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

Views and Opinions

Dialectical Materialism

It is one of the commonest features in many controversies to find the logicity of a conclusion assumed from the admitted soundness of the premise with which the argument starts. Freethinkers are familiar with this in the case of the Christian, who because he may perform an admirable action takes it for granted that it is a product of his Christianity, or when he finds an Atheist doing something dastardly assumes that to be a product of his Atheism. There is another common form of controversy in which each party feels impelled to deny the truth or the relevancy of whatever the other one says. I hope that I shall not come within either category, and I say that I find myself in cordial agreement with many of the first principles that Mr. Lindsay lies down, but I do not agree that his conclusions necessarily lead to Marxism. I do know that once a statement is wrapped up in a fearsome formula, it gains tenfold in strength with a large number of people, but that only increases the advisability of making sure that the terms used are clearly understood by those who hear and by those who speak. This precaution may have the effect of determining readers how far they agree with the premisses, and how far with the conclusions stated.

Let me take as a start what we are told is the one dogma laid down by *Dialectical Materialism*, "that the material world exists." That bald proposition has no more essential connexion with Marxism than it has with the man in the moon. For, put in that way, one may say that no one who understands what the philosophical controversy is about, ever denied the existence of a world that was called "material" as distinct from another world that was called "mental." This distinction lies at the root of all thinking. The question at issue is really the nature of the two categories which sum up the basic division of human experience. The extreme idealist treated the world of "matter" as a projection of a substance

called "mind," and at the other extreme was the type of materialist who derived "mind" from a world of objective "matter" composed of hard, indestructible and indivisible atoms, and affirmed the reduction of all phenomena to problems in determinism. The use of this formula, "the material world exists," as a basis for Marxism, adds nothing to the knowledge of those who understand, and it serves to confuse those who do not.

A Matter of Analysis

I find another general formula given as a basis for Marxism, which is equally devoid of exclusive application. "Being and not being may exist at the same time." This, Mr. Lindsay says, seems puzzling to many. He is correct in saying this, but it is another illustration of the evil of throwing a technical term at people, some of whom will accept it on account of its—to them—semi-magical character. But in strict truth "being and not being" is an expression that holds true of everything that is not absolutely static, and which exists only as a pure abstraction. Put in plainer language, it is only saying that everything contains within itself the conditions of its own destruction. Growth brings youth, but it also destroys it. Life contains in itself the conditions of death. Create an institution and the better it is, the sooner it destroys its utility by lifting people above it. It is a philosophical way of putting a world-wide truth.

So also with the much-talked of "thesis, antithesis and synthesis." This is accepted, apparently, as though it has some particular association with Marxism, and also that if we accept it Marxism follows by logical deduction. (I hasten to say that I quite relieve Marx of any charge such as this. But Marx was really very often thinking in abstractions, as competent thinkers are compelled to do.) The formula in itself describes a very old process, although it is not always expressed in the form cited. All it means, in essence, is that an opinion on any subject may be, usually is, met with an opposing opinion, and that from the clash of the two a third opinion, the synthesis, is born. It is really a form of compromise. Two things in opposition result in a third that is identical with neither, but is derived from the two.

Now I do not mean by citing these things that Marx was not perfectly justified in using them, and in saying that he based his conclusions upon them. They are rules of mental working, laws of social movements, and they are in common use by all, just as we all illustrate the law of gravitation every moment of our lives. An economist, or a sociologist, is warranted in citing such laws as "the negation of the negation" to illustrate the scientific character of his conclusions. I am only raising a mild protest against their being used as though in citing them one



is establishing proof of conclusions that have been reached. I am not even concerned with saying they *may* not provide the evidence desired, because I am not now concerned with either disproving or establishing Marxian Communism. I am objecting to their being used in the way that a medieval necromancer used his magic wand and his "abracadabra." And I think if I were an educational dictator I would disqualify any teacher who could not put abstract generalizations into simple language. It would be a great test of understanding. I feel sure that if Marx were alive he would not seriously disagree with a great deal that I have been saying. I am quite certain that while he would claim the right to isolate the employer and the employee from every other consideration when considering the influence of each on the other, as employer and employee, he would also agree that man as an individual is the sum total of social relationships; and that all relationships, husband, child, parent, member of a community as a whole, and member of sub-groups in terms of individual tastes and capacities, must be considered in their totality. The cross play of all these relations, some strengthening the abstract relation of employer and employee, and others considerably modifying it, all these would have to be taken into account when considering the man as we actually meet him.

