

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LV.—No. 35

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1935

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions

A New Life of Christ

HUNDREDS of lives of Jesus Christ have been written, from the religious side, and as biographies they have been so much waste paper. Their worthlessness has been asserted by unbelievers and demonstrated by believers; for a later generation has dismissed these last as being of no value. The chief value of the biographies is the light they have cast on the mentality of the writers. The lives of Christ written by hardshell theologians have not often survived their authors. Others, written from a sentimental point of view, or from a dislike to breaking too definitely with tradition, have lived a little longer. To these belong many of the lives of Jesus written during the nineteenth century, setting out a purely imaginary ethical reformer, who incarnated in ancient Jerusalem the moral "yearnings" of a twentieth century socialistic Christian Brotherhood. Some have been of a more literary character. To these belong "Lives" such as Renan's, which are of no lasting critical value, and of which a lady is said to have remarked that it ought to have ended with a marriage. These various "Lives" have all been pseudo-biographies achieving nothing more than a "rationalizing" of the writer's prejudices, his timidity, or his lack of scientific thinking. If any of these writers had found "Jack-and-the-Beanstalk" enshrined in an established religion they would have acted with "Jack" exactly as they acted with regard to Jesus Christ, and as the Swiss have actually done with their legendary national hero, William Tell. A few centuries ago the "Angels of Mons" might easily have held the place now occupied in the minds of many Christians by Jesus Christ. Actually, a gallant attempt to achieve this was made by the Bishop of London, Dr. Horton and others, who are somewhat cruelly called "leaders of Christian thought."

Straining at a Gnat—!

To these many lives of Jesus Christ Mr. Oliver Baldwin has added one more. (*The Coming of Aissa*, Grayson and Grayson, 8s. 6d.). One wonders why? Mr. Baldwin does not write as a Christian, although he does write as one who is in the grip of a superstition as scientifically crude as that of any ordinary evangelist. He says, in an introduction addressed to Mr. W. J. Brown:—

Before I began I read at least forty books on Aissa, but not one of them seemed to me to be either human, logical, or even understandable. So many of the English books on the subject flattered and gushed and patronized, and the others seemed so intent in making Aissa an Anglo-Saxon that I was dismayed. You know the sort of English books that talk of Aissa's life as a child in similar terms to those which a journalist uses in describing the latest invented foibles of some royal offspring, books that talk of him as a "beautiful child," as "just like other boys," or "brave and fearless, always first in manly sports," and you know how impossible that sort of thing is psychologically, if as we think, he was human, or how ludicrous, if, as they believe, he was God. . . . I cannot accept Aissa's divinity, for I know about Constantine's Council of Nicea, and I cannot find in the gospels the slightest *proof* of such divinity.

I do not know what Mr. Baldwin would consider proof of the divinity of Jesus—the statement implies a knowledge of gods and how they behave that is far beyond me. But I do know that if the Jesus of the New Testament ever existed, then he must have given to the people around him, who believed in him, all the proofs that usually were given of divinity or of a messenger of God. The belief in gods who were incarnate in men was common, messengers from God could be found by the hundred, wandering religious miracle-working Fakirs by the thousand, moral discourses—of a kind—were given by all religious teachers, and there is nothing on this head that is not to be found in the Old Bible and among the teachings of the Rabbis. It was also common to cure people of their ailments—another proof of divinity—as common as is to-day an announced cure with bottles of coloured water, bread crumb pills or doses of "faith in Jesus." Mr. Baldwin does not accept the proofs of divinity which those who lived a couple of thousand years ago normally accepted. That is because he lives in 1935 and has been affected by Free-thought teaching. Thanks to this he is sufficiently emancipated to reject the New Testament God, but he remains under the influence of a Christian superstition of a later date, that of the existence of an extraordinary moral teacher in the Judea of 2000 years ago, and he believes it is his duty to save the figure from the wreckage of Christian belief.

What he actually does is to supply the critical reader with a sketch of his own mentality. He aims

at giving us a life in the form of a novel; but he fails in both directions. He does not make his Jesus more convincing by spelling the names of the characters in an unusual way, nor by selecting certain of the miracles and rejecting others, nor by the mere repeating of "chunks" of the New Testament—mainly moral exhortations which are put in the mouth of Jesus Christ, but which, divorced from their superstitious background, have no greater authority than they had or have when said by others. And if Mr. Baldwin is really impressed with the moral value of these teachings, then there seems no justification for attaching them to Jesus. Moral teachings, if sound, are as independent of individuals as scientific laws are of those who first state them. All that Mr. Baldwin accomplishes in this way is to appeal to the very superstition he specifically rejects. The uncritical believer will take his praise of Jesus as fresh testimony to the value of his superstition, the critical unbeliever will pass the book as neither a good novel, nor a genuine study of either an historical or a mythical character.

* * *

How Not to Do It

When Mr. George Moore wrote *The Brook Kerith*, he gave us a sketch from a purely literary point of view. He did not make the fatal mistake of presenting his readers with a picture of Jesus which placed him so far above his times as to have no possible relation to them; for he knew that neither gods nor men come into existence in this way. Every God and every man is related to what has gone before and to what exists around him, and whether his reaction to these factors are in terms of approval or disapproval, the reaction is always there. So Mr. Moore, as a sound artist, created an atmosphere, a social atmosphere out of which the god-man, or man-god, the miracle-working semi-divinity of the New Testament naturally grew. And if one had said to Mr. Moore, "But this man-god never existed," he might reasonably have replied, "Does it matter whether he did or not? I have created a character in accord with the environment of that day, and have suggested the manner in which, given such an environment, the people then living might have believed he existed. My story is the reaction of a given character to a superstition-soaked society." That answer would have been complete. It sums up part of the work of the literary artist.

But Mr. Baldwin is not engaged in creating an imaginary, a literary character—at least, he does not believe he is doing this. He says he is trying to make Jesus speak as he believes Jesus did act and speak; to remind people that Jesus did not speak English, that he was not a modern European. But it is quite as reasonable to believe that Jesus spoke English, or some other modern language, as it is to believe that he actually voiced modern ideas that were altogether out of touch with his training or his surroundings. True, certain ethical maxims were as common two thousand years ago as they are to-day, they are indeed mere voicings of rules of life that are as old as human society. But in the environment in which Jesus moved—if he ever moved anywhere—the background of these maxims was the belief in God or Gods, and that is quite evident in the New Testament itself. The New Testament gives Jesus without an earthly father, but it does supply him with a mother and other relations. Mr. Baldwin gives us a Jesus who has no relations at all. He has no real relation to what has gone; he owes nothing to what is around him; he is not exactly a "sport," he is simply an unaccountable accident. In de-supernaturalizing Jesus Mr. Baldwin makes him impossible.

The Biography of a Myth

Yet a very good biography of Jesus might have been written. Biographies of other myths have been written, and to the psychologist, the sociologist and the scientist they are among the most important of biographies. Setting to work in a scientific way, Mr. Baldwin might have started with the story as it stands in the New Testament. He could have set on one side the discrepancies of the story—much of the interest in dealing with these belongs to the eighteenth century—and have asked how did the belief in this myth come into existence. That would have involved considerable anthropological knowledge, but this has been to-day so well prepared, and in its main lines so completely done, that it can be acquired with the expenditure of a moderate amount of time and trouble. He could have taken the belief in man-gods and have shown that this is a very wide-spread and very primitive belief, and could have shown that men were converted into gods by being ceremoniously killed. He could then have taken the belief in a virgin birth, and with the knowledge in the background that with primitive people all birth is treated as a phenomenon of the incarnation of tribal spirits, have pointed out how very general this belief was also. Along with these two foundational items of the Christian religion, he would have dealt with the belief in god-eating, as illustrated in the Last Supper, the working of miracles by people who were believed to have the co-operation of the tribal gods, the very general belief in the curing of the sick by casting out demons, and so on through the whole range of New Testament stories. On the ethical side, and as one with a professed interest in sociology, his first task would have been to show that the observance of certain rules of conduct are forced on society by the very conditions of existence, but that, in an early stage, they are associated with the activity of gods, as is everything else. But as society develops the nature of these rules are recognized, and in varying degrees the gods are, first of all partly, and then wholly, separated from them. Then, finally bringing together the whole body of evidence, the final step would have shown that in a society soaked with these traditional religious beliefs a character such as the Jesus of the New Testament might very easily have gained credence as an actual existence. Evidence in the modern sense of the word—of divinity, of the power to work miracles, or to cure disease, or to save men's souls from some imagined torment in some equally imaginary future life, was not required. It is not even necessary to-day to support similar claims in thousands of cases.

Nearly fifty years ago Mr. Kenningale Cook wrote an instructive biography of the New Testament Jesus under the title of *The Fathers of Jesus*. Quite properly, Mr. Cook was not concerned with whether the New Testament Jesus ever existed, a question that should be settled for every wholly scientific mind, he was concerned with showing the "spiritual" parents of Jesus; and although the work over-emphasized the more philosophic and ethical sides, it was yet one that moved along the right lines. Mr. Baldwin would have been well advised to have followed the same line as Mr. Cook. But by rejecting the superstitious basis of the belief in the New Testament Jesus, and then presenting us with a personage who gained the reputation of being an incarnate deity by repeating moral and religious commonplaces, with which the people of ancient Judea must have been very, very familiar, he has asked us to accept a miracle as great as any that he rejects.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Ay, sharpest shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
To death Imposture through the armor-joints!

Browning.

