they get the outlay returned through the sale of their goods. But the Church made the people who were to purchase the goods find the money for advertising them. It taxed them through their Governments, and it bullied them into subscribing personally. It was a process by means of which the people persuaded themselves of the virtue of the goods bought through reading the advertisements they had themselves provided. The Church not merely did this, but it prevented other possible competitors advertising their wares. It went further, and made it a penal offence for anyone to criticise the virtues of the goods sold by the Church. The laws against heresy, the extent to which the Church induced the State to prohibit competition established the greatest and the most powerful form of monopoly the world has known. No other business, even while aiming at the same end as the Church has ever managed to enjoy these peculiar advantages. By being hindered from becoming acquainted with the quality of the goods supplied by other firms, the Church prevented their clients even thinking of sampling the wares that might have been provided by others. There is no wonder that the business of the Churches flourished to the extent it did. I agree that the Church created a publicity technique that left the ordinary publicity merchant a long way in the rear.

* * *

Playing for Safety

There is one other thing in which the Church outdid the commercial publicity agent. Testimonials play a great part in many undertakings—particularly where quackery exists. Very large amounts of money must be expended in securing testimonials which appear in praise of quack remedies and various preparations for personal use. The Church took a sure road here, one which admitted of no mistakes being made. It wrote its own testimonials. It is very seldom noticed that all the testimonials to the virtues of Christianity are written by Christians themselves. We do not find Mohammedans or Jews, or Buddhists enraptured with the supreme beauty of Christianity; these testimonials are provided by Christian preachers in the first instance, they are told to the laity, and the laity hand them back to the clergy without many of them realizing that they are returning the testimonial to the original author. At this game the Salvation Army is an expert, and the late Harold Begbie was

one of its principal agents. He, or a journalist, of the right, or obliging, type would visit the Salvation Army—often by request. The Salvation Army would inform the journalist of the wonders of their work, the journalist would write for his paper what the Army officials had told him, and the Army would then repeat their own testimonial as independent evidence of the value of their work. Of course, the newspapers saw through the imposture, but it does not pay a newspaper to criticize a religious body in terms that would apply more or less to all of them. As the *Church Times* says with reference to anything which offends religious susceptibilities, "Newspaper editors are very sensitive to criticism, and especially so where it arises from the religious sensibilities of their readers. Polite but unambiguous letters of remonstrance at what is offensive to religious feeling would have an immediate and salutary effect." Quite so, but it would not be fair to accuse newspaper editors of timidity where *unpopular* opinions are concerned. Their courage is shown chiefly where the number of readers who protest against unfair treatment, or who ask for fair treatment are not thought sufficiently large seriously to affect circulation. Where the opinion criticized adversely is concerned with religious bodies, who are so fond of the weapon of boycott, the sensitiveness of present-day newspaper editors is very marked indeed.

Trusting to Prayer

Perhaps the finest example of cheap and successful advertising is that associated with the name of a very artful Christian gentleman named George Muller, of Bristol. George Muller ran a Christian Home, and it was his boast that he never asked anyone for money; he never spent a penny in sending out appeals or on advertising in the papers, and yet he never wanted funds enough to carry on. All he did was to make public that he was not going to ask anyone for money; but would rely upon prayers to the Lord. And as this was done year after year, and the fact that only the power of prayer was relied upon, the religious world accepted the challenge and the necessary money was forthcoming.

One would have imagined that this kind of artfulness was so apparent that no one would have been taken in. But if the leaders of religion saw through the artfulness of George Muller, it evidently did not pay them to say anything against it. On the contrary, for this example of George Muller was cited as a living example of what prayer could do, and there were, and are, many imitators. But none of them ever met with the success that the original "artful dodger" did. Probably even religious people thought that reliance on the Lord might be carried too far; and that if the test of prayer in this form was made too general, it might be very expensive to support.

But it is interesting to note that in some religious quarters it is recognized that this dodge of Muller's is wearing thin. The Rev. J. Bevan, who is one of the regular contributors to the *Christian World*, in explaining to a not very mentally bright reader, how one can account for the flow of money to Muller, replies that "Once it was known that such a noble institution as a Christian Orphanage meant to carry on without an appeal for funds, can't you imagine what a powerful effect that would have upon loving, devout souls. . . . The sheer publicity given to the fact that no money was going to be asked for would have this effect. . . . I am not convinced that missionary societies . . . which state that they trust wholly in God for their support are entirely so supported. I wonder if you know of any case where faith was the only basis for an institution's upkeep, and where such fact

has not been disclosed by reports, meetings or other means to the public?" We have often asked the same question when dealing with this particular example of religious humbug. In fact I would not mind guaranteeing to raise a few hundred pounds for the *Freethinker* by announcing that I was not going to ask anyone for money, but would only ask God to send it within a given time. I have not the slightest doubt but that the money would be forthcoming, and it might encourage Christians to buy the paper, and to insist that as I had not asked anyone for money, what was received was a direct answer to prayer, and that God was, for his own secret purposes, by proxy, a subscriber to the *Freethinker* funds.

So I really do agree with the *Church Times*. The Christian Church is the greatest advertising agency in the world. There is not a trick known to the advertising expert of to-day that the Church has not practised for centuries—and there are many tricks that advertisers and other merchants would like to practise. They would all like to educate people from infancy to buy none but their products. They would all like to prevent competition from other firms selling the same kind of produce; they would all like to pass laws penalizing anyone who ran down the quality of their goods; they would all like to receive funds from the State to pay travellers to boom their products. Above all they would all like to be able to write their own testimonials without running the risk of exposure. There are many other advantages which the soul-merchant has, and which the purely commercial operator would like to have. But, as it is, I am quite sure that a commercial man cannot do better if he wishes to push his goods than imitate the practice—so far as he can—of the Church. But he will have to be very careful. For in business there is a law against slander, there is also one against obtaining money under false pretences, there is one against fortune telling, and there is a general discrediting of clumsy falsehoods. In these directions the Church enjoys privileges that the man of commerce can never hope to obtain.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Wittiest Work in the World

"Voltaire was a stupendous power."—John Morley.

"Aye, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed. Imposture, through the armour-joints, to death."

"Jesus wept; Voltaire smiled."—Victor Hugo.

THE name of Voltaire has ever been a terror to Christians, and, with the solitary exception of Thomas Paine, none has been more hated, none more reviled. The reason is not far to seek. A very great writer, a perfect master of words, Voltaire attacked the Christian Religion, not in the dry-as-dust abracadabra of professors writing for a dozen haughty superior persons scattered throughout the world, but with wit and pleasantry which survive the winnowing-fan of time. He made priests and tyrants appear ridiculous as well as odious, and those who felt the lash of his deadly satire denounced him as a literary Mephistopheles, whose horrible writings all the faithful should avoid as they would a dreadful plague.

It is only very dull people who associate brilliancy with superficiality, and imagine that, because a man is witty, he must therefore, of necessity, be shallow. "Without it is based on seriousness," said Heinrich Heine, "wit is only a sneeze of reason." The soundness of Voltaire's judgment was only equalled by his perfect felicity of expression. A book might be written on his anticipation of modern thought. He accepted the view of man's savage origin. He derived the belief in ghosts from dreams, and discerned the

magical nature of early religion. He anticipated many of the social and political problems of our time. A pioneer among pioneers, he stated the population question before Malthus, and he cleared the way for the later developments of modern science.

Voltaire was thoroughly equipped for his work. A perfect artist in language, he wrote with that apparent ease with which a bird trills out his song. His versatility, too, was truly marvellous. "Monsieur Multiform" was his very witty name for D'Alembert, and he himself had an equal right to it. In the eighty crowded volumes of his collected works, he has proved his genius as historian, poet, essayist, thinker, humourist, tale-teller, letter-writer and critic. So strong was his appeal to literary men that Macaulay, one of the most omniverous of readers, and a most acute critic, selected Voltaire's works for his reading on the then-lengthy voyage to India. A glance at Voltaire's literary work proves his untiring and unparalleled industry. Writing *Œdipus* at seventeen years of age, and *Trane* at eighty-three, he crowded between these two masterpieces the accomplishments of a Titan. Not only did he add a great name to the splendid lead-roll of French Literature, but, as the champion of Calas and Serven, he proved himself one of the greatest humanitarians in history.

Among Voltaire's numerous works, *Candide* is, far and away, the most characteristic. Nowhere else has he displayed to such advantage the happiest and most joyous features of his extraordinary genius. It is not only his supreme masterpiece, but the wittiest work in the whole world. Frankly, most English translations cannot be said to add to Voltaire's charm for anyone who reads the French language with ease. In the journey from one language to another, so much of the master's sprightliness and piquancy are evaporated. For, remember, far too often, such translations were entrusted to badly-paid publishers' hack-writers, although these astute and unscrupulous tradesmen professed to employ none but "eminent hands."

In this masterpiece Voltaire brought out all his batteries at once. He faced the enemy with that terrible mockery, that bantering jest, and that deadly levity which few could meet and live. The book was occasioned by the news of the awful horrors of the dreadful earthquake at Lisbon, in which the greater part of a large city was destroyed, and forty thousand men, women and children, were killed. The terrible news roused Voltaire like the blare of many trumpets. Moved as he always was to reproduce his strongest feelings in his writings he wrote *Candide*. This time Voltaire was so moved that he forgot to argue; he merely exposed. In the searching fire of his irony the comfortable dogmas of the religious optimists blackened and died, and the "Sunny Jims" of Orthodoxy were shown forth the laughing-stock of the nations.

