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FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions

Force and the Gospel

EVERYONE knows the story of the public-school pupil who said of his headmaster that no one could possibly be as wise as he looked. In a reverse direction I often feel that way with regard to some of our prominent ecclesiastics. He, or they, cannot possibly be as silly as he appears or they appear to be. I qualify this assertion with "some," first, because the statement would not be true of all, and, second, because there is a genius in folly as there is in wisdom. Ever since I first met the present Bishop of London, for example, I have always recognized him as being as remarkable at one end of the mental scale, as, say, Shakespeare was at the other. Winnington Ingram's achievements in stupidity are of the kind that deserve the name of genius. They are of that spontaneous, effortless perfection that is the sign manual of greatness. They are not the expression of a character that is likely at any time to drop into passable wisdom or a sort of working common-sense. They are there, superb of their kind, flawless, without the least sign of an indication of an everyday logicity.

But, while the Bishop of London stands in his own line without a peer, there are others in his own profession that one regards with a certain amount of suspicion. An examination of what they say, and the way in which they say it, causes them to stand out as pretenders, second rate performers, in a region in which none but those of the first degree of excellence should be permitted to enter. What they say has usually enough nonsense to prevent its being taken for wisdom, but it has also enough wisdom to prevent its ever achieving the distinction of finding a place in an authoritative anthology of human stupidity. Their sayings neither command admiration for their subtle foolishness nor cause one to marvel at the way in which wisdom is decked out with cap and bells. They are as common as an ordinary news-

paper leading article, as empty as an Easter sermon, as vacuous as a political harangue. Such expressions do nothing else than just exist. If there were an intellectual Vagrancy Act in force they would be impounded for having no visible means of support.

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A Puzzling Passage

These solemn reflections have been set down as a consequence of what I take to be an attempt of Archbishop Temple to achieve distinction in a region where very many of his ecclesiastical brethren hold distinguished positions. I think it a great blunder on the part of Dr. Temple to risk adventure in an endeavour in which he is almost certain to fail. For I do not think that he could deliver an address, write an article, or preach a sermon without there being a danger of something sensible emerging in the course of his effort. Of course, I omit from this generalization the reading of a Church lesson, or the repetition of a set prayer from the Church ritual. But he could not, as can Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, deliver a speech that will conspicuously illustrate the Euclidean definition of a line as length without *breadth*. Sooner or later Dr. Temple would be definitely wrong enough for you to disagree, or right enough for you to applaud. In the endeavour to be sensibly silly he would almost certainly end in being inconsistently sensible.

So I am puzzled to know why he gave birth to the following which I find printed in some of the daily papers for September 25:—

Our first duty as Christians is to proclaim the Gospel as the power that can banish war, but to go on from that to deny the right of the Christian to use force for the suppression of lawless force is, I, am convinced, heretical.

Presumably, Dr. Temple means by "the Gospel," the exclusion of physical force, otherwise it would not be in such direct opposition to "force" as indicated in the passage. It cannot mean, unless, Dr. Temple is trying to outdo our late Prime Minister, that force should only be used when the end aimed at is one that must be gained and which cannot be achieved by other means. That is a proposition no one disputes. When the Chicago gangster cries "Stick 'em up," he uses no force if the order is promptly and efficiently obeyed. Mussolini would use no force against Abyssinia if the Abyssinians would give him what he wants. The late German Emperor would have had no use for his "shining armour" if the world would have given him what he required. Never should we have used force in India, or Africa, or anywhere else if we could have got what we wanted without it. In human affairs the possibility of the use of physical force is a latent threat; when used it is the forcible imposition of the will of one party on another party. And if you have any regard for logic or common sense, you cannot say, "I believe that

the *only* way to manage things is by the abolition of physical force, but if you do not act as I think you ought to act, then I shall just 'knock your block off,' for by so doing you admit your non-physical force method is only of use if it operates. And I do not know that anyone ever disputed that.

* * *

The Christian Way

It may be, of course, that Dr. Temple, after studying James Douglas and the Bishop of London, is trying what he can do in the manner of these well-known Christian teachers. And if he means that the Christian plan of salvation is, always preach the power of the "gospel," but never trust to it, if he means that, then I agree that this fully harmonizes with Christian practice in all directions. If, for example, God Almighty should so far forget his obligations to the British Empire as to permit George the Fifth to have another illness, Dr. Temple and his brother of Canterbury will at once call the attention of God to what has happened, and they will say that the question of cure is in his hands. But that will not prevent a small army of doctors and nurses being in attendance, and they certainly will not spend the time on their knees praying to the Lord. And if the King were to die, these same clerical gentlemen would be as certain that God had called him home, as they were when they said God might cure him. They say, in the sense of the citation given above, "As believers in the Gospel we believe that the cure of the King rests with God. But that must not prevent us acting as though He has nothing at all to do with it."

In war, Christian armies have marched with Christian parsons, and the inhabitants of the countries invaded have been told, "We bring you the gospel of love, a gospel which alone can end war and introduce an era of brotherhood, but if you will not love one another in the way we wish you to, and above all, love us, then, woe betide your degenerate bodies, for while we believe, through the teaching of our Saviour, that only by discarding force can love and peace be brought to the world, yet we also believe, that when the all-conquering gospel fails, then we have in reserve the gospel of 'pike and gun,' with the aid of which we mean to teach you the blessings of Christian peace." It reminds one of the man who took his boy out to Kipping Forest for a day's holiday, and having got there he solemnly addressed his offspring, "I have spent two shillings on you so that you might enjoy yourself. Now, you little beggar, just enjoy yourself, because if you don't I'll knock your blasted head off."

* * *

Theory and Practice

I do not deny that this kind of argumentation runs true to Christian tradition. Those who are used to theological discussions will find nothing unusual in Dr. Temple's arguing that only the gospel of Christ alone can bring peace, but if it doesn't, then we must go to war in order to secure it. And putting it as Dr. Temple puts it, it may cross the minds of the more alert believers, that if we must go to war to stop war, then the gospel of Christ loses its value as a road to world-peace. But then, again, it may dawn upon these same believers that after all this is only the sociological analogue of the belief in three gods that are one god, and of the three persons that are yet one person, likewise that if we fail to think of these three as being both separate and identical we shall without doubt perish everlastingly. Still, there is the danger of suggesting that a world at war is a bad prelude to peace, just as threatening to knock a boy's head off is not the best method of encouraging a state of jollifi-

cation. It looks as though we can, after all, do without the gospel of Christ; we may even do better without it than we have done with it, and may conclude that priests have only a decorative value when a country welcomes the return of its conquering army. They and their creed are about as useful as the cross on the crown of a king, or the bells on the cap of a fool.

* * *

Christianity and War

To be quite serious, the broad fact fronting Dr. Temple and his fellow preachers is that the threat to the peace of the world has for many centuries come from Christian countries, and from Christian countries alone. Not merely that, but all the non-Christian world has learned to look to Christian countries for leadership, and tutorship in the art of international slaughter. China and Japan have never shown any great eagerness to borrow our religion, but the Japanese, always a warlike people, freely and fully admitted that Christians knew more about the business of war than they did, and so sat at our feet as pupils. And China, always a naturally peaceful nation, had to master the lesson that the only thing that would make them secure against Christian rapacity is to convert itself into a more warlike people. It is true we have given both these people the Gospel, which they did not want, but we have also sold them the arms and munitions by which they could travel along the same road the Christian world has marched. And these Eastern peoples have not failed to ask themselves, if centuries of undisputed supremacy of Christianity in European countries have never developed among the Christian nations mutual trust, mutual honesty, or a sense of mutual justice, why should they imagine it will have any better effect among others? And even now the present talk among Christians about peace is not a product of a sense of the futility of war, or the beastliness of war, but only of the recognition that war is getting more costly and more dangerous. We are leaving the time when we can have wars a long way from home, and when the cost is comparatively moderate. Even the general stand against Italy has far more to do with the desire to prevent the development of another colonizing and war-like power that it has to do with the establishing of a reign of justice and decency. We are not embracing decency, we are being driven into it. We are no voluntary worshippers at the shrine of international honesty; we are conscripts to a degree of righteousness that we are beginning to see is necessary to our continued existence.

Two or three Sundays ago Dr. Temple preached a broadcast sermon, part of which was taken up with the fatuous theme that if all Christians resolved there should not be any more war, war would disappear from the world. *If all Christians resolved!* One could say with much greater truth that if all Christians were suddenly overtaken with an epidemic of common sense Christianity itself would disappear. In itself that might not do away with war, but common sense is catching and so it might be a very long step in that direction.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

How so many absurd rules of conduct, as well as so many absurd religious beliefs, have originated we do not know; nor how it is that they have become, in all quarters of the world, so deeply impressed on the mind of man; but it is worthy of remark that a belief constantly inculcated during the early years of life, while the brain is impressionable, appears to acquire almost the nature of an instinct; and the very essence of an instinct is that it is followed independently of reason.

Darwin.

Heating Hell Hotter!

"A large portion of society derives its sole emolument from the belief of Christianity as a popular faith."—*Shelley*.

"The book of Good News under your interpretation, tells people not only that they may go and be damned, but also that, unless they are lucky, they must inevitably."—*Landor*.