Omar and the Olympians

"We are children of splendour and fame,
Of shuddering, also, and tears;
Magnificent out of the dust we came,
And abject from the spheres."—H'm. Watson.

A LONDON evening newspaper has been lamenting that no one reads poetry to-day. Not only are contemporary poets unread, according to this critic, but no one peruses the great poets of the past. In Leeds, it is said the readers at the Public Library neglect all forms of poetry. And the critic sighs for the old days when Stead's *Penny Poets* sold like hot-rolls, and Tennyson's green-covered volumes were to be found in so many sheltered homes, alongside other half-forgotten signs of culture.

If this state of affairs were true, it would not be a wonder that some people should think that Shakespeare's works were written by Francis Bacon, or that Edgar Wallace wrote the *Zend Avesta*. But, like so many hurried pieces of journalism, the whole thing is a gross over-statement, a plausible exaggeration. Mr. Masfield is Poet Laureate, and his books have an extensive circulation. Shakespeare's works are more popular than ever, and Edward Fitzgerald's version of Omar Khayyam is quoted in leading articles in newspapers, and few modern novels are complete without quotations from its haunting quatrains.

Old Omar is not easy reading, like the sugary verse of the late Ella Wheeler Wilcox. But Fitzgerald's version is a masterpiece, and the translator enrolled himself among the major English poets in producing it. If any justification were needed, his version of Omar's wonderful "rose of the hundred-and-one petals" would be sufficient. The perennial charm of that immortal poem is that it voices with no uncertain sound the scepticism at the back of all thoughtful men's minds, and makes "linked sweetness" of it. What a translation of Omar Khayyam was Fitzgerald's, "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," said his friend Tennyson. And hundreds of thousands of readers have endorsed the praise of that:—

"Golden Eastern lay,
Than which I know no version done
In English more divinely well."

In sober truth, Fitzgerald's translation is much finer than the original, as any comparison with half a dozen other versions will abundantly testify. In this the Fitzgerald "Omar" resembles the authorized version of the New Testament, which, as Swinburne eloquently reminds us, is translated from "canine Greek" to "divine English." Why the Christ legend should be embalmed in the Greek language is a disputatious matter better left to theological critics.

In his version of the *Rubaiyat*, Edward Fitzgerald showed himself a consummate literary artist. The original is a collection of five hundred epigrams, and he chose a hundred. He found unpolished stones, but, so great was his skill as a lapidary, that, when they left his hands, they were sparkling diamonds of the utmost brilliancy, shedding radiance from every facet. The magnificent opening is pure, unadulterated Fitzgerald; and again and again throughout the work the master hand and the exquisite literary taste are revealed. In one of the later verses, for example, by the addition of only two little words, Fitzgerald has turned the merest commonplace into the most fearful indictment ever uttered by any man against any deity:—

"Oh Thou, who man of baser earth didst make,
And even with Paradise devise the snake,
For all the sin wherewith the face of man
Is blackened, man's forgiveness give—and take."

In particular, Fitzgerald voices Secularism:—

"Oh, threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!
One thing, at least, is certain—This life flies.
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;
The flower that once has blown for ever dies."

The sense of tears in mortal things breaks out in this poem, just as it does in Catullus, or Keats, or Horace, and it is allied to words that have some of the attributes of music. Indeed, many of the quatrains have been set to music by Liza Lehmann, and concert-lovers have enhanced the reputation of the old Persian's quatrains:—

"Yet ah! that spring should vanish with the rose,
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should close;
The nightingale that in the branches sang,
Ah, whence and whether flown again—who knows?"

Fitzgerald derides prayer as passionately as Swinburne. Listen to his bitter-sweet lines:—

"And that inverted bowl they call the sky,
Whereunder crawling, cooped, we live and die,
Lift not your hands to it for help, for it
As impotently rolls as you and I."

Like Lucretius, the old-world freethinker, Fitzgerald introduces argument into his poetry, and with the same deadly effect. Noting how self-contradictory is the language of the priests, he breaks out:—

"What, out of senseless nothing to provoke
A conscious something to resent the yoke
Of unpermitted pleasure, under pain
Of everlasting penalties if broke!
What? from His helpless creature he repaid
Pure gold for what he lent him, dross alloyed;
Sue for a debt he never did contract,
And cannot answer—oh, the sorry trade!"

The arrow often found its mark. On the publication of a cheap edition of the *Rubaiyat*, the *Daily Mail*, London, broke into hysterics:—

"The appearance in a threepenny edition of Edward Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam* makes one regret the days when mischievous books were publicly burned by the common hangman."

But tirades such as this only serve to turn lovers of poetry to Fitzgerald once more:—

"Ah love, could you and I with Him conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire;
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire?"

Real literature cannot die. We do not know whether the Homeric poems were written by one man, or many men, but they are read to-day by a bigger number than they were three thousand years ago. Dante has retained his literary throne for six centuries. The latest Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon, at which the flags of all the civilized nations of the world were unfurled, was a tribute to the deathlessness of genius. The fame of this greatest of all Englishmen has been steadily growing throughout the world for three centuries. Even in the case of Fitzgerald the rule holds good. The first form of these immortal quatrains was written by an old Persian poet eight centuries ago. To old Omar life was a stern reality, and the "King of Kings" was a live monarch, whose sword was very sharp, and whose very caprices had to be respected. To Omar the

"Shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens, green and old."

had not the charm that we find in them. The poet who rested beneath the citron shadows, saw,

"The costly doors flung open wide,
Gold glittering through the lamplight dim,
And brodered sofas on each side,"

did not enjoy the scene as we may now. Under the witchery of the poet's genius we scent, across many centuries of time and many thousands of miles of space, in our Western lands the aroma from those far-off Eastern gardens. We gaze on the roses, the perfect flame of the tulips, we drink the Persian wine, and wind our fingers in the tresses of the beloved. And our pleasure is more complete, because we are not dogged by "murder, with his silent bloody feet."

Oh, Immortals of literature! The old-world poet sees his vision, and writes his song, and eight centuries after, the tired worker, forgetting for a little space his labours, lives a freer and a better life in the wonderland of the poet's genius. Here are nymphs and roses, grotesque imaginings, human memories, and high thoughts. This is immortality indeed! under the "so potent art" of the poet, the reader dreams the same dream for one little hour—and is refreshed. So true is it, as Watson has told us:—

"Captains and conquerors leave a little dust,
And Kings a dubious legend of their reign;
The swords of Cæsars, they are less than rust;
The poet doth remain."

MIMNERMUS.

Some Elements of Paganism in Christianity

VII.

It is surely one of the ironies of history that the "triumph" of Christianity over Paganism should have so often been described in the pages of celebrated writers. They have drawn for us a terrible picture of ancient civilization with its succession of gods, its slaves and prostitutes, its animal and even human sacrifices, its savage gladiatorial contests, its shameful orgies and bestialities; and it is true that some of the worst features are recorded in the work of some of its own contemporary historians. But "in the fullness of time" came God's Blessed Son, who was God Himself. Rejected and despised by his own people, he was put to death after performing many miracles, and rose again after three days, eventually flying up to heaven so as to be able to sit at God's (that is, his own) right hand and rule the world from that comfortable seat. His Message was the purest love, which, once accepted in its entirety, made one a Christian gentleman. (It used to be a Christian Knight). The "common" people heard the message gladly followed by many patricians or aristocrats; and within two or three centuries, Paganism was almost completely ousted. A new era was ushered in—the Christian era. The world was given another chance, everybody breathed a sigh of relief, and everything that is any good in the world, or those things one believes in most oneself, are entirely due to the fact that we are all living in an age of Christianity.

It is a beautiful and touching story; but it has the awkward merit of being quite untrue. Far from Christianity ousting Paganism, Christianity is Paganism masquerading under another name. It has borrowed almost everything from Paganism; and there is hardly a silly thing in Paganism which it not only heartily supports, but insists on its devotees also supporting and believing.

The cross is Pagan; so is the Virgin Birth and the time of the "birth." "Mother of God," "Saviour of Mankind," and similar Christian phrases, are Pagan. The "crucifixion" is Pagan; the "dove," a synonym for the Holy Ghost, is a Pagan symbol. The

serpent is another Pagan symbol. The "descent into Hell" is Pagan—it is the disappearance of the sun into the "lower regions," or the darkness of winter. The Resurrection is Pagan, and even the mourning for Christ Jesus is merely copied from the mourning for the god Tammuz or Adonis. As the Rev. G. W. Cox has said in his *Aryan Mythology*:—

The wailing of the Hebrew women at the death of Tammuz, the crucifixion and death of Osiris, the adoration of the Babylonian Mylitta, the Lacti ministrations of the Hindu Temples, the cross and crescent of Isis, the rites of the Jewish altar of Baal-Peor, wholly preclude all doubt of the real nature of the great festivals and mysteries of Phœnicians, Jews, Assyrians, Egyptians and Hindus.

The "second coming" is Pagan, the "white horse" upon which the various gods ride is found in many of the solar myths. The twelve apostles who accompanied the God Jesus in his travels are suspiciously like the twelve signs of the Zodiac through which the sun travels during its yearly course in the heavens. As for the "teachings" of Jesus, a score of writers could be cited proving there was nothing new in anything Jesus taught. A good many of his sayings were the common property of Pagan nations for centuries. Others can be traced to Jewish sources. As some writer has wittily put it—those sayings that were true were not new; those that were new were not true.

The Trinity is Pagan. Paganism has any number of analogies like Brahma, Vishnu and Siva—as Moor in his *Hindu Pantheon* has pointed out.

