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

Views and Opinions

Teaching the Young Idea

WHEN Hitler, Goering and Co. address crowds of boys and tell them that it is their duty to grow up good soldiers, ready to defend their Fatherland, or when Mussolini brandishes his fist in a manner suggestive of a drunken bully, and informs schoolboys that they must make the armed might of Italy feared and respected, everyone—or nearly everyone—in this country recognizes this as one phase of a militaristic education. But foreigners are apt to err when they say that the establishment of Officers' Training Corps in our public schools is as much preparation for militarism as we feel it safe to make at present. We Britishers know better. We know that when the Prince of Wales steps aside from his normal task of performing harmless public functions, or setting the fashion in hair dressing or coloured socks, and says that those who oppose the formation of military Cadet Corps in schools are "cranks," or when military officers in full uniform visit schools and review the school regiment, also dressed in uniform, and carrying rifles, we know that we are building upon the conviction that British human nature is not like Italian or German human nature; and, therefore, proceedings that will make other people warlike only serve to make Britishers love peace the more. Others are training their youth to make war; we train ours only to preserve peace.

But sometimes this view of human nature is questioned, and when the intention of the authorities is questioned in this way, there is nothing apparently left for us to do but to apply the instrument of coercion to such as argue that if militarism is bad in other countries then it is bad here, and that if it is wrong to breed in the youth of Germany and Italy a delight in the military life, then it is equally wrong to do so in this country. Alone among the nations of the world we have made war in the interests of peace and progress, and therefore our intentions are no longer open to discussion.

The Sergeant-Major

That at least appears to be the view of a certain Mr. Keeton, who happens to be the Head Master of a public school at Reading. There is an Officers' Training Corps in the school and a parade had been ordered. But some of the youth who were still in the school, and some of the "Old Boys," who had left the school, both unaffected by the censure of the Prince of Wales, decided to educate school opinion against this parade. They circulated among the young men in the school the following leaflet (I am printing it here, because while many papers have commented on the incident, I do not think any have published the document in full). Here it is:—

SANITY OR SAVAGERY

Remember all you in the O.T.C., remember as you entwine your legs in rag, as you don your sacking and diving boots, as you waste two hours polishing buttons, as you twist your shoulders with "humane" killers. . . .

Remember only this . . . that you ask yourselves: "Is this pageantry worth while? Does it justify the yearly expenditure of £160,000?"

If you do, there can only be one course . . . you must leave the War machine. For that is what the Corps is . . . an integral part of militarism, as the Cadet regulations admit:—

"The object of training lads is to develop in them principles of patriotism and good citizenship during Peace, and to fit them in the event of a national War to take their places in defence of their home and country."

Therefore, when an attempt is made to dope you with such opiate as: "The O.T.C. teaches leadership and discipline (Defaulters) and is not military in nature," remember that in reality you are being trained to murder other men who happen to live in another region, that you will be called upon to gas babies and to destroy civilization.

But do not conceive of the notion that such immorality will protect the peoples of your country—it will not! *Crime cannot be vanquished by crime, neither can force by force.*

All it will do will be to plunge Mankind deeper into the mire, to aid the patriotic exploitation of the British Empire, and to maintain an outworn system which must inevitably retrogress to Fascism.

After you have performed your pantomime and are being exhorted to apply for commissions in Militia, hide your heads for shame! And when on the morrow, you learn of the spears that are to be "beaten" into "ploughshares" turn aside from such hypocrisy, and follow the Light.

For are you not human beings before you are Englishmen? And is not militarism antagonistic to the well-being of mankind? How then can you learn to kill your own, yet have pretensions to sanity?

Clearly, is it not a question of Sanity or Savagery?

This may not be high-class literature, and some of it might conceivably have been put a little more persuasively. But it is a statement of

genuine conviction and a head teacher who aimed at turning out real thinking young men might, on that ground, have taken the propaganda as a matter of course. But Mr. Keeton, being of the true Sergeant-Major breed, summoned before him the boys, both those who were still his pupils and those who had ceased to be, and demanded that they sign the following:—

We, the undersigned, apologize to the headmaster, and to the boys of Reading School for our action in connexion with the Officers' Training Corps, which resulted in a gross breach of discipline.

He also told the Old Boys, that if they refused to sign they would be forbidden entrance to the school, and that their connexion with the Old Boys would be terminated by his order. He explained that the boys had directly attacked a school institution, and that could not be tolerated. Very magnanimously he explained that he "recognized the right of every boy *when he leaves school* to use his privilege as a free Englishman to criticize everything under the sun, but I cannot recognize . . . propaganda *against any school institution* which is recognized by the proper authorities." (Italics mine.)

Mr. Keeton's liberality is charming! It is the true Sergeant-Major ethic in cap and gown—we had almost written, cap and bells. He does not wish to interfere with anyone exercising an Englishman's privilege of criticizing anything under the sun. But it must not be done in his school, neither must it be done in any organization over which he exerts influence. But he permits freedom of criticism in all cases—where he is unable to prevent its exercise. We believe that Hitler and Mussolini and Sir Oswald Mosley are inspired by the same spirit of liberalism, and are equally tolerant of all opinion—wherever they lack the power to prevent it. Mr. Keeton permits the young men under his care to criticize anything, with two qualifications. The first is that he must agree with the criticism that is offered; the second is that those who criticize adversely anything in which he believes must be outside the range of his influence, otherwise they must look out for trouble. Again, we believe that this is the ideal of free criticism as expressed by Mussolini the great castor-oil specialist, and Hitler the world's rubber truncheon champion. That the effects of this form of training under Mr. Keeton is not expected to have the results that have been manifested in Italy and Germany must be due to the fact that human nature in the British Isles is of a different kind to the human nature that exists elsewhere. Thank God we are not, and never have been, as others are.

* * *

A Question of Education

Mr. Keeton is dealing with young men until they are eighteen or nineteen years of age, and, through the Old Boy's Club, those of a later age. When they leave school they may exercise the privilege of a free Englishman, etc., etc. But the ages when these young men are under Mr. Keeton's control cover an important part of the formative period, a time when young people form habits that will determine their future. During this period Mr. Keeton says they must accept every institution that exists in the school, not merely those institutions that are essential to the school, but others that exist as non-necessary adjuncts. So long as they exist, that is so long as Mr. Keeton thinks it necessary, he insists in the true Sergeant-Major spirit, they must not be criticized. If boys think any of these organizations are inadvisable or bad, they must keep their opinions to themselves and act as though they are in full accord with them. As is common to the Sergeant-Major type, he does not violently object to hypocrisy amongst his boys—in fact he is doing his best to encourage it—what he aims at is conformity,

and universal conformity in any direction can only be achieved by either mental stultification or widespread hypocrisy. If Mr. Keeton is not acquainted with this elementary psychological fact he is quite unfit to have the care of children and young people.

How does Mr. Keeton imagine that his pupils will ever develop the privilege of a free Englishman when he escapes school control, if he is never permitted to exercise that privilege until he is about twenty years of age, and is removed beyond the control of the Sergeant-Major? If his boys are brought up to believe that anything that is established must not be criticized, how when they get out into the larger, social and political world are they going to develop the habit of criticism? It is, as even Mr. Keeton should be able to realize, not reasonable to expect that young men who have passed twenty years of age can develop a healthy and intelligent critical sense if before they are twenty they are never allowed to exercise their own reason, and even punished if they indulge in so wicked a habit? If they are taught slavishly to accept everything that is established, for no better reason than that it is established, in what way can they be expected to exercise the privilege of a free-born Englishman and criticize intelligently anything to which they object? Mr. Keeton's tuition may develop "the old school tie" mentality, or the kind that bleats "My country right or wrong," but will stoutly insist that *my* country never can be wrong, or the sort that goes into ecstasies when a princess gets a new hat, or a king says a sensible thing, or does a decent action, but it can never develop a really useful kind of citizen, proud of whatever good the country holds, and holding as a blot whatever in it is mean or contemptible. Mr. Keeton, in other words, can be trusted to develop by his method the mob-mind in its most unpleasant and most dangerous form.

Now I have not argued whether an O.T.C. attached to a school is a good or a bad thing; although as we agreed that any kind of military drill in schools in Germany inevitably develop militarism, I have never been able to see how what is wholly bad on one side of the Rhine becomes wholly good on the other side, even though the Prince of Wales calls one a crank for so believing. I have been writing under the impression that the chief work of a schoolmaster, with an intelligent conception of his major function, is to develop in his pupils independence of character and the capacity for forming sound judgments. I admit that this is not in accord with the ethics of the parade ground, and is quite out of line with the outlook of the Sergeant-Major. But I am concerned only with the development of the youth of the nation, and I am bound to say, that if I had any real regard for the character of a son of mine I should not care to entrust him to the charge of Mr. Keeton. A man who can first forbid young men to criticize any institution in his school, merely because it is recognized by the authorities, and if they do so can proceed to further humiliate the offenders by demanding a public apology because they have dared to exercise "the privilege of every free-born Englishman," may provide excellent material for the parade ground, he may gladden the heart of every Sergeant-Major, but, so far as his influence goes, the type of citizen he will develop will be of no value whatever in the task of developing a better social state.

I may return to this subject—without bothering further about Mr. Keeton—in a week or two, when one or two other matters have been dealt with. At present I want to thank Mr. Keeton for the support he has given to my often-made statement that the "mob mind" is as common with the "upper" as with the "lower" classes, and far more dangerous. In the "lower" orders it is openly and frankly primitive.

In the "upper" orders it is "rationalized" with all sorts of time-honoured phrases and catch-words that are really not more intelligent than the booings of an uneducated crowd, but which are sanctioned and buttressed by traditions that are themselves evidence of the persistence of the savage. Mr. Keeton, I should imagine, is one of those men who moves with the mob, thinks with the mob, and is deadly afraid of doing or saying anything that the mob is not accustomed to. And it follows "as the night the day," that such a man likes his pupils to grow up as reflections—or shall we say, perpetuations—of himself.