"If all religions but one are certainly wrong, what is the chance of one being certainly right?"—*G. W. Footc.*

SHAKESPEARE, the supreme genius in the world's literature, has told us that "our little life is rounded with a sleep." This material similitude of death to sleep is a thought which has possessed a peculiar fascination for great writers, both ancient and modern. Priests, on the other hand, have ever sought base advantage from the fact that man is mortal, although man's span of life is longer than other animals. They have taught their supine followers that death is the most dreadful evil. All the terrors that theologians could gather from savage nations were added to increase the horrors, and they invariably tried to paralyse reason with the stranglehold of fear.

The priests of the old Pagan faiths always used fear as a weapon, but the advent of the Christian Superstition actually deepened this terror. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian World. To visionaries such as Catharine of Siena, or idealists like Emanuel Swedenborg, it may have been different, but men as fine as William Cowper and Doctor Samuel Johnson were scared. As for the uncultured masses death has been, and is, the King of Terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Marcus Aurelius and Socrates would have scorned with lifted eyebrows. Recall how the grand old Pagans looked death in the face without flinching. Epictetus says proudly: "Why should we fear death? For where death is, there are we not; and where we are, there death is not." Marcus Aurelius is no less emphatic. Listen to his words: "It is childish folly to be afraid of what is natural." These old-world Pagans invested death with dignity, but Christians fear death as children fear to go in the dark. The Christian Religion actually added fresh terrors to death in the thought of being cut off in sin. Even to-day the Church of England, the State-aided form of faith of this country, has a prayer against sudden death, which the ancient Pagans regarded as best of all.

The clergy have found it a very profitable business to heap horror upon horror's head in connexion with death. "Prepare for death; flee from the wrath to come," have been their raucous cries. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," shout the evangelists, with throats of leather and lungs of brass. By such appeals to fear and imagination it has made a terror of what should be accepted with serenity. Multitudes of people have been driven mad by the sheer horror of religion. Spurgeon, the most popular preacher of the last century, taught and wrote that the majority of the human race was destined to everlasting torture in full view of their deity. To-day the Roman Catholic Church, the most powerful of all Christian Churches, has not abated one solitary spark of its fiery damnation, and the Protestant Salvation Army actually works the same threat into its commercial trade-mark, "Blood and Fire," and the tambourines of its devotees are full of money.

The clergy fully recognize that such ideas of an alleged hereafter are pure barbarism. In controversy, however, with Freethinkers it is their pleasant

fashion to explain, smilingly, that, in attacking the savage dogma of a literal hell, the Intellectuals are but flogging a dead horse. That quadruped, however, has a distressing habit of resurrecting when the Freethinkers are out of sight, and that there is plenty of kick left in that ancient brute is demonstrated by the literature issued for the benefit of innocent believers, and also that published for the rising generation. One religious tract, sold in quantities for distribution, bears the arresting title: "What is there after death?" and it preaches a hell of literal fire. Here is a passage which shows how far religion is in harmony with modern civilization:—

I wonder if you die unsaved whether you will see your believing wife after death? She, afar off, and happy with her Saviour; and you with the curse of unforgiven sin upon you in hell. And some of your children are in heaven, and others are on their way. And when you die your Christless death, will you for a moment see afar off your little ones with the light of heaven on their faces, and the peace of God upon their heads? Oh! these eternal separations! Families broken up for all eternity. Some in light and some in darkness.

That "gem of purest ray serene" is for adults. In a booklet, bearing the imprint of Mowbray & Co., and entitled, *The Blessed Sacrament, Drawn from the Writings of the Saints*, the old barbaric ideas are stated with naked realism. This publication, it should be borne in mind, is used for young people who are being prepared for their first communion, and such ideas are forced upon them at the most impressionable time of their lives. This is the sort of thing the clergy teach privately, while, in public, they flatter the Freethinkers by a pretended retreat:—

We are beings who have once been born, but who now can never die. We came out of nothing, but we cannot go into nothing again. O God forbid, the merciful great God forbid, we should pass into nothing! When they who have led lives of pleasure, of covetousness, of self-willed sin—when such, I say, come to be upon their death-beds, they may perhaps feel that awful, impossible wish that they could pass into nothing; for to be nothing were better than to be in the strong grip of Satan, and the intolerable heats of Hell. Dying sinners may feel that their immortality is to be an unendingness of pain, of remorse, of despair; and the deadness and the dumbness of passing into nothing, though it surely would make even a dying sinner shudder, would be more bearable to think of than the life in hell—the living in fire, the feeding on fire, the breathing fire, the being clothed in fire, the thirsting for cool water where all, all is fire—above, beneath, on this side, on that side, a far stretching country and burning fire.

Freethinkers, who imagine that one of the oldest and most barbarous religious dogmas is losing its hold on the national mind, should find out what the clergy are doing behind the scenes. Away from the public eye these objectionable dogmas are still being assiduously propagated by the priests. Wherever the clergy retain their power they still preach a hell of literal fire and eternal damnation. In this country the propaganda is largely subterranean, but in Ireland the Protestant pastors are as emphatic as the Romish priests. In the United States itinerant evangelists flame the fires of hell over a continent. In Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, Protestant pastors are as reactionary as Greek Church patriarchs in the East of Europe. It is worthy of the followers of a two-thousand years old creed, who, outraging the culture of the age in which we live, pray for rain, with all the gusto displayed by their dark-skinned prototypes in savage nations.

It will not do in the twentieth century in a country pretending to civilization and culture. If you are a reading man you will remember that many years ago it was decided by the Court of Arches that a disbelief in the personality of Satan did not invalidate a man's right to be a State Church communicant. You will also remember that Lord Westbury, in the matter of "Essays and Reviews," in addressing the jury, uttered the weighty and memorable words: "Gentlemen, your verdict kills the Devil and puts out Hell-fire." The verdict of the larger jury of the entire civilized and educated world is now dead against Satan and his flaming abode. This is a verdict that should bring relief and delectation to all except those hardened professional reactionaries who use the lever of fear with which to force open the doors that they may exploit their less-educated and more-innocent fellow citizens. Fortunately, the hope that an ignorant and superstitious minority can always bend the Intellectuals to its will is sheer illusion. The terror of death is passing away because the Christian Religion is decaying, and all the tortuous ways of priests will not materially resist the process of dissolution.

MIMNERMUS.

Eating One's God

III.

IN the mysteries of Mithra there was a sacramental banquet celebrated in honour of the ascension of the sun. It was by no means partaken of by the "vulgar," but reserved for the "initiates." One gets some idea of the kind of "initiation" the old mystery religions imposed upon their true believers if the "mysteries" in connexion with Freemasonry nowadays are considered. Hocus-pocus clearly describes all this kind of religious nonsense, and it is interesting to find out how that term arose. It is generally considered to be the ribald Protestant contraction of "Hoc est corpus" (from *Hoc est corpus meum*, "This is my body"). Everybody knows the magical incantation used by the ordinary conjuror when he is changing a rabbit into a playing-card—he admits himself it is "hocus-pocus"; and how any sane person can describe a priest's performance at mass in any other way is impossible for me to conceive.

The Mithraic supper was so similar to the Christian one that it aroused the ire of Justin Martyr, who roundly declared it to be a wicked imitation of the "Last Supper" of Christ by evil demons. And even Tertullian warned simple Christians of the dangerous resemblance. Whether these two eminent Church Fathers were aware of the fact that it was Christianity which copied the ridiculous rite from Paganism we are not told.

For, of course, eating "bread and wine" in this way, accompanied or not by a "love-feast" was characteristic of a number of these religions. Preserved Smith, in his *History of Christian Theophagy*, says:—

Attis, the Phrygian God who was born of a virgin and who died and rose again at Easter-time, also left his followers a sacramental meal. His worshipper could say, "I have eaten from the drum, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have carried the earthen dish." From pictures we know that this latter was carried on the head in exactly the style in which, in the Greek Church, the holy food of the eucharist was carried by the deacons. Another point of similarity between the communions of Attis and Christ was the use in each of fish.

Jesus Christ symbolized as a fish, or a fish symbolized by Jesus Christ, is, of course, well known. He was called *Ichthus*, but, says Preserved Smith, "this was not, as commonly stated, an anagram, but a genuine case of syncretism. He was called the Big Fish and his worshippers little fishes." There is quite a lot about fish in the Gospels, and Roman Catholics consider it is fasting when they make a hearty meal of fish on Fridays. At all events, there can be little doubt, and it is confirmed by inscriptions in the catacombs, that loaves and fishes were often eaten at the Eucharist celebrated by the early Christians.

But it is the "mysteries" of Dionysus which bear such a close resemblance to those of Jesus. Dionysus was the god of wine, but his story seems mixed up to such a degree with that of Bacchus and Osiris that it is difficult to say which is which, or whether they are not all the same. It is even difficult to say whether he is the son of Jupiter by Semele or by his daughter Proserpina. At all events, it is the last-named Bacchus (or Dionysus) who was given by Hera to the Titans, "who tore him to pieces, boiled his body and ate it with herbs. His heart was taken to Zeus and Semele from whom he was reborn. As this doctrine was spiritualized his resurrection was represented in a different way, and was followed by an ascension to heaven." And this used to be enacted symbolically all over Greece. A kid or a bull was torn to pieces, and fragments of the flesh were given to the worshippers to be eaten raw. And Frazer points out that when offence was taken at the idea of killing a god "the myth was changed to make the deity the sacrificer and communicant. Thus we find a god sacrificed to himself and eating his own flesh." Frazer also points out that "in Chios and Tenedos, Dionysus was represented by a human victim, who was subjected to the barbarous rite of holy cannibalism."