In the city of Rome, famous alike for the great Roman nation of antiquity, and for its Christian associations, will be found some extraordinary conglomerations of Paganism and Christianity, as has been noted by many travellers. Images and altars abound (or used to abound). Christian processions, almost similar to Pagan ones, regularly take place. Dr. Conyers Middleton, writing in the eighteenth century says:—

In one of the processions, made lately to St. Peter's in the time of Lent, I saw that ridiculous penance of the flagellantes, or self-whippers, or who march with whips in their hands, and lash themselves as they go along on the bare back till it is all covered with blood, in the same manner as the fanatical priests of Bellona or the Syrian Goddess, as well as the votaries of Isis, used to slash and cut themselves of old, in order to please the goddess, by the sacrifice of their own blood; which mad piece of discipline we find frequently mentioned, and as oft ridiculed by the ancient writers.

Without the flagellantes, processions can be seen in increasing numbers in this country; and there are interesting records of similar practices to whipping in our own saintly divines. Dr. Pusey used to wear a hair cloth next to his skin—"I have it on again," he wrote to Keble; "by God's mercy I would try to get some sharper sort. . . . I think I should like to be bid to use the Discipline." The "Discipline" seems to have been a maze of wire, the size of the palm of one's hand upon one side of which barbs projected. Dr. Pusey used to advise this to be worn by Anglican Sisters of Mercy as penances "for about a quarter of an hour a day"; and he used to enjoin explicit obedience to "your spiritual father" in this playful religious practice. Other "Disciplines" consisted of being whipped with knotted whip-cord without any clothes intervening.

Seneca describes similar scenes done publicly in Pagan Rome. Livy, the famous Roman historian, says that "holy impostures were always multiplied in proportion to the credulity and disposition of the poor people to swallow them"—this, of course, of the priestly frauds of his own day.

Cicero, in giving an account of the worship of Ceres, "which was celebrated with wonderful devotion," describes in vivid language the way in which many people thought they were helped by the goddess. "Her image was held in such veneration, that people fancied they saw Ceres herself, not made by human hands, but dropped to them from heaven." Dr. Middleton dryly remarks:—

Now if in place of Ceres we should insert Our Lady of Loretto or of Imprunetta or any other miraculous image in Italy, the very same account would suit exactly with the history of the modern saint, as it is told by the present Romans, as it is transmitted to us by the ancients.

He might have added also of "Our Lady" herself, whether as an image in any Catholic Church, or as an apparition at Lourdes, Knock or any of the other miraculous shrines.

Ancient Rome abounded in "speaking images," statues that spoke or shed tears or perspired or even bled; and in this, she is faithfully followed by Christian Rome. There used to be an image of the Virgin which reprimanded Gregory the Great for passing by her too carelessly; there was a crucifix in St. Paul's Church which spoke to St. Bridgith; and just as the image of a Madonna spoke to a sexton, so did the image of Fortune in old Rome do the same.

There was little in the way of deceiving the credulous people of ancient Rome her priests did not know, and the same compliment can be paid to our modern priests—particularly Roman Catholics; and the extraordinary thing is that both sets of impostors get away with it so often. But it would be tedious to give more examples.

Sufficient has, I think, been said now to show the truth of St. Augustine's famous dictum—"The same thing which is now called the Christian Religion existed among the Ancients, They have begun to call the Christian the true religion which existed before." The Christian Churches do not like this quotation, and it will not often be found as a text for the truth of God's special Revelation to man. But the Freethinker must never forget it; for it explains the survival of so much Paganism even in our own day.

Our job is to hasten the downfall of *all* religions; and we shall get on with the good work better if we understand something of their origins. And, though Christians may strenuously deny it, Christianity is simply for the most part, the Paganism they despise.

H. CUTNER.

Changelings

As is well known primitive animism developed into a belief not only in gods, demons, angels, ghosts and other supposititious creatures which are ordinarily called "spirits," but also in a world of fairies, elves, pixies, launes, banshees, nymphs, dryads, jinns, etc. And a world-wide belief arose that the babies of these, or some of them, were surreptitiously brought to houses and changed for human infants. The latter were taken to fairy land in order, it is supposed, to improve the fairy breed, or/and in some way to increase their chances of salvation at the Day of Judgment.

Much care was taken to prevent the substitution. A Bible, Prayer Book, rosary, cross or other holy object was placed in or near the cradle. But baptism was the chief preventative.

When the change had been effected—the changeling being recognized by its ill-looks, deformity or other defect—much trouble ensued. With true

medieval and early modern magico-religious ferocity the luckless child was subjected to flogging and starvation; it was swept or thrown out of the house, placed on a dunghill, or in a ditch or stream, apparently in the hope that the fairies would rescue it from such a position and bring back the human child.

The following is an excerpt from a rhyme spoken or chanted on such occasions:—

"Fairy men and women all
List. It is your baby's call;
On the dunghill top he lies.

You robbed my infant's cradle bed;
Then give me back my only child."

The changeling was also taken to the priest, whose touch was supposed to make it disappear; and, presumably, when the above artifices failed, the child might be seized with red-hot tongs, placed on a grid-iron over a fire, or branded with a red-hot poker.

The contact with iron is probably to be connected with the great antipathy of the fairy world to that substance. Frazer, in the *Golden Bough*, though not mentioning changelings, so far as I can find, writes as follows: "Thus in the Highlands of Scotland the great safeguard against the elfin race is iron, or better yet, steel. Whenever you enter a fairy dwelling you should always remember to stick a piece of steel, such as a knife, a needle or a fish-hook, in the door; for then the elves will not be able to shut the door till you come out again. So too when you have shot a deer and are bringing it home at night, be sure to thrust a knife into the carcase, for that keeps the fairies from laying their weight on it. A knife or a nail in your pocket is quite enough to prevent the fairies from lifting you up at night. Nails in front of a bed ward off elves from women 'in the straw,' and also from their babes; but to make quite sure it is better to put the smooching-iron under the bed, and the reaping-hook in the window." And so on.

The barbaric practices mentioned seem to have followed from the belief that children were especially liable to the attack of mischievous and malicious spirits. The use of fire as a remedy is doubtless to be associated with the belief that the demon who was within a witch was burned when she suffered that penalty; and that of iron comes down from early historic times, following the discovery of the then wonderful substance.

Though older than Christianity, we have to hold that congeries of superstitions responsible for the persistence of such beliefs, as well as of the savagery connected with them. We may reasonably believe that they would have disappeared during a few of the earlier centuries A.D. if they had not been taken over and further developed under the influence of greatly increased superstitious terror—of hell, of the omnipresence, the almost omnipotent and ceaseless activity of the Devil and his myrmidons. Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, writes concerning the Dark and Middle Ages, "The constant exaltation of blind faith, the countless miracles, the childish legends, all produced a condition of besotted ignorance that can scarcely be paralleled except among the most degraded barbarians."

And to this we add the insensate cruelty of the Inquisition, witch drowning and burning, and the like—insensate, because we can hardly suppose that such things were in general perpetrated from a mere desire to inflict pain and death, but must attribute such ferocity to the dementia produced by the domination of superstition and superstitious fear.

J. REEVES.

Things Worth Knowing*

SCIENCE AND SCIENTISTS

SCIENCE has made advances; the scientist is still a primitive man in his psychology.

The intellectual calibre of scientists was put to a test by the European War. The same men who had prated fervently at international congresses about the cosmopolitanism of science turned jingoes with the declaration of war. Ostwald, the great chemist, had been working for years at a universal language and a better understanding of peoples. Now he suddenly announced that Germany, as the supreme organizer, was bound to impose her efficiency on the countries still dawdling along on an individualistic basis. Pre-eminent German scientists renounced honorary degrees and distinctions that had been conferred by English learned societies. Britons and Frenchmen were not slow to reply. The gist of their utterances was that German science had never amounted to much; its reputation was based largely on bluff. Before the war Pierre Duhem, the French historian of physics, had expressed himself none too favourably about great *British* physicists. He regarded their lack of logical precision as a national trait, and contrasted them with French and German thinkers. But in 1915 his views of Teutonic psychology suddenly changed. Now the Germans were merely uninspired plodders working along with the patience and docility of medieval monks. In England Sir William Ramsay and Sir Ray Lankester expressed themselves in much the same spirit. In 1916 a Canadian scientist broke loose in *Nature*, and accused Germany of a conspiracy of silence about the accomplishments of English-speaking savants. The Germans were to be made to confess their indebtedness to Newton, Faraday and Clerk Maxwell. Apparently this wiseacre had never read what Helmholtz and Holtzmann have to say about these men; he did not know that Willard Gibbs, America's outstanding figure in the more abstruse aspects of exact science, was rescued from obscurity by Ostwald; and that almost every chapter in Mach's historical writings glow with admiration for the achievements of great Britons. But by 1916 scientists for the most part no longer cared what they wrote provided they could advertise that they were on the hand-wagon of mob prejudice. This sentiment prevailed after the armistice, and has by no means wholly disappeared. For several years at least scientists of the Allied countries declined to meet Germans socially. Some of them organized and held "international" congresses from which Germans and Austrians were excluded.