CHAPMAN COLEEN.

A Die-Hard Don Quixote

"The Puritans objected to bear-baiting, not because it gave pain to the bear, but because it gave pleasure to the beholders."—*Macaulay*.

"Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?"—*Shakespeare*.

Nor so long ago it seemed that every bishop must have his biography, and there have been episcopal biographies which made even a hardened reader groan aloud. Some leading lights of Nonconformity also "related themselves to paper," and one of the most illuminative and interesting of these volumes was Dr. Robert T. Horton's *Autobiography*. The book is intimate and sincere, two pleasant qualities not often met with in publications such as this. Earnestness is, perhaps, its most outstanding quality, and the wonder is that after so many years tilting at windmills, this Free Church Don Quixote retained his crusading spirit with unabated vigour to the end.

Such a biography is of interest, because Horton was one of the last of the "hot gospellers." He, however, "wore his rue with a difference." There were more affinities in his make-up to Newman Hall than to Spurgeon and Billy Sunday. Indeed, Spurgeon himself, not without reason, regarded Horton as "one of the down-grade heretics." The life-like portrait Horton painted of himself emphasizes very clearly the outstanding differences between himself and the Boanerges of the South London Tabernacle, and the pious playboy of the Western World. Indeed, Dr. Horton had a passion for "crying for the moon," and set himself seriously to the solving of some of the social questions of his day. In the process he was not mealy-mouthed, and he offended susceptibilities wholesale. The most interesting qualities of Horton's *Autobiography* are the pious prejudices of the author, and the searchlight thrown on the religious life of his generation, which was so different from our own.

Reared in a rigid Nonconformist home, Horton was eyed with some suspicion in his schooldays. At Shrewsbury School he was appointed crier, which compelled the holder to end announcements with the pious adjuration, "God save the Queen, and down with the Radicals." He only escaped this political ordeal by his removal to New College, Oxford. Young Horton rowed in the Oxford Eight five years consecutively, and, years later, hung the oar in his study, as a memento of his sporting days, and used a section of the vessel as a cupboard to hold some of his books.

Horton was fortunate in his friendships, and he watched the celebrities he met with a critical eye, and jotted down his impressions with determination. He tells an amusing tale of Professor Bywater, who was always talking of Plato and Platonism. "When I was a child I was christened and also vaccinated; neither of them took." The talented and unfortunate

Oscar Wilde was also a student, and sat for his examination with Horton, who said:—

I see him now, with his flabby face and ruffled hair, striding up to the desk for fresh paper after the first hour; then handing in his book half an hour before time was up. He was a genius, and for him to pose was second nature. Of course, he was in the first class; he reached by sheer ability a position which I had gained only by the concentrated and interested labour of two years.

Indeed, the recollections of his Oxford days have more than passing interest. "Milner," he wrote, referring to the Union debates, "was the speaker at that time who made the greatest mark in later life. He had a foreign accent, and never struck us as quite English, but his intellectual mastery was the prophecy of his famous career." Young Horton noticed many other things, and has a caustic commentary on the intelligence of the aristocracy:—

My Union experiences were not without their value in opening my eyes to the nature of English public life. When I was President my predecessor and successor were Lymington (now the Earl of Portsmouth) and Brodrick (now Lord Middleton). Thrown a good deal in their company, I found out the slender equipment with which the governing classes, by the weight of their traditions, could be carried to the highest places.

Horton's choice of a career throws a fierce searchlight on the social conditions of Victorian England. He decided to adopt the ministry, as his father and grandfather had done before him. "I knew that in Dissent," he wrote, "it is absolutely impossible to obtain a distinction which gives you any acknowledged place in the national life." This was a hard saying in a country pretending to real civilization, for Horton belonged to the Congregationalist Body, one of the oldest, wealthiest, and most reputable of the Free Churches of England. Always a "wholehogger," he announced his intention of discarding the title of "Reverend," and refusing to adopt clerical dress. "I shall wear," he declared, with a plentiful lack of humour, "no clothes to distinguish me from my fellow-countrymen." This was too much for the sobriety of the undergraduates of Oxford University. The young "Barbarians" made rare fun of this declaration, and caricatured Horton soaring to heaven, and tearing off his clothes.

There are far more serious things in this book than these trifles. Horton's first speech at the Oxford Union was in defence of the rights of Nonconformists to bury their own dead with their own rites. A Free Church minister had lost his wife, and when he brought her coffin to the churchyard he found that the place allotted to her was a rubbish-heap. It was happenings such as this which finally determined Horton to enter the Congregational ministry instead of that of the Government Religion. Had it not been for these purely religious antagonisms, he might have entered the Church of England, and to quote his own caustic words, "even have risen to be a canon." And, as such big guns of the Established Church go, he would have been as good as the next.

Horton's fierce indignation at this Church's conduct towards Nonconformists was only natural; but it must be remembered that this Church's attitude towards the working class was equally objectionable. What sixteen centuries of the rule of the Episcopal "Fathers-in-God" had done for the common people has been told by Joseph Arch, the first agricultural labourer who became a Member of Parliament. In most moving language he described the conduct of Churchpeople towards the poorest of their brethren:—

First, up walked the squire to the communion rails; the farmers went up next; then up went the

tradesmen, the shopkeepers, the wheelwright and blacksmith, and then, the very last of all, went the poor agricultural labourers. They walked up by themselves; nobody else went with them; it was as if they were unclean. At the sight the iron entered into my heart and remained fast embedded there. I said to myself, "If that's what goes on, never for me."

And this happened but two generations ago. Horton himself, Free Churchman that he was, did not escape the clerical virus. The Torquemada strain in him showed itself in his abortive attempts to impose his kill-joy Puritanism on his fellow-countrymen. Once he determined to preach in active support of a crusade against music-halls. "Then it occurred to me," he said, very naively, "that I had never been to such a place." So he went, and found the performance decorous and commonplace. "It was deplorable," in Horton's view, "that human beings should find pleasure in things so banal, stupid, and insipid." But pious folk, in those days, did actually find pleasure in "penny readings," and nigger-minstrel shows, which were all equally open to the same objections; and the converted and the unconverted were all in the same boat. Horton, apparently, overlooked the resemblance, and, to his credit, toned down his sermon.

Robert Horton's personality could neither have grown nor thriven outside the British Isles. It is one of the quaintest of blends of humanity, for it includes a good deal of Nosey Parker, a touch of Pecksniff, and a very large amount of Sunday-school teacher. In the wicked old days of absolute monarchy it was a law with all citizens who valued their peace of mind that "the King could do no wrong." This impudent adage Horton applied to himself. He denounced, whole-heartedly, all who dared to utter a word that might not profit the young boys and girls of that Hampstead Tabernacle he himself adorned. Horton failed in many of his crusades, as he was bound to do. It was too late to try and emulate the part of Mrs. Partington, the courageous farmer's wife, who sought to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean with a household mop.

MIMNERMUS.

Some Elements of Paganism in Christianity

I.

THERE is a passage in the works of St. Augustine which is often quoted, and which can, in a way, be used as a text for this series of articles: "The same thing which is now called the Christian Religion existed among the ancients. They have begun to call Christian the true religion which existed before." It certainly was obvious to the famous Christian Father, sprung from the ranks of Pagans, that many rites, ceremonies, and beliefs in his religion, were suspiciously like many in the pagan religions with which he was surrounded, and which he deemed it his duty to combat. And in no other way could he account for these similarities than by declaring that the one true religion had existed before; that it was actually no new thing. It was not, however, the business of the Catholic Church to stress the point. Rather did she insist that Jesus Christ had come not only with a new but a final Revelation from God—that is, from himself; and that henceforth no other would ever be needed.

But man is an ungrateful and an incorrigible animal. His insatiable curiosity leads him to enquire, to investigate, to test, and to experiment; and the dictum of the Church was not always—for the

good of humanity—respected. Hence his researches into the "mysteries" of religion, even the Christian religion; hence his growing belief that, after all, Christianity is just one of thousands of religions following more or less similar symbolisms and similar "fundamentals."

A large number of books have been written as the result of these scholarly investigations. They are packed with curious details of the extraordinary similarities existing between the Old and New Testament myths and those of ancient heathen religions. Certainly no one who studies these works can doubt for a moment that they all contain the same underlying myths, and that Christianity is no more divine than Hinduism—or just as divine. I propose to touch upon some of the more important points of contact—aware, of course, that it has been done before in these columns. But if the reader would like more detailed information with a list of many authorities, I strongly recommend *Bible Myths*, by T. W. Doane, as the handiest compendium I know. This book has the advantage also of being still in print.