Candide's wit is as fresh and facetious as when it was written generations ago. It still trips and dances on untiring feet. It reads like the fresh and unflagging work of super-abundant youth. Yet Voltaire was actually sixty-four years old when he wrote it—an age when most men are thinking of slippered ease. The story is, in brief, that of a young man brought up in the proud belief that this is the best of all possible worlds. He meets with a hundred adventures which give it the lie direct. Life is a questionable bargain, but one can make the most of it. That is the level-headed moral of *Candide*. "What I know," says the hero, "is that we must cultivate our garden." In the last analysis, be it noted, Voltaire's philosophy was Secularistic. The book is a mass of seeming extravagance with a deep vein of common-sense beneath. All flows so smoothly, the reader fancies that

it was lightly written. Yet when he notices how every stroke of wit adds to the effect, how every light touch tells, he sees that only a most consummate genius could thus dissect a philosophy and amuse men mightily in the process.

In England there is still great prejudice against Voltaire. Actually Englishmen owe him more than compliments, for he built himself very largely on British Freethought, and he wrote good English whenever he would. One turns with a sigh of relief from books about Voltaire by enemies and partisans alike to his own letters and books. Here one finds the man himself, no mere figure in cap and bells, but a sensitive man, bent on the destruction of cruelty and intolerance, and striking at the superstition of which these vices are the outcome. His keen eyes saw the atrocities and absurdities bound up with the Christian Religion. He saw it was essential that the religion in which intolerance had its root should be proved detestable and ridiculous. Men, he said, will not cease to be persecutors until they have ceased to be absurd; and, more than any other man, he caused the European world to smile at its own absurdities.

Voltaire's motto was "Straight to the Fact." He brought smilingly, all creeds to the test of truth and commonsense. Was it true or not that Omnipotence had chosen Oriental barbarians as his peculiar people? Was "God" born of a virgin? Did Jesus, indeed, ascend from the earth "like a balloon?" To ask these questions, and to cross-examine priests, was to provoke laughter. And, mind you, Voltaire was himself serious. He had profound convictions, and employed his exquisite wit as a weapon. There is no case of Voltaire mocking at any men who lived good lives. He did not gibe at the English Quakers; but he was merciless when he attacked the murderous priests of France, who invoked the laws to exterminate their opponents. A Protestant pastor, Rochette, was actually hanged for merely exercising his functions in Languedoc. The Protestant, Jean Calas, was broken on the wheel, because his son was found dead, and someone said that the father had killed him to prevent him turning Romanist. Even Calas's widow and children were put to the torture. La Barre, a lad of eighteen, was condemned at Amiens, for damaging a crucifix, to have his tongue and right hand cut off, and then be burnt alive, a sentence which was commuted to decapitation. No wonder Voltaire wrote bitterly, "this is the country of the St. Bartholomew massacre." It was he who exposed these judicial murders, and, to quote Carlyle's memorable words, "the whole man kindled into one divine blaze of righteous indignation, and resolution to bring help against the world." His services to Humanity in undoing such foul wrongs perpetrated in the name of religion will never fade from the memory of man.

For sixty years Voltaire waged unending war against the most powerful and tyrannical church in Christendom, and when he died the Romish priests refused him burial, hoping that he would be thrown in the gutter like the famous actress, Adrienne Lecouvreur. But he had carved his name too deeply on his country's roll of honour, and his remains now rest beneath the dome of the Pantheon, with its front glowing with the splendid words, "Aux grand hommes la patrie reconnaissante." Here he sleeps undisturbed, and by his side rest the ashes of Jean Jacques Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder, these great soldiers of the Army of Liberty rest under their magnificent tombs:—

"With the sound of those they wrought for,
And the feet of those they fought for,
Echoing round their tombs for evermore."

MIMNERMUS.

Pilgrimage

(Continued from page 358)

SAMUEL stepped carefully down the narrow difficult stairs. He felt himself slipping, and escaped a fall only by gripping the slender shoulder of the guide. The guide sank under the weight, queerly pliant as the bough of a tree, but did not collapse. Then the Kendrakes saw into the chapel. They couldn't see anything but soldiers, a crowd of men in khaki, men silent and gawky and foolish-looking in dim-burning jewelled light, trying not to poke their rifles into one another, good-natured and hot-eyed. Soldiers!

There wasn't room for another person in the Chapel. On one side of the soldiers stood a line of petticoated Greek priests; on the other a line of Roman Catholics. In the eyes of all the priests was a murderous glow of silent rage, rage unutterably bottled-up, festering; bored almost superhuman hatred. It was coming at last, something was coming. They stood silent, tortured in the dark stiff robes of their fathomless hatred, in certainty and terror of power. It was in them, it was in their fat crude hands and their heavy silent festering eyes. Something was coming. The world was coming loose. O bliss of the absolute! The Chapel, the Chapel, the birthplace of mystery. Look out, you others. Don't you dare. Take your hands away. We've got it, we and no others, we, we, we.

Nobody spoke.

Nobody stirred.

The faces of the soldiers crinkled, broke with wavering lights scrawled by the dim jewels. The soldiers wanted to laugh, but they were terribly afraid. There was no air to breathe. All the air was taken by the inbreathing silent lines of close-pressed priests, Greeks on one side and Latins on the other. The pitiless rows of priests who knew it all, who felt it coming, who had their hands on something, unafraid.

Even the guide said nothing, did nothing.

Samuel stared, his wife stared.

Nobody gave way. The soldiers were doing their duty, Gorbliney, sustained by khaki and a glimpse of the dark bore inside the barrels of their grounded rifles. The priests were outside the world, transfigured by hatred, perfect in consuming hatred. The world had passed away, but they would never pass away. Their jackal-eyes crowded the Chapel, out-burning the jewelled lamps.

Mrs. Kendrake spoke at last, upheld by appalling female curiosity and persistence. After all, she had seen worse things. Every woman had. She had paid her touring-fee in full, and her passport was in order.

"What are they doing?" she asked in a clear thin polite voice, slightly peevish.

Nobody spoke.

Nobody stirred.

The tensy of male passion reassumed control of the universe.

Mrs. Kendrake was obliterated, like a fly that settled on the face of deity. The soldiers wanted to laugh, but the dignity of discipline was theirs, the sham sterile male dignity, and they were pressed in between two unchangeable walls of silence.

Mrs. Kendrake refused to be obliterated; her soul rose in revolt and she was preparing to speak again. Anything, anything, to break this great male conspiracy of passion, this lie which outraged her to the depths of her soul.

Samuel, deflated of mockery, plucked at her sleeve. "Now, now, mamma . . . they're praying. . ."

She knew they weren't praying. She wasn't going to be cheated. There was something terrible and

cheating and underhanded going on; it was like a personal insult. She wasn't going to countenance it. She yearned. She flamed with anger.

"Stop it!" she shouted.

Nobody spoke.

Nobody stirred.

The priests were sublimely indifferent, consumed in hatred. The soldiers couldn't laugh, looking shamefacedly into the winking dark barrels of their rifles. The spiral bore could just be glimpsed within, and it made them feel dizzy; they could feel the bullet rushing out, turning round and round and round.

Mrs. Kendrake seethed with agony of outrage. Such an affront had never happened to her before. She had met rude men, ugly men, unpleasant men, surly waiters and vicious taxi-drivers; but here her very existence was violated, reduced to a discarded husk. Her womanhood ceased to exist, and became a thin appalling voice that meant nothing, absolutely nothing. Here, in the Chapel. She clasped the guide-book.

"Don't, mamma," said her husband abjectly. "It's private."

The guide got them out, up the slippery stairs, into the great rounded apse. He was earning his money. Samuel admired his capable discretion, and decided to give him a cigar after all, probably.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Kendrake in a weak insatiable voice. She must find out; otherwise she'd be drawn back, she'd cause a disturbance. She didn't care. She felt like a Christian virgin in an amphitheatre of lions or an English suffragette chained to a burning pillar-box.

From somewhere the guide returned with information.

"The Latins, they wanted to take out a picture that's over the altar and carry it round the city. But the Greeks own the curtain that's in front of the picture that the Latins own. So the Latins haven't the right to touch the curtain, and unless the curtain's drawn they can't get at the picture that they want to carry round the city. So the Greeks wouldn't let them draw the curtain. So the Latins couldn't take out their picture. So they were all fighting in the Chapel and killing one another, but the soldiers came and stopped them from killing one another, and now they won't move."

"How awful," said Mrs. Kendrake, feeling much easier now that she *knew*. The constriction ended and her wrath flowed normally. "Are such things allowed?"

"It's rather hard for the soldiers," said the guide. "A soldier had his ear bitten off a month ago by a Greek priest when two processions began fighting."

"But in there—in there—"

"Yes," agreed the guide amicably. "In there. Very holy in there. So of course they fight about it."

