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

Views and Opinions

A Study in Fallacy
 THE Dean of St. Paul's, Dr. Mathews, with whose statement that not twenty per cent of the population can be called Christian I dealt last week, has found it necessary to offer an explanation. This appears in the *Star* for September 6, but it does not explain, it continues. That is, it piles verbalism on verbalism, and agreement between Christians on his article can only be reached by (1) not insisting on a precise meaning to the word "Christian," and (2) labelling anything as Christian which is likely to get general support. Dean Mathews does not reply to any criticism of his statement, he merely gives us an elaborated study in fallacy. Indeed, his article would be excellent material to set before a class of students as an example of "How not to do it." Protestant writers have rightly berated the Roman Catholic Church for assiduity in forgery and the manufacture of bogus miracles; but is it really any better to offer unwary readers or listeners terms and statements, which while used in one sense by yourself, will be taken in quite another by those to whom they are given? Is it an improvement on the Roman Catholic method to read into early Christianity meanings that simply could not have existed, and to define Christianity in such a way that it will be made to mean what it never has and never can mean, or is it merely the Roman Catholic method applied in a different way? It is punishable, to give a man a coin which while apparently silver is made of pewter or some inferior metal. I have a very strong conviction that tampering with the coinage is a trivial offence at the side of tampering with the moral and intellectual currency.

* * *

Socrates Redivivus

Dr. Mathews starts his article with a kind of text. He says:—

In my opinion ambiguous words are a danger, and I agree with Socrates and Confucius that we should all be very much better if we understood the meaning of the words we use.

Excellent! It is advice that has been constantly given in these columns; but I hope it has had a better influence on *Freethinker* readers than it appears to have had on Dr. Mathews. But I have a suspicion that in travelling back to antiquity for intellectual guidance—a thing that is curiously deficient in Christianity—Dr. Mathews has unconsciously fallen under the influence of a practice which is said to have existed in ancient Sparta, that of forcing slaves to exhibit bad habits in order the better to "warn off" the youth of the nation. For his *apologia* exhibits all the faults against which Socrates and Confucius warns him.

Take this as a starting point:—

From the first the disciples of Jesus were spoken of as people who were following "the way," that is, who accepted certain ideals of life and rules of conduct which they derived from their Master; and this must always remain as an essential part of being a Christian.

One can form some idea of the way in which Socrates would set to work on this tangled mass of fallacy and, let us say, unconscious, mis-statement. First of all he would ask what exactly was meant by "Christian" among the people who first used the term? Dr. Mathews replies to this that it was the people of Antioch who first applied the name to the followers of Jesus, and as a term of derision and contempt. And we can imagine Socrates replying:—

We may take it, then, that the term stood for something with which the people were quite familiar, and which many did not hold in great respect. And we may also take it that the word as you use it is none other than our own Greek word *Khristos*, which stands for an initiate or an anointed one. But there were a great many mystical religious sects then in existence and each of these had their initiates, and their head who was a messenger from God or an incarnation of a God. It is a term that would be as easily and as properly applied to a member of the Mithraic or Orphic cult, or to any other esoteric religious body. "Christ" is not a personal or family name, it is a title, and its equivalent is one that is found in many directions in connexion with mystical religious bodies.

But, Dr. Mathews might urge, these people had certain ideals and rules of life which they had accepted from their Master. And to that Socrates would answer:—

But have not any and every society of human beings, because they exist in societies, rules and ideals which they accept from the society of which they are a part, just as in religion they accept these rules from a specific teacher? Have you not, in

your own world of the twentieth century, exactly the same sort of thing. And observe that this is true of every organization. It is true of the mob of a Chicago gangster, and of the Ancient Order of Buffaloes, of the followers of Siva and the members of the Klu-Klux-Klan; of the Fascists in Italy, and Germany, and of the Communists in Russia. Having ideals of life and rules of conduct was applicable, and with equal measure, to every religious group. It is not in the possession of an ideal or laying down rules of conduct that you can establish the superiority of Christians, but upon the quality of the ideals held and of the superiority of the rules adopted. And in neither case do you offer us any enlightenment. Do, my dear Dean, bear in mind my counsel, which you quote with approval, not to use ambiguous words and to try and understand the meaning of the words used.

Be not angry, my dear Dean, if I say that I get little enlightenment from your definition of Christianity as constituting in "Life, Creed and Fellowship." For these also mark every organization of men and women. Our conduct must in every case depend upon the kind of world we are living in, the expression of that belief will be found in conduct, and we shall find fellowship in those who agree with our interpretation of life. And when you say, "Religion that does not affect life and conduct is not religion, but hypocrisy," can you tell me in what respect this is not true of everything, or in what respect it has a greater truth in connexion with religion than with any circumstance in which a man's conduct does not agree with his professions? Distinction must ultimately rest on difference, and my difficulty is that in none of the definitions you give of Christianity am I able to distinguish it from other bodies. That there must be some difference, I have no doubt, but your language is so ambiguous that, in my stupidity, I am unable to see wherein the difference lies.

* * *

The Church and the World

You say that the Christian Church will survive only if it shows three things; (1) a higher and purer quality of conduct in its members than can be found elsewhere, (2) if it can show that it has a truth that can be interpreted from age to age, and, (3) if the Church can become a spiritual home for men, in which they can find a brotherhood that cannot be found elsewhere.

Your religion had not made its appearance, in the form of the Christian Church, when I left this earth. But from my place in the Shades I have continued my interest in men and women and in social development. And putting a definite meaning on language that is very ambiguous—for it is not the belief in right that is needed among men, but the knowledge of what is right—I have not noted in what I have seen of the Christian Church that it was the moral motive that animated either its teachings or gave the reason for conversion. As a special favour some of the more liberal members of your Church have thought that I might be admitted into the Christian heaven, but the vast majority have denied this because I had not the right kind of religious belief. The people who wished to join your Church were not asked how they lived, but what they believed. The Christian Church rests upon a community of belief, not upon an observed excellence of conduct. And it is quite certain that in those far off-days to which you refer, when groups of Christians first appeared as the believers in a new God, or rather an old God under a new name, it was not their superiority in conduct that struck the people around them. The appeal of the earliest Christians was to the desire for immortal salvation, and none ever treated the purely ethical motive with such contempt as Paul when he said that it was of no consequence whatever what a man did if there was no future life. We in Greece had our theory of an after world, but it certainly never equalled in brutal ferocity the doctrine of

hell as preached by the Christian, with the hideous insistence by many Christian writers upon the eternal damnation of infants who died without having received the mystical rite of baptism. I have also observed that at no time in the history of the Christian Church has there ever been lacking complaints of the lax morality of the rank and file of Christians, and even among the heads of the Church there has been a stream of testimony to their falling short of current standards of morality.

You suggest, rather than state, for your words are so ambiguous that one cannot be certain as to your meaning, that conduct is the main thing. That was, of course, my own teaching over two thousand years ago, and it was a common teaching with the philosophers of my day that morality is a social fact which grows out of men's relations to one another. But this has been the teaching against which your church has warred. Greek thought was essentially naturalistic; Christian thought was essentially super-naturalistic. That is the fundamental distinction between the two; and it seems to me that your plea—if it is to be taken in the best possible sense—is for the return to the Greek standard of values disguised as Christianity.

I must put this forward with all hesitation, because your language is so ambiguous that while you might mean this, you might also mean something else. You say one thing and may mean another; you may have a "reserved" meaning for your words, but it is certain that this will not be the meaning that your Christian readers will fix on. You quote my advice as to the avoidance of ambiguity in speech, but your message is small credit on my power as a teacher. You pile fallacy on fallacy and mistake vague sentimentalizing for a scientific demonstration.

My last words, my dear Dean, before I return to the shades is, avoid ambiguity. Honesty of speech is an indispensable quality in one who would rank as a beneficial teacher of men.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Cabbages and Curates

"How quickly Nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object."—*Shakespeare.*

"If I were paid what a bishop is paid for doing what a bishop does, I should find abundant cause for merriment in the credulity of my countrymen."

John Bright.

It used to be said in Ancient Rome that when two soothsayers met in the street they smiled at each other. Our present-day soothsayers only smile in the privacy of their own sheltered homes. In public they cultivate an expression of sweet melancholy. Indeed, they may be classified, from the slight droop of the lip of the higher clergy to the resemblance to a tired funeral horse worn by the Four Square Gospelers and the other Fancy Religionists.

One section of the clergy is more tearful than usual, and, it is rumoured, the curates are very dissatisfied with their present financial position. Some, colder than their fellows, have whispered suggestions of forming a guild of employment, which, in plain unadorned English, means a Trade Union. Although the curates are as solemn as undertakers, the announcement will provoke smiles. For curates, in spite of their alleged sacred calling, are usually regarded with amused tolerance. Dramatists, cabaret, and music-hall song-writers have made them the butt of their satire, and the public never seem to tire of the jest. It is all very ironic, for these long-faced young men take themselves so very seriously as heaven-sent individuals commissioned by Omnipotence to reclaim a very saucy world from very

naughty ways. Styling themselves "Reverend," and wearing dog-collars to distinguish themselves from their fellows, these young priests have always endeavoured to keep their peculiar caste surrounded by an odour of sanctity. And now, fallen on evil days, these young "Sons of God" are, "in the fell clutch of circumstance," compelled to "play the sedulous ape" to members of the Cats' Meat Men's and Saxophone Players' Unions.