The average Christian, in keeping Sunday as his "day of rest," is generally quite sure he is following a Divine command, and quite surprised when told that Sunday is nowhere the *Sabbath* in the Bible. If he knows a little more than the average Christian, he will immediately retail some of the reasons he is doped with as to why he gave up God's distinct commandment about resting on the seventh day and clinging to the first instead. The discussion has certain humorous features, and the curious reader should—if he can—get hold of one of the bigger works on the Sabbath question written by the Seventh Day Adventists where he will find overwhelming testimony as to the sacredness of the seventh day, that is, Saturday, and the almost criminal substitution by the Church of God's Divine Command in favour of the first day. But the Seventh Day Adventist, as a rule, seems quite unaware that the *seventh* day was kept by almost all the nations of antiquity. It was the day devoted to *Saturn*, just as Monday was devoted to the Moon and Sunday to the Sun. Of course, no one knows which day really was Saturday to begin with. But some so-called *seventh* day was the day chosen as a sabbath, and it was enough for the priests to say a certain day was the Sabbath for everybody to agree. Seven, in occultism and religious mysteries and numerology, is a "magic" number, though no one knows exactly why it should be. Perhaps it is because of the phases of the moon; perhaps because of the period of gestation ($7 \times 40 = 280$); perhaps because it cannot be divided like 28 or 14. The seventh day is therefore, naturally the "sacred" day—why, then, did Christians exchange it for the first? We know that in the early Christian Church there was a constant quarrel between the rival factions, the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians. By abrogating most of the Divine Laws delivered to the Jews, more Gentiles could be roped into the new faith; and the question of the Sabbath remained more or less in abeyance until Constantine, who was a sun-worshipper, publicly ordered the day kept specially for service to the sun, Sun-day, to be the Christian sabbath. A full account of this is given in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*. It used to be a Pagan festival, and is now a Christian day of misery wherever true Christianity prevails. And so obsessed are many Christians by the day that they even call the Jewish Sabbath day, the Jews' *Sunday*!

Take Christmas Day next. No educated Christian for a moment now maintains Jesus was born on December 25 of any year. No one knows when he was born, of course. But this particular day is quite hopeless. It would be useless to quote the large

"Letters to the Lord"

(A REVIEW)

THOSE who have written recently to Mr. Chapman Cohen, and are impatiently awaiting replies, will be pleased to learn that he has a really good excuse for his apparent neglect. For many weeks now he has been in correspondence with the Lord, and this has necessarily taken precedence over terrestrial affairs. The correspondence is at last published in book form and is thus available to the public. It is a somewhat unusual correspondence; for the reason that it is entirely one-sided.

For this Mr. Cohen cannot be held responsible, since in an early letter he threw out an unmistakable invitation to reply, though he was not very hopeful that it would be accepted; indeed, he expressed himself doubtful that his letters would even reach their destination. It is to be hoped that they did not, for if they did there was a clear obligation to answer them. There is nothing in them deserving of a snub. In my view their tone is on the whole more friendly than in the letters to the Country Vicar. Sometimes there is a suggestion of intimacy that might be resented coming from an avowed Atheist; but it is after all excusable that any man should unconsciously drift into a heart to heart talk with the Almighty. There is so much of heart to heart life to talk about. Nowhere does Mr. Cohen show a hostile spirit. On the contrary, his approach is sympathetic. True, it is candid; but then Mr. Cohen shows early his impatience with the idle flatterers that surround the Heavenly throne, and his candour is clearly prompted by no more than a simple desire to acquaint the Lord with the true situation. After reading the letters, one may well imagine that the Lord's silence is due to His being nonplussed by what Mr. Cohen reveals. It is quite apparent, as Mr. Cohen shows, that Heaven, as a department, has been seriously letting things drift; and God's ministers, as the ministers round a throne too frequently do, have been hiding the truth from Him, and in the end from themselves. It has been an ostrich policy all along the line, and now they are paying the penalty for having lived in a fool's paradise. God has been permitting the management of the world to pass more and more out of the hands of Himself and His ministers into those of his people, until the people have gradually learned to get on without Him. His is the unenviable position of an effete monarch whose policy of *laissez faire* has concealed from him the fact that authority and power were slipping from his grasp, and who has only himself to blame for the débâcle that surely follows. Mr. Cohen's attitude is wholly sympathetic, and he even goes so far as to suggest a policy of action through which the Lord might regain some of His lost prestige. But up to the time of going to print, nothing seems to have been done about it.

As with every correspondence, the *Letters to the Lord* have a twofold interest. There is what one might call the intrinsic interest, that which attaches to the subject matter contained in the correspondence, and a certain extraneous interest, arising out of things we ourselves discern about the correspondents. On this side one thing is clear, namely, that the dignity of the Heavenly Throne suffers in the course of a personal address. We have seen this happen before among the black peoples. God is acceptable as a person only so long as we abstain from treating Him as such. Indeed, this principle seems to extend over the whole of religion. The essential ideas of religion are capable of surviving only while we pretend they are not what they are, and we remain able to pray to God by taking good care never to converse with Him. A university professor can listen with bowed head while

number of eminent Christian authorities who sadly admit, as did the Rev. Dr. Giles, that "we have no clue either to the day or the time of the year, or even the year itself, in which Christ was born." Why was the day fixed as December 25? Well, it was, as Wheeler pointed out, a Pagan festival pure and simple. It had been a Pagan festival for centuries before the Christian era. There is no doubt it was near this date that Horus, the son of Isis, was born. So was the Moon (when the Moon was a masculine deity and not a feminine one). The festival of Bacchus was certainly celebrated at the end of December; so was the feast of Saturn. It was on or near this day that the continental Saxons offered a boar's head to the Sun (curious that in this case the Sun was feminine); and, of course, it was the day known as the winter solstice, and was thus a Pagan festival apart also from particular gods and goddesses.

Buddha was born about the same day; so was Mithra. Osiris, who seems to have been the son as well as the husband of Isis, was born on Christmas Day. Adonis was another God born on December 25, so was Freyer, son of Odin and Frigga. The Druids with their mistletoe kept the day with great solemnity; and even in ancient Mexico there are similar records regarding the day. In fact, it seems to have been a very great day for Paganism; and therefore one can understand quite well why it was finally absorbed by Christianity. A suffering saviour-God, born of a virgin, simply had to follow the prevailing religions; and December 25, a great Pagan festival, remained a festival for Christians by the very simple expedient of claiming it also as the birthday of Jesus. Possibly it will always be kept as a festival—at least, I hope so. Why not? The gods die, but the people live. Let them be merry.

Then look at *incense*. Nearly all pagan temples burned something on their altars. The real reason may have been due to the foul smell of continued animal sacrifices, the stench of manure, rotten carcasses, and so on—or even because of the primitive sanitary arrangements. But certainly incense is quite Pagan and borrowed by Christians and still employed by them. So is the use of holy water. There might have been good hygienic reasons for being washed or sprinkled with water, as people living in the East where water is not always plentiful, and where opportunity for washing oneself in the modern way simply did not exist, must have been pretty dirty before going in to worship. But it is now a thoroughly Christianized rite—or at least a Roman Catholic one. But it comes from Paganism undoubtedly. Then the burning of lamps and candles is surely thoroughly Pagan. Egyptian temples had "a famous yearly festival, called, from the principal ceremony of it, The Lighting Up of Candles." (Conyers Middleton). And actually ancient Christian writers wrote against the practice as heathenish.

Egyptian priests also used to shave their heads. The Emperor Commodus did so when he carried the God Anubis in procession. And it is common knowledge that all Roman Catholics have followed the Egyptians in this practice. Egypt, indeed, was a sort of store-house of religious rites and ceremonies, carefully copied by Christians.

H. CUTNER.

Liberty, equality, and fraternity are no longer the things they were in the days of the late lamented guillotine. This is what politicians will not understand, and therefore I hate them. What they want is special revolutions, revolutions in externals, in the political sphere. But this is mere trifling. What is really wanted is a revolution of the spirit of man.—Ibsen.

the Dean of St. Paul's addresses the Deity, but even the meanest intelligence would receive a rude shock on hearing an American negro having a confidential chat with the Almighty in the cotton fields. There is something about Mr. Cohen's correspondence that brings this contradiction still more clearly before us, for his mode of address has all the intimacy of the negro's, but none of its simplicity. Mr. Cohen is infinitely less formal with God than he was with Professor Eddington, but he raises some of the issues which were discussed with the Professor. But on the whole, he directs himself rather to the issues of everyday life than to the technicalities of science and philosophy, with the result that the letters are especially acceptable to the "plain man." If I may say so, there is almost a hint in the letters, not explicitly, but rather through the atmosphere of what is written, that the Lord is not particularly a student of either science or philosophy; and one cannot blame Mr. Cohen for this assumption, since the only text book we have from the Divine Hand is singularly lacking in any reference to these subjects. Nor shall we regard it as a defect that the letters confine themselves for the most part to mundane issues, for this serves to reaffirm the essential connexion of religion with everyday life. And that is something that requires emphasis to-day more than ever. The modern religious apologist attempts to throw dust in our eyes by pretending that religion is now a most recondite matter. He would have us believe that in order to appreciate religious controversy we shall almost require to familiarize ourselves with Higher Mathematics. Certainly the recent works of Sir James Jeans suggest that God's universe calls for the same type of understanding as Professor Einstein's. It is well, therefore, that Mr. Chapman Cohen should remind the Deity of his former relationships with mankind, in the same way in which we remind a Member of Parliament of his early promises to his constituents when his absorption into higher strata has temporarily blunted his memory.

Where Mr. Cohen does enter the region of philosophy there is a simplicity of treatment that defies misunderstanding. I feel that readers who have missed important points in his previous writings will assuredly appreciate them in the *Letters*. The ground covered is of necessity not wholly new, but it is covered in rather a novel way. The *Letters* are brief, but very much to the point, and their very pithiness is what makes them so clear. The author has taken, if anything, more trouble with the Lord than with his own reading public, for he has spared no effort to make sure that what he has to say is put beyond all ambiguity. Discussions are carried on in such a way that they can be continued in the humblest home. Very many of the letters require no greater qualification in order to debate them than practical observation and simple common sense. In fact so pronounced a feature is this running through the whole correspondence, that we might almost class *Letters to the Lord* as dealing specially with the common sense aspect of religious controversy. We all know that common sense is much derided to-day by professional philosophers, because, we are told, it is inadequate for the discussion of ultimates. But in the noise and confusion of this war on common sense we are apt to forget that what these professional philosophers are really referring to is not common sense at all, but immediate perception. Common sense, as such, is nothing more than sound judgment. But even if we stretch a point and allow that common sense refers to judgment based on the immediate perceptions of ordinary life, we must again pull ourselves together and remember that ordinary life is not a phantasy, and cannot be displaced from its position of practical importance by even the most grandiose meta-

physics. If there is one point that emerges with greater clearness than any other in the course of Mr. Cohen's letters, it is that the Lord must either shoulder the responsibility for practical life or abdicate. For too long has a fashionable deity sheltered behind the ramparts of metaphysics and evaded prosecution in the Common Law Courts of a plain man's judgment. The plain man will enjoy perusing these *Letters*. They say so much that he has been thinking, yet could not say. They call for an answer. If God cannot find time to supply it, one of his ministers ought to undertake the task. But this is one of the occasions, I suspect, when the subordinate will leave the responsibility to the higher authority.