"It must be stopped," said Mrs. Kendrake, revolving petitions, legislation, police-information, protests to Bishops, papers read at Ladies' Clubs, and various other means for curbing things. "It makes one's very faith reel and totter." For a grim moment she enjoyed the spectacle of faith reeling and tottering, then continued acidly. "I wouldn't advise any *real* believer to visit the Holy Land. I couldn't."

JACK LINDSAY.

(To be concluded)

And in these four things, Opinions of Ghosts, Ignorance of second causes, Devotion towards what men fear, and taking of things Casual for Prognostiques, consisteth the Natural seed of Religion.—Thomas Hobbes.

Executive's Annual Report

By THE PRESIDENT

It was said many years ago that Freethought would have its most testing time when it was nearest the moment of its ultimate triumph. The prophecy, a commonplace in form, yet contains a most important truth. So long as established institutions or generally accepted ideas are not seriously threatened, an easy-going toleration may exist with regard to them; but when the threat becomes vivid and its realization imminent, the spirit of repression is roused to its fiercest. History proves that threatened institutions fight for existence with an intensity that is determined by the appreciated danger of the attack.

The present position of Freethought, in and out of this country bears witness to the truth of what has been said. Less than half-a-century ago it looked as though freedom of thought, speech and publication was so well on its way to realization that, save for local set-backs and the ebb and flow that accompanies every movement, the principle of Freethought was securely established in the civilized world.

Events have shown that this was too sanguine an expectation. The enforced unity of religious belief that obtained in Europe for well over a thousand years had been broken by the impact of scientific discoveries and the force of social development. Religiously, this had resulted in the existence of a number of different religious bodies differing in details, but united on fundamentals. Naturally, Freethought benefited by these divisions in the religious world; but as the heat of the sun melts one substance and hardens another, so the desire for each to have the "true religion" which had formerly divided the sects now began to drive them together again in the hope of preserving religion in some form or another. More than that, the wish to impose right belief on all began to spread from the religious to the social field, the principle of authority in matters of opinion sought to express itself in the sphere of secular life.

The consequence of this is that Freethought has to face a more serious threat to-day than it has yet encountered. To-day Freethought is denounced, not merely in religion, but in science, in literature, in sociology. Whether we have reached the final phase of this struggle remains to be seen. It is certain that there is some hard fighting before us, and in these circumstances the Executive considers it advisable to devote a large part of its report to a survey of the general situation, instead of giving a detailed account of the work done by the Society—particularly as accounts of the work of the Branches and other items of society news appear week by week in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

But it must be understood that the report here presented is a report of the work of the Executive, not of the Society as a whole. The same is true of the Financial Statement laid before the Conference. Each Branch raises its own funds, and manages its own propaganda—assisted and advised by headquarters only when such assistance or advice is asked for.

So far as the immediate work of the Society is concerned, it is good to report that the general propaganda, both in the open air and in halls has been well maintained, the number of new members admitted rather more than the average, and the income slightly larger than last year. In London the open air work has gone on with its usual vigour, and two special lectures given in the King Edward Hall, Finchley—a new district so far as our work is concerned—met with marked success. There should be a good Branch of the Society started in that area. In the provinces, and in Scotland, there are equally encouraging reports

to hand. There has been a marked increase in the attention paid to the out-door work by the Branches, and usually with good results. In some cases rowdiness has been experienced, but this soon diminishes when firmness allied to a little tact is shown. Mr. George Whitehead has discharged his usual function as a whole-time missionary in the country, travelling between Plymouth and Glasgow from May to October, and on Tyneside and Tees-Side Mr. Brighton and Mr. J. Clayton in Lancashire have pursued their work with marked success.

One feature of this propagandist work should be pointed out. Mr. Clayton and Mr. Brighton have their expenses defrayed from headquarters. Mr. Whitehead, whose whole time is taken up by the Society from May to October, receives a regular, but not extravagant salary. But generally the work to which reference has been made is carried out on a voluntary basis, both as regards most of the speakers and wholly so with regard to the helpers. The Executive thinks it fitting, therefore, that this slight acknowledgement of the constant and not easily over-valued labours of both speakers and helpers should be made. The work is often hard, it usually means an expenditure of money as well as time, and without the help thus freely and generously given, the work on its present scale would be impossible. The men and women who make it possible have their thanks in the progress of the movement, but it is well that a thought should be given to the "Unknown Warriors" in the never-ending fight for human freedom.

During the year the Executive has been responsible for over 500 lectures. There have also been many applications from outside organizations for speakers. In every case requests have been complied with, and much good has been done. There is evidence that the interest thus excited did not end with the meetings.

A great deal of the work at headquarters is taken up with answering questions concerning Freethought work and aims—questions that come from all parts of the country and from abroad, and from persons outside our organization. Many of these are concerned with police interference with meetings. Usually they arise from the unwise action of some over-zealous police constable or inspector, either acting on his own account, or having been prompted to action by some bigoted religious persons. Now, while it should be understood that no one has a legal right of meeting in a public highway, it must also be understood that no one, no police officer or other official, has any legal right to interfere unless certain well-known conditions are broken. It is certainly not to be tolerated that a Freethought meeting should be forbidden while a religious meeting is permitted on the same ground, or that preferential treatment should be given to a religious meeting. Many cases of interference have been reported to the Executive, and when the issue was clear, and the advice of the Executive has been followed the matter has been equitably settled, and interference has ceased. Freethinkers do not ask for privileges that are not enjoyed by others, but they will certainly not rest content with less than others have. The freedom of public meeting is a very valuable thing, and its denial or limitation cannot be too carefully guarded.

Among the deaths of the year must be noted those of Mr. B. A. Le Maine, a well-known worker for many years in West London, and Mr. J. G. Bartram, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, one of the oldest and sturdiest of Tyneside workers, a man of sterling character and indomitable persistence in propagandist work. Mr. H. Jessop was a man of outstanding character, one whose wide sympathies and generosity to the Cause will be remembered and appreciated by all. Mr. S. B.

Saville is another very old London member, whose association with the movement goes back to the days of Charles Bradlaugh. Mr. Walter Mann was best known as a writer to the *Freethinker*, and there his work has been of great value to many thousands of readers. Finally, Sir John Sumner, another link with the Bradlaugh days, was generous in both his support to the Freethought and other advanced Movements, besides being a noted public benefactor in the district in which he resided. To these and to many others—men and women—who have passed from our midst, the Executive, in the name of the Society, offers a tribute of gratitude and respect for the work done by them, work which has gone to swell that volume of human endeavour which surely contributes to the building of a better and wiser human society.

Apart from the Annual Subscriptions, the Trustees of the Society have to acknowledge the receipt of £25 from the estate of Mr. G. Hollamby, £31 5s. from the estate of Mr. D. J. Thomas, and a special donation of £50 from Mr. G. R. Harker. Intimations of wills containing legacies to the Society have also been received. It may here be pointed out, as a glance at the balance sheet will show, that our actual income is very far from balancing expenditure. This means a large encroachment on the small capital of the Society, and thus tends to limit propaganda in directions where it might be extended. It should also be mentioned that owing to trade depression and increased costs, the Executive has to give a very much larger measure of financial assistance to Branches than used to be the case.

Reference has already been made to the dangers that to-day threaten the Freethought position. Over half a century ago John Morley wrote that the right of every man to do his own thinking, and publicly to avow his own thoughts was an accepted principle with every school of thought that could hope for a future. It is to be hoped that this statement is still substantially true, but it is clear that the right of every man to do his own thinking and publicly to state his conclusions is being to-day challenged from several directions. And the challenge is coming, not in the name of an obvious and avowed tyranny, but in that of Society, or the State, as though there is any justification for the action of either save the promotion of the freedom and happiness of the individual, and as though tyranny in the name of the State is in any degree more justifiable than tyranny in the name of the Church. Over a large part of Europe, the right to Freedom of thought and speech in literature, in art, in religion, in sociology, and even in science is being denied. Power has been seized by force, and maintained by terrorism. The world is being called on to achieve the freedom of each by perpetuating the slavery of all. For centuries the Roman Church fought to establish a community in which all should think alike, speak alike, and believe alike, submitting meanwhile unquestioningly to orders from above. It is a curious irony of events to find that just when this principle has been so greatly weakened in the field of religion, it is being transferred to the fields of politics and sociology.

Even in this country, where, in spite of strong retrogressive tendencies and manifest drawbacks, there still exists as much genuine freedom as anywhere else in the world, it is becoming clear that if we would retain what liberties we have we must fight hard for them, and still harder if we would have this freedom enlarged. It will be remembered that only a short while ago the Prime Minister, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, threw out an obvious feeler—a straw to find out the way in which the stream was flowing—by saying he had received the suggestion that Parliament

should do something to prevent newspapers publishing misleading news. The suggestion was received coldly, and it was dropped, at least for a time. The growth also of a pantomimic form of Fascism and other attempts at some kind of dictatorship are also indicative of the need for constant watchfulness if we are to guard that degree of Freethinking which has been so dearly won.