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#### A Logical Approach

Marxian Communism is a socio-economic theory that is placed before us and deserves the most serious consideration. Personally, as I regard every form of society and every institution as so many forms of experimentation in ways of living, I have no greater *a priori* objection to Communism than I have to any other theory, and it is curious to note that a great many of the bitterest objections brought against it are not that it is really bad, but that it is too good for a human nature that has too much of the brute in it to live up to Communist ideals. I do not take that view of human nature, because I believe it is the most pliable thing with which we are acquainted. But it is curious that most of the moral idealism is on the side of the Communist, and a great deal of the brute and the savage on the side of its opponents.

Let me also add here that, not for the first time, I protest very strongly against the habit that has grown up with magistrates (not yet with judges) with certain newspapers, and with many individuals who approach the subject of Communism as though it were outside the pale of reasonable discussion. It is monstrous to find police witnesses permitted by magistrates to cite the fact of a man being a Communist as *prima facie* grounds for committing him to prison. And just now we have examples of an advocacy for the condoning of the Brutal Governments of Germany and Italy, because they are likely to help crush Communism. When that kind of thing is encouraged we are making for revolution by violence, and if it comes in a more violent form than it might otherwise, the responsibility lies with those who make peaceful agitation impossible. What Danton said in his day is eternally true. Treat the people like brutes and they will behave like brutes. And after all Communism, like so many other 'isms, implies some things that society only ignores at its peril.

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#### Man and His Motives

To return to our muttons. Mr. Lindsay urges Communism upon us as the next necessary step in social evolution. I do not see it in this way at all. At most Marxism is only what one may call a contingent possibility. It is a case of, "If such and such conditions prevail, then such and such consequences must follow." That may be admitted. But no one

has yet shown that one can explain social phenomena wholly in terms of economics, although none but a fool would deny that economic considerations, under existing conditions, often play a larger part in life than is desirable. But no one has yet shown that capitalism had to follow feudalism, and that Communism must follow capitalism as a scientific necessity. I am not saying whether it ought or ought not to do so. I am simply trying to follow my great teacher Spinoza, and deal with human nature as though it were a problem in geometry. That capitalism must change, has been shown in the last generation. The thesis, antithesis and synthesis are always at work, whether in the direction of Communism or away from it. But it may develop away as well as towards. In Italy and Germany it has produced Fascism, and it is conceivable that it might even give rise to a purely slave State. And it is noticeable that the one country in which a form of Communism has been established has not passed through a capitalistic development at all. I don't think we can successfully argue that the movements of society are determined solely by its economic structure.

Indeed, if instead of talking of the power of the economic motive, we were to try expressing this in a wider form as the desire for power and distinction, I think we should have a more scientific view of the situation. For it is not money that men fight for hardest, but because we happen to be living in a society where money is taken as a symbol of success and even of worth, we are apt to take the means for the end. Translate the desire for money into the desire for power and distinction, and it will be found to fit the facts equally well. Visitors to Russia, of all shades of opinion, are in agreement that the money standard of human value has almost disappeared among the people, although other forms of distinction have taken its place. To be one of the richest men in the country is only an aim so long as being such gives a man the prominence that great fortunes do in modern societies. Even at present, it should be quite evident that the desire for money is neither the avowed nor the actual cause of modern movements among overwhelming masses of the people. Acquisition of new territories may be aimed at by comparatively small groups of people because of financial interests, but that is not the reason for the glamorous pride in great possessions expressed by the people. Economic interests may work in such a way as to cause war, but it is for economic interests that the *people* fight wars. It is even questionable whether the ultimate interests of capitalists in modern times are served by war better than they would be by peace. It is at least tolerably certain that on the whole "capitalists" burned their fingers rather badly in the last war. And in that case, instead of finding the cause of modern wars in capitalism, it would look as though a more powerful cause might be the mistaken idealism of the great body of the people, and the miscalculations of unscrupulous men depending upon and exploiting that idealism.