These young fishers of men are beginning to look with longing eyes at the loaves and fishes annexed by their right-reverend and very reverend superiors. Perhaps it is only natural that they should wake up and find that in a time of economic and industrial revolution they are as much "on the shelf" as the most elderly spinsters of their diminishing congregations. In the race for the flesh-pots of Egypt these young Sons of God have been passed by the handsome men who empty our dustbins and sweep our roads. Prayer may move mountains, but it takes dynamite to move the stony hearts of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Lords Spiritual. Truly, it must be galling for these youngsters to see men of not superior brains living in palaces, entitled "my lords," legislating in the Upper House of Parliament, drawing incomes varying from £2,000 to £15,000 yearly, and making life "one grand, sweet song."

It has even been said that the poorer clergy are "starving." At least, that is how the Right Reverend Bishop of London expressed the matter, and he even quoted the horrid instance of a clergyman who fed a whole family of eight persons on sixpence a meal, and the still more distressing example of another unfortunate Man-of-God who lost whatever brains he possessed because his bank-balance was on the wrong side of the ledger. Of course, the Bishop of London, who is a Christian gentleman, did his utmost to assist. He collected over £50,000 from other people, and hastened to protect the sacred persons of the clergy from the blessings of poverty. He could scarcely do more, for he has only £200 weekly between himself and the Relieving Officer.

The excellent Bishop of London should be an authority on poverty. He is obsessed by the woes of the wealthy, and is always painfully anxious to rebut the awful charge of personal riches. Once he explained, in apologetic tones, to a startled and perplexed congregation that, after drawing his episcopal salary of £10,000 annually for fifteen years, he was £2,000 on the wrong side of his bank-book, and actually far worse off, financially, than when he started the awful experience of following in the footsteps of the poor Carpenter of Nazareth. On such reckless housekeeping it is quite clear that, had his lordship's salary been as much as the £15,000 of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he must have finished his spiritual career selling bootlaces in the Strand, or sleeping on the Thames Embankment.

Whether the curates are really starving is a very open question. That some of them are hard-up has been vouched for by Mr. Lloyd George in the House of Commons, and his word is as good as that of the Bishop of London. Mr. Lloyd George declared that the "men-of-God" were worse off materially than the miners. But the clergy do not seem very anxious to exchange their soft jobs for the real hardships of underground work. Anyway, there is no reason why any curate should water his crust with his tears. The financial resources of the Church of England are far more solid than the gold streets of Heaven, and they are not invested in bucket-shop waste-paper. Lord Addington's Parliamentary return of 1891 showed that the annual value of the ancient ecclesi-

astical endowments alone of the Anglican Church was £5,469,171, exclusive of many other sources of revenue, which even a stockbroker would admit was big business.

The plain, unvarnished truth is that this Church of England is the richest church in Christendom. At the top are ecclesiastics with salaries ranging from £15,000 to £2,000 annually; and at the bottom are an army of holders of benefices more comfortably placed than ordinary men. Even the curates are much better off than the vergers, organists, choristers, and church-cleaners. For the clergy take money very freely, but do not disburse except under the severest pressure. "Parting is such sweet sorrow!"

Curates should be interested to learn that the most hideous of all known costumes—the episcopal Sunday uniform—costs £200, and fancy that a curate's wife could have stitched together something as good at less cost. Living, too, in the case of the bishops is kept up to the high society level. "The stair-carpets at Farnham Castle are measured by miles," wrote old Bishop Thorold. "My episcopal income goes in pergolas," complained Bishop Stubbs. It is, indeed, a far cry from the alleged fishing-nets of the original disciples to Lambeth Palace with its guard-room; Fulham Palace with its pleasure-grounds; Farnham Palace with its deer-park; and Wells with its moated garden.

It will be noted that few ecclesiastics display such Micawber-like qualities in their personal balance-sheets as the excellent Bishop of London. Most archbishops and Bishops put a little bit away for a rainy day. "Londoniensis" is too outspoken. He should have imitated the quiet and cautious reserve of the Archbishops and Bishops, who pocket larger salaries, have no objection to pluralities, and say nothing about such mundane subjects as personal finance.

There is a way of providing money, not only for the curates, but also for the underpaid church organists and workers, which will, doubtless, find no favour in the eyes of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and the trustees of Queen Anne's Bounty. It is to act on Shakespeare's advice, adapted from "King Lear":—

"Take physic, pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel;
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the heavens more just."

These pious guardians of the hoarded resources of this particularly wealthy Christian Church could so easily afford to "show the heavens more just"; and could, if they wished, prevent the poorer brethren from using bad language upon pay days. They might even invoke the Throne of Grace for the return of those ravens who fed the prophet Elijah. Perhaps an innate sense of modesty alone prevents them from depriving wealthy members of their congregations of so many opportunities for disbursing charity in such sad and distressing cases. With the divine example of feeding five thousand people with a few loaves and fishes, there should be no lack of incentive. One cannot think for a single moment that the present-day descendants of the apostles would act like the selfish boy with an apple, who, when his young sister asked him for the core, replied: "Go away! There ain't going to be no blooming core." Bishops, like other people, should learn the lesson that charity begins at home. As for the curates, like Mr. Wackford Squeers, when Bolder's father was two pound ten short, they have had their disappointments to contend against in a saucy world. While feeling is

thus fomenting at the base of the ecclesiastical edifice, things are not entirely tranquil at the summit. For some day the red flag will fly at Westminster, and this event will mean the beginning of the end of Priestcraft in this country.

MIMNERMUS.

On Father Irenæus

IN a recent article on Paganism in Christianity, I mentioned a passage taken from Irenæus' work, *Against Heresies*. Several readers have asked me for further particulars, though the passage in question is well known to theologians, but is not at all popular with them. Like the story of Jesus cursing a fig-tree, they often wish to goodness they had not to explain it. Of course, many parsons and priests hotly deny the existence of the passage and challenge its production. They are artful enough to know that even if it is there, few "unbelievers" are likely to carry about with them the bulky works of the old Father. So I give here a few fuller details.

Against Heresies forms one of the volumes of the *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, published by T. & T. Clark of Edinburgh, in 1868. It is edited by the Rev. A. Roberts, D.D., and James Donaldson, I.L.D., and translated by the Rev. A. Roberts, D.D., and the Rev. W. H. Rambant, A.B.—a sufficient guarantee, I hope, for its thorough orthodoxy. The chapter containing the passage is the twenty-second the page, 186, and it is headed as follows:—

The thirty æons are not typified by the fact that Christ was baptized in His thirtieth year: He did not suffer in the twelfth month after His baptism, but was more than fifty years old when He died.

Here are some extracts from this celebrated chapter:—

Being thirty years of age when He came to be baptized and then possessing the full age of the Master. . . . He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants . . . a child for children . . . a youth for youths . . . So likewise He was an old man for old men. . . . Then, at last, he came on to death itself. . . . From the fortieth and fiftieth year, a man begins to decline towards old age which our Lord possessed while he still fulfilled the office of a Teacher, even as the gospel and all the elders testify; those who were conversant in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord (affirming) that John conveyed to them the information. Some of them, moreover, saw not only John, but the other apostles also, and heard the very same account from them. . . . Besides this, those very Jews who then disputed with the Lord Jesus Christ have most clearly indicated the same thing. (John viii. 56, 57). . . . He did not then want much of being fifty years old; and in accordance of that fact, they said to Him, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? . . . the period included between the thirtieth and the fiftieth year can never be regarded as *one* year. . . ."

It will be seen that not only does Irenæus insist that Jesus lived at least till he was fifty, but also that "He came on to death itself," without a hint either of the trial before Pilate, or the crucifixion. Such a remarkable deviation from the accepted "facts" is extremely difficult to explain.

Irenæus is a very respected Father of the Church. He was considered, as Conyers Middleton points out, "of all the Fathers whose work still remains to us, the most diligent collector and assertor of apostolic traditions. And in truth, as far as his judgment and veracity may be relied upon, he seems to have been well qualified for that character; being

acquainted, as he tells us, with several who had conversed familiarly with the apostles." Dodwell said of him that "he lived so near to the time of the apostles as to be able to transmit their doctrines with certainty and fidelity, as they were delivered to him by oral tradition." Photius, however, claimed that Irenæus "adulterated by his false and spurious reasonings" certain ecclesiastical doctrines—an opinion, perhaps, now shared by modern church critics. The point to be noted, however, is, either he was an unmitigated liar, or he really did talk with people who had known other people who had known the original apostles. If the latter is true, then how can it be explained that he affirmed, as Middleton says, "that Our Saviour lived to an old age or was fifty years old at least, at the time of his crucifixion"?—though it must be remarked there is nothing about the "Crucifixion" in the whole of the chapter. It was, said Irenæus "the unanimous tradition and positive testimony of all the old men who had lived with St. John and the other apostles."

Christian commentators are aghast. One of them, Harvey, remarks, "The reader may here perceive the unsatisfactory character of tradition, where a mere fact is concerned. From reasonings founded upon the evangelical history, as well as from a preponderance of external testimony, it is most certain that Our Lord's ministry extended but little over three years; yet Irenæus states that it included more than ten years, and appeals to a tradition derived, as he says, from those who had conversed with an apostle."