Examples could be multiplied to prove that "Last Suppers" were common to most religions of pagan antiquity. Bread and wine, wine and blood—all these terms were known to their votaries. Christianity taught nothing new whatever in the institution of the Eucharist. The doctrine of the "Real Presence" is part and parcel of pagan mysteries; and it was just as vigorously defended then as it is now by the people who believe in it whether as Christians or as occultists. For example, here is a passage from Mrs. Annie Besant's *Esoteric Christianity*:—

It is important to understand the change which takes place in this Sacrament. . . . The truth which underlies what is called the doctrine of Transubstantiation is extraordinarily misunderstood by Protestants. . . . The substance that is changed is the idea which makes a thing to be what it is; "bread" is not mere flour and water; the idea which governs the mixing, the manipulation of the flour and water, that is the "substance" which makes it "bread," and the flour and the water are what are technically called the "accidents," the arrangements of matter that give form to the idea. With a different idea, or substance, flour and water would take a different form as indeed they do when assimilated by the body. . . . What, then, is this change of substance in the materials used in the Eucharist? . . . The new idea is that of the Christ nature and life, fitted for the building-up of the spiritual nature and life of man. That is the change of substance; the objects remain unchanged in its "accidents," its physical material, but the subtle matter connected with it has changed under the pressure of the changed idea.

It must be wonderful to be able to write like that—particularly when one has been for so many years sharing the plain common-sense of such a vigorous

thinker as Charles Bradlaugh, but it is difficult to understand the change in the "substance" of Mrs. Besant, for all that. The point to be noted, however, is that she really believes that a magical formula chanted by a priest over a wafer of flour and water changes it—though whether she believed the hocus—pocus of Roman Catholicism I do not know. The Catholic catechism is quite plain on the matter:—

Q. "When are the bread and wine changed into the Body and Blood of Christ?"

A. "The bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, when the words of consecration, ordained by Jesus Christ, are pronounced by the priest in the the Holy Mass." And further, "Christ is received whole and entire."

So that ought to be clear enough even for the very unlearned.

This brings me to another point. Do those of our literary men, the great converts to the Church, really believe all this unmitigated nonsense? One can understand some poor fools doing so because they believe that priests are in direct communion with God or "Our Lord" or both. But our *intelligentsia*? Preserved Smith says: "The expressed opinion of a Roman Philosopher as to the Real Presence is very much what the expressed opinion of a modern scientist is now: 'When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus,' says Cicero, 'we use a common figure of speech; but do you imagine that anybody is so insane as to believe the thing he feeds on is god?' The answer then, as now, was in the affirmative." Mr. Smith is right. But what a commentary on our boasted education and civilization!

H. CUTNER.

The Growth of Freethought

WHEN the writer was a small boy living in a village of about 1,000 inhabitants, there was in that community only one *avowed* Freethinker, who was looked on askance as a friend of the devil's, and therefore avoided by all people with Church or Chapel connexion. It was frequently remarked in awe-stricken tones that he would not allow a Bible in his house! For one, I do not now believe this. At any rate he was a man of intelligence somewhat above the average; a decent, well-living, public-spirited citizen—and it is ridiculous to suppose that in arriving at his opinions he had never read the Bible. Of course, if he did actually exclude that book from his abode it may have been out of consideration for the clear-mindedness of the young members of his family. At any rate it will be seen how he was regarded by his orthodox, pious and Bible-loving neighbours. He was a follower of Bradlaugh when that heroic man was fighting his tremendous battle for freedom against a believing, bigoted, and besotted House of Commons.

If our village of 1,000 population contained one staunch and stalwart Freethinker at that time, it is reasonable to infer that throughout the British Isles there would then be 35,000 to 40,000 persons of the same type as my old neighbour. It is impossible to estimate how many *unavowed* Freethinkers there were then—or are now. But everyone—believer or unbeliever—is bound to agree in this—that during the last half century Freethought has made remarkable progress. It has made no great spectacular leaps forward. But it is steadily and slowly gaining

more and more adherents, and gradually consolidating its position by leavening the minds of the descendants of many of those who were prominent and active supporters of the Faith and of a clerical system. As Bradlaugh himself said, "There can be no compulsion in Freethought." If any person has not enough mental independence and virility to arrive at conclusions for himself he is not likely to be found in the ranks of Freethought; and in the interests of the Greatest of Causes he is no doubt better outside.

No, there can be no compulsion in Freethought. When Bradlaugh said so it was in the course of the crushing rejoinder he administered to a clerical heckler, who sought to twit him with the defection of some of his supporters, notably Mrs. Besant. Bradlaugh calmly remarked that the question came strangely from one who was a professed follower of Jesus, of whom it is recorded that in his last extremity all his disciples forsook him and fled. Economic conditions and social pressure employed by ecclesiasticism have a great deal to do in keeping many unavowed Freethinkers from declaring themselves. Professional men equally with tradesmen and workmen are bound to risk losing employment or custom if they openly renounce the Church and embrace Atheism. Only a very small percentage of such people can afford (or have the courage) to do so. Plenty of people frankly join the Church for purely business reasons. With those who have no firm opinions either way, but who are identified with some Church, mental struggle means nothing. So long as they can secure, retain and extend their *material* prosperity by repeating and gabbling the shibboleths of the Faith; "teaching" in Sunday School; taking round the offertory bags and saying "ditto" to parson or pastor, they are bovinely content with their shallow existence. Of such gross material are the double-dyed hypocrites made, Horatio! Hypocrisy and lying go well together. But the astute leaders of the churches do not seek to test their supporters. Lying has become second nature with them; and they do not care who panders to them so long as they can maintain the economic conditions and exert the social pressure which keep (on the surface at all events) a majority of the people identified with ecclesiasticism.

One effect of the growth of Freethought is seen in the attitude of people to Sunday. Fifty years since anyone who took a Sunday paper was looked upon as a lost soul. Therefore it had mostly to be perused in furtive seclusion. Walking, except to Church and Sunday School, was not the thing. Travelling in vehicles of any kind was most damnable. But even then there were devil-delighting and irresponsible individuals who broke the rules. Secular books and periodicals, secular songs, even in some houses secular conversations, were on the prohibited list. Naturally and inevitably there were rebels who defied the prohibitions. More hypocrisy. Many people could not speak or act as they wished to do. They could not speak or act openly and frankly. The dead bands of the saints stayed the natural exercise of natural faculties. The Church ruled with a rod of iron over its adherents.

Our grandfathers who were loyal elders, deacons, churchwardens and sidesmen, would be horrified if they could see the modern Sunday with its papers, holiday excursionists, hikers and picnickers, concerts and cinemas. Yes, Freethought is growing, and the Rev. Mr. Greenfield is coming into his own. The Saints of Human Happiness are ousting the old dead ones. It will yet take some time before all those who are now enjoying the benefits that Freethought has sown for them will fully realize to what they

are indebted for their emancipation, and attain the insight to lead them to throw off even a nominal association with the Church. When that time comes they will cease to render a lip assent to the Christian creed, because they will realize the hypocrisy of doing so when such assent manifestly contradicts their habits, customs and practices. Such contradiction is the necessary corollary of hypocrisy. And in essentials no one wants to be a hypocrite. Then shall be seen a much greater accession to the Army of Freethought.

Meanwhile the Churches possess 99 per cent of the sinews of war. They realize now that the fight between them and Freethought is one to the death. Though for the nonce the situation is in the words of John Morley: "Ten armed men against one man in his shirt," there are no signs of despondency, far less of despair, in the militant ranks of Freethought. Funds may be low; organization may be difficult; the hypocrisy of very many may still remain impervious; all the resources of ecclesiasticism may make it appear unassailable! Nevertheless, the campaign goes on; the gallant assailants of the citadel of supernatural terrorism and clerical arrogance are gradually adding to their ranks, and giving the Black Army a devil of a lot to think about! There is no spiritual fellowship like that which inspires the resolute Army of Freethinkers the world over. It has given a new meaning to Freedom in the minds of myriads!

IGNOTUS.

CHRISTIAN LOVE

Another fault generally looked upon as specially characteristic of modern Puritanism—the complacent assurance that one's own clique is in the way of salvation, and that all others are on the broad road to damnation—is not only thoroughly medieval, but specially characteristic of those who had taken religious vows. Pious men in the Middle Ages contemplated with the most Calvinistic complacency the hopeless damnation of the whole non-Christian world, including millions of unbaptized infants for whom Christian parents had shed bitter human tears. Jonathan Edwards' sermon on the doom of unbaptized infants which is often quoted as a typical specimen of Puritanism, is simply a survival of the Middle Ages. St. Bonaventure only voices a medieval tenet, common, at least from St. Gregory onwards, when he says that "the sight of the pains of the damned heaps up the measure of the accidental joys of the righteous." In the contemporary *Diaeta Salutis*; perhaps falsely attributed to him, the author quotes the Psalms to the same effect, describing with merciless glee how the saints at the Last Day, "shall rejoice in the damnation (of the unrighteous) as it is written, the just shall rejoice when he seeth the revenge; he shall wash his hands in the blood of the sinner." His great Dominican contemporaries, Thomas Aquinas, Thomas of Chantimpre, and Humbert de Romans, write to the same effect. Later on, the saintly Gerson, who has often been credited with the *Imitation of Christ*, speaks with even more ghastly assurance, if possible, on this point.