MEDICUS.

The Origin of Sin

LITTLE is heard of Satan nowadays. His unholy name is not mentioned so emphatically as formerly, and even the pious seem doubtful if he now exists.

You may imagine that at last the Devil's Death-knell has been sounded, the final offensive has been fought, and the Heavenly hosts have wiped Hell and its legions off the cosmic map. Certainly that is the glorious termination one would hope for to the age-long conflict between Paradise and the powers of darkness, but the real explanation is merely prosaic.

Ungrateful as it may seem to one who has served the Faith of our Fathers with untiring devotion to his prescribed duties, there is a movement afoot to set his works at naught, and to place the credit or discredit in another quarter.

Some will say that that is as it should be, and anyhow nobody believes in him in these anthropologically enlightened days. But let us be fair, even unto Satan.

According to the fourth Lateran Council of the Roman Catholic Church, it is laid down that the Devil and other demons are angelic creatures created by God in a state of innocence, and that they became evil by their own act. Also, man sinned by suggestion of the Devil and the wicked shall suffer perpetual punishment with him in the life to come.

There is nothing plainer than that. Satan is the monopoly dealer in Sin, and there is no other agent. Man sinned because of Satan. That is an article of faith coming from the earliest known Christian formulations, but whilst Roman Catholics retain it unquestioningly, other Christians are sadly divided over its tenability. The result is that theologians are finding it a hard job to account for evil in humanity.

The Bishop of Birmingham quickly disposes of the most popular argument in Scientific Theory and Religion. "So long as belief in Eve's wrongdoing in the Garden of Eden lasted, a theory of the inheritance of man's guilt was put forward as a satisfactory explanation. That theory must now be consigned to oblivion, inasmuch as the story on which it rests is obviously folklore." Obviously!

Christians may be all one in Christ, but they are certainly not so in Satan, for the Archbishop of York differs again from Rome and Birmingham in his "Nature, Man and God."

Shelve the responsibility for human evil on to Satan if you will; personally I believe he exists, and that a large share of that responsibility belongs to him and to subordinate evil spirits. (Italics ours). The Archbishop clearly wants to retain Satan, for without him the fall story goes to the dogs and without a previous fall of man there would seem to be no need for a vicarious redemption by the death of Jesus.

Unfortunately the fall theory received a rude shock by the advent of the doctrine of evolution, and has long ago become discredited together with the whole Adam and Eve myth as narrated in the Bible.

The clerical reaction to this has been mainly of two kinds. One party hold the belief as essential to Christian ethics. Since they accept evolution, which makes the Bible account untrue, they postulate a premundane fall, a

fall anterior to the coming of man on earth. Another section frankly abandons the fall theory as untenable. How then does this latter group account for evil? Bishop Barnes answers that question in the work mentioned above. "In the end all attempts to take from God the responsibility for the nature of His creatures must fail."

The Archbishop of York grudgingly admits the same conclusion in a rather Macdonaldite phrase. "Human Sin was not a necessary episode in the divine plan, but was so closely implicated in the divine plan that it must be held to fall within the divine purpose."

It appears then, that whichever way you look at it, evil in the world is due to the self-limitation of God, and can only be referred to His inscrutable ways.

Most unsatisfactory, of course, but the fault lies only in giving a theological explanation to a psychological problem.

Since Darwin and his colleagues brought evolution within our ken the ethical question has been inverted. The real question is not the origin of Sin, but the emergence of Conscience.

What we want to know is not how man became sinful, but how, having evolved from more lowly beginnings, he succeeded in becoming moral. "The revolt of the angels," and "The fall of man," have nothing to do with the question, and the intelligentsia of the modernist vanguard know it. Yet while their cunning brains are keenly formulating diplomatic relations with science, what are they to do about the creeds and thirty-nine articles?

For calculated effrontery the following can scarcely be beaten. "We must allow a great historic institution, like the Church, time to make (these) needful adjustments. If we are evolutionists and not revolutionists, it is the duty of the officials of an institution to carry on during the period of adjustment." (*The Church's Creeds and Modern Man*, by H. D. A. Major, D.D.).

Machiavellism can go no further than that. The progress of science and the rising status of human decency are shaming Christianity into slow suicide.

The modernist vogue is Christianity's last ditch. The modernist clergy are ready to surrender every historically orthodox doctrine which reasoned argument can destroy, while formally giving lip service to the same incredible creeds.

They are at variance over Satan and the fall story, and can only tell us that in the last analysis the fault of man's sinfulness belongs to God!

Psychologists will pass by this explanation with a smile. Not only has the problem a different answer to that attempted in Christianity's death struggle, but it must first be re-stated in intelligible terms.

E. V. BIRKBY.

Acid Drops

Some of the members of the Government, particularly those who have secured jobs, and hope to retain them, are repudiating with indignation the suggestion that political capital was made out of the King's Jubilee? They ask, "In what way would anyone make capital out of the Jubilee?" Oh, the simplicity of it all! One wonders what these protestors think the many months of extensive and intensive advertising of the Jubilee were intended for? For months, every day and in every possible way people were informed, on the air and in the press, of the impressive greatness of the coming Jubilee, the enormous crowds that would be gathered together, the importance of this to the whole Empire, and the lesson it would give of British superiority over the rest of the world. The spontaneous desire of every public body and every publicist to join in these celebrations was widely advertised, and every public body or every public individual who did not make these protestations was carefully ignored. And when the Jubilee arrived the results of the advertising were reaped. Crowds went to see the crowds, none thinking that each one helped to make the crowd. The Government needed a general election, it also needed a burst of primitive feeling on the part of the general

public if its war-preparations—decided on long before the Jubilee—were to be publicly announced so soon as the Jubilee was over.

The unreasoning feeling of the mob—educated and uneducated—was counted on with such confidence that it was even said that the security of the Empire actually hinged upon the person of George the Fifth, or if not upon him, then upon a King. Not, be it remembered upon British institutions, upon British democracy, upon our sanity, the capacity for self-government, upon the value of our methods of conducting our political life. All these might be questioned, but at least they made some sort of appeal to the intelligence of men and women. The population of the British Empire, have, apparently, not sufficient common sense, not enough intelligence, to keep together because of their own personal strength and devotion to a common law or to a common principle; it is upon devotion to a person, and a person who according to the constitution must not and dare not interfere to any open and serious extent with the Government of the Empire. I do not know of anything more remarkable than this depreciation of British intelligence and of British self-governing institutions than to say, as was openly said when the Jubilee advertising was in full swing—that it was only the person of the King that held the Empire together.

Actually this kind of thing brings us back to the most primitive type of intelligence and of social life. It belongs to that period of human culture when the safety of society, the growth of the crops, the daily rising and setting of the sun, depends upon the life and health of the King. Readers of Fraser's *Golden Bough* will find hundreds of illustrations of this kind of thing; it persisted in English history in the supposed power of the King to cure disease by a touch, it persists in the sacredness of the King's person, in societies less developed than our own, and in our own in the fascination to the crowd in the movement of children of the Royal Family, of the wonder when a King or Queen is found doing the most ordinary things or making the most commonplace observations. It was upon this primitive religious feeling that the Jubilee was built, it was upon this that the Government built, knowing that in this burst of primitive emotion anything that was proposed in the name of the King, or with the sanction of the King would go without much question. We have often pointed out the danger to civilization that lies in so much savagery existing with only the thinnest of thin veneers of civilization above it. We had one breaking through of the savage in Europe in 1914. The first clear indications of the coming of that outbreak was at the Jubilees of Victoria, very mildly advertised and tame affairs by the side of the Jubilee of 1935. We can only hope and strive to prevent a similar uprising of the savage in the near future.

We hope sincerely that the public will not allow their interest in such trifling things as the resolve of Japan to annex Northern China, Italy to seize Abyssinia, the South African Republic to annex Bechuanaland, and the question of disarmament to distract attention from things that really matter. Luckily the *News-Chronicle*, ever alive to important matters, gives prominence to the fact that the Prince of Wales has, instead of brushing his hair flat over the top of his head now brushes it backward on the right-hand side. It publishes two portraits of the Prince, one showing the hair in the old and one in the new style. It is such things as these that should bring home to Britons the value of a free and unfettered press.

Mr. Chesterton spoke on "Freedom" over the wireless, the other day. It need hardly be said that the wonderful freedom we used to have has now been almost lost, and all because we threw overboard Roman Catholicism at the Reformation for a despicable Protestantism. Mr. Chesterton pool-pooled liberty of "opinion." It didn't amount to anything at all so long as men had lost the liberty for everything else which, of course, he always had under the wise, beneficent, and

prosperous rule of the Church. The only way to get our freedom back was to go bodily over to Rome. Believe everything you are told, blindly follow your priest without question, and grovel on your knees before parcels of old bones, and everything in the present wicked world will be put right. Mr. Chesterton did not put it quite like that, but he said that "liberty is most nearly destroyed in non-Catholic countries like America, Prussia, and England." The *Church Times* says this is "untrue"—a polite way of calling Mr. Chesterton a liar. What is he going to do about it?