The translators of Irenæus say, "He is, for example, quite peculiar in imagining that Our Lord lived to be an *old* man; and that his public ministry embraced, at least, ten years." But why is he so peculiar, considering his authority comes from those who knew the apostles or their friends?

Dr. Whitley and other critics declaim in a similar manner, but they are unable to explain away the offending passages. I leave it to those—but especially to "reverent" Rationalists—who are so cocksure that, in the main, the Gospels are credible and authentic, to explain Irenæus' statements. Considering that almost all the other traditions respecting Jesus say that he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, it is quite astonishing to find a great Christian Father and authority telling us he lived twenty years after the supposed event. It is just as astonishing as to find the Jew Trypho discussing with Justin, *not* Messiahs in general, as some "reverent" Rationalists like Conybeare would have us believe, but the "genuine" Messiah, Jesus Christ, and telling Justin that they have manufactured one for themselves as no one knows anything about his birth or where or when he lived.

Of course, Irenæus was, like most of the Christian Fathers, credulous and foolish. They all seem to have believed the most extravagant fairy tales; and, in many cases, nothing was too silly for them to believe and expound. Protestant divines have mostly, I think, been extremely chary in referring to stupid arguments derived from these people—though the great Catholic theologians relied on them greatly to prove what were often idiotic and contemptible doctrines.

One of my correspondents says that a Catholic priest with whom he has been in controversy denied that the passages I have dealt with in this article are in *Against Heresies*. I should be keenly interested in hearing an explanation of his denial. And I trust the foregoing will show to others the kind of "testimony" which has so long maintained the fables of Christianity.

H. CUTNER.

Too Intellectual?

WE are accustomed to more or less humorous, more or less serious disparagement of the "highbrow," as well as of neglect and here and there disparagement of education, especially that of the "common people." Our rulers seem to be rather remarkable for unintellectuality; and the speeches on the education estimates are, as is often said, made to "empty benches." As an apparent result of all this, we note that at least two leaders of one of the parties have said that the party, or its policy and regime, "should not be too intellectual."

Now, as a large proportion of the members or supporters (or both) of this party were, according to the statements made by many of its principal spokesmen, "stampeded" by the famous red letter, and by a suggestion that their savings in the Post Office Bank were in danger, it might well have been expected that the steadying force of increased knowledge, of power of logical thinking and of outlook would be obvious. But though the party is the most advanced in its prospective educational policy, we do not find much reference to this in the more important speeches made; and the paramount leader, so far as I have seen, never mentions the subject. Instead of this he, with "damnable reiteration," pleads for more Christianity (as though we hadn't had nearly 2000 years of it), and has lately made an appeal to the Pope and other leading ecclesiastics on behalf of peace. We have also seen pictures on the front page of the *Daily Herald* of another leader sitting on the platform at a big meeting of Salvationists.

Here we have at once the encouragement by well-meaning and progressive and influential, if not very enlightened, politicians of ignorance and superstition, which is comparable with the influence exerted by the mass of parliamentarians to maintain the old, traditional, essentially conservative if not retrograde ideas and practices they happen passively to pick up at home, at church and elsewhere. The result is, of course, to distract attention from things that matter, and to make feebler, if not to prevent, rational thought and action.

Considered in the wider or more philosophical aspect, we now recognize that the increase of the mental side of life is a natural and, I think we may say, inevitable process, though a lamentably slow one. And of this mental side we see that the emotional aspect is early—and its activity easily stimulated. Intellectualism comes later, and with greater difficulty. At present the main tendency is, if not principally to rely on religion, to muddle together religious emotion and practical social affairs. The danger of this has been pointed out by Bertrand Russell, and by J. M. Robertson. It is not only that strong emotion may be aroused for bad causes as well as good, but even in respect of a wholly good cause, like that of peace, the emotion—in the absence of a real intellectual conviction—may be readily overcome by a stronger one. Hence the mere emotion in favour of peace may still be easily nullified by that of nationalism. Similarly, the emotion in favour of political advancement—based, say, on notions such as "the Socialism of Jesus or Christianity"—is easily overborne by the fear arising from vacuous suggestions, in minds insufficiently fortified by intellectual activity.

Of course the predominance of emotion over intellectuality in the West has come down to us from the Dark and Middle Ages, and has been largely generated and perpetuated by Christianity. This system, including the superstitions of the ancient Hebrews contained in the Bible, gives no encouragement—but

rather the reverse—to the acquisition and spread of real knowledge, has long resisted and still resists science (note the Fundamentalism of to-day), and did much to keep as the basis of history the providential and demonic instead of the true and natural course of events, and so on. Rational thought was therefore for a very long period largely inhibited, and its spread by education has been and still is seriously impeded.

J. REEVES.

The Church of the Ages

THIS title is taken from an article on "Free Lance Christians," appearing in the *Edinburgh Evening Dispatch* recently. To those of us who decline to believe in anything that is not demonstrable by evidence which would be accepted in a modern High Court of Law, it is an entertaining hodge-podge of irrelevancies. The fact is that many church-going pietists are appalled by the thinning of congregations. The beggarly attendances are making them querulous. They refuse to see the effect of Freethought propaganda in the increasing number of absentees. So they assume that all the absentees continue to be believers, though dissatisfied with the Church, and instead of having the courage to attack Freethinkers themselves they pen complaints against "free lance Christians" who have detached themselves from "organized Christianity."

What a farce it is! What is the "Church of the Ages," anyway? The writer of the article referred to evidently assumes that the title is appropriate to the particular Protestant sect with which he has identified himself! The Church of the Ages! Why there is not a Protestant Church that is more than 300 years old. The Roman Catholic Church claims an existence of 1900 years. The Greek Church is still older. And even all these Christian bodies are younger than Judaism. All of them have grown out of much earlier supernatural cults. What is the Church of the Ages?

On historical matters, the article referred to parades a mass of falsehoods in the attempt to bring back the lapsed sheep. This is the sort of thing submitted for acceptance by presumably educated persons in the twentieth century:—

"He (the 'free lance Christian') has to admit that the very society he lives in, the very influences which have made it possible for him to be a Christian at all have been created by the Church of the Ages. Without the Church Christianity could not have survived, and such morality as exists in Europe to-day is almost entirely the product of the Church's work and thought."

Good God! Morality as it exists in Europe to-day! Has the writer any conception of the standards of morality in pre-existing civilizations, which knew nothing of Jesus Christ? Does he know the undisputed historical facts upon which the success of Christianity as a persecuting organization was built? Did he ever hear the name of Constantine? Does he know that his "Church of the Ages" has unto this day flourished because of its recognition by the secular ruling powers, which not so long ago, here in Britain enacted that disbelief in the Christian religion was a crime? What is the sort of morality which eliminates the freedom of the individual and exalts mob rule? Yet that is in essence what has been the result of Christianity. What is the Kingdom of God composed of? Simply of a crowd of ecclesiastical rulers and their minions, satellites and parasites, who have been bribed into selling their independence.

What are the ideals of Christianity? They are becoming vaguer and vaguer every day; and their ethical significance has fallen into disrepute in contrast with the better and higher ethical systems in force among non-Christian peoples as research has disclosed. It is beyond doubt that the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are not original utterances of Jesus Christ, but were stolen from oriental philosophies; so that the claim that "no man ever spake like this man" falls to the ground. And Jesus Christ is reduced to the character of an itinerant agitator indulging in egotistic oratory; and professing to heal human ills by quack remedies. The New Testament has been shown to be a very much patched-up account of his life and teaching written by different authors long after his death; and subsequently altered by interpolations and interlineations, subtractions and additions by other writers. But to the bigoted and arrogant pietist, of course, both the Old and New Testaments are forever the "Word of God"!

Yes, people will believe anything. Human credulity will swallow camels and fiery dragons if pressed to do so. The Freethinker reads the Bible for entertainment, just as he reads the *Arabian Nights*; but he is not going to accept stories involving complete infactions of Natural Law as occurrences of actual facts. The pietist retorts that if he does not do so he is eternally damned.

But in this article as in most of the present-day propaganda on behalf of the Christian Faith, we find no definite reference to the central verity of Christianity—the very stone of the corner—which Modernists are very quiet about or ignore altogether, namely—the revolting scheme of redemption, whereby God is said to have vindicated his eternal righteousness by murdering by proxy his only begotten Son. Do the modern Christian propagandists begin to realize that the intelligence and good feeling of mankind generally and its sense of justice and honour are simply revolted by this once greatly lauded scheme of redemption? In primitive supernatural cults we have repeated instances of the worshippers killing and eating their God; and this revolting idea has been continued and incorporated in the Christian faith of the twentieth century!

And with what strutting effrontery and presumption do the priests throw scorn upon the beliefs of the older nations of the earth! Of course, we are expected to assume without any question that the religion adopted and patronized by the British Government is and must be the only true one! What a limited and parochial outlook! The Chinese, for example, honour and worship their ancestors; but they never in all history put forward any great ancestor with such an appalling thirst for blood as the Christian God. The character of the Christian God of Britain may be explained by and reflected in the Great War, when the blood of millions was shed in the name of the God of Battles.

Do these shallow-minded pen-pushers of the penny press ever consider what a tremendous task lies before the Church in any effort to restore itself and its clergy to public confidence? Most of the clergy are being found out for the quacks and hucksters that they are. The Law of Equity finds no place in ecclesiastical ordinances; but the minds of men are awakening to the mockery of supernaturalism; and many more are now addressing themselves to making this present life—the only one we know of—a higher, happier, fuller and better thing. What a tribute is this criticism of "Free Lance Christians" to the growing power of Freethought!