This is sad enough. But it is more humiliating to compare recent practice with that of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. About 1748, while Spain and England were at war, Ulloa was returning from an expedition to measure the arc of a meridian. He was captured and sent to England, but British men of learning came to his rescue. He was released and *elected to the Royal Society*. Were the hostilities of the country of a minor character? Well, the Napoleonic wars were not. Having regard to the times they were quite on the same level of magnitude with the late unpleasantness of 1914. Yet while Prussia was crushed and dismembered, Alexander von Humboldt peaceably climbed Vesuvius

with his friend Gay-Lussac and remained one of the eight foreign members of the French Academy. With the consent of the King he made Paris his headquarters and published his principal monographs in French. In 1841 there was talk of war between France and Germany. Humboldt wrote to his old friend Arago, asking whether these political differences would have any effect on their personal relations. The astronomer is insulted by the very suggestion. "I must not," he writes on March 12, 1841. "I will not believe that you have *seriously* asked me whether I should be glad to have you come to Paris. Could you doubt my unchanging affection? Know that I should regard any uncertainty on this point as the most cruel insult." . . . Again in 1806 Humphrey Davy wrote a paper on "Some Chemical Agencies in Electricity." French scientists awarded him a medal for the best experimental work on electricity. He accepted it notwithstanding the life-and-death struggle between England and Napoleon. Said he, some people say I ought not to accept this prize; and there have been foolish paragraphs in the papers to that effect; but if the two countries are at war, the men of science are not. That would indeed be a civil war of the worst description. We should rather through the instrumentality of men of science soften the asperities of national hostility. In the fall of 1813, Davy, accompanied by Faraday, went to Paris and regardless of the war was welcomed by French scientists.

What a contrast in mental maturity between the scientists of 1813 and of 1918! Men of learning had not yet been debauched by Chauvinism. They might be snobs like Davy, they might hob-nob with Kings, like Humboldt, but intellectually they were freemen who guarded the interests of mankind as a whole.

Are We Civilized? by R. H. LOWIE, pp. 287-290.

Acid Drops

We strongly sympathize with the complaint of a correspondent of the *Church Times* against the B.B.C. He laments that the B.B.C. is trying to make people "pray and praise alike, as well as to talk alike." We endorse this complaint, not from the point of view of the average man, but from that of the Recording Angel, or from that of "Our Lord." It must be bad enough for both of the parties named to have to listen, age after age, to petitions and praise, which at the best must be full of "damnable iteration," but there must be at present some chance of a little interest and amusement being derived from noting the slight variations in the form of asking either for lollipops or the knock-out of the other fellow. But if all the praise and all the prayer is to be identical, then heaven will be dull enough for the angels to take trips to hell, as men see in the giddy distractions of Brighton relief from the dull routine of a city office.

Prayers for "our statesmen in the present crisis" will be offered in Westminster every day from one o'clock till one-fifteen until further notice. That will leave the parsons right in any case. If trouble comes it will be because the "Holy Spirit," for whose guidance the prayers are offered, thinks it best to have a war. If it turns out all right that will also be because the Holy Spirit has guided our statesmen on the right road. The game suits the parsons, otherwise one might wonder why the Holy Spirit does not do something for peace without being directly and publicly asked to do so. And why every day from 1 to 1.15? Are these the Holy Ghost's office hours? Or does he, or she, or it only attend to business when he is loudly, publicly, and continuously being told that it is time he did something?

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

Mr. Lansbury also made an appeal at the City Temple for the Churches to unite against war. Mr. Lansbury must be very simple if he does not realize that the churches, as churches, will do as they have always done—preach peace while peace is most popular and war when war is fashionable. That has been the history of the Churches, Established and Nonconformist, and they are not likely to alter in the next war.

Besides Mr. Lansbury might reflect that the world that is drunken with war is a Christian world, a world in which for over fifteen hundred years Christianity has been the strongest single organized social force, and is still strong enough to impose hypocrisy upon a very large section of the people, and to command the sincere belief of millions who are too stupid to disbelieve it. The teacher whom Mr. Lansbury professes to follow asked scornfully whether one could cast out Beelzebub by Beelzebub? Peace, if it is to come, and remain has to rest upon a better foundation than unreasoning religious fervour, which can sow more hatred in a year than any other single force can in a century. Religious fervour is naturally a force which politicians seek to use, because it is strong, when active, and quite unreasoning in its action. But those who take sounder and longer views have as little to do with it as possible. If the world had had less Christianity it might easily have been in a better state.

We suppose most people think they mean something when they start talking, but it is rather hard to imagine what Canon Whitham, of Christ Church, Oxford, means when he says that evolution "cannot explain the laws of nature." Bless the man's stupidity, if evolution be true, then the process known as evolution is the description of the way in which nature works, and if that is the way in which natural process work themselves out, these processes are the laws of nature. But we expect that this is rather too difficult for Canon Whitham to follow, so we must just commend his utterance to the author of the recently issued *History of Human Stupidity* to be placed among his collection of cases.

Father J. B. Jaggard thinks the "Dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary" is "thoroughly reasonable and consistent." Of course he does. Seeing that the Pope has declared it to be so, every Catholic must see the reasonableness of it. But to make it consistent as well, seems rather overdoing it. It commits Father Jaggard to believing that Adam deserved all he got, and man deserved hell and the rest of the Adamic curse because "Adam was not merely a private individual," but was "the genetic principle of the whole human family," so we all get hell to be consistent with the Blessed Virgin Mary's immaculacy. If this "reasoning" seems unreasonable, we must refer our readers to the Pope, who if not immaculate or reasonable is at least infallible.

The Rev. L. B. Cross, M.A., Chaplain of Jesus College, Oxford, suggests as a parallel to the obvious differences (which he does not deny), between the various accounts in the Bible, of what is said to be the same event. He says:—

The account of an important political event given in *The Times* frequently differs fundamentally from that given in the *Daily Herald*. Both are accounts of the same event. . . .

If two accounts "differ fundamentally" they cannot both be true in regard to these "fundamental differences." We are not impressed by the comparison of the two newspapers mentioned. If the Bible is no more true than stories fundamentally contradicting one another, even the reputation of the *Daily Herald* cannot save it. It is a poor testimonial for the Bible.

Mr. G. L. Kieffer, President of the "American Religious Statisticians," has compiled for the U.S.A. *Christian Herald*, a most charming Christian Fairy Tale,

called *Statistics of Churches in the U.S.A.* He shows from "facts" supplied by the churches themselves (from the horse's mouth, so to speak), that there are more Christian members than one would think. The twenty-six principal denominations claim an aggregate membership of 60,004,724. Without adding the numerous odds and ends of what even Christians call the "freak" religions, these twenty-six sects account for half the population of U.S.A., including men, women, children, and imbeciles certified as such. We can only raise our hands in admiration at the romantic imaginations of American Religious Statisticians. These figures read like a Freudian dream of Unfulfilled Wishes.

As a rebuke to other critics Dr. James Moffat quotes approvingly Pascal's "At least let them understand the religion they attack, before they attack it." Quite excellent advice—in form, but not always so in fact. For Pascal, for whom we have always had a very great respect, did not understand the religion he defended, nor are we quite certain that Dr. Moffat does. It is one thing to know what a religion teaches, or what doctrines are taught by a particular church, or to know what "Our Lord" said, and so forth; and it is quite another thing to understand these same doctrines and teachings. The man who talks, for example, about the "sacrament of the last supper," without realizing that there is here a survival of the very primitive—and still existent—practice of god-eating, which is a development of a still more primitive practice of religious cannibalism through which a man partook of the qualities of the human being he ate, is only darkening counsel with much talk. Or the man who discusses such a question of the Virgin Birth of Jesus without realizing that there is here again a survival of the primitive belief that all birth is the product of intercourse between a woman and tribal spirits, a belief that arose in the absence of a knowledge of the part played by the male in procreation, is proving that he does not understand.

There may be historical value in knowing what doctrines a Church holds, there may be much sociological value in knowing what religious doctrines prevailed at this or that period, there may be much psychological value in knowing that certain individuals believe in this or that group of doctrines, but none of these involve an understanding of religion. One might as well claim to understand the reason for the structure of man without any knowledge of his animal evolution. It is, indeed, a very significant thing to observe that although the evolutionary concept has penetrated history, science and sociology, the one thing that it has not apparently touched is religion—among those who believe in it. With those who do not believe in it, the situation is different. This disbelief is really based on an understanding because they relate existing beliefs to the most primitive ones and are able to show that the former is the parent of the latter. To know what religious beliefs are may permit belief in them. Thoroughly to understand how they became is a sure road to their rejection.

An appeal on behalf of "Racial and Religious Freedom" has been issued by "The Christian Protest Movement," and is signed by a number of Archbishops and Bishops. We have, of course, every sympathy with the protest, but the protest contains the statement that this can only be secured by the "application of Christian principles," and would make us open our eyes if we were not so used to such verbiage. The Christian Church was the heir of the Roman civilization, and in that civilization the race question simply did not exist. In that Empire also international freedom was as complete as it has ever been, and while slavery existed, as it did in the Christian world until yesterday, yet a common citizenship existed in the Empire such as has not since been achieved elsewhere. The race question was created in the modern world by those who were firm believers in the Christian Church. Slavery became worse under Christianity than it had ever before been, and intellectual liberty is but a recreated thing of yesterday, and is now

denied most emphatically in countries that are still professedly Christian. One wonders how long this babble of Christian principles will last? The answer is probably, just so long as people allow themselves to be fooled with phrases.