Many things have contributed to give mere authority the chance of asserting itself. The development of political parties, the growth of trade unionism, to which the working classes in this country owe so much, and to the development of which the Freethought movement so largely contributed in the early part of the nineteenth century, a standardized education which has followed the establishment of a national system, and later a syndicalized press and monopolistic broadcast system, all have combined to produce a mass mentality favourable to the growth of dictatorships, as against the spirit of individual freedom. Good in themselves, and even productive of good, necessary stages in the evolution of society, as some of the things named have been, yet these considerations should not blind intelligent men and women to the clash of principles that has resulted, and the dangers that may follow unless we are very wide-awake. The problem of developing at the same time a keen sense of social responsibility and maintaining individual initiative is not an easy one to solve at any time, and there are always a great many impatient minds who imagine that they may firmly establish the freedom they desire for themselves by denying it to other people.

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Acid Drops

It is very difficult to probe the minds of some people, and in most cases the difficulty is largely academic. But with those occupying public positions, or engaged in the administration of justice the case is more serious. For example, the other day (June 3) Mr. N. B. Goldie, M.P., and the Recorder of Manchester, had before him a youth who had stolen his sister's bicycle and sold it, and spent the money on "the dogs." Said the Recorder:—

I am perfectly shocked at the calendar which is before me. It consists almost entirely of young boys of seventeen and eighteen, who have started on a career of crime. It is terrible that when the nation is trying to do all it can to give youth a real chance in life, one youth after another has to come before me.

There are several things that arise out of these remarks, which together might justify a criminal in the dock that he was shocked that a judge with so little understanding of the nature of crime and criminals, should be entrusted with the administration of the law. Both judge and criminal give rise to serious reflections, the one on the conditions of youthful criminality, the other on the judge's apparent conception of the nature of crime and criminals.

First the astonishment of Mr. Goldie at finding a number of adolescents before him charged with various offences, is very ingenious. A better acquaintance with the subject of criminology would have supplied him with the information that an overwhelming proportion of our regular criminals commence their careers under the age of twenty. If there is a larger proportion in the Manchester district than elsewhere, the fact is a compliment to the efficiency of the police. If Mr. Goldie will look up the facts he will find them to be as stated. Whether the offender is captured before or after twenty really depends upon how soon he is caught. That is obviously a question of police methods.

But the picture of youth *contra* nation, is, as the usual newspaper writer would say, intriguing. Is there any such actual thing as a "nation" trying to do one thing, and "youth" trying to do all it can to defeat its intentions? Of course there are some people that are trying to do certain things with regard to preventing the development of the criminal, and there are some who are acting so as to prevent the praiseworthy purpose of the others being realized. But the two classes—with other classes—actually constitute the nation. Bill Sykes is as much part of the nation as the Lord Chief Justice. The good man and the bad man, the fool and the genius, the criminal and judge, the prisoner and the gaoler together constitute the nation.

Now if this judge and member of Parliament had possessed sufficient understanding of what is, in truth, a fundamental principle in all sound sociological thinking. he might perhaps have realized that the number of young men who were brought before him was of a different kind from that which his remarks indicated. In the first place, he would have known—he ought to have known before he was allowed to even sit on the Bench, that the number of court charges depend upon the rigour with which the law is administered, the skill of the police in arresting offenders, and the creation of laws which make things an offence at one time which are not an offence at another time. He also would have seen, which is of far greater importance, that the fact of so many youths being brought before him was fundamentally a social problem. He would not have been so keenly concerned with *what* had been done so much as with *why* it had been done, the "what" being of importance only as an index of individual character. There would have been no stupid picture of the nation on one side and the wrong-doer on the other. The wrong-doer would have been just a part of the nation, and this might have led to the further perception that crime was a social product, even though an undesirable one. Perhaps one day those who deal with crime will reach that point of view, but we have evidently a long way to go yet for that to be characteristic of the mind of those who have to deal with "crime."

One of the earliest May Meetings was that of the Bible Society. The Chairman is said to have presented "a thrilling report"—which, however, included statistics showing that 77,738 fewer Bibles were circulated by the Society as compared with the previous year. God was heartily thanked—presumably for inspiring about 250 purchasers per working day to invest their money in beer instead of Bibles.

On a recent Sunday at the West London Mission two Anthems were sung; their names following one another breathed the air of true modesty always associated with the memory of the Founder of the Mission, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. They were "Now we are ambassadors," and "How lovely are the Messengers."

Speaking at the London Diocesan Conference, the other day, a Mr. Peter Winckworth, aged twenty-six, spoke for "youth" and their needs. He claimed that the young are "not really odd." They were "much the same as their fathers were years ago," and they were "not attracted by religious stunts." All they needed was discipline and, in addition, instruction and direction, and they realized "the need of prayer." Ye gods! "Youth," who realized the need of prayer and wanted religious discipline, instruction and direction were in Master Winckworth's opinion *not* odd! And no doubt the youth who "orated" this nonsense thought he was a champion of "youth." One can only add that anybody, young or old, who really depended on "prayer" or the "need of prayer," belonged to that large class who never grow up. They are intellectually petrified.

We always imagined that though differences in the Church were serious, yet on such an inspired ceremony as Baptism, there would be the most perfect harmony

among those who believed in it. Yet the Rev. Vaughan-Jones, writing in a religious paper, claims "that the method of the administration of Baptism in this country is appalling." Moreover, "this abuse has grown up through a course of years and is deep-rooted in the habits of the people and cannot be eradicated in five minutes." The rev. gentleman seems rather lazy as to a remedy, but thinks that "Disestablishment is a preliminary necessity before the Church can recover its full spiritual authority." But what if Disestablishment is so long in coming that there won't be a Church or only a sort of skeleton Church, and precious few members? We strongly advise getting Baptism back on the map in a less appalling way before bothering about Disestablishment. Perhaps the addition of a good well-advertised toilet soap will help matters.

Canon W. J. Sparrow Simpson, D.D., closed a sermon which he delivered the other day with the words, "Our chiefest interest is to ascertain whether the Ultimate Deity is a blind, unintelligent power, or whether it is a living and loving God?" Surely this is verging on the most blatant blasphemy? A Canon of the Church of England, inspired of a living and loving God, asking such a question as that? Surely he has no doubt whatever about the All-Mighty Father of Our Lord—who, by the way, is actually the All-Mighty Father, All-Loving, and *All-Knowing*. Or is he?

With reference to the *Church Times* and advertising, which is noted elsewhere in this issue, that "centuries before the modern publicity merchant had his first beginnings the Church was mistress of a public technique which has never been surpassed." We have said the same in these columns many times, and we agree that "she can afford to smile when she is told how greatly she would benefit if she would but emulate the methods of the newspaper advertiser." She certainly can "afford to smile," for of course nobody on earth ever advertised so thoroughly as did the Church, and as she is still doing. The only snag in the ointment is the dictum that advertising is bound to fail if you don't "deliver the goods." Has the Church delivered the goods? Has she not egregiously failed? Did she not promise Heaven if you swallowed all she gave, and Hell if you didn't? And who believes in the Church's Heaven and Hell now?

But there can be no doubt about the long and continued advertising. The Church has captured the B.B.C., and the only way one can escape from the religious drivel forced on to the public over the air, is by shutting off the wireless when the services and talks are on, or by switching over to a foreign station. And it is true also that "the newspaper press has been increasingly used in the cause of religion," and that "newspaper proprietors are alive to the interest of religion, and are genuinely desirous of providing for it." In fact, there is hardly an avenue in "advertising" that the Church does not use; and yet look at the results. Decreasing memberships almost everywhere, and constant wailing that enough is not done to bring people to Christ; that, in fact, the people prefer a cinema or a football match to a Church. For, if still very slowly, they are beginning to realize that the Church does *not* deliver the goods.

Another new book on prayer can be had for half-a-crown. If the examples of one's parents, teachers, and religious people generally is not enough. Mr. W. Harper provides you with *A Guide to Private Prayer*, in which "schemes for morning, noontide, and evening devotions" are carefully outlined with a recommendation by the Archbishop of York. There is also some "useful" advice given on "meditation." Of course, there must be some demand for this sort of book, but we would dearly like to meet the people who buy it and act upon it. Outside convents, monasteries, church and

chapel houses, the class who have made religion a profession, and religious lunatic asylums, how many people in this country really do pray in private for hours, or "meditate" for days? We wonder how many children, for example, would rather pray than go to see "the pictures"? And are many now compelled to go on their knees through the threats of hell-fire and eternal punishment? Surely if Freethought has done little else, it has banished that damnable superstition.

The Bishop of Llandaff, speaking, the other day, on the "Social Gospel," before a body of earnest believers, said that "for the last fifty years, the Church had been preaching the Social Gospel. But the awkward fact was that nothing seemed to happen." And this, in spite of the Bishop's admission that "they could not keep Christ out of commerce and industry because he was there already." Well, if Christ was here or there or everywhere, and they preached the "social gospel," why did nothing happen? And like all other Christian bishops dealing with more or less the same topic, his Grace of Llandaff had no answer. Perhaps he was afraid to admit that the real truth was that the Church was a colossal failure. Christianity's "social" gospel shares this with its "heavenly" gospel.

Young Churchmen and young Roman Catholics have issued a joint "Manifesto." They take Christ to be literally perfect God and perfect Man, and they insist on the immortality of the soul and original sin, and the whole of the Nicene Creed. Christianity is something greater and more wonderful than mere "humanitarianism," and they cannot compromise on any Christian "fundamentals." In other words, these young people believe everything the primitive, ignorant, and credulous Christians believed—which is perfectly right and proper. It is the only true Christianity; and watering it down with modern beliefs or tampering with its plain meaning should be rigorously repressed. God, Jesus, the Devil (in this order), together with God's Mother, Hell, Miracles, Redemption, Mass, Holy Water and Purgatory, should never be given up. We are here absolutely at one with the young Churchmen and the young Roman Catholics.