His friend, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, has now fallen foul of Sir Walter Scott. That great writer has committed the unpardonable sin of saying things about the Roman Church in the *Talisman*, which Mr. Belloc does not like or thinks are wrong, thus leading young, innocent and pliable minds to form views which must be severely nipped in the bud. The worst of it is that the *Talisman* is a very popular book among young people, and once they get these wrong impressions of God's Own Church, it is very hard to eradicate them. Even Mr. Belloc finds it hard. He considers it was almost a crime for Scott to show the Grand Master of the Templars as a villain, and the Archduke of Austria as repulsive, considering that both were Roman Catholic Christians; while, at the same time, representing Saladin as a chivalrous gentleman, when he was a mere savage Mohammedan. Even if these things were true—Mr. Belloc does not, of course, think they are—it should not be shown. In other words, Scott ought not to have written what he thought right; he should have been censored by the Church—or Mr. Belloc. It is good to think the *Talisman* will survive his attack. It may even outlive Mr. Belloc.

Even Archbishops have got to do something for their money, so it is not surprising that they "called" for special prayer at Whitsuntide for "Governments and people." As the Dean of Chichester rightly remarks, "prayer to be effective, must be sustained," and we certainly advise a few thousand Asiatic Praying Wheels be imported with willing pious helpers in relays to keep the wheels ever giving its holy message to the Almighty. The Dean thinks, however, that a regular place should be found for private prayer; and those who wish to influence God in their favour this way can do so by obtaining "a little prayer-card, which the Christian Organizations Committee of the League of Nations Union has prepared, and which may help some in continuing in prayer." We hope out of our forty millions of people 29,467,383 at least will respond, and never lose an opportunity of privately praying the pious prayer on the card. But if this fails to do the trick—whatever that is—will it prove that either God is helpless before prayer or the prayer itself is all wrong?

When all is said or done, we think the Church of England has a perfect right to insist on its dogmas being held sacred by those who profess the faith. If the Convocation of Canterbury—following the supposed teachings of Jesus—has come to the conclusion that it would be a grievous wrong in the eyes of the Lord to remarry an innocent, divorced person, that person has two courses open to him. One is to throw overboard the Church—and Jesus—and get married in a Registry Office; the other is to submit and be miserable ever afterwards. The Archbishop of Canterbury *did* point out that "civil marriages were always available," and that "in a civil marriage there was no question of the legitimacy of the children." And what can be clearer than this hint? The more civil marriages, the less the influence of the Church; and that surely is something to work for. If only more and more people married outside the Church, there may come the time when the Church, in fact, will not be needed at all—except to a mere handful of the faithful.

Here is a chance for our religious bookmakers. On Sunday, June 30, Pontifical High Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Shine at the Grandstand on the racecourse in Beverley. We hope those who attend will refrain from

shouting the odds against Jesus being actually present. May we suggest that our religious boxers would jump with joy if Mass was celebrated now and then in a boxing ring, and that pious Greyhound racing fans would welcome Mass also on their racing grounds? How about having Pontifical High Mass on a Test Match cricket ground just before the match? We throw out these hints in passing, as Mass on a racecourse affords welcome possibilities for increasing religious devotion.

In the *Methodist Recorder*, the Rev. A. E. Whitham completely confirms those Freethinkers who insist that supernaturalism is the one and only basis of Christianity. "Without it," says Mr. Whitham, "I might as well turn to a tap-room for fellowship." This is only another way of saying that the interests of Christians are necessarily related to the supernatural and not at all to human needs unless by any chance the latter are included in the former. Where religion enjoins anti-human laws, customs and morals, God comes first—and "God" means whatever the Ministers of God decide is God's will.

The new President of the Welsh Assembly, Rev. R. Jones-Williams appears to be a very commonplace back-number. In his inaugural address he referred to "the Darwinian theory of evolution, which at length resulted in the Great War." Mr. Jones-Williams may forget that a compatriot-minister, the Rev. Griffith-Jones declared "It is *our duty first and foremost* to break in pieces like a potter's vessel the powers of the military caste in Europe, whose centre is Berlin" (See *Arms and the Clergy*). Only a fool could imagine that belief in the scientific truth called evolution creates in men's minds a desire to revert to the primitive instincts from which we have evolved.

The Rev. Jones-Williams, of course, prefers the Old Testament immorality to the new morality of which he says rather incoherently "the new morality underlies (sic) the sacredness of marriage and home, and is a return to the herd life." He then proceeds to confuse Determinism with Nationalism, and calls these two fundamentally different things "a first cause of militarism." This slanderer of principles he does not take the trouble to understand must feel quite at home as President of the Welsh Methodists.

Edinburgh has recently been the scene of some delightful religious bigotry. Anti-Catholics gathered together in great style to boo Catholic clergy, and protest generally against any civic honour being given to Mr. Lyons, the Catholic Prime Minister of Australia. Pandemonium broke out in the Usher Hall, cries of "No Popery" were shouted by anti-Catholics, and twenty men and women were ejected before order was restored. Scores of police were on extra duty, but they did not prevent, for some time, the disorder and shouting which were headed by Councillor John Cornack, who was one of those ejected. Outside he was "chaired," and inside Mr. Lyons was cheered when he thanked the Corporation and City for his wonderful reception. Altogether it was another of those beautiful examples of how Christians love one another.

Professor Hauer, at a mass meeting, the other night, at Frankfurt, declared that "Germanism and Christianity are irreconcilable." He regretted even that Christ "represented too much that was foreign to be the centre of German religion." On the other hand, General Ludendorff—who, while he was leading the German Army in the War, certainly called himself a Christian—condemned Prof. Hauer as "not being a genuine heathen." Dr. Rosenberg has just written a new diatribe against all forms of Christianity—which he stigmatizes as being very Jewish—but particularly against Roman Catholicism; and all these attacks are bringing Christians of all denominations together in defence of their faith. As the German leaders want a new "religion," all we can say is that there seems, in the ultimate, very little difference between one form and another. The true ideal is the abolition of religion as being hopelessly futile; and that is the work of Freethought.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2472.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- B. A. MILLICHAMP.—Thanks for pointing out a very obvious error. Will see it is corrected.
- J. BARTON.—Chesterton's talk on Freedom was, like so much of his verbal output, pompous clowning. The talk of Freedom coming out of Catholicism is a safe thing to say where no talking back is possible. So is his quite deliberately dishonest statement that the Pope has protested against the tyranny of the Totalitarian State. He has—in Germany and Russia, where the Catholic Church has fared badly. But has he, or has Mr. Chesterton, protested against it in Italy, where the Church works with the State, and where women are brutally imprisoned because their men-folk will not return to be executed and imprisoned, and where all the essential evils of Germany exists, with just a less degree of bestiality and brutality? Mr. Chesterton conveniently admits that one of the instruments of liberty for which the Catholic Church was wholly responsible was the Inquisition.
- R. BELL.—Men are "elevated" to the House of Lords for various reasons, because they have contributed to party funds, or because the Government wishes to get rid of them in the Commons, to strengthen the hands of the existing Government in the Upper Chamber, or as reward for personal merit. The latter cause is responsible for the minority. Many of the historic nobility owe their titles to a complaisant female ancestress where the King was concerned, or to other equally lofty considerations.
- J. HANNAH.—Many thanks for your efforts to gain new readers, paper being sent.
- FOR Circulating and Advertising the *Freethinker*.—A. Hanson, 58.
- P. GOLDMAN.—Thanks for new subscriber and keen interest.
- 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 1357.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, R. H. Rosell, giving as long notice as possible.
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.
- Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.
- The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.
- All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

The *Evening Standard* has been publishing some sketches of the life of the late Mr. Justice Avory. Mainly these sketches consist of descriptions of the cases in which Avory was engaged, and to be quite frank, the criminal appears to have been often far more interesting than either the Counsel or the Judge. But the first of the sketches contains an account of the famous *Freethinker* trial in 1883, in which Avory played a very small part. The description of the case is quite well done, but there

are some aspects of it that call for comment, and which only a Freethinker can make. Mr. Cohen will write on the subject in the next issue of this paper.

The *Referee* awards its weekly prize for the best review of the week to a review of Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy*. The reviewer believes that time will "prove this authority of the Church's tireless stand against pacificism to have only an antiquarian value." The writer evidently believes that the clergy will have learned their lesson, and will act differently during the next war from what they did during the last. We doubt it. The clergy will act in the next war as they acted in the last, and Christian teachings will once more serve to rationalize man's savage instinct and prove that in dropping bombs on the enemy we are carrying on God's work. We again say that in our judgment, whether the clergy learn to behave better or not, *Arms and the Clergy*, with its documented account of what the clergy did and said during the war, is a book that no Freethinker should be without; and if Christians can be induced to send for a copy, so much the better.

The Birmingham Branch is arranging a Saturday afternoon ramble for June 29, to which all Freethinkers in the area are invited. Details are as follows: meet 2 p.m., corner of Hill Street and Navigation Street. Tram to Rubery Terminus. Walk through fields to Lickey End, stopping for tea mid-way. From Lickey End return to town by bus. Total cost, including tea, 2s. 4d. Mr. C. H. Smith will accompany the party and explain the geology of the district. We are pleased to note the growth of rambles and outings among N.S.S. Branches, they are a valuable social asset to the movement.

Mr. G. Whitehead will continue his open-air meetings in Birkenhead to the end of this week. Mr. Whitehead reports very good meetings at Liverpool, and makes special mention of the help given by the local N.S.S. Branch. The platform, chairmen, helpers, and support of members were always present, and as is usual, efficiency helped in the desired direction. On July 7, Mr. Whitehead will be in Stockport.