Things Worth Knowing*

RELIGION AND REFORM AT THE OPENING OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WHEREAS the ruling class could not imagine a heaven that would be an improvement on this world, the Methodists taught that heaven was really the Fifth Act, in which the supreme artist would give a happy issue to the tribulations of this life, and that the greater the sufferings endured with patience in these passing scenes, the greater would be the triumph of faith and courage in the day when the plot of the life of humanity received its final disentanglement. . . . The official attitude of the Methodist leaders seems to have been quite clearly conservative in the years of crisis, 1817 and 1819. In 1817 the Reformers appealed to them . . . but they seem to have replied by warning their congregations to keep away from Reform meetings. In August of 1819 one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Society sent to the Home Office an address that had been adopted at a Conference of Methodist Ministers at Bristol. . . .

We deeply sympathize with those of you, dear Brethren, who, from the pressure of the times, and the suspension of an active commerce, are, in common with thousands of your countrymen, involved in various and deep afflictions. . . . Cast all your cares on God, for he careth for you, and fail not to remember, and to comfort one another with these words, "that in heaven, you have a better and an enduring substance." In the present changeful scene of things, one event happeneth to the righteous and the wicked, but you are nevertheless still under the care and the eye of your Father in heaven. Such afflictive events he will sanctify to those who trust in him. . . . As many of you to whom this measure of national suffering applies have been appointed to reside in places where attempts are made by "unreasonable and wicked men" to render the privations of the poor the instruments of their own design against the peace and government of our beloved country, we are affectionately anxious to guard all of you against being led away from your civil and religious duties by their dangerous artifices. Remember you are Christians, and are called by your profession to exemplify the power and influence of religion by your patience in suffering, and by "living peaceably with all men." Remember that you belong to a Religious Society which has, from the beginning, explicitly recognized as high and essential parts of Christian duty, to "Fear God and honour the King; to submit to magistrates for conscience' sake and not to speak evil of dignities." You are surrounded with persons to whom these duties are the objects of contempt and ridicule; show your regard for them because they are the doctrines of your Saviour. Abhor those publications in which they are assailed, along with every other doctrine of your holy religion; and judge of the spirit of those who would deceive you into political parties and associations, by the vices of their lives and the infidel malignity of their words and writings.

It is not surprising, in view of this manifesto, that some of the leading working-class Reformers regarded the Methodists quite definitely as enemies. Cobbett said in 1824, "the bitterest foes of freedom in England have been, and are, the Methodists. Amongst the people of the North they have served as spies and blood-money men. . . . The friends of

* 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.

freedom have found fault, and justly found fault with the main body of the established clergy . . . but hostile to freedom as the established clergy have been, their hostility has been nothing in point of virulence compared with that of these ruffian sectarians. . . . Books upon books they write. Tracts upon tracts. Villainous sermon upon villainous sermon they preach. Rail they do, like Cropper and Bott Smith, but not a word do you hear from them against the slave-holders in Lancashire and in Ireland. On the contrary, they are continually telling the people here that they ought to thank the Lord for the blessings they enjoy; that they ought to thank the Lord, not for a bellyful and a warm back, but for that abundant grace of which they are the bearers, and for which they charge them only one penny per week each. . . ."

If we look into the life and teaching of this new religion, we can see that the whole spirit of its mission was unfavourable to the Democratic movement and the growth of the Trade Union spirit. The Methodist movement was a call not for citizens, but for saints; not for the vigorous, still less for the violent redress of injustice, but for the ecstatic vision; the perfect peace of expectation. The brutal inequalities of life, the wrongs inflicted on man by man, the hardships of poverty and suffering, these vexations of a passing world were merely trials of faith for the true Christian who could escape from them and sustain his soul with dreams of a noble and confidential companionship in this world and of radiant happiness hereafter. The reforms that he wanted had nothing to do with Parliament, or Corn Laws or Combination Laws.

. . . In so far as this religion touched on the affairs of this world, it tended to reflect the conservative spirit of its first missionary. The spirit of its teaching was just the opposite of the Trade Union movement of the time. It taught patience where Trade Unions taught impatience. The Trade Union taught that men and women should use their powers to destroy the supremacy of wealth in a world made by men; the Methodist that they should learn resignation amid the painful chaos of a world so made, for good reasons of His own, by God. The trade unionist taught that men were not so helpless as they seemed, for combination could give them some control over the conditions of their lives. The Methodist taught that men were not so helpless as they seemed, for religion could make them independent of the conditions of their lives. Further, the Trade Union movement made loyalty to a class a virtue, teaching men and women to think of themselves as the citizens of a community struggling to be free.

. . . The Methodist movement had had just the opposite effect. . . . It set up a rival to the ideal of civic freedom. It diverted energy from the class struggle at a time when wise energy was scarce, and money was still scarcer. It would be extremely interesting to know what sum was spent on this religion by a class that was thereby diverting its resources from a war for independence.

The Town Labourer 1760-1832, by J. L. HAMMOND and BARBARA HAMMOND, 1p. 277-85.

He who fights with priests may make up his mind to have his poor good name torn and befouled by the most infamous lies and the most cutting slanders.—Heine.

Christ not only never instituted marriage, but, if we search for formal precept on the subject, we find that he rather disapproved it than otherwise.—Tolstol.

Acid Drops

The Rev. W. D. Langridge, of Brighton, is angry with both Modernists and Fundamentalists. His view is a very common one to-day. The clergy who occupy remunerative cubby-holes do not want to be disturbed by the plain language of any kind of extremists. Mr. Langridge says that "Fundamentalists and Modernists are both in danger." For his part he "must refuse to sweep away with contempt" a past which he himself knows to have "misunderstood God," and consequently he also "refuses to be bound by it." He is similarly sitting on the fence about "the Pentateuch," which must be retained because it contains "the greatest prayer recorded in the Old Testament." Moses may have made a few trifling errors, but he "remains our master." Mr. Langridge is a Laodicean and deserves the Laodicean's rather unpalatable destiny.

The "Modernist"—that is, the Christian who believes not as much as possible, but as little as possible of the Christian creed—is by no means despised and rejected by the "Catholic." The Modernist is still, we are told, "a member of the Church of England," he is still "a sacrificing priest." He can "communicate at a Mass at which Dr. Barnes is the celebrant with full confidence." But what he cannot do is to join in "full confidence" at a Communion Service at which Dr. Scott Lidgett is the minister"—though the latter may believe far more than the Modernist. In other words, one can repudiate all the essential doctrines and beliefs of Christianity and still remain a member of the Church of England. How beautifully accomodating! No wonder the pious believer is hopelessly perplexed—particularly if he is a real Protestant. And no wonder, to the outsider, Christianity is becoming more and more a huge farce.

In a review of *Value and Existence*, we are told that the author, Professor Lossky, "throws real light on the mystery of the Holy Trinity." This is most comforting as, so far, most of the attempts have been so utterly futile that the "Holy Trinity" has remained a genuine mystery. It seems, however, that "God is the absolute perfection. His existence contains within itself self-justification; God, in other words, is that which is unquestionably worth existing." This, no doubt, will be received with unalloyed delight by Theists as will the statement that "the individual uniqueness of the Three Persons of the Trinity is the source of their mutual enrichment." In addition you get "their perfect mutual love, their full mutual acceptance, and their complete mutual self-surrender." Finally, "the absolute fullness of their existence is something that is united and is singular." If these beautiful words, so unerringly placed one against the other, do not convince you of the veritable existence of the Holy Trinity, we are afraid nothing will.

The Rev. E. E. Winter is astonished that "the Church which takes such trouble to supply good syllabuses for elementary schools should make no corresponding contribution to the boarding (private) schools. It thinks in terms of elementary schools only. Meanwhile the educated classes go less and less to church." It isn't only the "educated" classes; the "poorer" classes seem to be in the same boat. At all events, a good film at a Sunday Cinema will always compete successfully with church or chapel. But why blame the lack of religious teaching for this state of things? Why not put most of the blame on the secular scientific teaching at the schools, as well as the growing consciousness of intelligent people that the whole story of Christianity is based on fables? Mr. Winter will have to try again to find some reason why the "educated" classes are going less and less to Church.

The idea that, whatever their shortcomings, the B.B.C. religious services are welcomed by "thousands of bed-ridden invalids," receives a rude shock at the

hands of Miss Louisa Knight-Bruce, a Member of First National Assembly (whatever that is). She says that these poor people together with "educated men and women, life-long attendants and communicants of the Church" are almost all "forced to listen to the unloveliness of the Nonconformist Service." "Unloveliness" indeed! Fancy calling a religious service, sponsored and passed by Sir John Reith, "unlovely"! This seems the unkindest cut of all. What Miss Knight-Bruce wants is to hear "a glorious Eucharist" at least, and a "morning Mass and Sermon" once a month. But what about the people who consider these things not only "unlovely" but also silly? Don't they count for anything? Still, it's a good thing that religious people continue to wrangle.