In short the unlovely features of Puritanism are simply such as have attended most great religious revivals. It would be difficult to name any doctrine or practice distinctively Puritan—as distinguished from those common to all Protestants—for which ample authority may not be found among orthodox medieval churchmen. Much of the odium rightly incurred by the zealots of the seventeenth century is simply due to the fact that they were the first party strong enough to enforce, on an enormous scale, that exaggerated and often repulsive other-worldliness, which had for centuries been the ideal of the hermitage and the cloister.—From "Ten Medieval Studies," by G. G. Coulton, pp. 55-7.

In Memoriam

Address delivered by Chapman Cohen at the
Cremation of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, August
27, 1935.*

I DO not know that I can profitably add much by way of tribute to what has already been said. But I have been asked to say a few words as representing a movement with which the name of Bradlaugh has always been closely connected, and to express as well as may be what very many people in this country will be feeling to-day.

I think that the chief feeling will be that with to-day's ceremony there is broken the last direct living link that connects us with one whose name will always stand high in the history of nineteenth century Freethought and Reform. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner was more to her father than an affectionate daughter; she stood by his side through years of stress and storm a loyal and hard working disciple. And after his death she counted no labour as too small or too great that might clear his name of the calumny that was heaped upon it, and place him in his rightful position in the history of Reform.

I do not think that I detract from the personality of the daughter in thus placing the father first. I think she would have preferred it, and the highest praise that can be given her is to say that they were worthy of each other. It was, indeed, this that endeared her to the members of the Freethought Party, and it was shown always in the intimately affectionate reference to her as "Hypatia."

Her own interest in reform, as you have heard, was wide and sustained. Her writings and her general activities show this very plainly; and if she did not bulk as largely in the public eye as she might have done, this was because she lacked that genius for self-advertisement which so many of smaller capacity, and whose services were far less valuable, so often manifest. But if ever a "great assize" is held, and the testing question is put, not, with what successful movements were you linked, but to how many forlorn hopes did you give assistance, what struggling and unpopular ideas did you help, was your aim that of personal advancement or that of bearing in mind the permanent welfare of humanity?—if these questions are asked, I think Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner will come well through the inquisition.

On the personal aspect of death I do not know that I can say very much. Where feeling is sincere, silence is often the truest eloquence, and where sincerity is not, the frothy eloquence of insincerity is an insult to the dead.

But this much I may say. All those who have come near to the shadow of the valley of death know what it means to lose a loved member of the family circle. The loss may be of one in the dawn of a promising life, or at the end of a lengthy and honourable career; death may come as a lightning stroke to one who but yesterday was in the full flush of health, or at the end of a period of lingering incapacity. It matters little how death comes, the break is always

* Other speeches, by Mr. J. P. Gilmour, and Lord Snell, were delivered at the cremation ceremony. These have already appeared in the *Literary Guide*, but only a very brief summary of Mr. Cohen's speech was published, owing to the publishers not being aware that a report had been taken. Inquiries were not made by the *Guide*, or we would have placed the above report at their disposal, the report taken by Mr. R. H. Clifton and another friend. After the ceremony we had a number of requests that Mr. Cohen's address might be printed in the *Freethinker*, but we did not know that it was intended to publish a report of the speeches, and it would have looked peculiar to publish one by itself. That objection is now removed.

there. There is always about death a snapping of ties, a rupture of associations, an element of abruptness that no philosophy can dispel, and that no wise philosopher would seek to remove. That sorrow we can all share.

But there is also with death a quality which acts as an anodyne to the sorrow it brings. For death can rob us of only one thing in the future—that of personal association. The past remains beyond its powers of destruction, and the memories of what has been gained in strength and sweetness with the passing of the years. The wound that death inflicts time heals. The scar remains, and that becomes a tender memento of our lost one, a memory with which we part only when we ourselves pass into the great silence.

There is no need to minimise the sorrow of death, but there is folly in exaggerating it. What is required is clarity of mind and strength of character. These were two qualities which Hypatia Bonner possessed in a marked degree. She was trained in a school of philosophy which taught that life and death are woven of the common stuff of which love itself is born, and that the grief which death brings is born of the love that comes with life. To those who mourn we can give but one counsel. Let grief have its way to-day; and to-morrow let us take a fresh plunge into life and duty, and so prove ourselves worthy of the affection the dead gave us.

We live to-day at a time in which the manhood of the world is called upon to prepare itself for international slaughter. But there is another war, older than that war, and greater than that war, a war which calls for something higher than the cheap courage of the soldier, a war which leaves behind it no ruined homes, no children mourning for their parents, no wives sorrowing for their mates. That war is older than the war of brute force, it dates back to the beginnings of human history, and marks the commencement of human culture. The army that fights that war has no conscripts, men and women, they are all volunteers, and the call to service is heard only by those whose nobility of character leads them to respond. Few monuments mark the graves of those who have fought in this war, often none save those represented by the better life of humanity.

Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner was a volunteer and a gallant fighter in that great army of progress; and to-day we offer a final salute to a fellow fighter in the great war for human liberation.

PROGRESS

Civilization implies the development of a principle of human selection, of a choice by which man encourages what makes for his safety and happiness, while discouraging what does not; and it implies, of course, also the gradual replacing thereby of the notion of man being in the hands of forces which must be propitiated because they are stronger than he, and which can be propitiated because they have the same nature as himself. Mankind gradually learns that other human beings can be propitiated by human civilities; and that while that which is more powerful than mankind cannot be propitiated in any way, that which can be averted or turned to man's purpose need no longer be propitiated; we do not compliment the bacillus of malaria, we destroy him; we do not pray to the lightning, we conduct it away from our houses. The sacredness of beneficent or malign natural forces and outer objects is gradually replaced by the sacredness of such of our feelings and actions as conduce to more universal and enduring safety and happiness. What becomes important is not life, however concentrated, but how life is lived.

"Vital Lies," by Vernon Lee,
Vol. 11., pp. 36-7.

Acid Drops

Dr. I. P. Jacks suggests that there is one road open to Abyssinia which might defeat the aims of Italy. He thinks that the Emperor of Abyssinia might say to Mussolini, "I am a Christian, a follower of Him who went like a sheep to the slaughter. Advance, then, and work your will." Unfortunately Mussolini might say, if he were quite frank, "I represent a Christian nation. My country is the headquarters of the greatest Christian Church in existence, and I shall have the support of that Church in seizing your country, for I shall be able to promote 'true Christianity,' and so civilize you—that is to give you the same brand of civilization that Italy possesses." In the name of Christianity Abyssinia would turn one cheek when the other was smitten. In the name of Christianity the smiter would go ahead and do just as he pleases. Dr. Jacks is very rash. He is helping to illustrate the value of Christianity as a guide to practice.

We are far from denying that there are circumstances where the policy of non-resistance, or passive resistance may not be a very powerful and a very effective one. But it is a policy that will work only in a given set of conditions. The Abyssinian trouble has arisen as a consequence of a general policy that has been practiced by the white nations of the world for centuries. Italy has adopted it late in the day, just when its success threatens the security of those other white nations that have for so long boasted of the extent of their "possessions." Otherwise there would have been very little said about it. But it is to be noted that in general it is because the coloured peoples met the whites, in most instances, with all friendliness, that their lands were taken from them. They were really the victims of a form of non-resistance.

Whether the conquest of the blacks by the whites was for their own benefit—a very favourite form of justification, but which adds only hypocrisy to the original theft—has nothing to do with the point at issue. This is, that it was because the natives so often met the white visitors with friendliness and hospitality that annexation and conquest were made possible. And in the present instance nothing would suit Mussolini better than for the Abyssinians to follow the advice given by Dr. Jacks. It was the absence of resistance upon which Mussolini counted, and the very large forces which he has planted in Africa was meant to demonstrate the futility of opposition. If it had succeeded, or if it were to succeed, Mussolini would simply enter into possession, subject the Abyssinians to the rule of Italians, and we should see in Abyssinia the same reign of terror, the same subjection of men and women to the whims of a megalomaniac, the same denial of the elementary social right to freedom of thought and speech that now obtains in Italy. Non-resistance is the practice that is enforced in Italy, and which tyranny everywhere has always aimed at.

The Methodists of Bristol appear to be making dangerous enemies. In the current *Journalist*, the official organ of the National Union of Journalists, it is stated that General Secretary of the Union has been instructed to send a strong protest to the Methodist Synod at the "discourteous treatment" of journalists at the recent Methodist Conference in Bristol, and to bring to the notice of editors the question of ministers of religion doing work that should be done by journalists. With regard to the first complaint, our advice is simple. Unless an apology is forthcoming, together with an assurance of decent treatment at the next conference, the journalists should boycott it. It would not be the first time that journalists in this country have had to take such a step. The engagement of ministers to do newspaper work would seem to indicate that the clerics concerned are not only keen publicity hunters but also money-spinners. What a pity the report of the step which the National Union of Journalists has been compelled to take will receive no wider publicity than that

given by the *Journalist* and the *Freethinker*. Won't some enterprising newspaper man send a paragraph to the *Daily Herald*.