On Sunday, July 21, the West Ham and West London Branches are combining forces for an outing to Southend-on-Sea. The party will contain a number of speakers, and if any Southend saints would co-operate, a public meeting could be held as part of the day's programme. A platform and pitch need be all required from the local Freethinkers, with their support, of course. Will those in Southend, willing to co-operate, please communicate with the Secretary of the West London Branch N.S.S., Mr. C. Tuson, 20 Flanders Mansions, Bedford Park, London, W.4, as soon as possible.

There appears to have been an error in the report of the N.S.S. Conference which appeared in our last issue. The vote in favour of the newly-worded Principles and Objects was said to be in the proportion of four to one. A delegate reminds us that the proportion was slightly under three to one.

A RABBINICAL IDEA OF HELL

The punishment of hell is not continuous. Through God's pity the condemned have rest at prayer times, on the Sabbath and the new moon. One hour and a half is allowed them three times a day, for the morning, afternoon, and evening prayers, making four hours and a half every day or twenty-seven hours in six days. On the Sabbath day, they rest the whole day of twenty-four hours. They thus have fifty-one hours of repose in the week. The fire will then smoulder and the prisoned souls keep holiday. On Friday, however, they suffer double torture, to compensate for its remission on Saturday. No Jew, except the perfectly bad, will be tortured beyond twelve months. Thereafter, they are entirely consumed and cease to exist.

The Population Problem in Pagan Rome

THE decline and subsequent fall of the Roman Empire proved of disastrous consequence to civilization. The causes of this collapse have been keenly controverted, but Gibbon's conclusion that it constituted the triumph of barbarism and religion remains essentially sound. The sapping of the virility of the native Latin communities through the extensive infusion of barbarian blood, and the lessening, and ultimate disappearance of civic virtue; the victory of an Oriental creed, with all that cult's unceasing discords and attendant sacrifice of life and treasure; each of these evils determined the downfall of Imperial Pagan Rome.

With the departure of the Republic and the appearance of the Empire under Augustus and his worthy successors, the various peoples in different stages of culture, who were incorporated within the Pagan State, became slowly assimilated to the culture of the supreme Power. But, while the many uncivilized communities were imbibing Latin culture, their rapidly increasing numbers destined them to become the dominant race. Instead of absorbing the alien peoples, the Romans were absorbed by them, with results detrimental to the European race.

The Swedish historian and archaeologist, Professor Martin P. Nilsson, in his important volume, *Imperial Rome*, traces the overthrow of ancient Rome almost exclusively to the widespread infiltration of inferior blood. He asserts that: "Ancient culture is a creation of the Greeks and Romans, and it is a fact of fundamental importance that culture rests on racial character."

Environment, in its immediate sense, is not all. The factor of heredity must also be taken into account. It is to be noted, for instance, that while the Macedonians became a powerful people, the Thracians in very similar surroundings never evolved a State. Wherever the Greeks conveyed their culture, there it flourished, but the native communities residing in Attic settlements showed small signs of advance.

It is true that the vigorous Roman succeeded in diffusing his culture and character throughout the Italian peninsula, diverse in aptitude and civilization as the Celts, the Oscan and Umbrian tribes were. But with the weakening of the free yeoman stock so invaluable to the State, both in war and peace, demoralization set in. A free agricultural class was displaced by an army of slaves fettered to the soil by the great landed proprietors. As Nilsson intimates: "The slave was cheaper than the free labourer; he could not allow himself the luxury of a family and useless mouths to feed. When he died a new one was bought. But along with imperial peace came a scarcity of slaves. The old slaves had died out without leaving offspring; but before that, they, or more correctly the capitalist system, had, at least to a great extent, driven out the free yeoman population."

With the more thoughtful section of the community, birth control is tacitly assumed. Some, however, are suspecting that the present generation betrays signs of mental decline. It is said that the average intelligence is certainly lower than that of the Victorian Age. At that time giants abounded in every department of intellectual life. Moreover, nearly all the more highly gifted of our contemporaries are survivals from that earlier period. It is possible that many who might have maintained the preceding high standard of ability perished, as did Rupert Brooke and others, in the World War. Yet, even a convinced neo-Malthusian must admit that we appear to have been replenishing the earth from inferior stocks to

too great a degree during recent decades, while, of course, other influences have operated in the reduction of the general intelligence. The popular press fosters stupidity and encourages superstition. Many of the films are shockingly bad, and the drama, which formerly played an important part in public instruction has been driven into the background by rival attractions. An excessive addiction to various forms of sport has also contributed to the decline.

In Rome, children in Imperial times became more and more regarded as incumbrances. This was, and is, quite natural in a civilization affording so many means for personal enjoyment. Nilsson very aptly says that, "The lowering of the birth-rate as a result of economic individualism seems to be a phenomenon that accompanies all the higher civilizations. . . . At the zenith of their power and culture ancient nations were attacked by the same phenomenon. . . . In the ancient world the upholders of culture became too few, and they faltered and broke down under their burden."

Augustus was alive to the impending evil, and his laws were designed both to strengthen the marriage bond and encourage procreation. But his early enactments proved so unpopular that they were withdrawn. A decade later matrimony was made obligatory to the patricians. To prevent evasion, preferential treatment was accorded to married men with children in making appointments to public offices, and unmarried people were not permitted to witness the universally popular public games. Marked distinctions were conferred on parents with three or more children. Legacies were declared invalid if bequeathed to the unwedded, and even a childless parent lost half his inheritance. Yet all these devices failed, for the laws were cleverly circumvented. And, as usual, unforeseen evils resulted from these drastic rules. "Incidentally," we read, "they created many opportunities for extortion and chicanery. Tiberius took measures against informers, and Nero reduced their perquisites by half. The Emperors defeated their object by bestowing on individuals as a personal favour the legal rights given by the possession of three children."

Monogamy is the fairest system thus far evolved, as it furnishes a safeguard for the welfare of the offspring of the union. Yet, a rational system of divorce, entirely emancipated from the restrictions imposed by religious and conventional prejudices, is still sadly to seek. Almost invariably, the State regards marriage as the only legitimate means of procreation, despite the greater number of females in the community. In Russia this rule seems to have been relaxed, but of Europe as a whole this cannot be claimed.

As already implied, in the age of Augustus, men with large families were singled out for honour and emolument. It was vainly supposed that a rising birth-rate among the upper classes would be followed by that of the general community. So far, however, as this scheme was adopted, it came too late to restore the strength and vigour of the Roman population.

Alimentary institutions enjoying State patronage and support were established. Patriotic citizens also sent their voluntary contributions. From money invested at interest, corn was given to children and a lump sum provided to enable them to start in life. This was under Augustus, while in the reign of Nerva, it was ordained that the offspring of impercunious parents in Italian cities should become a charge on the benevolent public. Trajan, an illustrious Pagan ruler, developed this scheme and 5,000 of Rome's children were to share in the free distribution of corn. The Emperor also endeavoured to revive Italian husbandry by supplying credit to small cultivators at a nominal rate of interest. Succeeding

rulers, Hadrian, Antoninus and Aurelius continued Trajan's policy, and the wealthy were encouraged by the prospect of popularity to devote their abundance to the extension of alimentary institutions. Vast sums were thus expended, and the younger Pliny was a generous subscriber, and the urgent necessity of a desirable population was an opinion widely entertained.

All these devices ended in failure. Under Commodus, the reputed son of Aurelius, Rome's descent began. The capital invested to promote national recovery fell enormously in value. It was extensively appropriated and squandered by the State until, eventually under the first Christian Cæsar, Constantine, the money, with its dependent institutions, disappeared altogether. But by this time the sterling qualities of the Roman people were of the past, and the foundations of the coming Dark Ages were being well and truly laid.

The increasing diversity of the Empire's population presented a problem so complex, that it baffled the ingenuity of its ablest statesmen. So long as the semi-civilized stocks who were settled within the Roman State submitted to Imperial authority it endured. But the day arrived when the barbarians rose in fierce rebellion, and their outside kindred pressed with greater and greater intensity on the Empire's weakened frontiers, when the crash became inevitable. Moreover, in addition to the Northern invaders, the Western Empire was constantly hybridised and enervated through the settlement within the Roman pale of various Oriental strains. These brought both their vices and their quaint superstitions, one of which became the religion of the State.

Two leading migrations participated in the rearrangement of Rome's population. That from the East was chiefly one of freedmen, slaves, and traders who emigrated from Asia Minor. The other stream flowed from Rome's Northern provinces and from lands adjacent to the Rhine and Danube. This wave furnished tillers of the soil and recruits for military service. But apart from these alien elements, the recognized Roman peoples were very composite in character. Italy itself was the home of a medley of races. In addition to the Romans and their near kinsmen it contained Illyrian stocks, many possessing Greek blood, and the representatives of a race of uncertain origin, with several other strange tribes whose affinities nothing is definitely known. Under the earlier Republic these stocks were partly Romanized, but quite late in Northern Italy, the Gaulish type prevailed. Yet, in isolated regions, even in Imperial times, the Ligurians preserved their independence and their penury both in Southern France and Northern Italy.

The primitive races of Italy seemingly remained for centuries practically undisturbed. There was little friendly intercourse and probably small admixture with neighbouring tribes. But Roman conquest changed all this. The ancient boundaries were removed, and the various communities subjected to a single administration and moulded by the same culture. Roman roads established ample means of communication; commercial and other relations were encouraged, and the diverse peoples became slowly but surely converted into a nation speaking the Latin language and leading lives necessitated by the changed conditions which time and tide had brought into being.

T. F. PALMER.

By religion, I understand a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life.

Sir J. G. Frazer.

Beethoven and the Revolution

(Concluded from page 389)

It is probable that Beethoven followed the "great infidel," Goethe, in professing a sort of vague Pantheism. Professor Dickinson and Mr. Dannreuther are of this opinion. His faith seemed to rest on a Pantheistic abstraction, which he called Love. Reversing the orthodox shibboleth, he decreed: "Love is God." But what must he have thought in the days of his great affliction? It surely must have occurred to him, as it did to Winwood Reade, that if "God is Love" why is there any evil at all?