The Christian press seems to be quite bewildered by the Abyssinian-Italian situation. The fact remains that both countries are Christian, and Christian apologists for the one can't find words hard enough to express what they think of the other. The *Catholic Tablet* says that Italy will arouse Christendom "if she smites the table with a mailed fist and roars out her contempt for world opinion," while the *Catholic Times* says "Abyssinia is a foul country, where murder, slave-dealing, and all the treachery and degradation of savagery are still triumphant." And the same paper declares that Abyssinia cannot "protect the Catholic minority from persecution, much less allow freedom of preaching." The truth appears really to be that Christians won't mind Abyssinia being conquered if only their particular brand of Christianity is imposed upon the unlucky natives. The latter's Christianity is obviously not *true* Christianity.

News from the Fascist front—In Germany the Mayor of Magdeburg has forbidden the beating of cattle with sticks when driving them into the slaughter-house. We presume that the gallant Nazis are getting sufficient physical exercise in beating up old men and children. In Italy Mussolini has resolved to free the Abyssinian slaves, even if he has to blow them to pieces with bombs or poison them with gas to do so. In England "Ozzy Mo" is determined to set us all free by doing away with the liberty to question anything the English Fascist does. Mussolini-Hitler-Mosley—Father, Son and Holy Mo!

The "unauthorized" Book of Common Prayer proposed an addition to the Litany asking God to "bless and prosper the Forces of the King by sea, land and air, and to shield them in all dangers and adversities." Fancy asking God to let our aeroplanes drop bombs on helpless cities, and to "shield" the aeroplane from accident while fulfilling its murderous mission. One could understand a prayer that God would assist all defences against all invasions everywhere, but the Bishops must leave the way clear to Bombing under the British Flag, without interference "from above" or below. This prayer has been adopted by many of the clergy although it is still "unauthorized" by Parliament.

Fr. C. C. Martindale, following hot in the footsteps of those Methodist parsons in America who playfully throw snowballs at each other during the service, "got inside a Punch and Judy booth to address people at a fete in aid of a church in Kent." We think it is a pity he did not try to convert Punch, Judy and Toby while he was about it. Perhaps, however, the original Punch was a Catholic. In any case, it is quite a treat to see how the Christian religion, which once was gloomy and depressing, is now becoming funnier and funnier. This should please Mr. Chesterton in particular.

Knock, Co. Mayo, looks like becoming a formidable rival to Lourdes. In its first year, says District Justice Coyne, there has been "a most remarkable continuity of cures." Unfortunately, he added, "the real difficulty in dealing with them has been the absence of a proper Medical Board of Inquiry." Perhaps this is a good thing for Knock as if there had been the Board, there may have been no remarkable "continuity of cures." However, these little things don't worry true believers who are going in crowds to the shrine—including stretchercases. And no doubt the cures will eventually be quite as numerous as those of Lourdes—one in a million or thereabouts.

But Knock is also having its share of apparitions of Our Lady. It was the resident priest's housekeeper, Miss Mary McLoughlin, who saw the first one—on a blank wall of the church at 7. a.m. There were in reality

three figures—perhaps the Holy Trinity—and she did not tell the priest at first but a woman friend. This is conclusive evidence of the apparition. Then a boy, aged fourteen, Patrick Hall, "clearly saw the Blessed Virgin standing like a statue with St. Joseph dressed like a Bishop, on her right, holding a book." The boy and some friends went on their knees in prayer and said "Our Father and Hail, Mary." As it was raining, they then went away. These two magnificent proofs of the Divine connexion between Knock and Heaven are irrefutable; and should prove a source of great joy and wealth to Knock in the future.

One of the really "nasty" methods of Catholic writers on Birth-Control is to pretend that the latter is a form of what is euphemistically called "Onanism." Professor Henry Davis, S.J., in his *Birth-Control* (a book published with the official "Imprimatur" of the Cardinal Archbishop), refers to the sacred story as "an unsavoury episode." It is. But its unsavouriness has nothing whatever to do with Birth-Control except that it gives indecency a chance to quote high Catholic authority for throwing mud at one of the most moral and beneficent contributions which social science has given to humanity in our day.

The Film in the School is the title of a new book edited by Mr. J. A. Lanwerys, who is championing the great educational influence of the cinema for children. Mr. Lanwerys mentions how excellent are films on geography, botany, physics, art, bird life, biology, etc., but—to the horror of a religious writer—he does not deal with religion. "He does not," moans the critic, "appear to consider it is worth a thought." And the critic points out also how little the distributors, Messrs. Pathé, Kodak, and others, bother about religious films, which he considers "highly unsatisfactory." He wants more and more Scripture films, missionary films, Holy Land films, and "romances with a religious teaching, or background." In fact, it looks as if this gentleman would like nothing but religion and religious films all the time.

Of course, he recognizes the immense influence on our civilization the cinema is exerting, and particularly the fact that it is ousting the influence of the Church. The large queues waiting for admission to the local cinema theatre on a Sunday night is in striking contrast with the few stragglers who now-a-days go to the vast majority of churches and chapels. And religious leaders are anxiously enquiring if the people cannot be tempted by a film with "a religious background." It is true, with fake photography, that it would be possible to show Elijah going up to heaven in a fiery chariot, Jonah being swallowed by a whale, or Jesus feeding the multitude with a few fishes or stopping a storm. But we venture to assert that a good gangster film will knock a Bible-miracle film into a cocked-hat in competition for the favours of the public. Claudette Colbert will "put it over" Jesus almost every time even with the kiddies. The exploits of Charlie Chan will always prove more thrilling than the adventures of Paul; and one of Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson's travel pictures will draw its thousands where a Holy Land one will draw its tens. The Church is now quite too late in the matter.

A writer in the *New Statesman*, Mr. Raymond Mortimer, declares that "jazz and Tudor Bungalows, Mr. Coward and Miss Stein, Buchmanism and Books of the Month clubs are the death rattles of all culture." Upon this, the *Church Times* comments, "Nothing, indeed, can save civilization, but the recovery of the Catholic Faith." Well, we are not championing jazz, or even Miss Stein, but to say that the credulous balderdash of true Catholicism is going to save civilization is unmitigated nonsense. Bad as things may be, relatively speaking, in these days, they are infinitely better than the foul epoch known as the Dark Ages—when ignorance, slavery, crudelity, disease, hunger, and war, stalked through Europe. What did the Catholic Faith do for the mass of people then?

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ.

EDITORIAL :

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. J. JENKINSON.—We should be very pleased to adopt your suggestion, but there is the question of the expense, and just at present these are heavy enough. When the paper pays its way we shall be prepared to launch out in new directions.

W. J. MEALOR.—We had seen the article. See "Sugar Plums."

G. H. TAYLOR.—Received with thanks. Shall appear as soon as possible.

C. R. CAMPBELL writes : Thanks for "Views and Opinions" on Snobbery. They help to clarify one's views on an important topic that is too often discussed as a vehicle for cheap wit. Let us have some more on similar lines.

H. MORTON.—You seem to go a long way round to prove the scientific commonplace that every change in social life initiates other changes, and that the new stage in which the change established becomes worn out in time. That has been said thousands of times in these columns. Where you trip is in assuming this "law" makes a *special form* of change essential. It does not. There may be half a dozen different ways in which the new change may be expressed. The form may be *inevitable*, in which case it is definitely scientific; or it may be *contingent*, in which case its actuality will depend upon a number of non-necessary circumstances. In social affairs the form of the change is not so inevitable as you assume.

T. K. SCOTT.—Shall appear at early date.

C. WOODWARD.—There are very few things that one can say that are original in the sense that the same idea has never before been expressed. The most that can be done is to express old ideas so as to fit new conditions. In religion all that could be said wholly new was said long since, and in politics, when one exhausts all the Greeks had to say, there is not left much worth bothering about. But as newcomers on earth are always arriving, there is urgent need to say the same thing at least once, and the thick-headedness of those who are already here necessitates their being said more than once.

MESSRS. R. STRAUGHAN AND H. STEELE.—Lecture Notices not received until Wednesday morning, August 21.

D. W. HOLLAND.—Books despatched as requested. Wheeler's *Paganism in Christian Festivals and Footsteps of the Past*, price 1s. 2d. and 3s. 9d. post free respectively, should meet your requirements.

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.

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary R. H. Roselli, 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.

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Sugar Plums

Our "Views and Opinions" of last week was published on the same day (August 21) as an article by Dean Inge in the *Evening Standard* on the same subject "Snobbery." We venture to suggest a comparison of the two articles. The Dean thinks that snobbery consists in the desire to copy fine manners, but only succeeds in presenting himself to discerning readers, of whom Ben Jonson once said, "ye be mighty few," as a first-class snob himself. Fine manners really have little or nothing to do with education, correctness of speech, social status, or general position. Only a snob could come to the conclusion of Dean Inge.

The first occasion on which we visited the grave of Shelley in Rome, a workman in the cemetery, doing something near the grave, pointed it out to us, and then stood with his back turned while we were examining it. That was fine manners. We saw, the other day, an obviously not over well-off working-man carrying a child, place the child on the ground, while he helped an old woman carry a rather heavy bag to her place in the train by which she was going to travel. I have been in a house where a man of very "correct" manners would punctiliously jump to his feet to open the room-door for a lady, and would pass without any offer of help to a young girl struggling to convey an empty dust-bin out to the back-gate. That was bad manners. But neither case has anything to do with snobbery, as such. We think Dean Inge defines snobbery in this way because he has a rather strong conviction that fine manners belong to old-established families, and to an "aristocratic" class. And that is quite wrong. As we pointed out, the King in a country such as ours, may have very bad manners, but he simply cannot be a snob. But he may be the cause of snobbery in others from the aristocrat downwards.