I am not, of course, disputing the influence of the economic factor, I am only trying to put it in its place among many other factors, as against the position that the Freethought movement should merge its specific function in some sort of political or economic campaign. And, again, I think in saying what I have said, I have Engels and Marx with me. Neither of them was blind to the power of these other factors, although both for strategic reasons over-emphasized the economic one. According to Engels:—

Marx and I are partly responsible for the fact that the younger men have sometimes laid more stress on



the economic side than it deserves. In meeting the attacks . . . (it was necessary) to emphasize the dominant principle denied by them, and we did not always have time and opportunity to let the other factors which were concerned in the mutual action and reaction get their deserts. . . . According to the materialistic view of history, the factor which in the last instance is decisive is the production and reproduction of actual life. But when anyone distorts this so as to read that the economic factor is the sole element, he converts the statement into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic condition is the basis, but the various elements of the super-structure—the political forms of the class contests and their results, the constitutions, the legal forms, and also the actual contests in the brains of the participants, the political, legal, philosophic theories, the religious views—all these exert an influence on the development of the historic struggle, and in many instances determine their forms.

This certainly reads as an illustrative comment on many of the things I have been saying. It was, of course, easy tactics to stress the need for more and better food and clothing with masses of the people, and as mere political tactics there may be much to be said in its favour. But when some of the advocates of Marxism take up the same position in what should be a scientific and philosophic discussion, they make the argument, in the words of Engels, "meaningless, abstract, absurd."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued)

## Dogma in the "Dailies"

"The foundations of Christianity are sapped; its dogmas are discredited."

Rev. H. D. Major, in "Modern Churchman."

"A Christian rejects all religions save one; the Freethinker rejects all religions. The difference between the Christian and the Freethinker is one religion out of a hundred.—C. Southwell.

THE clergy must often be uneasy at their very cavalier treatment at the hands of the worldly editors of the popular newspapers, and be inclined to murmur in their lawn sleeves, "Save us from our friends." Not that the saucy journalists attack religion in so many words, but that they treat all forms of piety with an amused tolerance, and regard the various and numerous creeds as so much "news." Indeed, the editors serve up holy matters on the same page as the latest divorce case or the last horrid murder. A bishop of the State Church may be delighted, momentarily, by seeing his own portrait in the press in all the glory of a Wardour Street replica of a fourth-century ecclesiastic, but his pleasure will be diminished by noting that an adjoining picture represents a brother-in-the-Lord posturing in a barrel at a popular seaside resort, or an African medicine-man in full regalia. Again, a Romish ecclesiastic may rejoice at a column of print puffing the curative properties of a visit to Lourdes, but he may get blood pressure when he finds that the Four-Square Gospels or Latter-Day Saints, get a precisely similar amount of print and puff in the following issue of the paper. For it is abundantly clear that to the newspaper-man everything, theological or otherwise, is grist which comes to his mill, from the latest convert to Romanism to the latest clerical scandal, or the freshest news concerning the "Abode of Love."

It is part of this journalistic adroitness that it contrives to modify, and even to conceal, the fact that

the purpose of the press is to exploit Christianity. In leading articles lip-service is given to Orthodoxy, but simply because it is a vested interest, and not at all on account of its alleged truth or usefulness. But what is said, or implied, in a leading article is frequently contradicted in some other part of the paper.