Pious biographers make considerable traffic with what they are pleased to call "Beethoven's Creed." It was a few lines copied out of Champollion's *Paintings of Egypt*, which he had affixed to his writing-table. Here it is:—

I am that which is. I am all that was, that is, and that shall be. No mortal has lifted my veil. He is solely of himself, and to this Only One all things owe their existence.

Ruskin would probably have included this specimen of "an infinite deal of nothing" among the forms which he termed the "pathetic fallacy." It has raised the ire of Ernest Newman, who says he cannot, with any justice, think very highly of the intelligence of the man who made a fetish of such stuff. Yet I am inclined to think that Dannreuther is more pertinent, as well as more patient, when he suggests that these little commonplaces merely served Beethoven as themes for mystic musings, just as Diabelli's harmless little valse served as a starting-point for his wondrous excursions in thirty-three variations.

Nearly all Beethoven's God "talk" is to be found in his correspondence with the ecclesiastic Archduke Rudolph. Someone has hinted its significance. It is related of Moscheles, who arranged some numbers of *Fidelio* for Beethoven, that he inscribed the score à la Haydn, with the words, "Finis. By God's help." Beethoven did not fail to notice this phylactery, and wrote underneath: "O man, help thyself." That he even enjoyed poking fun at orthodoxy is evident from a communication addressed to Von Haslinger, where the "blessed book" is the theme for merriment. The letter ends thus: "I intend sending something composed on Steiner's name to show that his is no heart of stone (stein). Adieu, my good friend; it is my most heartfelt wish that you may prosper as a publisher; may all credit be given you, and yet may you never require credit. Sing daily the Epistles of St. Paul, and daily visit Father Werner, who can show you in his little book how to go straight to heaven. See how anxious I am about your soul."

Beethoven sought for no consolation in any form of religion. Art was his "great goddess," to whom he made all petitions. By his own confession, it was art that prevented him from laying violent hands on himself. "Art! art alone deterred me." He praised her in times of despair. "In godlike art alone dwells the impulse which gives one strength to sacrifice the best part of my life to the celestial muse." He despised the world that did not feel instinctively that his art was a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy, and "I," he says to Bettina, "am the Dionysos who will press out this glorious wine."

"It is strange," says Sir George Grove, "that the Bible does not appear to have been one of his favourite books." Strange! It reminds me of the remark of "the sage of Chelsea" over a similar observation. "It is the wild cry of amazement," said Carlyle, "on the part of all spoonneys that the Titan was not a spoony too!" Strange! Why, the master mind of

Beethoven was ever with the great Pagans of Antiquity, even to his death-bed. There was no room for "Hebrew Old Clothes."

Schindler assures us that Beethoven's last days were in all respects remarkable, and he looked forward to death with truly Socratic wisdom and peace of mind. His friends suggested that a priest be called. Beethoven consented. But we know that he had little thought for the beautiful land above. He once said to Bettina: "The intellectual realm is the most precious in my eyes, and far above all temporal and spiritual monarchies." Witnesses testify, however, that the ceremony of administering the sacrament was most impressive, and Beethoven expressed his thanks. But an "outburst of Rabelaisian laughter" was to follow; for, no sooner had the "ghostly man" departed, than Beethoven turned to his friends, saying, "*Plaudite, amici, comœdia finita est.*" ("Clap your hands, friends, the play is over").

Beethoven's freedom of speech was extraordinary, and in all his observations, no matter on what subject, radiate the word "Liberty." He was a privileged character in Vienna, and never molested on account of his opinions; although he once narrowly escaped excommunication (he was nominally a Roman Catholic) for saying that Jesus was only a poor human being, and a Jew.²

Just as he rebelled against the conventions and formalities of Court and Church, so he protested against the pedants' laws of form and modulation, which held music in thrall. "Liberty and progress," he would say, "are great essentials in music as in the universe." Wagner called him the "great path-finder," who came to release music from the fetters of fashion. What the Bayreuth master did for Opera, Beethoven did for Sonata and Symphony, Mass and Oratorio.

Now, finally, let us inquire how far Beethoven, as a Freethinker, is concerned in this great emancipation of music. In his only oratorio, *The Mount of Olives*, where the scholarly Mr. W. H. Hadow detects the "un-Christian hand," the composer flings custom to the winds. From the sublime prelude to the magnificent "Alleluia" (which Mr. Hadow considers "purely Pantheistic") the style is secular. Christ is treated without the slightest reticence or restraint; and, contrary to all precedent, is made sing a lengthy *Scena ed Aria*, a florid duet with the Angel, and quite a lively trio with the Angel and St. Peter. The latter, says the orthodox Mr. Rockstro, is not only secular but, in some places, "absolutely sparkling." Here in England this oratorio has been considered "improper" and "extravagant" and an attempt has been made to "palliate the evil" by substituting another libretto—*David in the Wilderness*—fortunately, without much success.

Beethoven also used the ritualistic text of the Latin Mass for two great compositions. But they cannot be counted as Church music, for, besides being thoroughly alien to the ceremonial of the Roman Church, Beethoven had no real liturgic purpose in view. Not that he had no acquaintance with the requirements of the Church: he simply felt that he could not express himself within the limits of the *a cappella* style. In short, a return to the old forms of religious music was as impossible to him as a return to the old religious faith.

His biographer, Nohl, says the *Mass in C* is "not a religious composition," and Sir George Macfarren suggests that it "might scarcely have proceeded from an entirely orthodox thinker." It is in the *Missa Solennelle*, however, that we find the real emancipation

from all ritualistic influences, for in this Beethoven positively ignores the Church. It is one of the greatest contributions to the glorious art. Beethoven considered it his most finished work. "Its astounding grandeur," says Schlüter, "leaves no room for religious feeling." Dannreuther speaks of it as "a veritable hymn to humanity . . . before the glory of which all that pertains to any particular church, to any particular priesthood, vanishes as shadows in the noonday sun." As an example of the unconventional treatment, one may instance the *Angus Dei*, where, right in the sublimity of the *Dona nobis pacem*—the prayer for peace—comes the sound of "thundering drums" and "trumpets' loud alarm." This is no supplication to the "Lamb of God." It is Revolt.

In a recent biography of the master, the author is of opinion that the *Missa Solennelle* has elements that "woefully detract from its value as helpful church-music." "Every Churchman," we are told, "welcomes music that will keep him in his devotion; not art that carries the mind away from the Church into the world." That has been the attitude of the Church from the days when Augustine adjured believers not to turn their hearts to worldly music, down to the recent *Motu Proprio* of Pius X. But it is too late for any protest from Rome, or elsewhere, to influence modern thought. The Church that once did bend music as her handmaid is now impotent. All the greatest minds have turned their faces away from her, and the best music, even the so-called religious music—Bach's *B Minor Mass*, Beethoven's *Missa Solennelle*, Berlioz's *Requiem*, and Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem*, all constitute a phase of art in direct opposition to her interests.

(Reprinted.)

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Sacred Songs

(Concluded from page 381)

David, the sweet singer of Israel, and the lad among the lasses O! is always represented as a lineal ancestor of Jesus Christ, though evidently the latter did not inherit the amorous tendencies of David, and was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. But a hymn apostrophises him in this way:—

Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou David's royal son,
Who in the Lord's name comest,
The King and blessed one.

In some hymns the self-centred individualism of the believer cannot be kept out. Thus the penitent thief:—

"Lord, when thy Kingdom comes remember me!"
Thus spake the dying lips to dying ears. . . .

It has been authoritatively represented that Jesus Christ has been ruling mankind for nearly 2,000 years. If that be so, surely this verse of a hymn is bitingly ironical:—

Thy Kingdom come, O God,
Thy rule, O Christ, begin,
Break with thine iron rod
The tyrannies of Sin.

And the reference to his iron "rod" is rather letting the cat out of the bag. For we have been nurtured in the teaching that God, who is Love, is to use—not an iron rod, but to draw mankind to him, with "the cords of love and the bands of a man!" It is a hint of what is to come at the Judgment Day perhaps. Those who won't now be drawn by the cords or bands have a rod in pickle awaiting them in the hereafter! What a Faith!

God's jealousy is only equalled by his rage. It is remarkable how many human defects are attributable to the Omnipotent and All Loving. So we have this description of the Second Advent:—

² When a catalogue was made for the sale of his posthumous effects, the police seized five of his books as prohibited publications.

Day of Wrath! O day of mourning,
See fulfilled the Prophets' warning:
Heaven and Earth in ashes burning!
O what fear man's bosom rendeth,
When from Heaven the Judge descendeth,
On whose sentence all dependeth!

God is not one ever to let bygones be bygones, or to "call quits." No, no; on the contrary, he has every offence, major or minor, ledgerized and debited in the account of every human individual!

Lo! the Book exactly worded,
Whercin all hath been recorded,
Thence shall judgment be awarded.

The enslaving, debasing and most damnable doctrine of original sin has been the source of untold human tragedies and miseries. And despite what any reformer, liberal or modernist, may say, the accursed belief that man is essentially vile and depraved in his very heart of hearts forms the main part of the very foundation of the Christian creed. Christians worship a two-faced God. He is at once the tender shepherd and the furious and unsparing avenger:—

When God of old came down from Heaven,
In power and wrath he came:
Before his feet the clouds were riven,
Half darkness and half flame.