It is always difficult for most of us to understand the Modernist Christian's retention of his membership of the Orthodox Church. Professor Maurice A. Canney, of Manchester University, writes on "The Modernist Message." It is sincerely an attempt to prove the honesty of Modernism. He says, "People cling to what is old, particularly in religion, long after it has lost its meaning." This is obviously true, but it is less obvious how fine scholars like Prof. Canney can participate in religious services and repeat religious creeds which "make-believe" that "the old" retains all "its original meaning."

Professor Canney, while denying a great deal that Christian Churches teach as essential to their fellowship claims that the Modernist teaching is itself "the essentially old and original religion of Jesus." Clearly, whether the "Modernist" is the Ancient, or the Ancient has "lost its original meaning," there is all the difference in the world between the Church which dogmatically insists upon "the Three Creeds," and those heretics who deny these creeds (or parts of them). Prof. Canney's place is outside, not inside, a Church where these creeds continue to perpetuate doctrines he opposes as "never intended to be taken seriously."

Atheism apparently commands Churches and Parliaments to say nothing of monarchies and presidencies, according to the Rev. Dr. W. B. Selbie, D.D., whose historical sense needs a long course of "treatment." He is under the impression that "Atheism and scepticism . . . seemed to rob life of meaning and purpose" just before the Christian era. "Into such a world Christianity came like a breath of fresh air." And it is pretty much the

same "in the world in which we are now living." Dr. Selbie doesn't seem to realize that Christianity is condemned by the fact that after nineteen hundred years of its power, the Selbies of to-day can find so much to justify their gloomiest pessimism. But does he believe, as we do, that a new Christ coming direct from heaven to-day and getting some Constantine-scoundrel to back Him up with Imperial force, would waste another two thousand years without bringing civilization a step further than He found it? Christianity has been tried and found out.

In future the Boss of the English Presbyterians is to be called "Right Reverend." There can be little honour to anyone in using a title given to Bishop Winnington Ingram! The Methodists are joking about the new title of the Presbyterians, and suggest that "Rather Reverend" would do for probationers. We suggest that "Wrong Reverend" is the proper title for those who ask for a respect they do nothing to deserve.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham has been writing on what he calls "The Quest of the Supernatural." If he finds what he is looking for, it will be an "Inquest" that is required. The Supernatural, however, is not dead, it has never been born. Mr. Whitham's "quest" is myriads of years old, and he had better keep to cross-word puzzles if he merely wants to waste time. But if Mr. Whitham fails to find the Supernatural, he at least finds a good story. He tells us of a Scotch minister, many years ago, who had no objection to offering prayer for the monarch, but when asked to put in a good word for the Heir-apparent of that day, he sarcastically prayed, "God bless the Prince of Wales and help him so to comport himself that we may find it tolerable to be loyal to him."

Mr. Arthur Mee has written a book called "God Knows"—a phrase expressing human ignorance. Mr. Mee, in a chapter entitled "The Incredible Past," talks about child-labour, disease and social injustice, and adds an indictment of present-day evils. This seems sufficiently remote from "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," especially if Mr. Mee appears to think, "God Knows" all about it. But, says the *Christian World* in its review, "at the conclusion Mr. Mee's faith in the spirit of man co-operating with God rises unconquered." What then has been the cause of all the ghastly horrors Mr. Mee mentions? Is it that there has been too much or too little of God's side of the "co-operation"? If God has played a fair part, it is evident that God is useless. If He has cheated and left man to do all the work, let us cease worrying about supernaturalism altogether.

The Rev. Albert Belden has gone for a holiday to the United States, where he will receive one of those "honorary" degrees, and he will return as Dr. Belden, a Doctor of Divinity. It has been well said that if anything of earth wants "doctoring," it is Divinity. Meanwhile, Mr. Belden's pulpit will be occupied by Dr. Sezoo (or should it be Sez-you) (of Washington D.C.), and other American "divines."

"The Holy Land turned out to be one of the most un-holy lands I ever visited," writes Dr. Clayton Morrison, after visiting Palestine recently. He speaks of "the charlatanism of the exhibition of sacred things and sacred places." "From one end of it to the other you are shown fictitious and fantastic objects with all the pious assurance of historical verity." Dr. Morrison makes the extremely wise suggestion that there should be some truthful guide agency, employing trained educated men "to explode the nonsense and deceit which Greek and Roman Churches now use to exploit the piety and credulity of the devout." Except that we believe it is impossible to cure the credulity of the devout, we should like, say a student of John M. Robertson, to explode the Christian myth on the spot where it is said to have originated.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL

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Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. J. TAYLOR.—Thanks for your successful effort in getting a new reader.

Mrs. M. J. WADMAM (Durban)—Paper being sent to address given for six weeks. Thanks.

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

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

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums

We must ask the indulgence of readers and correspondents this week. Conference Sunday means a very hard day's work, and the Bank Holiday following severely restricts the available time for getting the paper ready for the press. Everything necessary will receive attention in our next week's issue.

There was no mistaking the success of the Manchester Conference. There was a good attendance of delegates and private members, and the interest in the proceedings was very keen indeed. There was hardly a dull moment during the whole of the day, and whatever differences of opinion existed, as there should exist at such a Conference, were put forward with, not merely a professed, but with a very obvious desire to further the interests of Freethought.

On Saturday evening the reception brought old and new friends from all parts of the country. Councillor Hall, the President of the Manchester Branch, acted as Master of the Ceremonies, and the Branch provided an excellent musical programme. The evening passed very quickly, and very profitably.

Whit-Sunday is the worst day in the year for a public meeting, and the Picture House was not quite filled. But, very much to the surprise of those who permit their minds to be governed by tradition, the day was fine, and the audience large. The list of speakers was a lengthy one, eight and the President, and the best compliment to the speakers lay in the fact that for nearly two hours the interest was well sustained, and when the President sat down at the close, there was long and loud applause.

On Monday a number of the delegates and members went to Castleton. Again the weather, while not at its best, was well behaved. Castleton is a very beautiful spot, and in walking, and visiting the famous Peak Caves, and the Blue John Mine, the day passed very quickly. Lunch and tea were served at the Cheshire. Mr. Cohen accompanied the party, but had to leave early in order to get back to London in time for his work on the *Freethinker* the next day. Unfortunately, he missed his connexion at Derby, and so had to spend the night at Leicester, catching a very early train the following morning. But the two days represented a very good time, and the results will, we feel sure, be of value to the Society.

We publish the Executive's Report in this week's issue. Next week there will appear an account of the proceedings of the Conference. A good report of the Conference appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* for June 10. Accounts may have appeared in other papers, but we have not seen them if that is the case.

Another nibble at the liberty of the press. First, Mr. Macdonald throws out a feeler, then Mr. E. Graham-Little asks the Home Secretary a question as to curtailing the press, where interviewers intrude on private family matters and on family grief. We admit the bad taste, but the remedy does not lie in the law. If decent people will set their faces against the idiotic chatter about this and that celebrity, coming celebrities, and would-be celebrities, this kind of journalism would soon cease. Most of it is sheer fabrication in any case. But it commences with the shape of the trousers of the Prince of Wales and the hat of Princess Marina, and naturally works down to the "lower classes," who have only more or less sordid matters that will attract.

Of graver nature is the speech of Lord Kilmaine in the House of Lords. He wanted the government to stop newspapers publishing "provocative and alarmist" headlines dealing with foreign affairs. This would mean, in operation, that our papers would only be permitted to publish what the Government of the day decided was permissible, as was the case during the war, when the papers became advertising agencies for the official view of what amount of truth, or what number of lies the public should be told. The consequences of that policy are still with us.

Of course, the freedom of the press is open to abuse, and, of course, it is abused. But it is a curious thing that while so many are ready to run risks in the interests of tyranny and censorship, very few are ready to run any risk whatever in the interests of freedom. But one cannot live without running risks, and all experience proves that on the whole, and in the long run, there is less risk run in freedom than in censorship and suppression. We suppose the latter course is the more popular because a policy of freedom requires some degree of intelligence and honesty; while almost any rogue and any fool can commence to suppress, or can wish to suppress anything with which he disagrees.

We are asked to request those who wish to co-operate in Freethought propaganda in Nottingham and district to communicate with Mr. T. Mosley, 3 Carnarvon Grove, Gedling, Notts. Mr. Mosley is a very ardent Freethinker, and there is certainly scope for much good work to be done in the area named.

Mr. George Whitehead is commencing a week's lecturing in Liverpool to-day (June 16). He will be at Queen's Drive (opposite Walton Baths) at 8.0 p.m. on Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday. At the same time on Thursday, he will be at the corner of High Park Street and Park Road. The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate, and as it carries on a very active campaign throughout the season really good meetings should await Mr. Whitehead's visit. Freethought literature, including Mr. Cohen's new book, *Letters to the Lord*, will be on sale at all meetings.