Two more deaths have taken place among the Scottish pilgrims who went recently to Lourdes. This makes eight deaths. Moreover, some cases of enteric have appeared also among some of the French pilgrims who went to Lourdes. The water from the Grotto, has been tested by the public health authorities of Glasgow, we understand, and has been found free from enteric germs—though whether this is a valid test we do not know. The fact remains that Lourdes pilgrims have contracted enteric fever, and were *not* treated by miracles, but by the prosaic methods common to hospitals. And Catholic newspapers and converts—have not yet explained why medically incurable cases of cancer, blindness, Bright's disease, etc., are easily cured at Lourdes, and simple cases of enteric are not. Is there not any defender of Lourdes about?

Archbishop Mostyn said recently that "the Holy Church in this country is slowly but surely getting her own back. . . . Once more Abbeys and Abbey Churches are springing up in the land." We do not doubt this for a moment, but the real question is, is the country becoming more religious? Are wholesale conversions being made among unbelievers? Do more and more educated men and women believe in such doctrines as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection? Are University Professors more and more inclined to belief in miracles? Can even the Roman Church say, once a Catholic, always a Catholic?

A somewhat similar feeling of elation can be found in the annual report of the British and Foreign Bible Society. It seems that "the total number of Scriptures in whole or in part circulated by the Society in English in the British Isles last year was 853,000." That may be so, but how many of these Bibles or parts of the Bible were read? How many cases can be found in the country of father, before going to business, calling the household together in the front parlour and reading out a chapter or some chapters of the Bible, followed by long prayers to the Almighty? How many people does one meet in one's usual encounters who know their Bible? Or even know it in an elementary way? It may be true that the Bible is wonderfully circulated, but all most people seem to know about it is its name.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc, in an article on Bethlehem, believes in the "tradition of the Holy Sepulchre," but "since the wretched, half-informed modern sceptic has naturally attacked Bethlehem as well, every Catholic should know what our grounds are for venerating the little cave of the nativity." It is good to find, anyway, that Mr. Belloc admits that he writes for Catholics who in the past have swallowed so many marvels without cavil, that they are not likely to jib at anything he could now put forward. But the "wretched half-informed modern sceptic" will be able to enjoy another laugh at the angry Mr. Belloc and the kind of "evidence" he can adduce to prove that Bethlehem actually possesses "the little cave of the Nativity."

He admits at the outset that there is not "any contemporary evidence." But when the evidence was put in writing, it seems that it was put down by "people who in youth had known and talked to the contemporaries of Our Lord, Our Lady, and the Apostles." Mr. Belloc says so, anyway, and if anybody casts the smallest doubt on what he says, he must be hopelessly ignorant of the nature of evidence. Did not "Our Lady" say the cave was in Bethlehem? Is "She" likely to have been mistaken? "Would the story of a journey that had never taken place," asks Mr. Belloc in derision, "have been accepted by the people who were witnesses of it, or who took part in it, and accepted apparently unanimously?" If that does not prove the story of the cave at Bethlehem, then all we can say that

the ignorant and stupid sceptic ought to hide his head in shame. Anyway Catholics will believe Mr. Belloc, and that ought finally to settle the matter.

The story of Helen Keller is one of the most remarkable in the world. Deaf, dumb, and blind, she overcame these terrible handicaps and became a great educator. But she owed almost all of her triumph to her deliverer, Mrs. Annie Macy, an Irishwoman, whose life history is also an amazing one. We wish to point out one thing noted by a Catholic reviewer of the story of her life. "It is a sad story for the Catholic reader, for by a series of tragic happenings the young Irish girl early lost contact with her religion, and has not, so far, in her old age, recovered it." It may be sad but it is not extraordinary. Mrs. Macy probably found out her old religion.

Most Catholics, but particularly those outside Germany, are up in arms at Herr Rosenberg's attack on Christianity. Had he confined himself entirely to attacking Jews, they might not have been so angry. Rosenberg "repudiates both the Old and the New Testaments," and claims that the Old Testament must be done away with to stop "transforming us mentally into Jews." He also denies that "Our Lord was of the Jewish race," and says that "Jesus is the Hero." Rosenberg's great God is obviously Hitler, with the Swastika instead of the Cross. Whether Hitler will soon be wearing a halo also we do not know; but Rosenberg's "religion," whether backed up by Ludendorf or the "Old Catholics," or the "New Lutherans," is really not much sillier than "genuine" Christianity or other religions. The substitution of a "Pagan" religion for Christianity (which is based on Paganism) is simply ludicrous.

Miss Mary Pickford, once the beloved of "Movie Fans," wrote some "sob-stuff" in *Liberty* (an American weekly) called "Why Not Try God." She publishes testimonials, like any nostrum advertiser, telling us how marvellously this article influenced mankind. It is said that a woman in Boston, on the point of murdering two children, read the article and didn't. And "a condemned man carried his copy of the issue to the gallows with him"—a rather poor testimonial surely. We expected at least he would have been pardoned. But, says Miss Pickford, "When the article appeared in book form, the response was overwhelming." Her latest story is headed, "Why Die?"—a question which the condemned man might have been asked.

Mary Pickford says, "I have been poor and cold and hungry and heart-broken, but it isn't what happens to us that matters, it's the way we react to it, what we think about it." This may be the case on the screen, but unemployment matters quite a lot, destitution is not entirely governed by what we think about it, and bombing on India-border natives gives little time for the victims to have much mental re-action about it. But then Miss Pickford knows that Death is nothing at all. A man thrown into a den of lions—"hungry lions," Miss Pickford says—simply "graduates into another life" "that was the part of him that went on." Immortality seems simple to simple minds.

The Rev. Neville Martin is a Bachelor of Science. But it does not prevent his preaching some particularly unscientific nonsense about Moses, who "when he came down from the Mount, his face was shining with such glory, that the people veiled their faces from the light they could not bear." And this was a mere tallow candle compared with the light which shines from the face of Christ. . . . "yet we need not hide our faces from the face of Christ! Can this be because nobody ever sees Christ? Mr. Martin mixes his metaphors when he says it is we who "must tear the veil from our faces." We should have thought it must be Christ who would unveil if we can see Him so comfortably. People only veiled their eyes after seeing Moses. Until we see Christ we cannot tell whether we need a veil, or a magnifying glass, or a telescope.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE,

EDITORIAL:

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

C. MORRIS.—No, we have not forgotten our promise, but other things are constantly getting in the way. So soon as we can we will write a couple of articles giving an outline of the Atheistic philosophy of Spinoza.

L. THOMPSON.—We fancy the secret is that most newspapers, including the weekly and monthly publications, are so eager for advertisements that very few impartial reviews of new works appear. The general policy appears to be, so long as a publisher advertises, do not slate any of his books. If it is bad, say nothing; if it is moderate, give it high praise.

S. W. JAGGAN.—We cannot say whether it is true or not that actors have supplied the largest number of saints. We doubt it as a statement of fact, although we are quite prepared to believe that a very large number of saints have been actors.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks. May come in useful. Pleased to know that you are keeping well, and still setting the younger generation a good example.

For Advertising and Distributing the Freethinker.—Don Fisher, 3s.

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.

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

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.

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

On Sunday next (October 13) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30.

The Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S. had a good send-off for its autumn session on Sunday. The Picton Hall was well-filled, and Mr. Cohen's address gave obvious pleasure and satisfaction to those present. Mr. Shortt took the chair, and made a strong appeal for continued and regular support from those present. We hope this will be forthcoming, for the Branch well deserves all the support that can be given it. The programme for the winter season is varied and excellent. The Committee appears to be working well and hard. This season the regular Sunday evening meetings will be held in Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, nr. Islington Square. Particulars will be found weekly in our Lecture Notice column. Secretary's address, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool.

We continue to receive letters thanking us for our new "feature," "Things Worth Knowing." Some of our correspondents ask if they could ultimately be published in book form. We cannot answer that at present. If we were quite sure that there would be sufficient demand to repay costs it might be done. We feel sure that if this were done the volume would not only contain some of the "world's best," but it would form both a guide for further study and a guide to books. We aim at making selections from books that are good *on the whole*. Not from a book which contains a grain of wisdom in a Sahara of nonsense. From enquiries we know that many of the books cited from are likely to be purchased.

West Ham contains a large number of Freethinkers, and they are asked to note that the local N.S.S. Branch has booked the Labour Room, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10, for indoor meetings during the winter season. The session will begin on Sunday evening, October 13, at 7.30, and meetings will follow at the same time on successive Sundays. The area served by the Branch is a large one, and given the support which it ought to have meetings could be arranged in other parts of the territory.

The South London Branch N.S.S. has arranged an interesting syllabus of lectures and debates for Sunday evenings commencing to-day (October 6) and terminating on March 29 next. A hall has been booked at the Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4, and the proceedings will begin at 7.30 p.m. Admission is free. Copies of the syllabus may be obtained from the local Branch Secretary, Mr. J. Seibert, 286 Camberwell New Road, London, S.E.5.

The Birkenhead Branch N.S.S. has secured a hall in the Beecheroff Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, where lectures will be held during the indoor season. The proceedings will commence to-day (October 6), when Mr. George Whitehead will give the first of an interesting course of four lectures on successive Sunday evenings at 7 o'clock. The subject for this evening will be "The Roots of Freethought." The local Branch appeals to all Birkenhead Freethinkers, whether members or not, to co-operate in making the season's work successful from all points.

The Bradford Branch N.S.S. has been busy in making arrangements for a visit from Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who will speak in the Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford, to-day (October 6), on "Nature, Man, and God." The subject offers an excellent opportunity for introducing orthodox friends to our movement, and local saints will no doubt take full advantage of that side of our work. The lecture begins at 7 p.m. Admission is free with reserved seats at 6d. and 1s. each.