Sacred versifiers must have horrible imaginations! What pictures in hymns are conveyed to us of the raging, tearing Divine avenger! Are they so drawn to reduce the convert to a condition of sufficient abjectness to prepare him for the ministrations of the Holy Ghost—the "Comforter"? Knowing the partnership of which the Holy Ghost is a member, it makes any one of independent thought very chary of accepting his doubtful attentions. He is an artful and wily fellow, is the Holy Ghost—in this respect not without resemblance to King David, in his relations with desirable women. His job is to promise comfort, but really to entrap and seduce. And the descriptions we get of God's fury certainly suggest that, at the second coming, it is going to do more damage and destruction than the biggest fleet of military aircraft could do! If we are to have a God, for heavens' sake let him be divested of human failings, and let him be made constructive and not destructive!

The record the Christian God is—"Broken Promises all the way." The gospel hymn says, "Come unto me, ye weary, wanderers and fainting." Well; many thousands came, and how many were relieved of their weariness, how many found a home, how many were strengthened? It is "all my eye and Betty Martin!" Converts are wanted by the Churches, not for *their* benefit; but for the continuance and sustenance of the black-coated gentry, whose assurance and dictatorial impudence are notorious, because they regard themselves as God-appointed and as responsible to God only. But signs are not wanting to show that many people are finding the clergy out for what they actually are—cumberers and parasites and "batteners on honest people's corned beef barrels." Though priest and parson map out your life for you, they do as they choose with their own—and work, or don't work, as they like. They are, of course, usually so overworked from October to April, that they need from April to October to holiday abroad. What a game it is! And what mugs the mass of the people are! The Supernatural Joss is put up by the priests and parsons, just as the idols and oracles of old were put up; and the believers chant before it:—

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold:
Take my intellect and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose.

(The italics are ours). But the priests and parsons take the "dough"!

The gospel can never be denuded of militaristic emblems. So they sing:—

The Son of God goes forth to War,
A Kingly crown to gain:
His blood-red banner streams afar;
Who follows in his train?
Who best can drink his cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain:
Who patient bears his Cross below,
He follows in his train.

And, of course, we have the good old, rollicking old songs:—

Stand up! Stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the Cross.

and:—

Onward! Christian Soldiers,
Marching as to War.

Yet, by way of counter balance, we have:—

Peace, Perfect Peace!

Truly the Gospel can be made all things unto all men! But it comes from the same source as terrorism.

Here is a scene of final Heavenly Glory, which might make an attractive Hollywood Picture:—

Ten thousand times, ten thousand,
In sparkling raiment bright,
The armies of the ransomed saints
Throng up the steps of light:
'Tis finished, all is finished,
Their fight with death and sin;
Fling open wide the Golden Gates,
And let the Victors in.

As the Honourable Mr. Crushton of Bath, in *Pickwick*, would have said: "Glorious, glorious!" The "golden" touch is essential and always effective.

There is nothing more misleading or contemptible than the Christians' attitude to Death as disclosed in the Hymn Books. Mixed metaphors are used about Death: here it is said to have a sting, as a snake—there it is called a "dark wave." It is neither to anybody but believers.

IGNOTUS.

Sport and the Clergy

THE steady decline in church-going, and the present lack of interest in religion, particularly on the part of young people, have compelled the clergy more and more to use methods other than purely religious ones in order to maintain their influence.

The field of sporting activity is an especially fruitful one for priestly exploitation. It is well-known that village cricket has long been regarded as one of the vicar's rightful interests, but the modern tendency goes much farther than patronage of that pastime. More stress is laid nowadays upon the value of games and athletics in theological training colleges, many of which can field powerful teams; indeed, it is hardly too much to say that ability in sport is one of the most valuable assets a young cleric can have. One can visualize the time when candidates for ordination will have to satisfy the examiners as to their proficiency at Rugby football and their merits as forcing batsmen, as well as their scholastic attainments.

The churches' bid for the support of the sporting classes—or "fraternity," as perhaps they prefer to be known—has taken the form, in many cases, of organizing special services for sportsmen.

Some of the methods to which religious organizations have resorted in their efforts to attract an indifferent public would have scandalized the church-goers of thirty years ago.

Professional players took part in a "football service" held in a provincial city recently, and the church was bestrewn with footballs and football jerseys. Religionists are aware of the high esteem in which professional athletes are held in this country, and when such shows as that just mentioned are staged, strong efforts are

always made to induce well-known players to read the lesson, sing a solo, or take part in some other way. If these efforts are successful, the name of the athlete, and that of the club for which he plays, are printed on the bills advertising the service, and the result, more often than not, is an increase in the size of the congregation.

By such methods our churches are keeping abreast of the times, though they have not yet gone so far as have those of the United States, in which saxophone solos and speciality dances have been known to brighten the services. A picture of this kind of thing is to be found in Sinclair Lewis's fine novel, *Elmer Gantry*, which does not seem to have received the attention it deserves from Freethinkers.

An interesting consequence of worship by gatherings of sportsmen has been yet another estimate of the character of Jesus, who is now presented to us as "the greatest of all sportsmen." True, it has not yet been claimed that he actually played games while on earth, but we gather that he heartily approves of bodily exercise. He seems to have moved with the times in this respect as in so many others.

Clerical influence over that august body, the Football Association, whether direct or indirect, is strong. It is not mere chance which causes hymns to be sung when 100,000 people are gathered to watch a Cup Final. There will never be any Sunday play so long as the present control of the winter game continues. So intolerant is the Association on the question of Sunday observance, that participation in matches on that day renders a footballer liable to life suspension from the game. Professional players have the right to refuse to take part in games on Christmas Day and Good Friday, on religious grounds, but it is interesting to note that this right is scarcely ever exercised.

The autocratic control which the governing body of football exercises is astonishing. There is no appeal against its decisions, and the evidence on which young offenders against the code of the game are "convicted" is often of the flimsiest. The writer, for his sins, has had to attend a good many meetings of football committees, and he has often marvelled at the seriousness with which these "legislators" of sport take themselves. From the solemnity of the discussions, and the dignified deportment of the delegates, one might almost suppose that a diocesan conference was in progress, rather than a meeting of people who organize play.

It might be thought that cricket, with its snobbish distinction between amateurs and professionals, and its favour with the public schools, would be largely under clerical control, but actually this is not so. As a matter of fact, there has been an appreciable increase in the amount of Sunday cricket in recent years. Freethinkers will notice that in football, the more highly-organized game, with its host of officials, the clergy have been able to impose the seventh-day taboo on the nation. In cricket, on the other hand, they are powerless, as there is no national body to exercise control, and therefore no medium through which bigotry can make itself effective.

Indoor games are perhaps more subject to clerical interference than any other form of recreation. The reason is that most parish churches nowadays have been compelled to form institutes, in order to keep the interest of young men, and consequently parsons are to be found on the committees of many of the institute associations which exist throughout the country. It is scarcely necessary to add that the prospect of billiards and snooker being played on Sundays under the auspices of these bodies is remote indeed.

Playing cards are still banned by some clerics, though most are not opposed to card games. Some of the more "sporting" parsons, in fact, are regular players in the church institute whist team.

The great increase in the popularity of outdoor games in recent years, enables one to predict with some confidence that ministers of religion in future will devote serious attention to sport. It may even be that the highest places in the churches will be filled almost entirely by muscular Christians. They will be men like the present Bishop of London, whose prowess at squash rackets is still the envy of many a pale curate.

W. R. TOMLINSON.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

WAR AND ITS CAUSES

SIR,—Your correspondent of June 16, R. B. Kerr, seems to think of war only, scientific facts so easily demonstrated are nothing new. What is needed most, is a different view brought to bear upon those facts. There is too much talk of peace with a war frame of mind. Let the militarist justify war, that is his job. If we want peace let's strive for it, not make excuses for wars that are to end wars.

As for those who strive for peace being mere "demagogues," he would be doing better if he got his mind "Debunked" of war-time phraseology. All that sort of talk reminds me of a play I once saw, "The Englishman's Home," the civilians and soldiers were all running about looking for the "B—y colour-sergeant," they can be seen everywhere.

A. G. HASSELL.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"The Causes of War."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, June 30, Mr. Ebury. 8.0, Highbury Corner, Mr. Tuson. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, July 1, Mr. Ebury. Mornington Crescent, 8.0, Wednesday, July 3, Mr. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 7.0, Sunday, June 30, Mr. P. Goldman. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, July 2, Mrs. E. Grant. Manor Street, Clapham High Street, 8.0, Friday, July 5, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

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. Evans and Tuson. 7.30, Thursdays, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. *Current Freethinker* on sale at the Kiosk.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY ("The Umbrella," Bridgeton Cross) : Debate "Was Jesus the Perfect Saviour?" *Affr.*: Isaac Queens (Secretary Protestant Defence League). *Neg.*: Muriel Whitefield (Glasgow Secular Society). *Freethinker* and other literature on sale.

OUTDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market) : 7.30, Friday, Saturday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, June 28 to July 4. Opposite Park Gates, 7.30, Sunday, June 30. Well Lane, 7.30, Monday, July 1 and Tuesday, July 2. Mr. Whitehead will speak at each meeting.

BLYTH (Market Place) : 3.0, Saturday, June 29, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road, Queen's Park) : 8.0, Friday, June 28, Muriel Whitefield. Grant Street, St. George's Cross, 7.30, Sunday, June 30, Muriel Whitefield. *Freethinker* and other literature on sale at each meeting.

HEFON : 8.0, Tuesday, July 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths) : 8.0, Sunday, June 30, A Lecture. Belfast Road, Old Swan, 8.0, Tuesday, July 2, A Lecture. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, July 4, A Lecture.

MORPETH (Market Place) : 7.0, Saturday June 29, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market) : 8.15, Friday, June 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR BRANCH N.S.S., Debate—"The Message of Christ Can Save Humanity." *Affr.*: Mr. S. Shilling. *Neg.*: Mr. A. Flanders.

STOCKTON : 8.0, Sunday, June 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

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