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In these circumstances the existence of a body such as the National Secular Society, standing aloof from all merely political entanglements and above sectarian interests, asking no more for itself than it demands for others, is of first-rate importance. The democracy of the National Secular Society has always been a very real thing, and its advocacy of real freedom has been equally pronounced. We demand for every man and woman the right to express an opinion without incurring any punishment whatever. We do not ask for toleration for anybody, but for equal freedom for all. This Society does not ask for freedom of opinion because it believes that certain opinions are right, but because it believes that it is only through freedom of discussion that truth can be reached, and only by encouraging the expression of differences can that revision of accepted ideas upon which progress depends be secured. Acceptance of the principle of freedom of thought and expression has nothing whatever to do with whether an opinion is right or wrong. This principle does, in fact, assume that some opinions are wrong; without that assumption the demand for freedom would be ridiculous.

It is upon this fundamental principle that the National Secular Society rests. Its members may be and are divided upon all sorts of political, social and ethical issues and beliefs. The Society has no political programme, not because it holds that political programmes are useless, but because it is not in the name of political agreement that its membership rests and co-operation is invited. Union between people must be based on things in which they agree, not upon things in which they differ. And our union rests upon, first, the belief that social progress depends upon the capacity of human effort to solve all social and intellectual problems without reference to any kind of religious belief; second, that all institutions must admit of justification in terms of social utility and efficiency; third, that all the religions of the world have arisen in error and eventuate in injustice.

This Society stands therefore for the freedom of the individual and the socialization of human effort. The only articles to which we ask for adherence are those indicated. After that it is left for each member to satisfy in whatever way seems best, the principles we have implanted and the inspiration given.

If the expression may be permitted, the National Secular Society existed before it was born. Its principles are implied in the history of progress, but as a concrete fact the history of this Society began in the amalgamation of those associations which came into existence in this country as a consequence of the agitation resulting from the influence of the French Revolution, the writings of Thomas Paine, and the writings and work of Robert Owen and his immediate followers. It was the union of these associations that constituted our Society, and during its existence in both an embryonic and a mature form, no other organization has contributed so large a proportion of earnest and valuable workers to the reform movements of this country. Without the seminal influence of Freethought, the story of reform in Great Britain would be far different from what it is. We have stood, and still stand, as a great clearing-house of human endeavour. There is no other organization that does so distinctly stand for such an end, and only the blindness engendered by sectarian or party passion can deny the value of such a work.

At the opening of this report, reference was made to the general propaganda of the Society. The weakening of religious beliefs goes on with increasing rapidity, although religious organizations, with the power of vested interests behind them, are more diffi-

cult to destroy. Yet looking at the advance made, it is depressing to have to state that a great deal of the strength of the common enemy is derived from the apathy of large numbers of those who, while living in that freer atmosphere which the work of Freethinkers has created, show no disposition to help the common cause. This work is left to the minority, not merely to gain further advances, but to safeguard the ground already won.

This apathy may prove dangerous. Religion still holds a privileged place in social life; the burden of rates, borne by all, is made greater by the non-taxability of Churches and other buildings devoted to religious purposes, and in the tithing-war that is going on, we have a standing illustration of the extent to which sectarian religion is subsidized by public money. Sabbatarianism has been weakened, but it is far from dead; such freedom of enjoyment as exists in the large centres, surrounded as these are by various restrictions in favour of the Churches, does not exist in very many parts of the country. The pressure of religious bodies on political and municipal and other candidates for election is still great, and is powerful in encouraging a spirit of hypocrisy and dishonesty that works strongly against a desirable public life by shutting out from office many of the better type of men and women. There is a very real danger here in the growth of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, and also, it is to be feared, in the number of its adherents. That Church has never retreated from its claim to secular supremacy, and stops at no method by which this end can be realized. The blasphemy laws remain unrepealed, and indicate a latent danger that may become active in any season of reaction. Sedition and blasphemy are easily made legally interchangeable and identical, and the fact that such a disgraceful measure as the Incitement to Disaffection Act could be passed is an indication of what may be done. When the time comes for its application, this Act will be found to have a very wide range.

With regard to the question of religion in the schools the position is actually worse than it was a half-century ago. Religious bodies are to-day clamorous for a larger measure of religious instruction in State-supported schools, and for greater financial support from the State in others. In Scotland the advantages secured by the Roman Catholic Church from the Scotch Act of 1918, advantages both financial and sectarian, have been so great as almost to amount to a national scandal. And the important thing about this is that what the Roman Church has secured in Scotland, the Roman Church and the Church of England are striving hard to obtain in this country. The aim is to throw the whole cost of the maintenance of the voluntary schools on the rates, while at the same time securing a greater measure of control over the religious education given in Council schools, with an inevitable supervision of the teachers employed.

One very great step towards the prevention of this state of things would certainly be accomplished if Freethinkers would make their position better known with regard to religious beliefs. It is certain that no Government we are likely to have in the near future—whether it be Conservative, Liberal or Labour—is likely to move further along the line of securing complete religious equality than public pressure forces it to go; or negatively, no Government will decline to grant concessions to the more clamorous of the sects unless it is made aware of a volume of public opinion against it. To most candidates for election, the whole question is to secure votes—with justice if possible, but votes at all costs.

There is not a political organization in the country that does not number among its members a proportion of convinced Freethinkers, but who generally keep

their religious opinions in the background. It is time they ceased to show this deference to stupidity and superstition. Christians would be less insistent in their sectarian claims if Freethinkers were less secretive with regard to their own opinions. It is also the case that, if Freethinking parents would insist on withdrawing their children from religious instruction the State would be made aware of another factor to which at present not enough attention is paid. The plea that the withdrawal of children from religious instruction in schools protects them from persecution has really not very much to support it nowadays. More generally, it is the parents who hesitate to make their own opinions known to their neighbours. Sometimes there may be some justification for this, but every abstinence makes that justification stronger. But the certain thing is that so long as public reverence is made to stupid and useless, even harmful, customs and beliefs, so long will these things retain their dominance in our social and political life.

Freethinkers would do well to remember that this fight between the Churches and Freethought is literally a fight for the child. Yet we must beware lest we are led into the snare of using the child as a mere instrument of propaganda. That is decidedly and avowedly the aim of the Churches, but we need not imitate them in this respect. It is the individuality of the child for which we are fighting. This must always be our first aim in the work of so training the child that it may become a useful adult member of society; and this cannot be done unless the capacity of the child is so developed as to strengthen the exercise of a real critical capacity which may be applied to the whole of life, and above all of mere authority.

It is when we bear in mind much has to be done that we appreciate the need for strenuous work on the part of all. Writers and speakers may do their share, but their efforts will secure scant results unless they are backed up in practice by Freethinkers as a body. We hear much to-day of what is called a "united front." The Executive suggests to all that divided as we may be upon all sorts of issues, there is one upon which the whole of this Society has always stood solidly, and from which it cannot retreat without being false to its avowed principles. This is the complete divorcement of the whole of life from religious control, and the right, nay more than the right, the duty of every man and woman to express his or her opinion upon any and every aspect of life. If we can secure this much, we shall be creating an influence before which every superstition and every form of wrong and injustice must ultimately disappear.

A Fragment Concerning a Famous Firm

SCARCELY any personality of outstanding fame has escaped the attention of the fabulist. Fictitious tales are legion concerning Bradlaugh, Disraeli, Gladstone and many other well-known public men. Stories relating to the Rothschild family and its fortunes, which are entirely devoid of truth, are still in general circulation. Books and pamphlets have appeared in many parts of the world dealing with the same theme. Yet, with very few exceptions, the various detailed stories which occur in these publications emanate from those who possess scarcely any reliable information relating to the origin and spectacular rise to opulence and power of Rothschild's famous financial House.

One writer, however, the late Lucien Wolf, in his posthumous *Essays in Jewish History* (The Jewish Historical Society, 1934), speaks with special author-

ity, as he was privileged to peruse a collection of 197 autograph letters, both of Nathan Mayer Rothschild, the founder of the London firm in New Court, and his father, Mayer Amschel Rothschild. These documents prove that Nathan's career began as a cotton exporter, in Manchester, with a warehouse in Brown Street, and a residence in Downing Street, Ardwick. In 1800 he was established in Cornhill, and removed to New Court ten years later.

Until Rothschild's advent, New Court was an undistinguished spot and gave small promise of its future celebrity. Wolf remarks that "Its real life began when Nathan Rothschild took up his abode there. He and his descendants have made it famous, indeed, one of the most famous spots in the whole city. Like Threadneedle Street and Lombard Street, it is more than a famous topographical expression, it is a world power, and there have been times when it was the actual hub of the financial universe."

At this period, City men resided over their shops and offices, and rents and rates were nominal in amount. Three houses out of the five in New Court, St. Swithin's Lane, were then to let, and Nathan selected the most commodious of these, which was a roomy and convenient merchant's domicile, where business could be conducted on the ground floor, while the rent was only £6 per annum, and the rates worked out at the insignificant sum of 2d. in the £. Among his past or present neighbours in New Court were Maltby, the friend of Samuel Rogers, Travers the eminent surgeon, and Nathan Rothschild's relative, Moses Montefiore.