To their useful "Thinkers Library" (1s. each) Messrs. Watts & Co., have just added three new volumes. One is a selection from Voltaire, translated by Mr. Joseph McCabe, and which hardly needs words of praise here. This should serve a useful purpose, as translations of Voltaire's anti-theological writings are not very common nowadays. The second volume is *Renan's Life of Christ*, with a very good introduction by Mr. Howell Smith. Although mainly of historical importance, the volume will serve to show how far we have travelled since this not very scientifically critical work roused a storm in the religious world. The third volume, *Five Studies in Greek Religion*, by Professor Gilbert Murray, brings within easy reach a fine work that all should have at hand.

Mr. W. J. Lickley, who for 22 years has been Superintendent Registrar of Marriages of Westminster, says concerning marriage before the Registrar:—

Any prejudice that may have existed against the civil marriage is rapidly being overcome, and register office marriages have increased to a remarkable degree. While I have been Superintendent Registrar there has been a 28 per cent increase in register office marriages.

I have no reason to believe that the percentage of register office marriages dissolved is greater or even as great as the percentage of church marriages dissolved. I think the place of marriage has little bearing on the happiness or the permanency of the marriage.

As we have many times pointed out, a marriage in this country is only legal when it is performed by someone who is licensed by the State to perform a marriage, and in a place licensed for that purpose. A minister of the Church of England is licensed to perform a marriage. The civil marriage is thus the only legal marriage in the country, although it may be accompanied by any ceremonies the contracting parties desire.

Things Worth Knowing*

VII.

JESUS AND MITHRA

AMONG the most ancient and the most honoured gods of Roman Paganism was the Persian Mithra. He came to the Empire out of a more remote oriental antiquity than did the great Mother of the Gods. . . . In the beginning of the Christian centuries the domain of Mithra extended from the Indus in the east to the Euxine on the north. In the plateau countries of Asia Minor he was strongly entrenched. . . . The mysteries of Mithra, like the other private cults, were strictly secret and the liturgy, which for the faithful was such an important part of their religion, has all but completely disappeared. Scarcely a trace is left of either hymn or prayer, and only scattered hints may be gathered here and there as to the character of the ceremonies included in the Mithraic rites. Mithraic monuments, however, are comparatively abundant, and from these one may derive indirect suggestions concerning the cult ritual. At least it is possible to gather from the remains of *Mithraea* a general impression of the effectiveness of the Mithraic rites.

The sanctuaries of Mithra were caves in the mountains or underground crypts. . . . these chapels were always small, and when the brotherhood grew beyond a convenient size—a hundred members at the maximum—other *Mithraea* were established. In small shrines such as these, the impressions made on the mind of the neophyte were bound to be intimate and personal. . . . Various ceremonies figured in the Mithraic liturgy, which were calculated to induce the process of spiritual renewal. Among the most important were the ablutions which from the earliest times were prominent in the cult of Mithra. The ceremony consisted either of sprinkling as with Holy water, or of complete immersions as in Isiac practice. In the grotto of the Persian God, water was always at hand, and in certain instances, at Ostia, for example, vaults have been found which may have served the purpose of immersion. Mithraic baptisms, like the later Christian rite, promised purification from guilt and the washing away of sins. The Christian Fathers noted the similarity and were quick to charge the Devil with plagiarism at this point. Tertullian declared:—

*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.

The Devil, whose business is to pervert the truth, mimics the exact circumstances of the divine sacraments in the mysteries of idols. He baptizes some, that is to say, his believers and followers, he promises forgiveness of sins in the sacred fount, and thus initiates them into the religion of Mithra.

Again, and this time for the sake of rebuttal, the Christian lawyer stated the case for pagan baptism in the following words; "Well, but the nations, who are strangers to all understanding of spiritual powers ascribe to their idols the imbuing of waters with the self-same efficacy (as Christian baptism)." Then he countered with the argument, "but they cheat with waters that are widowed. For washing is the channel through which they are initiated into the sacred rites of some notorious Isis or Mithra." From Tertullian's *ex parte* statement of the case, even, it is clear that the neophyte came out of the baptism of Mithra with his conscience lightened from the weight of previous guilt. The waters of baptism were believed to wash away the defilement of the old life, and to induce a spiritual renewal.

Provision was also made in the Mithraic ritual for nourishing the new spiritual life in a realistic manner. At initiation, honey was applied to the hands and tongue of the candidate. According to Porphyry, this was done in both the Lion and the Persian grades of initiation. As Porphyry said explicitly, honey was supposed to be a powerful preservative; hence it would serve to keep the initiate from the blemish of sin. In the Mithraic liturgy, however, it was believed to have a positive efficacy also, as its application to the tongue of the candidate suggests. . . . So in Mithraism the spiritually new-born were fed with honey. So later, in primitive Christianity and among the Marcionites, the baptized were given a drink of milk mixed with honey. . . . The communion included bread as well as wine. In the famous bas-relief from Konjica, Bosnia, there is a most interesting representation of a Mithraic communion. Before two reclining communicants stands a tripod supporting tiny loaves of bread, each distinctly marked with a cross. One of the standing figures in the group, easily identified as a Persian, presents the communicants with a drinking-cup. . . . This bas-relief shows in an unusually circumstantial manner that the Persian mystery religion, like the Christian, had its sacramental communion with its bread and wine.

The likeness between the two rites did not fail to impress the Christian apologists who once more accused the demons of thievery. Justin Martyr, in speaking of the Christ and Eucharist asserted "the wicked demons have imitated this in the mysteries of Mithra, commanding the same thing to be done. For that bread and a cup of water are placed before the initiates with certain incantations in the mysteries, you either know or can learn." The similarities between the two communions, Mithraic and Christian, are indeed striking. . . . Both were memorial services, celebrated in remembrance of the divine hero of the cult; for Mithra at the close of his redemptive career and just before his ascension to heaven, partook of a last supper with Helias and other companions of his labours. On the back of the great pivoted bas-relief at Hedderheim this original last supper was depicted. Whenever the initiates participated in the Mithraic communion, they recalled the mythical love-feast.

But it meant more to them than this. From their communion they gained assurance for the future. Supernatural effects were expected from the assimilation of the consecrated elements. From the bread and wine they gained not only vigour of body and

wisdom of mind, but also the power to combat evil spirits and a divine substance that assured them of the boon of immortality. . . . At different points in the ritual . . . spiritual genesis is specifically contrasted with natural birth. "Though I was born a mortal from a mortal mother . . . having been sanctified by sacred ceremonies, I am about to gaze with immortal eyes on the immortal æon." Again, the contrast between the natural birth and the spiritual rebirth is even more clearly brought out in the words addressed to the supreme god. "I, a man . . . begotten in mortal womb by human seed, and to-day begotten again by thee; a man, who has been called from so many thousands to immortality according to the plan of a god wonderful in his goodness, strives and longs to adore thee according to his human ability." The concluding words of the liturgy mark a high point of ecstatic expression, and form a fitting conclusion for a Mithraic ritual. "O Lord, Having been born again, I pass away, being exalted the while. Having been exalted, I die. Coming into being by life-begetting birth and freed unto death, I go the way as thou has ordered, as thou hast established the law and ordained the sacrament." . . .

Certain characteristics of the Mithraic ideal stand out with clarity. Primarily it was an ideal of perfect purity. The ritual prescribed repeated ablutions and purifications, and these were intended to wash away the stains of sin. The very conformity of ritual practice at this point showed a sensitiveness to moral turpitude. The Mithraic life was also one of steady self-control and of asceticism even. Rigorous fasts and abstinences were enjoined, and continence was encouraged as a special virtue. More broadly, the resistance of all sensuality was a mark of the Mithraist. Chiefly, however, the Mithraic life was characterized by militant virtue. The good-will of this religion dwelt in action, and a premium was placed on the energetic virtues rather than on gentler qualities. . . . In the largest terms, life for the Mithraist was a prolonged struggle, a part of the great cosmic warfare of good against evil, right against wrong.

Pagan Regeneration, A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Græco-Roman World (1929)
by H. R. WILLOUGHBY, pp. 143-166.

SWINBURNE'S ATHEISM

As my antitheism has been so much babbled about, perhaps I may here say what I really think on religious matters. Having been as a child and boy brought up as a quasi-Catholic, of course I went in for that as passionately as for other things (e.g.) well nigh unaffected and unashamed ecstasies of adoration when receiving the Sacrament, then when this was naturally stark dead and buried, it left nothing to me but a turbid Nihilism; for a Theist I never was. I always felt by instinct and perceived by reason that no man could conceive of a personal God except by crude superstition or else by true supernatural revelation; that a natural God was the absurdest of all human figments; because no man could by other than apocalyptic means—by other means than a violation of the laws and order of nature—conceive of any other sort of Divine person than a man with a difference—man with some qualities intensified and some qualities suppressed—man with the good in him exaggerated and the evil excised. This, I say, I have always seen and avowed since my mind was ripe enough to think freely.

Letters of Charles Algernon Swinburne,
Vol. I., pp. 208-9.

How often is truth still kept in the dungeons of suppression!—(*The Late*) Justice McCardie.