Take, for example, the *Daily Mail* (London), which has always professed to side with the big battalions of Orthodoxy, and done it so noisily as to embarrass the Christians themselves. Even a believer may plead guilty to some hesitation in noticing that the British Lion and the Union Jack are summarily included amongst the most sacred emblems of his religion. Men have worshipped cats and even crocodiles, but of all the gods created by men in their own likeness, the Anglo-Indian-Colonel type of divinity of the *Daily Mail* is the most astonishing. For the piety is so often charged with the pettiness of politics, and the hymns are so frequently hymns of hate.

Buttering-up Orthodoxy in leading articles is one thing which is comparatively easy, but the pinch comes when press contributors write on religious topics, and ignore the oleaginous piety of the other fellows. In a recent issue of the *Daily Mail* (August 5), Dr. W. B. Wolfe unburdened himself on the subject of religion, and put himself in opposition to those innocent people who think religion should be made to measure, like a pair of trousers. Dr. Wolfe starts with the startling assertion that:—

Every human being must have a religion.

and then he qualifies his remarks by adding:—

I do not mean by this that every human being must belong to a church.

This is skating on very thin ice, but he has not yet got into his theological stride. He continues:—

One of the first things that a human savage does is to get himself a religion that helps him to face the cosmic problems which are around him.

Then, screwing his courage to the sticking-place, he leaves the savage and turns to a more sophisticated inquirer. Ignoring altogether the journalists who write the purple passages in the leading articles, he breaks out:—

Some individuals prefer to formulate for themselves their own religions. Such religions can exist and be in a sense good religions, though the concept of God does not enter into them.

Just when he is getting interesting, Dr. Wolfe has a relapse, for he continues:—

At the adolescent level of religious development we find those individuals whose religion is doubt and scepticism, and who are interested in breaking idols rather than in building them. Many an individual who believes himself irreligious and goes about destroying other peoples' illusions about religions and God is not so clever as he thinks he is, because he has not yet learned the necessity of faith in human life.

It will be seen that as a defender of the faith, Dr. Wolfe is no more a success than Henry the Eighth, who was "a pain in the neck" to the priests who patronized him. Being an instructed citizen of an educated nation, he should know better than to pen such nonsense. There is always something exhilarating in the infatuation of an heroic ignoramus, but this holy simplicity is overdone. He follows the beaten track of theologians in writing in this manner of Freethinkers. One thing, however, we are grateful for: Dr. Wolfe does not perceive "the hand of Moscow" in man's striving for intellectual freedom.



Wisely, he leaves that foolishness to the leader-writers, those sapient pen-pushers who pretend to discover Muscovite influence if the charwoman asks for more money, or the errand-boy's grandmother conveniently dies.

The *News-Chronicle* (London) has very little in common with its flamboyant rival, but it has a tendency to face two ways on the question of religion. Catering for the Nonconformists, the editor uses more guarded language, and, in leading articles, occasionally rises to the giddy heights of the *Hibbert Journal*, a periodical said to be a great help in cases of insomnia. Unfortunately, the lower stratum of Nonconformity is by no means high-brow, and, journalisticly, these innocents have to be catered for as well as the better-dressed congregations who sit at the feet of the leading Free Church ministers. Mr. Hugh Redwood caters for this particular section of the *News-Chronicle* audience, and his articles have a mid-Victorian flavour. They are compacted of battered and threadbare conventionalities, and it is difficult to believe that he has ever studied life outside a Nonconformist chapel, for where else could he stumble upon his claptrap conversions? But is it not playing it a little low down on the British Free Churchman thus to take advantage of his innocence of life and his lack of experience? When the Education Act has run another half century, the readers of newspapers, perhaps, will cease to hunger for sawdust, and will prefer the bread of knowledge. In sober truth, and not in the cant of journalism, let us wish for the recovery of the *News-Chronicle*. There are so many editors for whom the inscription, "Died of the Christian Fallacy" is good, and good enough. But the man who occupies the seat formerly used by Charles Dickens, the man who writes for the great newspaper which numbered Harriet Martineau, Andrew Lang and Herbert Paul among its contributors should not be one of these. So desperate is the dilemma that almost is one persuaded that British Nonconformity has declined to a period of hypocrisy and vulgarity.