The customary quietness of the Court was now intermittently broken by the crowds of clients and clerks who thronged to the newly-opened establishment, while the rapidly increasing wealth of the financier was everywhere discussed. Moreover, he soon organized an intelligence agency which gave him great advantages over his competitors in the money market. With the assistance of couriers, closely linked with a well organized Channel and Continental system, Rothschild easily eclipsed all rivals in business, the public Press, and even Downing Street itself, in the knowledge he possessed of foreign transactions.

Joseph Montefiore, who was then an apprentice in St. Swithin's Lane, frequently recalled the sensation occasioned in the hitherto tranquil Court when messengers mounted on foaming ponies, arrived with the despatch bags. This was in ordinary business hours but, sometimes, the neighbours were aroused from slumber at dead of night or early dawn. The earliest intelligence of Napoleon's escape from Elba was carried by a French courier to New Court at five o'clock in the morning. In the later 1830, Talleyrand, in one of his epistles noted that "the English Cabinet always obtain their information from Rothschild ten or twelve hours before the arrival of Lord Stewart's despatches, and this is not to be wondered at, seeing that the vessels which carry Rothschild's couriers belong to that firm, take no passengers, and start at all hours."

Prince Leopold, afterwards the Belgian King, once visited New Court in a hired conveyance very much the worse for wear. Rothschild severely censured the Prince for his careless impropriety in travelling through the Metropolis in so undignified a manner. Then he sent his client home to Carlton House in a glass coach. An episode originally occurring at New Court, and since associated with several public characters relates to Prince Pückler-Muskau. This highly consequential personage called at Rothschild's office on important business, and was curtly told to take a chair while the financier proceeded with his work. "The visitor," we learn, "was aghast at this uncer-

monious reception. 'I am afraid,' he said, 'you did not hear who I am. I am the Prince of Pückler-Muskau.' Rothschild looked up quizzingly. 'Well, well,' he said, 'take two chairs.'

The astute financier was far from sentimental and, unlike several of his descendants, was little concerned with science or art. Spohr the composer, and Audubon the ornithologist, each had an introduction to Rothschild. The composer soon discovered that Nathan had no ear for music such as Spohr's, when he rattled the money in his pocket and remarked "that is the music for me." Audubon was anxious to sell a copy of his famous work, *The Birds of America*, for the sum of £200, but, to the naturalist's annoyance, Rothschild asserted that £5 was a very fair price. Later members of the Rothschild family, however, have displayed a keen interest in the science of life. Tring is famous, and £10,000 is said to have been expended in the publication of Rothschild's magnificently illustrated book on birds. With his business friends old Rothschild's relations were far more cordial, and the more close-fisted he found them, the better he admired them.

While ever devoted to his calling in the City, Nathan Rothschild nevertheless became active in the movement to secure the civil and religious emancipation of the Jews. As a money magnate he was in a position to plead the cause of Anglo-Jewry in the presence of the leaders of both political parties. Nor was he indifferent to the sufferings of Israel in Continental lands. His life closed at Frankfurt in 1836, and his death was hastened by the incompetence of his German surgeons. Travers was sent for when it was too late, and when he arrived it was only to find that his old neighbour in New Court had passed away.

The Rothschilds have been portrayed both in England and abroad as shining saints and perhaps more frequently as shameless sinners. Wolf reminds his readers that when an inquisitive busybody asked Rothschild how he had become so wealthy, the financier grimly retorted: "By minding my own business." But the millionaire was usually very reserved and this seems a family characteristic. Yet, at a dinner party where the wine circulated, Nathan confided to Sir Thomas Powell Buxton, an interesting account of his early career, which was afterwards given to the world. Also, his brother James issued a pamphlet in reply to certain aspersions concerning his kindred but, apart from a family anecdote, emanating from another Rothschild, nothing further has been revealed to the curious section of the community.

Many accounts, mostly unreliable, of the rise and progress of the House of Rothschild have appeared in print. It is still a popular belief that Nathan Rothschild's immense fortune was made through his circulation of a false report of the termination of Waterloo's conflict, and then extensively purchasing the heavily depreciated stocks and shares which he subsequently sold at an enormously increased price. This legend, adorned with many details gathered from various anti-Semitic sources was published in London as late as 1912, in a work entitled *The Romance of the House of Rothschild*. That this production is truly romantic Lucien Wolf had no difficulty in proving. He demonstrates that what purports to be a sober historical narrative is utterly mendacious even with regard to the origin and early history of the family. As for the Waterloo story, previously set forth by several writers as fully authenticated, when briefly outlined, it runs as follows: "In order to deceive the Stock Exchange, Nathan Rothschild followed Wellington to the field of Waterloo, and that when he saw which way the battle was going, he posted to London, depressed the market with hints of disaster, secretly bought the depressed stock, and

thus managed to 'scoop' several millions sterling when the official news arrived."

This fiction first saw the light in 1846, in Paris, and was apparently the concoction of a shady scribbler who had previously attempted to intimidate Baron James de Rothschild, the head of the Paris firm, by reading from the manuscript and demanding money for its suppression.

Now, while it is true that Rothschild in London was the first recipient of authentic tidings of the battle, he did not depart to Brussels until the following day under an urgent commission from the Treasury to forward a supply of gold to the English headquarters. Wolf assures us that the original invoice "is still to be seen in Messrs. Rothschild's counting house." It is likewise evident from the documents preserved that Rothschild "received two messages containing the news, and both arrived before the official despatches."

The elaborate system for securing a rapid transmission that Rothschild had established clearly accounts for this. Earlier, in 1813, when the Bank of England was unable to furnish a full supply of specie for the needs of the British troops on the Continent, the Government turned to Rothschild, who promptly established special agencies at Dover, Calais, Ostend and other places. So when on June 20, 1815, the messenger arrived at New Court with the news, he was at once sent on to Downing Street, where the tidings of Napoleon's successes at Ligny and Quatre Bras had just been received through official channels. This made Lord Liverpool and Mr. Croker decidedly incredulous as to the British victory until, about thirty hours later, all doubts were set at rest by the delivery of Wellington's despatches.

T. F. PALMER.

Sacred Songs

SOME of the more musical and poetical minds in the Churches have of late years been leading a movement for reform and revision of books of praise, with the result that several fine examples of Victorian doggerel have been excised. But still, enough remains to entertain the Freethinking reader. So, if one is stuck for a good novel, there is always the hymn book to fall back upon. It will certainly lift one out of monotony.

What at once strikes a reader in resorting to the "Songs of Zion" is the evidence which is furnished therein of the persisting primitiveness of religious belief. The attitude of the early believer and of the savage supernaturalist towards their respective josses is repeated in the modern believer, notwithstanding all the material accessories of public worship in the twentieth century. From the tenour of most hymns in which the Almighty is addressed by his worshippers, it is clear that he must be continuously adulated if he is to be kept in a placable mood. An enlightened thinker could hardly be brought to conceive respect, far less veneration or reverence, for a character who, while advertised to be omnipotent and omniscient, displays such a weakness and craving for everlasting boasting. The Christian God of the twentieth century is most infernally jealous; and one may infer that that characteristic has contributed more to human ills than any other cause. For if you cross your God there can be no doubt you are "for it"! And there does not seem the slightest hope for you anywhere if you double-cross him. We are told that it is not worry but worry that kills. Has there ever been any worry for humanity to equal the demands of a supposed Almighty Creator and Governor of the Universe, as preferred through his black-coated ambassadors?

These gentry profess to map out your life for you; and if you do not accept their plan you can go to hell and be damned to you!

And yet—and yet—we do not see proofs of the power of such singing campaigns as were conducted in former days by Sankey and Alexander. The more refined minds of to-day cannot swallow the bellowing blatancy of the nineteenth century Methodists and Ranters. Influential believers throughout the world are acquiring more lady-like minds, which suggests the possibility of God changing his sex. Anyway, would mankind be any worse off with an Almighty Goddess than an Almighty God? The huge majority of the ardent supporters of religion are women; and in point of fact we have quite recently read of proposals to invest women with higher official positions in the Churches. Even in Scotland there are now two or three clergywomen in Congregational and Presbyterian Churches. And it is always the unexpected that is happening.

This exordium may not be wholly appropriate; but it has this bearing on sacred songs—that very many of these are specially adapted to the feminine constitution. For example, one is not particularly intrigued, though he may be amused, by listening to a six-foot, sixteen stone coal-heaver warbling the words:—

Safe in the arms of Jesus
Safe on his gentle breast.
There by his love o'ershadowed,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.

It sounds more as a hymn to be rendered by sopranos and contraltos than by basses and baritones.

A lurid light is cast upon the character of God when we come upon verses which show what a whining, whingeing, shivering, abject creature the believer appears. Thus:—

When rising from the bed of death,
O'erwhelmed with guilt and fear,
I see my Maker face to face,
Oh, how shall I appear!
If yet while pardon may be found,
And mercy may be sought,
My heart with inward horror shrinks,
And trembles at the thought;
When thou, O Lord, shalt stand disclosed,
In majesty severe,
And sit in judgment on my soul,
O how shall I appear!
But thou hast told the troubled mind,
Who doth her sins lament,
That timely grief for errors past
Shall future woe prevent.