Apropos. A correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*, who sarcastically signs himself "Proud Father," complains that a ten-year-old boy friend of his in "a public school" cannot spell the simplest words correctly, and encloses a copy of a letter to prove what he says. We can only say that it would not be easy to find a boy of ten in a London elementary school who could not do better. But the boy's father is to blame. With plenty of good schools, elementary and secondary, where the teaching is demonstrably better than that given in a great number of public schools, the father prefers the public school because it looks better, or sounds better. That is real snobbery in action.

We have received information from a friend in—and out—of Germany that letters from the *Freethinker* office are suppressed and, therefore, do not reach their destination. We thank Herr Hitler and Co. for the compliment. It would be a lasting disgrace if they thought well of us.

Clacton magistrates have declined to grant Sunday licences, under the Al Capone Racketeering Act, unless the applicants undertake to eliminate jazz music and "patter." These things are all right from Monday till Saturday, but they must stop on Sunday.

Now there is no pretence that these things are worse on Sunday than on any other day in the week. And no one who does not like them need attend. There is no law compelling attendance, nothing is to be gained—as in Church-going—for no one can work a commercial fraud the easier by advertising himself as a staunch supporter of Church or Chapel. Who ever goes has no other object than that of passing the evening in innocent enjoyment. The only ground on which these magistrates act is that of the narrowest, and the most demoralizing form of religious bigotry. It is a public scandal that such men should be in any office which permits them to control the action of their fellows.

We should like to see these entertainment providers open their places, and fight the matter out in the law courts. There are ways in which this might be done, and general public opinion would be with them. Moreover, those sufficiently interested in a free and civilized Sunday have resources large enough for the purpose.

Making Paradise Attractive

ETERNAL rest is Eternal Rubbish. Who wants to rest for ever? The various Christian advertisements of the glories of Heaven are too vague. They are ignominiously beaten by the artistic holiday posters we see all around us in the grand old summer time. Human beings are changing their ideas of the best conditions under which real happiness can be experienced. The magnificence of Oriental Palaces and decorated Marble Halls soon pall upon the minds of normal sane people. The unworried soul finds heaven—after a day's tramp through fairy woodlands, o'er moor and fell, and by the banks of chattering streams. At the remote rural inn, where after a toothsome tea of ham and eggs, he can stretch his tired limbs, smoke his pipe of peace and quaff at intervals the tankard of old nut brown on the ledge of the porch. Or, during his periods of toil, he finds Heaven on lifting the latch of his humble dwelling and being almost torn to pieces by a band of laughing, yelling touzy-headed youngsters. There is no suggestion of anything boisterous in the Halls of Heaven. The lotos eaters of the Better Land must not have their perennial slumber disturbed. Though we are here and there told that continued praises ascend to the occupants of the thrones of Heaven; and one would assume that such musical performances are not always conducive to uninterrupted rest; it is clear that the Christian conception of Heaven involves no exertion of any kind, physical or mental. But consistency is no part of the Christian programme. Millions of years of inaction and stagnation are to follow, at the most sixty or seventy years' "work" in the Lord's vineyard on Earth. Nothing but the monotonous plash of the crystal river and the dreary hum of the unending praises of the Trinity relieve the atmosphere of Eternal glory. For "there shall be no night there"—no bewitching starred firmament—no entrancing moonlight nights—no twinkling coloured lanterns in dark gardens—no golden sunsets—no impressive dawns. Nothing but the blazing glare from the throne as the white-robed harpists harp and the choristers go on chanting. There is no suggestion of jesting or laughter in Heaven, because Heaven is an eternal Sabbath; and the earthly Sabbath of which it is the perpetuation for ever and ever and ever is but a picture of assemblies of mirthless glooming wooden faces. Oh, to be over there! Well, you're telling me!

And "there shall be no more sea." Oh, you happy surf-riders, swimmers, bathers, divers and paddlers—think of it! No more dawn coming up like thunder out of chimeric east the bay! No more white wings of graceful yachts bending and swaying and bellying in the scented breeze and the salty spume! Nothing but far stretching plains of gold, gold gold; and the central Palace of Heaven with its incrustations of jewels and precious stones! What a glorified pawnshop! Think of it, friends, and ponder and dwell upon it, for this is the eternal home of believers on Earth! Think of your pastors and masters, your ministers and elders and Sunday school teachers standing near the Throne of God—Oh, that great white throne—in their shining white robes with ever-

green palms in their hands. Doesn't the sight—even the contemplation—of such glory thrill you to the heart? It doesn't? Well, you skunks!

No "ship, ahoy!" in Heaven. No Atlantic, no Pacific, no White Sea or Yellow Sea or Black Sea or Red Sea or Blue Sea. No lapping of sparkling wavelets at the sanctified feet of the Elect of God. No larges on the Thames; no jolly watermen; no majestic liners with fussing little tugboats about them; no gallant tramps beating up to port in dirty weather; no more graceful clippers decked like splendid brides; no more happy cruises up lochs or fiords; nothing but the stark hills and dales of Heaven, and no bosun's pipe. Aren't you fascinated with the prospect of this dry land of everlasting day? You aren't? Well, be damned to you!

A Scotswoman who had recently become a widow was induced to attend a Spiritualistic seance, and was put into touch with her departed hubby. "Are ye happy John?" she enquired. "Ay Maggie I'm happy." "Happier than when ye was here?" "Oh ay, Maggie a lot happier." "Oh John, it must be graun' tae be in Heaven!" "Ah, Maggie ma lass, but ah'm no in Heaven."

Climate, of course, may be the most important consideration with some people. Company with others. But few believers would have the presumption to aspire to a Heaven of their own making according to their own taste. You see HE—that is the old fellow up above—doeth all things so well that there is no need for any believer worrying about planning his own heaven. The Eternal Father strong to save whose arm hath bound the restless wave (for all the future) will provide a suitable niche in the night-less sea-less glory land for every confiding and credulous brother and sister who have put their destinies in His Almighty hands. Think, oh stormtossed sailor man, what a time will be yours! No more turning out for your watch on deck in an icy wind; no more swabbing or holy stoning; no more going aloft in a rain-drenched wind; no more cursing officers; no more mooring at longed for quays; no more pubs, no more beer, no more rum! Aren't you drawn to your never ending rest? You aren't? Well, blast you!

The other attractions of eternity for believers consist in the statement that there shall be no more hunger and no more thirst. But are these "attractions?" Kipling makes one of his soldiers sing of "a thirst that you couldn't buy." But Heaven is evidently to be the killer of all desire and all longing. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled." In Heaven once you are filled you stay filled; and all you have to do thereafter is to lie snoring or to "sit pretty"!

Well now, that being so, isn't it time that the Bishop of London or Dick Sheppard, or some of these up-to-date chaps, set about getting up a revised prospectus of the Better Land for the use of Christians everywhere? Of course one realizes the difficulty of suggesting features of Paradise not consonant with the descriptions in Holy Writ or in Dante and Milton. But something will have to be done about it. For, as already said, many people's ideas of the suitable conditions of real happiness have vitally changed.

IGNOTUS.

OUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS

More than a third of all the wealth in the country was in the hands of the clergy, and the bishops and abbots lived in luxury. The poorest people were compelled to make gifts to the Church, otherwise the priest would neither marry them, bury them, nor baptize their children.—(From "A Short History of Scotland," by P. Hume Brown).

Obituary

DEATH OF MRS. BRADLAUGH BONNER

We regret to have to record the death of Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner, the only surviving child of Charles Bradlaugh, at the age of seventy-seven. She had been ill for some months with a very serious disease, but appeared to be on the way, if not to recovery, at least to a return to moderate health. But some three weeks ago her weakness increased, and the end came on August 25.

To the Freethinkers of last generation "Hypatia" was a very familiar figure, and her devotion to her famous father was marked. She acted as his secretary, and must have been a source of comfort as well as of usefulness in years when even so giant a character as Charles Bradlaugh needed all the support that could be given him. After her father's death, she watched over his name and reputation with jealous love, and her letters in the public press whenever his opinions were misrepresented, would make a rather large volume.

During the existence of the Hall of Science she taught the Chemistry classes in that institution, and was also a frequent lecturer on the N.S.S. and other reform platforms. For some years she was compelled to abandon lecturing owing to an affection of the throat, but her pen was busy, and she published, in addition to the life of her father in co-operation with John M. Robertson, a number of books and pamphlets. Her interest in advanced movements remained keen to the end. In the case of the Bradlaugh Centenary Movement, while her health prevented her playing a very active part, she was always at the service of the Committee whenever required.

The cremation took place at Golder's Green on Wednesday, August 28.

Vale!

Into the mortuary flame her body goes—
Hypatia Bradlaugh passes from our sight;
Her vibrant voice no more proclaims the right;
Her discourse draws to its predestined close.
Now, as we lay her in her last repose,
Now, as the curtain falls in death's long night,
Now, when that flame is snuffed, which burned so bright,
What comfort have we 'neath this rain of blows?

Surely, the thought that we are left to do
The task unfinished but so well begun,
The task that presages Illusion's end;
To Truth to dedicate ourselves anew;
To fight for Freethought till our fight be won,
Inspired by Bradlaugh's daughter and our friend.

BAVARD SIMMONS.