Canon Bezzant, the Chancellor of Liverpool Cathedral, declared, the other day, that, "No professional men are so poorly equipped in technical knowledge of their craft as the clergy of the Church of England." He added that "adequate attention should be given to the arts of preaching and teaching, and particularly to the clear articulation of the English tongue in an audible form." This is a fine commentary on the general capability of our clergy, is it not? All the same, we wonder how far Canon Bezzant himself would go "in teaching and preaching"? Would he get away with it before a congregation of unbelievers? The fact is it is not a question of teaching, preaching, or mumbling. It really depends on *believing* or faith. And little will ever shatter faith.

Two more deaths from enteric fever have been recorded among the Scotch pilgrims to Lourdes. This makes six deaths now, and we call attention once again to them because it surely is astonishing that any deaths took place at all. Why were the sick not kept at Lourdes and dipped in the holy waters again and again till cured? What does "Our Lady" mean by thus neglecting her own in this way?

But the illness is not confined to the Glasgow pilgrims. Three cases of typhoid have just been reported from the contingent of 800 who went recently from Liverpool. There are also two "suspected" cases. And yet none of them remained at Lourdes until cured or was taken back. They are being closely watched here by the medical authorities, whose cold official hearts obviously do not regard miracles as of a prophylactic nature. We agree. A bottle of disinfectant is worth a million "miracles."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton has been trying to answer the question, "How did human beings ever come to burn heretics?" He says that "the real difficulty of answering is the difficulty of getting the questioner to broaden his mind." But "the answer is simply to be found in imagining an Englishman might feel patriotic for something larger than England," which is extremely satisfactory for our complacent Mr. Chesterton, but would not have been found quite so thrilling for the unlucky heretic getting burnt. One ought to have, of course, an historic perspective; but the fact remains that, in religion as in some political spheres of thought, those who are not with it are against it. Exterminate them, else they contaminate. Against this kind of doctrine, has been raised the banner of Freethought; and the fact that, except rarely, heretics are no longer burnt is proof that Freethought has won; and Mr. Chesterton, with his long-winded articles trying to explain away our victory, really only shows how thoroughly annoyed he is.

"To create a little flower," wrote William Blake, "is the labour of ages." But what do the wisdom of the poet and the labour of ages matter to modern Europe? There are not now, nor ever have been, dividends in either. Indeed, Europe has had the commonsense to starve and stone her poets and ages in the interests of religion and commercial development. "Where there are no dividends the pious perish."

Far from wishing "to create a little flower," modern religious and industrial "civilization" will soon, it hopes, be enabled to destroy vegetation itself. Hear this:—

Carbon monoxide . . . easily generated . . . no protection.

Lewisite . . . in six hours past medical aid. No grass will grow within three miles of the factory in which it is made.

In this quotation from the daily press the gentle inquirer may learn whither centuries of piety and industrialism are taking us. Modern European civilization has no use for flowers or for wisdom while poison-gas is cheap and mankind is ignorant. Wisdom has nothing to hope while a crude nationalism and religion are in the ascendant.

In a world given over temporarily to a collection of "sin-complexes," the fruits of centuries of religion, it is not astonishing that new "crimes" are invented more frequently, and with greater ease, than new brands of face-creams and new kinds of cigarettes. Anything disliked by authority tends to be criminal, and if possible punishable. The nature of the "crimes" in any particular country depends largely upon the mentality of its rulers. The mentality of Germany's rulers can be gauged from the fact that recently Juergen Ohlsen, whose name, by the way, is Scandinavian, has been "put into disgrace" for playing tennis with a Jewish boy. To this pitch of civilization has Christianity and its necessary reaction brought Central Europe by the invention of "sin"; an invention fatal to the moral health of humanity.

Dr. Archibald Fleming explains how the contradictions of the Bible arise. This is certainly better than denying that contradictions exist. He says, rather naïvely, that the "editor" of the Book of Genesis, "finding two different accounts of the Creation," simply decided to "put both in and so make sure that whatever is the more accurate form, no material fact shall be lost." The difference between the Menu, the number of guests present, and other "facts" connected with the Miracle of "Feeding *multum cum parvo*," is accounted for similarly, by Dr. Fleming. Our only surprise is that ten thousand different and contradictory stories are not thus scheduled. It reminds us of the schoolboy who said he had added the sum nine times, so he must be right. He proved it by producing nine different answers.

The Rev. Edward Bragg, in the *Methodist Recorder*, tells us of a different method of "harmonizing" contradictions. He writes about Matt. v. 13-16, which says the exact opposite of Matt. vi. 1-2. One tells us to live that men may see our good works, and the other tells us not to do so, and Jesus is the authority for both statements. Mr. Bragg approves of the "explanation" given by Dr. Fosdick to the effect that Jesus meant us not to put on "side"! Don't pretend to be better than you are, but also don't pretend to be worse. Of course it must be very easy at this time of day to know what JESUS MEANT. Even our modern "thought-readers" cannot be expected to read the minds of the long-ago dead.

The Rev. Leslie Church wants to quote Christ as "the Master Physician," but evidently does not like the crudities of that ghastly story of Jesus holding a conversation with a disease, treating it as a living supernatural "devil," arguing with it, and finally commanding it to change its domicile. Mr. Church says:—

It is impossible to diagnose the malady from which he suffered. The diseases which we call, to-day, insanity or epilepsy, were commonly supposed to be some form of devil-possession. The malign influence of evil spirits was held to be the cause of many physical troubles. In the account of St. Luke it seems that Jesus took care not to discuss the matter with the suffering man.

"Discussing the matter" with the patient would surely have been saner than asking the "evil spirit" his name, and telling the latter what he thought of him.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. RILEY.—Pleased you think so highly of *Letters to the Lord*. We have not heard from or of the person about whom you enquire for some years. Thanks for cuttings, but you will add to our obligation in the future if you will add the name and date of the papers from which the cuttings are taken.

H. L. STONE.—The subject of biblical prophecy is too hopelessly stupid for controversy in these columns. To argue with one who believes in it nowadays is like putting a logical demonstration before a dipsomaniac that the peculiar animals he sees have no existence outside his own brain.

S. WETHERBY.—We did not write in any spirit of discouragement, but only to remove any misunderstanding that might exist in the minds of those who are interested in the future of the *Freethinker*. We are keeping quite well, no time nor use for illness.

For Circulating and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—W. Don Fisher, 38.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9. All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen commences his lecturing this season a little earlier than usual. He will speak in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday next (September 22), at 7 p.m., on "Some Savageries of Civilization." We hope the local friends will do their best to make the meeting as widely known as possible. On Sunday, September 29, he will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool.

We have often commented on the remarkable want of understanding of most journalists when they touch on matters outside the mere chronicling of every-day occurrences. The latest comes from "Our Special Correspondent" of the *News-Chronicle*. Sir Arthur Woodward had been addressing the British Association on "Progress in the Study of Early Man," and had explained the causes which led to "some apes" being compelled to change their habits of living. On this comes the comment:—

Presumably he meant that the necessity of changing their mode of life caused them to think pretty hard and so develop their brains.

That strikes us a gem of journalistic ignorance worthy of preservation. We haven't seen an authoritative report of the speech, but presumably, Sir Arthur was expounding a theory of the causes which led a primitive type of mammal to take to the trees, evolved a comparatively upright statue owing to this, and then subsequently returned to life on the ground again. If "Our Special Correspondent" wishes to become acquainted with an outline of this theory, he might pay a visit to the British Museum and read *Aboreal Man*, by Professor Wood Jones, published some twenty years ago. A later elaboration of the general argument was given by Professor Elliot Smith in his *The Evolution of Man* (1924). But we do not expect that a newspaper man is likely to "waste time" on such reading. Why should he? He does not write for the kind of audience that would appreciate his researches.

We have received several letters thanking us for our new weekly feature, "Things Worth Knowing." We are pleased the reprints have been found interesting and useful, and we feel certain that as they accumulate they will provide "powder and shot" for most, and will also indicate a number of good books for which thoughtful readers may keep on the look-out. We have indeed long thought that a very useful weekly publication might be issued which should consist entirely of similar excerpts from the world's literature. Such a publication would aim at presenting all points of view, and thus enable readers to form something like an educated opinion, instead of being fed with the scare-head paragraphs, and idle gossip that make up most of the newspapers that are now issued. There is no reason why new books should be selected. There is indeed much wisdom in what was said by one man, "whenever a new book is published I read an old one." There is often little sense in rushing for a book, merely because it is new.

C-de-B. writes:—

It was a happy thought of yours to commence this feature, "Things Worth Knowing." The two extracts which have appeared earn their corn in the matter of space, and I should like to express my appreciation of the compiler's selection. A continuance of this item is a pleasure to come; you have already given readers full measure, but I suppose this last addition was a slap of affection. As you are invulnerable to flattery, I may just finish this note by saying that my record of pearls dived for in "To Correspondents" would make your hat blow off, but la' Sir, to quote Thornton Wilder "such authors live always in the noble weather of their own minds, and those productions which seem remarkable to us are little better than a day's routine to them."

We are pleased to have the appreciation of C-de-B., and can assure him that we are deriving considerable pleasure from compiling these expressions of opinion. Only book-lovers can realize the pleasure it gives us to go wandering round our bookshelves dipping into this and that author, recovering almost forgotten passages, and feeling that our own pleasure is being intensified by the knowledge that it is being shared by large numbers of people in all parts of the world. We feel as if we are holding a weekly "At Home" with some of the best men and women of the ages for guests.