The "key" word of this nightmarish soliloquy is "Majesty." Prostrate at the feet of the Joss the cowering sinner lies. How primitive! But how pleasing to the priest! The 21st Psalm asserts, and emphasizes by the mouth of a singing monarch, the majesty and the Divine Right of Kings in which thousands still believe. But the 21st was not a Psalm that Oliver Cromwell was likely to sing.

There used to be a peculiar sect in America, popularly known as "The Shakers," so named because of the fact that the members used to get up and do a sort of shuffling dance, in the course of which they seemed to shake themselves—clear of their sins, probably. Artemus Ward, it will be remembered, was invited to one of their services; but didn't join. The sexes did not mix. The males sat on one side of Meeting House—the females on the other. Each side sang alternately. Thus the males:—

Send down Sal—
Send down Sal—
Send down Salvation!

Then the females:—

O for a Man—
O for a Man—
O for a Mansion in the skies!

It is notable that throughout Scripture God is regularly described as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. This explains a great deal of the psychology of his worshippers. Once they made a God, they had to give him the likeness of a man. What else could they do? It may be objected that human races have worshipped or held in reverence sacred snakes, bulls and cats. But in the main the Supreme Being behind all has always been a person with a human likeness. And to the ignorant and fearful he is always just a duplicate of the boss or head man or manager or slave-driver, who helps them at their toil. And he is always "holy" and always right in what he says or does. Thus we have hymns of adoration beginning:—

Holy Holy Holy Lord God Almighty!

Holy Holy Holy Lord God of Hosts!

Sound aloud Jehovah's praises,
Tell abroad the awful name!

O worship the King all glorious above.

Praise my soul the King of Heaven.

The Lord is King! Lift up thy voice
O Earth . . .

Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens adore him!

My God, how wonderful thou art!

IGNOTUS.

(To be concluded)

Religious Instruction in Schools: Signs of Movement

THE Report and leaflets recently issued by the Secular Education League—*The Teaching of Religion in State-aided Schools*, *Why Teachers should support Secular Education*, and *The Blight on Education*—have drawn renewed attention to the necessity of extirpating from our public scholastic system all religious instruction.

It is pointed out, among other things (1) that until the desirable consummation is achieved we can never get a fully unified system of national education; (2) that in a large number of Single School Areas parents are practically compelled to send their children to Anglican schools, whether they like to do so or not; (3) that the existence of schools which are mainly under clerical management and control, and in which "definite religious instruction" is given, involves inquisition into the theological belief or unbelief of teachers, some of whom are therefore practically excluded from more than half of the existing public elementary schools. (The effect of this procedure is well described by Mr. Bertrand Russell in *Education and the Social Order*: "Since most people whose intelligence is much above the average are openly or secretly Agnostic, the teachers in a school which insists on religious instruction must be either stupid or hypocritical . . . theological tests limit the choice of teachers and exclude from the profession most of those who are best fitted to stimulate the young, both intellectually and morally); (4) that the instruction in question necessitates the payment by the public for teaching to which a large proportion of them object; (5) that Roman Catholic schools, though quite unnecessary, are being constantly added to the list of State-maintained schools, and being commonly small cannot possess the amenities of the large Council School, nor, owing to the unavoidable teaching of groups formed of children of two or three different years, can they give so good a general education; (6) that we are faced with a demand for the full provision of buildings as maintenance for sectarian schools; and (7) that religious interference with education forms a formidable obstacle to the full reorganization of the schools and to the raising of the leaving age.

As regards (3) there is now to hand a Report of a Committee on the working of the Scottish Education Act of 1918. This Act transferred the existing Roman Catholic schools to the Education Authorities; the cost of purchase

was £771,000, and that of replacing the schools that were "out-of-date" a further £1,335,000; the qualified staffs were taken over and their salaries increased, in some cases by as much as 200 per cent. The report adds that "the Roman Catholic Church has been enriched to an enormous extent, both by relief from the provision of buildings and by the increased remuneration of the staffs, as a considerable number of the teachers are in religious orders, and their salaries, by their religious vows, therefore go into the coffers of the Church." Not only do the schools remain practically Roman Catholic, but we are told that there are training colleges for Roman teachers, and the cost of these to the public "represents a considerable sum."

The Committee hold that the Act of 1918 cannot be regarded as a permanent settlement, because it fails to provide a really national system of education, segregates children, and indeed the whole community, according to religious belief, and subsidizes Roman Catholic teaching. It is therefore urged that the Act should be so amended that a system of education embracing all children irrespective of religious belief may be established; that no denominational school shall in future be erected or taken over by a public authority; that religious tests for teachers shall be abolished, and that no member of a religious order shall be employed on the staff of a public (provided) school.

Although there is a further recommendation that periods should be set apart for religious instruction, to be given by the teachers or representatives of the churches, we may wish the movement success, as it tends to discredit sectarian schools and may do something to check the teaching of the more degraded type of superstition.

We have also to note some signs of progress toward the secular ideal in this country. The Association of Assistant Masters has passed a resolution stating that it is not the duty of teachers to inculcate the Christian or any other religion; and the National Union of Teachers has appointed a sub-committee to study the League's publication, *The Case for Secular Education*. With these events we may associate the procedure of the Education Committee at Heston and Isleworth, in which a candidate for a Council School post was asked whether he was a Christian, and whether he was prepared to teach the Christian religion. This foreshadows the possible application to all teachers of religious tests.

It is believed that a large proportion of teachers favour the secular solution; but naturally enough they fear that if this were known to the Education Authorities of many districts their prospects of promotion, if not their very livelihood, might be endangered. Obviously the only remedy for this denial of freedom is the complete secularization of education.

J. REEVES.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

POPULATION AND WAR

SIR,—In your issue of June 2, the writer of "Sugar Plums" says of Jane Addams: "She gave it as her opinion that if the war could have been withheld for another twenty years there would have been an end of war altogether. Her faith was in the new generation that was growing up, and which had been subjected to an entirely new view of social development."

I fear Jane Addams must have been a Pharisaic humbug if she, imagined that that was all there was to be said on the question of war. It is very natural that an American should dislike war. Americans have taken by violence from the Red Indians a continent as large as Europe, and containing immense resources, which have made them the richest people in the world. This vast area is jealously guarded from intruders. No Chinaman, Jap, or Hindu, can set foot on it, and now nearly all Europeans are excluded. It would be extraordinary if Americans were not content, and if they have little im-

agination they readily believe that others ought also to be content.

People less happily situated take a different view. The Japanese have only one third of an acre of cultivable land per head, which is only one sixth of what scientific agriculturists consider necessary to produce the varied diet of Britain and America. Consequently they are limited to a diet consisting wholly of rice, barley, and beans, and the great majority of Japanese never taste milk, butter, cheese, eggs, fruit, or meat. Naturally they are not so well pleased as the Americans, and are getting ready to fight for what they believe to be their rights.

It is exactly the same with the Germans. They are miserably poor because they are overcrowded. The German Empire contains only one seventieth part of the area of the British Empire, and only a fortieth part of the area of the Soviet Empire. General Goering, Germany's Air Minister, lately said:

"When, as was the case of Germany, 65,000,000 people lived in a small space, it was no use trying to solve the social problem, because the essential conditions for a solution were lacking."

That is a scientific fact easily demonstrated, and it is understood by all Germans. It is therefore natural that Germans, young and old, are full of enthusiasm for a militant policy which will give them as large a share of the earth as the British, Russians, and Americans possess.

Anyone who talks about peace without honestly investigating and weighing these facts is a mere demagogue.

R. B. KERR.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Dr. Horace J. Bridges (Chicago Ethical Society)—"The Rising Tide of Religious Disbelief in America."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.30, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Rational Atheism."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, June 16, Mr. Tuson. 8.0, Highbury Corner, Mr. Goldman. 8.0, Monday, June 17, South Hill Park, Mr. Tuson. 8.0, Wednesday, June 19, Mornington Crescent, Mr. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 6.45 Sunday, June 16, Mr. C. Tuson. 8.0, Tuesday, June 18, Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, Mr. P. Goldman. 8.0, Friday, June 21, Manor Street, Clapham High Street, Mrs. E. Groul.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. P. Goldman.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Wood and Bryant. 7.30, Wednesdays, Messrs. Ryans and Tuson. 7.30, Thursdays, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. Current *Freethinker* on sale at the Kiosk.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

ACCRINGTON MARKET : 7.0, Sunday, June 16, Mr. J. Clayton. GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street, St. George's Cross) : 8.0, Muriel Whitefield and John More. *Freethinker* and other literature on sale.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths) : 8.0, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, June 16 to June 21, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening. 8.0, Thursday, June 20, Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Mr. G. Whitehead.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Belfast Road, Old Swan) : 8.0, Tuesday, June 18, Messrs. A. Jackson and D. Robinson.

NELSON (Chapel Street) : 8.0, Tuesday, June 18, Mr. J. Clayton.

PORTSMOUTH (Tadmorden Valley) : 7.45, Friday, June 14, Mr. J. Clayton.

READ : 7.30, Wednesday, June 19, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR BRANCH N.S.S. 7.0, Debate—*Affir.*: Mr. J. S. Wattam. *Neg.*: Mr. Allan Flanders (N.S.S.)—"Did Jesus of the New Testament Ever Live?"

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue) : 7.0, Mr. A. Flanders—A Lecture.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of enquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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