The Deistic Movement

(Continued from page 541)

SUMMING up the seventeenth century, and giving the keynote to the following era, appeared the philosopher Locke, who, while adhering to a rationalized Christianity, was looked up to by all the unbelievers of the eighteenth century, and whose influence on Toland, Collins, and Shaftesbury was direct and undoubted. In dispelling the doctrine of innate ideas, Locke swept away the stronghold of mystery and logomachy in which theologians love to hide themselves, and did much to forward that psychology of observed facts which, in the hands of Hartley, Hume, Priestly, Mill, and Bain, has gone hand-in-hand with a scientific rather than a theological interpretation of nature. In seeking to make Christianity reasonable, Locke made it subordinate, and showed himself in

strong opposition to Christian tradition, which looks rather to faith and authority than to carnal reason. In advocating toleration, Locke equally set himself against the great body of Christian tradition.

The Loasted Toleration Act of 1693 only exempted some of the dissenting bodies from subscribing to certain of the Thirty-nine Articles. There for a long time it ended. The Test Act remained unrepealed, and a new Act against blasphemy, which still disgraces the statute-book, was passed in 1698. By this Act—which there is good reason for believing Bishop Burnet had a considerable share in drawing up—to deny any one of the persons in the Trinity to be God, or that the Christian religion is true, or to deny the Old or New Testament to be of divine authority, is a crime punishable with imprisonment for three years. This "ferocious" statute, as it has been described by Lord Coleridge and Justice Stephen, was in part directed against the Unitarians, who, under the patronage of Mr. Thomas Firmin, a wealthy merchant, had put forth many tracts. In 1693 William Freeke was sentenced to pay a fine of five hundred pounds, to find security for good behaviour during three years, and to make a public recantation, for having published *A Brief but Clear Contutation of the Trinity*. In 1695 another Unitarian, John Smith, recanted under threat of prosecution. In 1697 the Dissenters, with Dr. Bates at their head, requested King William in an address presented to him, to shut the press against the Unitarians. Unitarianism, however, spread, and early in the eighteenth century both Whiston and Clarke followed Locke in his Arianism. The former was deprived of his professorship at Cambridge, and expelled the University. Convocation attempted further proceedings against him, but they were abandoned. Whiston, however, seems to have feared a worse fate, since in his *Memoirs*, he speaks of learning the prayer of Polycarp, "if it should be my lot to die a martyr."

In the last decade of the seventeenth century Henry Layton, a barrister, put forward several pamphlets arguing against the immateriality and natural immortality of the soul. This position was taken up by Dr. William Coward, whose *Second Thoughts concerning the Human Soul*, published in 1702 under the pseudonym of Estibus Psychalethes, occasioned some stir. Although the work was dedicated to the clergy, founded on scripture, and only adopted the views now held by Christadelphians and believers in conditional immortality, it was ordered by the House of Commons to be burnt by the common hangman, which order was carried into execution, 1704. This, however, only made the author more notorious, and helped the sale. Coward's view was defended by the learned Dodwell the elder. The House of Commons further proved its orthodoxy by expelling John Asgill, member for the pocket borough of Bramber, in Sussex, for publishing a tract in which he took the words of Jesus, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die," in their literal sense. His work was ordered to be burnt by the common hangman as profane and blasphemous. Asgill and Coward are both classed by Swift and others among the unbelievers of the period.

Convocation attempted proceedings against Toland as well as against Whiston, but the effort broke down. In attempting to silence Hoadly, Convocation was silenced itself. From 1717, when, as Buckle remarks, it was justly considered that the country had no further occasion for its services, till 1850, when a feeble Government thought the Church needed a safety-valve, its croak was heard no more.

In the reign of Queen Anne foreign scepticism began to attract attention. Bayle's great dictionary, the precursor of Diderot's *Encyclopedia*, was trans-

lated into English, and No. 389 of the *Spectator* relates how Bruno's *Spaccio della Bestia Trionfante*, which a few years before had been sold with others by the same author for twenty-five pence, fetched fifty pounds. A translation of this work of Bruno's, of which only fifty copies were printed, appeared in 1713.

Shaftesbury is to be noted for his defence of ridicule as the proper remedy for fanaticism. The French prophets, whose convulsions had been intensified by their cruel persecution in their own country, occasioned so much disturbance that steps were proposed for suppressing them. This occasioned Lord Shaftesbury's *Letter on Enthusiasm*. These fanatics, he argues, glory in persecution—how much better to laugh at them. He even ventures to suggest that the Jews would have done more harm by ridicule than by crucifixion. He was, however, in favour rather of good humour than mockery. "Good humour is not only the best security against enthusiasm, but the best foundation of piety and true religion." "Our Saviour's style is sharp, humorous, and witty in his repartees . . . his miracles carry with them a certain festivity, alacrity, and good humour, so that it is impossible not to be moved in a pleasant manner at their recital"—i.e., as Leland kindly explains, not to laugh at them. "Sacred Scripture has been so miraculously preserved in its successive copies and transcription under the eye (as we must needs suppose) of holy and learned critics." (Mill's *New Testament*, with thirty thousand various readings, first published in 1707, passed through several editions and made some stir.) "David was a hearty espouser of the merry devotion. The high dance performed by him in the procession of the sacred coffer shows he was not ashamed of expressing any ecstasy of playsome humour." "The Christian theology, the birth, procedure, generation, and personal distinctions of the divinity, are mysteries only to be determined by the initiated or ordained to whom the State has assigned the guardianship and promulgation of the divine oracles. It becomes not those who are uninspired from heaven and uncommissioned from earth to search with curiosity into the original of these holy rites and records by law established." It is evident Shaftesbury's profession of "steady orthodoxy, resignation, and entire submission to the truly Christian and Catholic doctrines of our holy Church, as by law established," may have had a political, but certainly had no religious value.

Scepticism was slowly but surely gaining foothold, Swift, the greatest intellect of the time, believed rather in High Churchism than in Christianity. In his *Tale of a Tub* sacred things were most freely handled, and he did not scruple to write a profane poem on the Day of Judgment. Pope, though by profession a Roman Catholic, in his most famous poem, the *Essay on Man*, if not directly inspired by Bolingbroke, the guide, philosopher, and friend to whom it is addressed, considers man without any reference to Christian dogmas. Every line in the poem might, as far as the sentiments are concerned, have been written by any Deist of the period. Even bully Warburton loved a fair fight, and was greatly in advance of his age in the matter of toleration. Of that shapeless mass of erudition and hard-hitting which he called *A Demonstration of the Divine Legation of Moses*, Churchill writes:—

To make himself a man of note
He in defence of Scripture wrote:
So long he wrote and long about it
That e'en believers 'gan to doubt it.

The opponents of the Deists, in striving to reconcile Christianity to reason, virtually hauled down the old

flag and ran up a new one. What had been gained cannot be better stated than in the admission of Butler:—

I express myself with caution lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is, indeed, the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself, or be misunderstood to assert that a supposed revelation cannot be proved false from internal characters. For it might contain clear immoralities or contradictions, and either of them would prove it false." (*Analogy*, part ii., chap. 3).

The old positions were being abandoned, and the tide, while driving the Deists towards anti-supernaturalism, drove even Churchmen further and further from the old citadel of faith towards the very frontiers of Freethought.

Anthony Collins had projected following up his attack on prophecy by an investigation of the Christian miracles. The design was executed by Thomas Woolston, of Sidney College, Cambridge, who had proposed to Collins to make a collection of the ridiculous opinions that have the sanction of the primitive Church as a means of attack, both on that Church and its modern defenders. This proposal is the key to much that seems strange in Woolston's discourses, in which he attacks the Gospels under cover of the Fathers. Born at Northampton in 1669, he was distinguished at college for his study of Origen and the patristic writers whom he followed in placing an allegorical interpretation upon scripture.

His first appearance as an author was in 1705, when he had printed at Cambridge a work on the evidences in which he adopted the allegorical method of interpreting the old Jew-books. This work excited little remark, and he continued at Cambridge until 1720, when he published a Latin treatise, challenging as a forgery the letter said to have been addressed by Pontius Pilate to Tiberius Cæsar. About this time he also wrote an epistle to prove that the Quakers were nearest like the primitive Christians. Shortly after these evidences of heterodoxy he was deprived of his fellowship at Sidney College, Cambridge.

We next find him entering into the controversy which Collins had raised in his discourse on "The Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion." He published *The Moderator between an Infidel and an Apostate* (1721). In this work Woolston maintained, among other matters, that the miracles were incredible. They must be taken as figurative. Saint Augustine had said that, if some of them were not figurative, they were foolish. A prosecution for blasphemy and profaneness was the result. To the honour of Whiston, he used his influence with the Attorney-General to drop the charge.

(Reprinted).

J. M. WHEELER.

LYTTON STRACHEY

Strachey disliked Christianity, obviously. *Ecrasez l'Infame* was his battle-cry as surely as it was Voltaire's. And are not gay, laughter-feathered arrows far more effective than solemn denunciation? It was not for nothing that Strachey had read Pascal. And after all, his bias against Christianity implies its corresponding quality, tolerant humanism. He hated Christianity because in his view it destroyed, or smudged, a great deal that was lovely in humanity, and gave rise to muddled emotions, muddled thinking, and abomination of abominations, hypocrisy and cruel dealing. He had no reverence for Christianity, certainly; but, on the other hand, he very much revered the things he believed it spoilt.

Bonamy Dobrée, in "The Post Victorians."

Is Mexico's Religious Policy Justified?

Radio Address delivered by Mr. Joseph Lewis, President of the Freethinkers of America, over Station WOR, Sunday, July 7, 1935.

I CONSIDER it a great privilege to defend the Mexican people in their present religious controversy with the Catholic Church.

From the facts in my possession, coupled with indisputable records from the pages of history, not only do I justify the Mexican people in curbing the activities of the Church, but I believe that the firm stand they have taken was necessary to their security and peace.