Having had a month in the Northumberland and Durham area, Mr. G. Whitehead will spend a week in Birmingham commencing to-day (September 15), where meetings will be held in the Bull Ring. The local saints will co-operate at all the meetings, and we wish them every success.

The *New Statesman* for September 7 publishes a lengthy supplement giving a summarized history of the Abyssinian trouble. It is history in which not a single country comes with even a moderate degree of honour or honesty, but it is a record that is well-worth having by one. Italy selling its support on the one hand, and other nations ready to buy on the other, and offering in

payment land and people that did not belong to them. The *New Statesman* would do well to reprint the supplement in cheap pamphlet form. We may find ourselves forced into war, and it is well that the average Englishman who is frightfully ignorant of the series of events that have led up to the present situation should know what it is all about. A little knowledge might be of help in preventing future catastrophes. Of that, however, we are not at all certain, for the average man is slow to learn and quick to forget.

At the invitation of the Tottenham Adult School, Mr. R. H. Rosetti opened a discussion last Sunday morning on "The Wonderful Birth of Jesus." From the reception of the address, and the discussion that followed, it was evident that new light was being thrown on strongly held popular fallacies, and that is all to the good. The Executive of the N.S.S. is always ready to send a speaker to Debating Societies, Discussion Circles, etc., providing a fair and representative audience can be promised.

Students of European civilization have for a very long time been aware of the immense debt that Christian Europe owes to the Spanish Mohammedans for the revival of learning and culture in the Western World. When the Christian Church drew a Chinese wall round Europe, denounced pagan learning and pagan science, and threatened with the prison or the stake those who dared to question its authority, there was left but one weak place in its protective ramparts. This was in that part of Spain inhabited by the Mohammedans. By the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt, and with the agency of the Jews they became the preservers of a great deal of the Greek science and philosophy, and after the conquest of part of Spain in the eighth century, developed a learning and a culture to which Christendom contained no parallel. It was from this point that the light began to spread over the rest of Europe. There was no other point from which it could come. But for Mohammedan Spain, we might still be in the shadow of the Christian Dark Ages.

It was, of course, to the interest of the Christian Church to hide both the source from whence the light came, and the immensely beneficial character of the illumination. But scholars could not altogether hide the fact, and there has been a stream of acknowledgements for nearly a century. Humboldt, Ranke, Renan, to name some of the older ones, have pointed out the indebtedness of the world to Moorish Spain, Buckle dwelt upon the evils following the expulsion of the Moors, Prescott, in his *Ferdinand and Isabella* gave a brilliant chapter to the greatness of the Spanish Arabs, and Draper in his *Intellectual Development* gave an account of the debt to them. Since then the acknowledgements have been very numerous, even though complete justice has not yet been done them. The chief detailed developments since have been mainly on the artistic and æsthetic side; but to the main lines of the influence of the Spanish Arabs on Europe nothing essentially new has been added; and in spite of the efforts of a few religious writers to deprecate the debt owing to the Arabs, the case as laid down sixty or seventy years ago remains untouched.

In *The Splendour of Moorish Spain* (Watts & Co., 10s. 6d.), Mr. Joseph McCabe again retells the story of the Moorish civilization, with a required and necessary emphasis on the part played by it in the revival—in truth, the civilizing—of Western Europe. This cannot be done too often, for in spite of the large number of writers who have dealt with the subject in spite of the facts are kept in the background as much as possible. Owing to propagandist writers, as Mr. McCabe says, "an entirely false conception of European civilization has dominated our literature." This is due to the theory "that Christianity, which had mysteriously remained inoperative during six or seven centuries of undisturbed faith, began in an age of increasing scepticism and immorality to lead the nations of Europe back to civilized ways." Whatever beliefs one has in that direction

ought to be quickly dispelled by reading this work by Mr. McCabe. The history of the Moors in Spain is given from their settlement until their banishment, a banishment which with that of the Jews, left Spain, as Buckle said, ashamed of having what a nation should be proud to possess, and proud of possessing what a nation should be ashamed to have. The story is one that all should read, and those who wish to follow it in fuller detail, particularly on the artistic and philosophic side, will find it in two of the volumes of the useful *Legacy* series, *The Legacy of Islam* and *The Legacy of Israel*, published by the Oxford Press, and for those who wish to read a full and authoritative account of the expulsion of the Moors and its consequences on Spain, one could not recommend a better book than H. C. Lea's *Moriscos in Spain*. The ghastly business is there depicted by the hand of a master. *The Splendour of Moorish Spain* has a coloured frontispiece and eight half-tone plates. It is a capital book to incite further reading in one of the great chapters in European history. And Spain offers an outstanding example of religious bigotry beating down the economic interest of the whole community, and bringing a country to the verge of ruin. In other countries the economic and the religious factors have been mixed to an extent that puzzles the ordinary reader. In the case of Spain they are easily separable, and the appalling influence of unrestricted religion is quite clear.

Before dismissing this subject we should like someone to press upon the Syndics of the Oxford Press the advisability of translating and reprinting Renan's great work on *Averroes and Averroism*. The task is not likely to be undertaken by other publishers, most of whom show little appetite for doing more than "rook-ing" the genuinely reading public for the books they publish. It is a shame that Renan's book written some fifty years ago has never appeared in an English dress.

The Deistic Movement

(Continued from page 556)

A BILL for the further suppression of blasphemy and profaneness, brought this year (1721) before the House of Lords by Lord Willoughby de Broke, Dean of Windsor, and which would have proved a thorough restriction of all liberty of speech upon the doctrines of Christianity, was happily thrown out by a large majority. Nor was this all; an Act was passed for the relief of Quakers by substituting their affirmation for the oath; and in 1726, when Edward Ewall was tried at Stratford for denying the Trinity, the jury, knowing him to be an honest man, refused to convict. Henceforth the Unitarians felt tolerably safe. It was soon, however, to appear how far we were from having gained complete toleration. Free publication was by no means assured. In 1723 an edition of Servetus was seized by Bishop Gibson, and destroyed. The same prelate contrived to get hold of the MS. of Matthew Tindal's second volume, which, consequently, never saw the light.

Undeterred by his narrow escape, Woolston pursued his work, and in 1726, and the following years, published the *Six Discourses on the Miracles*, upon which his fame rests. They were dedicated to six bishops. They had no publisher's name on them, but were "Printed for the Author." Sold by him near Moregate, and by the Booksellers of London and Westminster." Infidelity was, for the first time, put before the people in common language. The older Deists had used the language of scholars, but Woolston attacked the Church with mother-wit and held its doctrines up to ridicule.

Woolston cites St. Hilary, who says: "There are many historical passages of the New Testament that,

if they are taken literally, are contrary to sense and reason, and, therefore, there is a necessity for a mystical interpretation." This he applies to all the miracles. If the story of sending the Devil into the swine had been recorded of Mohammed and not of Jesus, "our divines, I dare say, would have worked it up to a confutation of Mohammedanism. Mohammed would have been with them nothing less than a wizard, an enchanter, a dealer with familiar spirits, a sworn slave of the Devil; and his Mussulmans would have been hard put to it to write a good defence of him." If, when Pilate asked what evil had Jesus done, the merchants of the Temple and the owners of the pigs had come forward, it would not have been easy to vindicate his innocence.

In regard to the woman with a spirit of infirmity, Woolston says: "If the story of such a miracle had been related of any impostor in religion, of an arch-heretic, or popish exorcist, our divines would have flouted at it; they would have told us there was nothing supernatural and uncommon in the event, nor anything at all in it to be wondered at. Take the Devil out of this story, and there's no more in it than what is common for a simple, melancholy, and drooping woman, to be cheered and elated upon the comfortable advice and admonition of a reputedly good and wise man." He further remarks that the writings of the evangelists so abound with stories of Satan, Beelzebub, and of greater and less numbers of devils, and of demons and unclean spirits, more than any other previous histories, that one would think, if these stories were to be literally understood, the age in which Christ came was the one in which hell first broke loose.

The cursing of the barren fig-tree is termed "such an absurd, foolish, and ridiculous, if not malicious and ill-natured act in Jesus, that I question whether for folly and absurdity it can be equalled in any instance of the life of a reputed wise man." St. Augustine very plainly says that this act, upon the supposition that it was done, was a foolish one. To curse the fig-tree because hungry and disappointed was as foolish and passionately done as for another man to throw the chairs and stools about the house because his dinner is not ready. If he was of power to provide bread for others on a sudden, he might surely have supplied his own necessities, and so have kept his temper. But what is yet worse, the time of figs was not yet when Jesus looked and longed for them.

Did anyone ever hear or read of a thing more unreasonable than for a man to expect fruit out of season? What if a yeoman of Kent should go to look for pippins in his orchard at Easter (the supposed time when Jesus sought for these figs), and, because of a disappointment, cut down all his trees? Again, whose fig-tree was it? Jesus owned nothing. Even among the relics preserved by the Church of Rome there was not so much as a three-legged stool or a pair of nut-crackers that belonged to him. This miracle must be interpreted figuratively. Some of the Fathers explain the fig-tree as signifying human nature, others the Church, and others the Jewish nation.

In dealing with the miracles of turning water into wine and of the resurrection, the opportunities of mirth are so many that Woolston took the precaution of putting his gibes into the mouth of a Jewish Rabbi. This device, however, did not save him, any more than his constant plea that these things are an allegory.