The Story of a Wayward Philosopher

THE erratic philosopher, Friedrich Nietzsche, has shown himself far more formidable in death than in life. After his first brilliant outburst he soon lost favour, and his writings were ignored save by a discerning few, until Brandes, the famous Danish critic, restored Nietzsche's works to notice. A splendid prose writer of marked individuality, his influence for good and evil has since become great. His Atheism and his intense scorn for the creed of Christendom have endeared him to heterodox thinkers, while his apotheosis of the Superman, whose will to power remains serenely unconcerned with conventional moral estimates, so far as he proclaims his superiority by his success, has perhaps encouraged Hitler, Mussolini and other dictators in their strivings towards State despotism. For all civilized communities were made possible, according to Nietzsche, by the "blond beast sweeping magnificently after conquest and prey."

Born near Leipzig, in 1844, Nietzsche came of clerical stock, both paternal and maternal. His father died in 1849, as the result of an accident, and his deeply devout mother with her two small children, went to Naumburg, where she and her female relatives reared Nietzsche in strictly religious style. Later, he was sent to the grammar school at Schulpforta, where he eagerly studied the classics. Plato and Æschylus were then his idols, and he was also greatly impressed by the works of Wagner and Hölderlin. He composed an essay on the Greek Theognis, a thinker who apparently suggested the theory of Supermorals and its antithesis, Slave-morals, which so greatly dominate his later speculations.

After studying at Bonn and Leipzig Universities, Nietzsche went to Basle, where he was appointed Professor at the early age of twenty-four. Thus began an active literary life lasting twenty years. Even then, as Knight notes in his able volume, *Some Aspects of the Life and Works of Nietzsche* (Cambridge, 1933), there are passages in his Inaugural Lecture at Basle in 1869 that furnish a key to his later work. One striking sentence runs: "Life is worth living, says Art, the fair seductress; life is worth understanding, says Science."

During the war of 1870, Nietzsche served as an orderly, but left the army with impaired health, which seriously weakened his constitution. Still, he returned to his duties, and his lectures embraced a very wide field until his continued illness induced his retirement in 1879.

Nietzsche now boldly asserted that the ancient Greeks were not a civilized people in the modern sense, and instead of placing the age of Pericles as the palmiest period of Hellenic culture, he declared that the culminating era of antiquity was in the sixth century B.C. Plato and Socrates he now treated as decadents who heralded the overthrow of Greek supremacy. Heraclitus and Empedocles were far superior men and more in accordance with Nietzsche's concept of Superhumanity. These iconoclastic opinions alienated the orthodox scholarly schools and their expositor was sent to Coventry.

When at Leipzig, Nietzsche became a zealous adherent of Schopenhauer, "whose doctrine of renunciation and whose theory of art as the realm of consolation" made a powerful impression for a time. Wagner he also greatly revered as a giant among men. Later, however, he asserted that Goethe was the last German for whom he retained any respect. Indeed, his references to his compatriots became decidedly scornful. For instance, the Germans "have

all the crimes against the civilization of Europe on their conscience." His indictment is summarized as follows: "They (the Germans) are the most barbarous, most stupid, *most disruptive* race in Europe. They ruined the last effort to unify and raise humanity, the splendid achievement of the 'European' Napoleon. . . . There is not much hope anywhere: there is no hope at all in Germany."

Wagner was gravitating towards the religiosity which afterwards culminated in *Parzival* at the very time when Nietzsche approximated so closely to humanitarian Rationalism. This seems the sanest period of his life. Freethought, Positivism, and Voltaire are acclaimed as ideals. He also modified his attitude towards antiquity, while his complete break with Wagner is shown in a preface to *Human, All-too Human* (1886), where he wrote: "As early as the summer of 1876. . . . I silently took leave of Wagner. . . . Richard Wagner, apparently the conquering hero, actually a despairing decadent who had become rotten; suddenly sank down helpless and broken before the Christian Cross."

Morgenröte (Dawn) was his next volume, and this betrays sentiments of sympathy to Epicureanism. *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (The Gay Science) appeared in 1882, and its sunnier and kindlier spirit owes much to its author's improved health. As he himself says: "This whole book is simply nothing but a fit of cheerfulness after long abnegation and impotence, the rejoicing of things returning."

But reaction soon set in, and Nietzsche returned to an earlier phase of thought. Life he considered as an interesting experiment, and one that had not disappointed him. Truly, he says, as the years flow by, he more keenly appreciates its richness and variety, and faces it bravely and with joy.

Not only must truth be tracked into her deepest recesses, but we must learn to confront her without tears, however harsh her aspect. Sentimental Christian ethic is suited to a sick generation and, when put into practice, serves to increase the mental and physical misfits of the race. This and other views are expounded in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, a splendid prose poem of marked literary excellence which fell, however, almost stillborn from the press. What little notice it received was unfavourable, and Nietzsche was henceforth driven to publish at his own risk.

Knight and other authorities consider this work his masterpiece. Yet, although one of the most widely read of his writings it is one of the most difficult to follow. The Superman is certainly one of its leading attractions, and the startling opening declaration rivets attention. "God is dead! Now let us will that the Superman live! Man is a thing that must be excelled!" is the keynote of this revelation. Man is to ascend as far above purblind humanity, in its present phase, as *Homo Sapiens* has evolved above his anthropoid ancestors. "What is the ape in the eyes of a man? A source of laughter or of painful shame. And that is just what a man must be for a Superman." But to realize this grand transformation all obstacles must be removed. The State, maudlin morality, every shoddy and sham of Christian society must be swept aside. Each superior man must become his own intellectual and moral guide. Pity for the weak is misplaced. Protection against their incapacity and folly tends to multiply unfitness. Perhaps Nietzsche recalled Goethe's warning of the danger of turning the world into a general hospital. Pity, Nietzsche asserts, serves no useful purpose and paralyzes action.

"Ah, where in the world were greater follies done, than in the neighbourhood of the compassionate?"

God is dead; God died of pity for man—

Therefore be warned against pity: from it comes a heavy cloud yet upon men."

The ignorant and brainless mob; morbid ascetics and preachers of virtue, as well as all priests and professors who sustain the existing order of society must be subordinated. Moreover, let men know that the history of the cosmos is one of eternal recurrence. "Man!" declaims Nietzsche, "thy whole life, like an hour glass, will be continually reversed and will continually run out—a great minute of time in between, until all the conditions, from which thou hast come into being, come together again in the circular course of the world. And then thou wilt find again every pain and every pleasure, and every friend and enemy, and every hope, and every error, and every blade of grass, and every gleam of the sun, the whole association of all things."

In his *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Beyond Good and Evil) moral values, as estimated by ordinary ethical standards, are denounced. Valid morality, so far as it exists, resides in the will to power, presumably the proud prerogative of the world's Mussolinis. In his subsequent *Genealogy of Morals* (1887) Nietzsche in splendid style epitomizes the earth's history in terms of a truceless conflict between the interests of an aristocratic few and an inferior and soulless many. The enlightened ones must urge the transvaluation of all virtues. Self-sacrifice, compassion and humility are the quite proper virtues of the poor and oppressed. The shining virtues of a noble aristocracy, on the other hand, are dauntless courage, a proud, and perhaps condescending consciousness of its own superiority, combined with a lofty acceptance of the self-sacrifice of the common crowd. Thus in the semi-divine superman of a higher civilization, the stern heroic type of ancient Rome will reappear. As for the mass, they are merely "copies on bad paper and worn-out types."

Miserably contemptible as the values approved by the mob unquestionably are, they are those of the majority, and as these values are the very essence of Christianity, then the sooner statesmen destroy them the better. Nietzsche's scorn and hatred of Christianity are perhaps most scathingly shown in *Der Antichrist*, where his intemperate outpourings dismayed many of his friends, while the critics were contemptuous or ominously silent. In 1888, however, the literary boycott was broken by Georg Brandes, whose brilliant lectures in Copenhagen University drew widespread attention to Nietzsche's works, which became generally known two years later.

A large library of books and pamphlets now celebrates Nietzsche's fame. A great German prose writer, even in his most perverse moods, he stimulates and suggests. Unfortunately, the illness he contracted during his war experiences sadly marred his life. A many years' martyr to insomnia and recurring visitations of migraine, he increasingly resorted to drugs, chloral being a favourite sedative. While in Turin, in 1889, he suffered a stroke which left him incurably insane. In its early stages his insanity was associated with hallucination, and he supposed himself to be Dionysus or Christ, and sometimes both. He steadily declined into complete paralysis, but was lovingly tended by his mother and sister till his death in 1900. This unhappy ending has enabled Nietzsche's antagonists to brand him as a life-long lunatic. That he was abnormal there is little doubt but, in a sense, everyone is who differs from the commonplace citizen. But even assuming that Nietzsche was a congenital madman, his insanity was closely related to, if not entirely indistinguishable from, true genius.

T. F. PALMER.

Amen against Yahweh

Why is such a tremendous fuss always made about the way the Hebrews turned a tribal over-god into a god of the whole world? Mr. Bedborough, examining Dr. Inge's claim as to Jeremiah and Isaiah in this respect, points out how the statement of Yahweh's supremacy is riddled with notions of hatred and revenge. But quite apart from the fact that it is common for savages to attribute to their deities vaguely universal cosmic powers, we have before us the remarkable statements of Egyptian theology. There is no doubt whatever of their date and authenticity; with them we are not dealing with a jumble of overlaid and re-edited material like the Hebrew Scriptures; and they were composed centuries before there was any organization except of the most primitive kind among the Hebrews.