And in debating an important question of this kind, it would be an act of cowardice on my part, if I failed to speak the truth that the facts demand.

Where human liberty and human life are involved, I do not consider any institution too sacred to be exposed, nor do I believe that the ends of justice can be achieved by remaining silent upon a subject, merely because a religious institution is involved.

No wrong can be too old or too venerable to be attacked.

And he who decides a case, though he may decide rightly, if he has not heard both sides of the question, has not done justice.

In my opinion, there is no question of religious liberty involved in this controversy.

If this were a question of religious freedom, I would plead with all the power and strength that I possess, not only for the Catholic Church, but for any Church; and not only for any Church, but for any individual.

I do not believe that religious liberty depends upon arguments.

It is a fundamental human right.

Although I believe that religion has been a retarding influence upon the intellectual and social life of the human race, I would not for a single moment deprive a person of the right to worship, or to hold any religious opinions he desires.

This right, however, belongs equally to the person who does not worship, and who is free from any religious convictions whatsoever.

But religion, to an even greater degree than charity, covers a multitude of sins.

When a religious organization aligns itself with the forces of reaction, it cannot cry "Intolerance" and "Persecution" if it meets the forces of progress.

Catholicism is not the native religion of the Mexican. It is foreign and alien to his nature.

It was not until the year 1521, that an emissary of the Pope planted his flag upon Mexican soil. Shortly thereafter, the simple faith of the Aztecs was destroyed. All of their sacred literature and religious symbols were consumed in flames, and the population was baptized en masse into Catholic Christianity.

From that day began the exploitation of a people, almost unparalleled in history. In addition to being robbed of their possessions, they were forced to adopt this alien religion, at the point of the sword. So abject did they become, that not only their lands, but even their domestic animals, had to be blessed by the church—for pay. And on November 4, 1571, there was established in Mexico, under the dominant rule of the Catholic Church, the most hateful institution that ever existed upon this earth—The Inquisition.

The Palace of the Inquisition is now the National School of Medicine.

On April 11, 1649, 127 persons were burned to death for violating the laws prohibiting religious liberty.

The Mexican people, in their fight against tyranny, corruption and exploitation, found that it was first necessary to break the strangle-hold that the Catholic Church had upon the people.

No Government could exist in Mexico, until the present successful revolution, that offered the slightest semblance of freedom and equality to its people, as long as the Catholic Church possessed the resources, controlled the education, and dictated the policy of the Government.

Four hundred years of uninterrupted rule gave the Catholic Church absolute dominance over 15 million Mexicans.

No word of mine, no argument that I could advance, could so pertinently tell the story of this dominance and its degradation better than the facts of history itself.

The progress of a nation is determined by the welfare of its people.

What did these four hundred years of absolute domination by the Catholic Church do for the Mexican people?

What was their condition before the Revolution of 1857?

It was one of subjection and abject poverty.

What was their average in intelligence? It was one of the lowest on the American Continent. 85 per cent were illiterate.

What was their standard of living?

Hardly better than that of slaves.

What was their per capita wealth?

The Church either owned or controlled nearly 90 per cent of this immensely valuable land.

No country in the world had become so pauperized through the avarice of the Church. It became known as the "paradise of religious orders."

What was their political situation?

They were vassals of the Church.

Did they possess religious freedom?

How could they? The laws under which they lived for over three hundred years expressly prescribed the Roman Catholic religion, and proscribed all others.

The first Mexican Constitution, adopted in 1824, under the domination of the Catholic Church, specifically provided that "The religion of the Mexican nation is and shall perpetually be Roman Catholic—and forbids the exercise of any other."

This is not the first time that the Catholic Church has maintained that the Mexican people have been unfriendly to it.

When the Constitution of 1857 was formed, Pope Pius IX. denounced it in scathing terms, and pronounced the anathema of the Church upon it.

When General Calles was President, and sought to enforce the reformed Constitution of 1917, based upon the Constitution of 1857, not only were there loud cries of "persecution," but an edict of excommunication was threatened against the people.

And what happened?

The Government insisted upon the observance of its laws.

And what was the result?

In 1926 the present Pope placed an interdict upon the people, and the Catholic Church, in its entirety, went on strike.

For three years it refused to participate in the religious exercises of the Mexican people.

And it was my prediction then, and I think subsequent events have verified it, that those three years proved to be three years of momentous importance in the intellectual and political life of the Republic.

During this period, the Mexican Government laid the substantial foundation for a new social order, bringing to the enslaved Mexican people the first ray of political and social freedom that has brightened their dark horizon for more than four centuries.

During the three-year strike of the Catholic Church, other religious organizations continued to function, and when services were resumed, the hierarchy discovered that it had lost thousands of its communicants.

Laws satisfactory to other religions should certainly be good enough for Catholicism.

(To be concluded)

Ideals are like stars; you will not succeed in touching them with your hands, but like the seafaring man on the desert of waters, you choose them as your guides, and following them, you reach your destiny.

Carl Schurz, "American Medicine."

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER,"

SYSTEMATIC PRAYER

SIR,—I beg to thank you for sending me a copy of your paper, dated August 18, in which you make some criticisms on my "Ministry of Prayer." It is only fair you should give me a little space to reply. I am the son of a converted Brahman, and have been a Congregational minister here in England for twenty-three years. I have recently retired from the active work of the ministry, and am devoting the leisure given me by my retirement to praying for the whole world, in a regular, constant, and systematic daily prayer life; as also for any who desire my prayers in their needs and sorrows. It is hard but happy work; but the response has been wonderful, as also the answers God has already vouchsafed. I believe that He will answer prayer even on behalf of Freethinkers if they are reverent and sincere seekers after Truth.

PITT BONARJEE.

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

SIR,—Athoso Zenoo's conclusions are his own entirely, and in attempting to create an analogy between two extremely different kinds of faith, becomes merely a platinarian.

The theses which has failed is based on ignorance, superstition, and rognery. Dialectical Materialism is merely the ultimate revolutionary ideal based on nothing more or less than solid human fundamentals.

To compare Vanoc to Inge, is an attempt at creating a pose, and to suggest that Dialectical Materialism is a meta-physic is merely philandering.

Your own extraordinary logical conclusions on Freethought might be extended to embrace the Freethinkers in the mental wards, and whilst you have taught us to think freely as far as religious quackery is concerned, you omitted always to recognize that religion was and is a part of the economic structure, and the economic structure was part of religion. So, if you are not very careful you will find yourselves stuck high up on a Freethought pinnacle of mental verbosity, in company with Athoso Zenoo.

Religious Idealism is merely a necessary adjunct to a fraudulent economic system. When one goes the other will quickly follow.

We only need Freethought now to overthrow the lunatic, and evil-minded, self-interested individuals who grow fat on other peoples ignorance.

When mass intelligence displaces ignorance as it will (in spite of Mr. Zenoo) we shall have to consider what we are going to do about this Freethought which was denied to us for such a long time, and Mr. Zenoo will evolve on the lines of Dialectical Materialism just as the rest of humanity. We, or posterity will meet there.

A. SELLS.

[We suggest the reading of one or two trustworthy works on anthropology. Mr. Sells may then discover religion is *not* part—that is an essential part—of the economic structure. It is part of the *social* structure, which contains both the economic and the religious. Still, we grant that it is comforting to many to be able to explain the evolution of society in a paragraph, to settle the future in a sentence. But the Christian man is a long way ahead here for his explanation consists of four words only, "The will of God."—EDITOR.]

CEYLON

SIR,—Included among the many amusing statements which Mr. T. F. Palmer has made with reference to Buddhism relies in his article on the Ruins and Religion of Ceylon, there is one which should be corrected, as it is likely to mislead the tourist who is interested in matters of this nature. He states that a model of the Tooth relic is on view at the Colombo Museum: what is shown in the Colombo Museum is not a model of the Tooth relic.

P. E. PIERIS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH DISCUSSION SOCIETY (375 Cambridge Road, E.2, opposite Museum Cinema): 8.0, Monday, September 2, A Discussion.

OUTDOOR

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 1, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, September 2, Mr. Gee. Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Wednesday, September 4, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Christ, The Enemy."

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 J. Darby. Thursdays, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Gee. Fridays, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Connell. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at The Kiosk.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLYTH (Market Place): 7.0, Sunday, September 1, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, August 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE: 7.30, Tuesday, September 3, Mr. J. Clayton.

HETTON: 8.0, Tuesday, September 3, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, August 30, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road): 8.0, Friday, August 30, Muriel Whitefield. West Regent Street, 7.30, Sunday, September 1, Mr. Robert T. White.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, September 1, Mr. C. McKelvie. Belfast Road, Knotty Ash, 8.30, Tuesday, September 3, A Lecture. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, September 5, Mr. D. Robinson.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Manchester): 3.0, Mr. W. Atkinson.

NORTH EAST FEDERATION OF N.S.S. BRANCHES (Sunderland, Galbraik Avenue): 7.30, Friday, August 30; Newcastle, Bigg Market, 7.0, Sunday, September 1; Seaham Harbour, 7.30, Monday, September 2; Chester-le-Street, 7.30, Tuesday, September 3; South Shields, near the Fountain, 7.30, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, September 4, 5 and 6; Morpeth Market, 7.30, Saturday, September 7. Mr. George Whitehead will speak at each of these meetings.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.15 and 7.0, Sunday, September 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

READ: 7.15, Wednesday, September 4, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, August 31, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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