The discourses were immensely successful. Voltaire, who was in England at the time, says that 50,000 copies were sold. Many copies were sent off

to America. Torrents of abuse flowed from clerical pens. No less than sixty pamphlets were written in opposition. The title of one was *Tom of Bedlam's Letter to his Cousin Tom Woolston*. Another was *For God or the Devil; or Just Chastisement, no Persecution: being the Christian Cry to the Legislature for Exemplary Punishment of Public and Pernicious Blasphemers, particularly that WRETCH Woolston*. The cry for persecution was, of course, taken up, and a prosecution for blasphemy instituted by the Attorney-General, who declared the *Discourses* to be "the most blasphemous book that was ever published in any age whatever."

At his trial at Guildhall before the Lord Chief Justice Raymond, in March, 1729, Woolston spoke several times himself, and, among other things, urged that "he thought it very hard to be tried by a set of men who, though otherwise very learned and worthy persons, were yet no more judges of the subjects on which he wrote than he himself was a judge of the most crabbed points of law." He was guilty on all the counts, Lord Raymond declaring that the court would not suffer it to be debated whether writing against Christianity in general was a temporal offence. He said, however: "We interpose only where the very root of Christianity itself is struck at, as it plainly is, by this allegorical scheme—the New Testament and the whole relation of the life and miracles of Christ being denied."

Woolston's counsel contended the prosecution should have been under the statute 9 and 10 William III., cap. 95; but the Chief Justice ruled that blasphemy was punishable at common law in addition to the statutory penalties. Woolston was sentenced to one year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. At the expiry of his time, being almost friendless, and unable to pay his fine, he was detained in the King's Bench Prison. Solicitation for his release were made by Drs. Chandler and Samuel Clarke, and this might have been procured upon the understanding that he would not offend again by promulgation of his views. This he nobly refused to promise. He esteemed the right of freely uttering his views even more than personal liberty. Accordingly, he lay in the then deplorably unhealthy cells of the debtor's prison until the prison fever brought release by death in 1733.

An indication that Rationalism was now spreading amongst the mass of the people appears in the writings of Thomas Chubb. Chubb was a journeyman glover (Leslie Stephen says tallow chandler; and, in fact, he had followed that occupation). He had little scholarship, and less boldness than Woolston, but was honest in his convictions and had a fairly level head. A careful study of the Bible had convinced him that its teachings were very different from the dogmas of orthodox Christianity—in short, as Voltaire happily expresses it, that Jesus Christ was of the religion of Thomas Chubb. His first tract only went the length of Arianism. Being patronized by Whiston, it got printed, and was followed by others, thirty-five of which were collected and published in 1730. In these and succeeding tracts Chubb, while not breaking from the name of Christianity, which he considered in its essence was not dogmatical, but practical, gradually developed all the positions of Deism.

(Reprinted).

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded)

I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.—Paul.

The Book Shop

FIVE lines of Swinburne decided the question:—

In hawthorn-time the heart grows light,
The world is sweet in sound and sight,
Glad thoughts and birds take flower and flight,
The heather kindles towards the light,
The whin is frankincense and flame.

The *Tale of Balen* had to be taken home, read, and squeezed on a shelf. W. H. Hudson quotes the last line in connexion with an essay chiefly about the Dartford Warbler, a very rare bird, owing to the activities of egg-collectors, and those who think they can own it, by snaring, killing, and having it stuffed. Having read the Bible for many reasons, and, as an amateur naturalist having theories of my own about birds, there may be some truth in James, Chapter 3 verse 7—every kind of bird hath been tamed of mankind. This is a sweeping statement, and throws more sentiment than sense into the world of birds. It is difficult to associate the biblical intimacy with warnings to each other of the smaller birds, and the quick silence in hedges and fields when a hawk is hovering in the sky. Man would have his hands full in reconciling the hawk to the little wren. He would have to be more active still in taming every species, and he would also have to have infinite knowledge of bird migration. But what of it? The cole tit, one of the most active and noisiest of garden birds, keeps calling out to me, "Good business, good business, good business, good." The thrush questions and answers, "Did you do it? Did you do it? You did, you did." The black-bird's language seems to defy translation into any human language; one can catch "Dee, dee, I doe," and the rest is a lyrical scramble of sweet notes. The homely sparrow in early spring says, "Will you? Yes! Will you? Yes! yes!" Men can fly—a bad imitation of a bird's flight, and as usual, the invention has been grasped the wrong end up; what benefit it has brought could be pitched into the sea together with the world's gold, and mankind be no worse off.

Lovers of Richard Jefferies' imperishable works will be pleased with the new edition of Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., *Out of Doors with Richard Jefferies*, 3s. 6d. net. It is good value and tastefully bound, nice print, and contains, "The Gamekeeper at Home," and generous extracts from other works of the author. These extracts are delightful; if anyone should think that Jefferies is merely a workman with pretty words it is a mistake; he will, in rural descriptions of the Gamekeeper, surprise you with this:—

"It is strange to think of, yet it is true enough, that, beautiful as the country is, with its green meadows and graceful trees, its streams and forests and peaceful homesteads, it would be difficult to find an acre of ground that has not been stained with blood." There is an index on the cover showing the sources of the extracts from the essays. It is difficult to refrain from further quotations, but on page 234 there is a remark about what Jefferies can see in the great luminous eyes of the cow: "enduring without passion." And on page 197, from "The Pageant of Summer," the real nature lover, noting the indifference of birds and animals to a thunderstorm, writes: "If but by reason and will I could reach the godlike calm and courage of what we so thoughtlessly call the timid turtle-dove, I should lead a nearly perfect life." Jefferies' intense sanity, with his feet on the earth, is a relief to readers; his value consists in the fact that he can be read again and again with mental refreshment, he gave no quarter to the imbecilities of Christianity, and with his positive attitude towards the sun he bequeathed to posterity a gift of which few writers are capable. It may be summed up in a line from Whitman. "But I shall be good health to you, nevertheless," and after fifty years of reading, the present writer has come to the conclusion that such generous giants are mighty scarce in the history of the world. A reader possessing all the works of Jefferies will be rich for a life-time.

C-DE-B.

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.

(Concluded from page 557)

Mexicans are not the only people who have found it necessary during the past centuries to curb the power of the Catholic Church.

France, Italy, Spain, Germany and England found it necessary, for the stability of their Government and for the welfare of their people, not only to curb, but in some instances to expel, the Church.

The pages of history speak for themselves.

The religiously deluded youth who assassinated President-Elect Obregon wore under his shirt, over his heart, a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe when he committed this dastardly deed.

To-day, a Mother Superior is serving a sentence of life imprisonment, for her participation in this crime. In a solemn religious ceremony she blessed the pistol that fired the fatal shot.

President Obregon was one of Mexico's most eminent statesmen.

And the evidence raises the suspicion that the Catholic Church supported the reprehensible and traitorous Huerta in his campaign of conspiracy against the Mexican people, which ended in the assassination of their beloved President—Francisco Madaro.

Even if the clergy had nothing to do with the murder of Madaro directly, they rejoiced at his death. For two days, following his burial, services of celebration were held in their churches throughout the land.

What would our Government do if a church persistently violated our laws, flaunted our efforts to establish a system of secular education, and was suspiciously associated with the assassination of our Presidents?

I think the attitude of the Mexican people, in this crisis, is one of great restraint and leniency.

It is only when the Catholic Church becomes an instrument of political intrigue that the Mexican people insist that its priests be silenced, and its subversive activities cease.

If an individual is known to be an habitual criminal, greater precautions are used to protect society from him.

A defiant, meddling, domineering and conspiring religious institution can easily become Public Enemy No. 1.

Thomas Jefferson must have had Mexico in mind when he said:—

"In every country and in every age the priest has been hostile to liberty, he is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own."

Mexico is now living under a Constitution which compares very favourably with, and, in some respects, is admirably in advance of our own.

The Mexican Constitution, like our own, provides for the secular education of its children, and for the rights of conscience in matter of religious belief.

We cannot object to another country's flattering us by its imitation of our laws, especially if those laws are the fundamental basis of our Government.

Our Constitution says:—

"That Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

And the present Mexican Constitution, concerning the same subject reads:—

"That Congress shall not enact any law establishing or forbidding any religion whatsoever."

It is these provisions of the Mexican Constitution which the Catholic Church takes exception to.

It wants to repudiate this Constitution for the one which provides for the existence of the "Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion as the national religion, without toleration of any other."

It also wants the statutes revived providing for the "Benefit of the Clergy."

But the Mexican people, like the peoples in other enlightened countries, insist that the temporal power of the Church shall no longer prevail in their country, and they insist that the Church confine its activities and functions solely and exclusively to matters of a religious nature.

The Church as a divine institution belongs in the same category as the belief in the flatness of the earth.

The days of theocracies are over. Religion cannot dictate to free Governments.

Neither individuals nor religious institutions can complain of the laws under which they live, if, because of their persistent violation of those laws, freedom is denied to them.

With a well-organized and well-oiled machinery of propaganda, the religious problem in various countries could be stimulated and magnified to such a menacing proportion, that it could embroil the entire world in one of those bitter and devastating religious wars, which have stained the pages of history with blood.

Religious intrigue has, on more than one occasion, precipitated bloodshed, and unless we are willing to take heed of the past, it will do so again.