Here are some passages from the great hymn to Amen-Ra (as given in Sir E. A. Wallis Budge's *From Fetish to God in Ancient Egypt*):—

O Form, ONE, creator of all things, O Only One, maker of things which exist. . . . He maketh the herbage whereon cattle live, and the staff of life [wheat] for man. He maketh the fish to live in the rivers, and the feathered fowl in the sky. He giveth the breath of life in the egg, he maketh birds of all kinds to live, and the reptiles which creep and fly. He causeth the mice to live in their holes, and the birds that are on every green twig. Hail to thee, O maker of all these things, thou only ONE.

He is of many forms in his might! He watcheth over all those who sleep, he seeketh the good for his brute creation. O Amen, establisher of all things, Atana and Harmakis, all people adore thee, saying "Praise be unto thee because thou restest among us, homage to thee because thou hast created us." All creatures say, "Hail to thee!" and all lands praise thee. From the highest height of the sky, to the whole breadth of the earth, and to the depths of the sea thou art praised.

This was written while the Israelites were an obscure desert-tribe engaged in smashing up what culture had developed in Palestine. Is there not a healthy pantheistic note about it to which we can respond far more thoroughly than to the later morbid outcries of the oppressed and wretched Hebrews? This religion was based on actuality, on the visible sun; and it loved the world. The same hymn, which expresses the developed orthodoxy of Egypt, breaks out joyously:—

Thou art loved when thou art in the southern sky, and art esteemed pleasant when thou art in the northern sky. Thy beauties seize and captivate all hearts, the love of thee maketh the arms to drop, and thy beautiful form maketh the hands tremble, and hearts to melt at the sight of thee.

The pantheistic delight of this orthodox hymn proves that the similar note in the hymns of the heretic King Aknaton was nothing idiosyncratic. The same joy in the manifestations of nature shows itself in the Theban hymn to Amen and the Tell-el-Amarna hymn to Aten.

This is from the latter:—

Maker of every land, Creator of whatsoever there is upon it,

Men and women, cattle, beasts of every kind, and trees of every kind that grow on the land live when thou shinest on them.

Thou art the father and mother of what thou hast made.

This last sentence shows that the Egyptian had gone beyond the crude notion of a personal Heavenly Father as Creator. He realized that the source of life could not be limited to so crudely simple a notion

as that of Fatherhood, though he naturally used the images of human generation as symbols of nature's creative energy. But to him the Ultimate was not Father or Mother, both of whom imaged creativeness; it was something which he tried to depict as an "essence renewing life," a plasm of energy and matter. "I fashioned myself out of plasm. My name is— [?] the plasm of the plasm." In these pantheistic intuitions there is a concrete element which we can still respect. How unlike the efforts of the poor bedevilled Hebrews to project a frantic image of race-unity.

I must quote a few more passages from the Aten-hymn. Anyone who wishes to see how the Hebrews stole directly their best things from Egypt should compare this hymn with the Hebrew Psalm civ. The plagiarism is undeniable:—

The young bird in the egg speaketh inside the shell,
Thou givest breath to him inside it to maintain its life;
Thou makest his form mature,
So that being fully grown inside the egg
He can crack the shell.
He cometh forth from the egg,
He chirpeth with all his might;
When he hath come forth from the egg,
He walketh about on his two feet.
O how many are the things which thou hast made!

This tender spirit of life is very far from the jealous Yahweh. Yet critics quote the New Testament God who watches the sparrows fall as if it meant something new brought into thought and feeling. This hymn written some 1500 years earlier is sufficient re-
tort.

And there is nothing of the Yahvistic parochialism about it all. There is tolerance and a vision of universal humanity which is quite free of the fanatical wish (based in terror) to make all people the same:—

. . . Every man with the portion destined for him,
Thou dost compute the duration of his life,
Their tongues are different in speech,
And their characters and their skins likewise.
Thou givest distinguishing marks to the dweller in foreign lands. . . .
O Thou Lord of every land, thou shinest upon them.

And Syria is even mentioned before Egypt as a recipient of this nature-bounty.

If it is protested that this pantheistic tolerance and delight lack moral elements, the answer is that such a tender and sensitive joy in life is its own morality; it naturally eliminates cruelty and hatred and intolerance, the sources of all evil. But there are also abundant direct statements showing how this pantheistic worship fostered gentleness and patience and the sense of justice:—

He heareth the prayer of him that is oppressed, he is kind of heart to him that invoceth him, he delivereth him that is afraid from him that is violent of heart, he judgeth between the strong and the weak.

Of course there are other less pleasant ingredients in Egyptian religion, which had a development over several thousands of years. What I have been concerned with here is to argue against the notion that the Hebrews had some peculiar "religious genius." I insist that it is impossible for anyone who has even superficially studied Egyptian religion to believe that the Hebrews added anything at all except intolerance. What makes them seem different is merely that, deprived of all normal political outlets, they expressed their politics in terms of religion. Isaiah is a fine poet and *Job* shows the beginning of a genuine cosmic sense; but how can we talk about a peculiar "religious genius" there when we have the Egyptian hymns and Aischulos, Plato and Epictetos, Aknaton and Marcus Aurelius?

JACK LINDSAY.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

A QUESTION OF ACCURACY

SIR,—Wherever I go in my travels I get my *Freethinker*, and life would be considerably poorer without this form of communion with the saints of Freethought, and especially with yourself.

Your own articles are always stimulating and indispensable in their accuracy, and this description applies, on the whole, to the various writers. It was therefore a matter of concern to find in the issue of September 15 (p. 581), a paragraph which the other side might, with some justification (as it seems to me), use against us.

I admire the style and the matter of Ignotus, but he is guilty of an inaccuracy when he says that "there is not a Protestant Church that is more than 300 years old."

I have no books with me, but I believe the Moravian sects broke away from Rome in the fifteenth century, and they are still in existence. There is at least one Church in London—I think in or near Fetter Lane, anyhow I have been inside it.

Again, what *does* he mean by saying that the Roman Catholic Church claims an existence of 1900 years, and that the Greek Church is *still older*? And this is A.D. 1935!

It is not, again, correct to say that the Roman Church is 1900 years old, and that the Greek Church is still older. I do not think that even the Roman Catholic Church claims to have been founded within two or three years of the death of "Our Lord." Certainly the Greek or Eastern Church did not come into existence until centuries later. Was it not Pope Paul IX. who excommunicated the Eastern heretics in the eleventh century?

I hope that Ignotus will not consider this to be carping criticism. So often I go to my *Freethinker* for weapons in debate, that I must protest when I find a flaw in the steel.

A. H. MILLWARD.

THE RUINS AND RELIGION OF CEYLON

SIR,—In my recent notice of Mr. Mitton's *Last Cities of Ceylon*, it is stated that a model of the Tooth relic is shown in Colombo Museum. As Mr. Mitton was in close touch with the Director when writing his work, his statement should be reliable.

In his introduction, Mitton states: "Of the help received on the spot from all officials, including Sir Joseph Pearson, D.Sc., Director of the Colombo Museum, Mr. H. C. P. Bell, ex-Archaeological Commissioner, and the representatives of the Survey . . . I cannot speak too warmly."

Then in reference to this troublesome tooth, he states: "The tooth is very seldom seen indeed by Europeans. It is enclosed in many caskets and guarded at Kandy. . . . But though the original cannot be seen, there is a model in Colombo Museum, which shows exactly what it is like. It is held up by a wire which encircles it and springs from the heart of a lotus flower after the usual fashion for such relics in Burma as well as Ceylon."

When we remember that the first edition of Mr. Mitton's volume appeared in 1916, and was reprinted in 1928, the number of tourists who may have been misled in their quest of the sacred tooth's model must by this time be pretty considerable, and so far as one can gather, without any protest on their part.

T. F. PALMER.

Enthusiasm is an enemy to truth unless it be guided and restrained by a knowledge and love of truth.

(The Late) Justice McCardie.

It is a crime, but not a sin, to torture a heretic; it is a sin, but not a crime, to eat meat on a Friday.

G. W. Foote.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Dr. Horace J. Bridges (Chicago Ethical Society)—"H. G. Wells' Life Story: A Side Light on Culture-History."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough, N.S.S. (Author of *Arms and the Clergy*)—"Why Believe in God?"

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 7, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"The Foundations of Culture."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road): 7.30, Re-Union of Members.

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, October 6, Mr. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, October 7, Mr Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirtal) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead—"The Roots of Freethought."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, Mr. C. H. Smith—"Charles Darwin, the Man and his Warfare."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Nature, Man and God."

FAIRFORTH Secular Sunday School: Sunday, October 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Grand Concert by Braunstone W.M.C. Orchestra.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Coopers Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, J. V. Shortt (Liverpool), Hon. President, Liverpool Branch N.S.S.—"Religion and its Brand."

NORTON (Stockton) (Womens' Guild): Tuesday, October 8, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Women, Worship and Woe."

OUTDOOR

ACCRINGTON MARKET: 7.30, Wednesday, October 9, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, October 6, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street, St. George's Cross): 8.0, R. T. White and M. Whitefield.

HAPTON: 7.30, Monday, October 7, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, October 4, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. Flanders—"Successful Secularism."

TRAWDEN: 7.45, Friday, October 4, Mr. J. Clayton.

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Reading for To-day

Arms & The Clergy

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