Almost every Government in the world has had its religious problem, and if the United States were to interfere in each and every one of these countries, every time a religious dispute arose, our country would be meddling with the internal affairs of almost every nation on the face of the globe.

We ourselves are not without our racial and religious problems.

Let us make sure that our house is in order before we seek to arrange the affairs of others.

The American people believe that the religious situation in Mexico is purely a problem which concerns them and them alone, and it is our intention to let them solve it.

Secretary of State Hull has just issued an official communication, in which he states that the Government of the United States does not intend to interfere, in the slightest degree, with the religious affairs of Mexico.

He gives as his reason for this action, that not a single complaint has been received by him from an American living in Mexico, whose religious liberty has been abridged to the slightest degree.

The enlightened people of the United States want to live in peace and harmony with the rest of the peoples of the world, and with no greater degree of good will does this apply than to the people of our sister Republic, below the Rio Grande.

Courts of equity were formed for the purpose of administering justice, but one of the cardinal principles of these courts is, that those who seek redress shall come to them with clean hands.

Can the Catholic Church in Mexico do that?
Has it been free from the crimes which it now charges Mexico with perpetrating against her?

It is a matter of historical record that the Mexican people have been far more liberal with the Church, than the Church has been with them.

The present political leaders of Mexico are men of the highest ideals, and have dedicated themselves to the cause of freedom, and I am confident that future generations will honour General Calles, President Cardanes, and other Mexican leaders, with the same devotion that we honour George Washington and the Revolutionary Fathers.

To enjoy the fruits of a Revolution is quite a different thing from enduring the suffering and hardship of living through one.

I cannot conclude this defence of the Mexican people in their present religious controversy more appropriately than by firmly and emphatically stating that there is a greater degree of religious liberty in Mexico to-day than there was, at any time, during the four hundred years of its domination by the Catholic Church.

The Blessings of Poverty

A SATIRE

GREAT and manifold are the blessings of poverty! and many there be who share them, yet, we have still a few who do not partake of this glorious bounty, who do not revel in this realized dream of human happiness. They rather choose to become martyrs, to abstain from these earthly joys. Noble souls! The words are wrung from us. What do we not owe them? How many of us for want of thought might have become entangled in the snare of riches, and have known to-day the wretchedness of being well fed, and properly clad. To think of being able to pay our way in the world. Never to hear the sweet musical tones of the grocer, the milkman, or the landlord, stealing on our ear like sighs of summer's eve. To have thus lost the poetry and harmony of life.

Behold our benefactor the capitalist! Hear how he groans under the burden of his riches, yet how manfully he forces the champagne down his throat. How he rises to the occasion and goes on a motor tour, and how in the sublime struggles of his soul he lies a-bed till late, cultivating the stern virtue of laziness, and all this while the worker is dreaming his life away in some shady den, indulging in that most epicurean of pleasures, early rising, and enjoying from time to time the keen satisfaction of seeing his table diminishing, being thus saved the trouble of working his jaws.

Behold also our friend the parson! With what admirable spirit he ever seeks to abstain from indulging in the blessings of poverty. How he drags him off to some friend to suffer the penance of drinking tea. How divinely he urges against small collections, and how, true to the injunctions of his master, he is ready to accept the hardships of a church with a larger salary. Such are the achievements of those mighty spirits of adversity, while we the children of inferior clay are content to exclaim, How sweet are the blessings of poverty!

THOMAS K. SCOTT.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SHAKESPEAREAN SCEPTICISM

SIR,—I regret to find that Minnermus still writes derisively of those who question the traditional authorship of the Shakespeare plays. I was in hopes that my article and the more recent one of Lieut.-Colonel Douglas (author of *Lord Oxford was Shakespeare*) would, at least, have induced caution. Surely it is now for Minnermus, in one of his weekly articles, to justify himself at length. At present his attitude seems an example of the "many hurried pieces of journalism" that he laments, just that of the orthodox Christian about theories of the Christ Myth. I need hardly say that to the hustling journalist both call for curt and cavalier treatment. Literary heresy calls for more considerate treatment in the *Freethinker*.

If Minnermus is disposed for a public debate there is an excellent opportunity. I have undertaken to lecture on the subject to the South London Branch of the N.S.S. Both the Secretary and myself will gladly make it a debate if an opponent is forthcoming.

W. KENT.

THE PUBLIC AND A PARSON

SIR,—Lansdown Cemetery is of special interest to students of nineteenth century history and architecture as it was formerly the garden of the famous recluse, William Beckford, the author of *Vathek*, and it contains the tower built by that eccentric personage in 1831; a landmark that can be seen from miles around.

After the death of William Beckford, his daughter, the late Duchess of Hamilton, presented the garden with the tower to the Rector of Walcot Parish, Bath, and it was then used as a cemetery. Thousands of pounds must

have been taken in telling plots of this land for graves, and, seeing that the land cost the Rector nothing beyond the charge for conveyance, Beckford's garden must have proved a very profitable gift, and provides no excuse for exorbitant charges for burials.

The succeeding Rectors of Waleot felt under no obligation to repair the tower. Beckford's dining-room in the lower portion was fitted with pew seats and used as a cemetery chapel, the rest of the building, beyond a little spasmodic patchwork, was allowed to fall into decay.

A few years ago the building caught on fire, through the over-heating of a flue, and considerable damage was done. The Rector appealed to the public for funds to restore this well known landmark and object of interest. Money was forthcoming and the work was put in hand, but to the dismay of students of Beckford lore, it was found that the dining-room had not been restored but altered into a chapel to suit the requirements of the Rector, and although Nonconformist money was readily taken for the alleged restoration, no Nonconformist is allowed to hold a burial service in the chapel, but must conduct the whole service in the open air.

Beckford's ornamental iron shutters have been removed from the windows, and the structure has been modernized out of all recognition as a Beckford relic.

Need we wonder that the Church makes enemies, and parsons preach to empty pews?

ERNEST CRAWFORD.

HEGELIAN MATERIALISM

SIR,—The first counter-attack, by the Apologists for "Hegelian Materialism" seems to me to be rather weak—dialectically. Perhaps the more experienced ones are "waiting to see."

Briefly, in reply to A. Sells, I did not "compare Vanoc to Inge." Dean Inge tries to justify his outlook on life, by the Philosophy of Plotinus. The British Revolutionary Communists try to justify their outlook—and policy—by the Philosophy of "Hegelian Materialism." I merely pointed out that both outlooks—or attempted justifications—as Metaphysical, not Scientific. Then, I reminded "our" readers that Primitive Religion—Developed Religion—Old Metaphysics Hegelian Idealism—and New Metaphysics Hegelian Materialism—are all attempts, by strictly limited human mind, to comprehend an unlimited "Universe." They, all, have failed. All are Metaphysical, not Scientific.

I suggest to A. Sells—and others—that there is an "Historical Materialism" and an "Evolutionary Economics" which are Scientific, not Metaphysical. It is upon that kind of "Historical Materialism" that Scientific Atheists work.

All Hegelian Materialists admit that three of these Theses have failed: The Thesis of Many "Gods"—Incomprehensibles: The Thesis of One "God"—Incomprehensible: the Thesis of Three "Gods"—Three Incomprehensibles.

Now they postulate a "Triune Process" of Three Incomprehensible Theses—which has (have?) no objective existence at all! THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE, "Gods," "Absolute," "Ultimate," "Creator," "Etcetera," Oombah, are put into New Cloths. The Ghost—Wholly Ghost—inside the Cloths is still the SAME OLD GHOST.

These failures are due to Ignorance and/or Superstition. Neither A. Sells, nor any other Hegelian Materialist, is entitled to say that—in every case—they are based upon "Roguerie."

When will some Atheists have enough sense to recognize that Sincerity—to the point of a painful death—often goes with Ignorance and Error? Physical Force is no Remedy.

In conclusion, A. Sells, first of all, writes that my "conclusions are his (my) own entirely." In his fourth paragraph he coupled me with Chapman Cohen as Twins "high up on a Freethought pinnacle of mental verbosity!" I have received some dialectic compliments in my time; but, never yet, have I had the honour to be put upon a par with Chapman Cohen in Dialectic. I thank A. Sells for the comparison and compliment.

ATHOSO ZENOO.

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 16, Mr. F. A. Marshall—"The Influence of the Churches on Education."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1), 11.0, Joseph McCabe—"Changing Human Nature."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. E. T. Bryant.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 15, Mr. L. Ebury. High-bury Corner, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, September 16, Mr. L. Ebury. Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Wednesday, September 18, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Sunday, September 15, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, September 17, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Manor Street, Clapham, 8.0, Friday, September 20, Mrs. E. Grout.

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

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 *Free-thinkers* on sale at The Kiosk.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

ACCRINGTON MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, September 15, Mr. J. Clayton.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Bull Ring): Mr. G. Whitehead will speak.

BLYTH: 7.0, Sunday, September 15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, September 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE: 7.30, Tuesday, September 17, Mr. J. Clayton.

CRASINGTON (Lane): 8.0, Wednesday, September 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street): 7.30, Mr. R. T. White.

HETTON: 8.0, Tuesday, September 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, September 15, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, September 19, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 8.0, Wednesday, September 18, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, September 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WORSTHORNE: 7.30, Friday, September 13, Mr. J. Clayton.

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TO THE LORD

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