Being a professedly Socialist newspaper, the *Daily Herald* (London) should adopt a saner attitude on religion than its get-rich-quick rivals. It does nothing of the kind. In its intense desire for popularity-hunting, it simply tickles the ears of the groundlings. Reading the *Herald's* pages, one would imagine that the writers had read *The Rights of Man*, but had never even heard of *The Age of Reason*.

The unpalatable truth is that the newspaper press is less concerned with principle than with interest. The press is simply used by the proprietors as a means of making money, at almost any cost. The editor has no more power than the greenest reporter, and has to do what he is told, or lose his job. To-day there are no newspaper editors like John Morley, who spelt God with a little "g," or William T. Stead, who took the goddess Grundy by the throat, and added the Criminal Law Amendment Act to the Statute Book of his country. Present-day editors are always ready to make great sacrifices for their opinions. They are always ready to die for the truth, if they only knew what truth was. Journalism was once a great profession; to-day it is a mere trade, and the editors are the tradesmen's assistants. Unfortunately, they are not so honest as the men who cut cheese with a wire, or sell tripe and onions. For the journalists deflect the scales of justice, and debase the moral currency. Until the newspaper press is really free from the fell clutch of big business, it can never challenge vested interests, let alone express unquenchable revolt against the agonies of mankind.

MIMNERMUS.

## Imperfections of the Papacy

THE Crusades waged by Christendom against the Moslem invader have been cynically described as "the foreign policy of the Papacy." After several centuries' bitter strife, incurring terrible bloodshed and stained by unspeakable atrocity, Islam remained triumphant in Africa and the East. Ostensibly designed in the first instance to recover the sacred places of Christendom from the profane clutches of the insolent Arab, these wars became more and more devoted to secular ends, as the generations rolled away. The wave of religious emotion which had swept over Europe in earlier days was nearly exhausted by the close of the fifteenth century. Commercial considerations were now predominant, and the use of the term Crusade to condone acts of wanton aggression within Christian realms served to disenchant the pious and quench their former zeal for religious conflict with Islam.

Far from proving victorious in the fight, Christian Europe was on the defensive in the fifteenth century. The Turks had reached the Danube and were steadily gaining ground, yet no combined effort was made to stem their advance. Pope Pius II. called for a general Crusade against the turbulent Moslem intruder, but his cry passed unheeded. As the Professor of Modern History at Oxford, Sir Charles Oman, notes in his volume *The Sixteenth Century* (Methuen, 1936): "Pius sat in vain at Ancona in 1464, waiting for fleets that never came, and when they failed to come, died of a broken heart. He had looked out from his headland over the Adriatic for long weeks, but nothing turned up save ten Venetian galleys—and the Venetians alone might have sent 100 galleys if they had been set earnestly on answering the Crusading cry. From the rest of Europe came nothing. The game was up."

A feeling of abject failure was general in the closing years of the fifteenth century. Not only had the Crusades terminated ignominiously but the attempts of the various European States to set their own house in order ended most miserably. The leading secular and religious Powers of the Middle Ages—the Holy Roman Empire and the Papacy—had sadly deteriorated. Oman thinks that both had fallen to their deepest degradation about the year 1492. This date "combines the death of Frederick III. . . . and the election to the Papacy of Rodrigo Borgia, the most infamous wearer of the triple crown in all the annals of the Roman Church—not excepting any of the wretched Johns, the fifteenth century pirate or the tenth century degenerates."

For three centuries a conflict raged between the civil and spiritual powers for supremacy. No means, however vile, were spared in a contest which led to a general moral anarchy unsurpassed in the chequered career of mankind. Most sane people to-day view war with aversion, but the medieval Papacy in its endeavour to gain supremacy over all secular rulers never hesitated, when its spiritual thunders were disregarded, to furnish every encouragement to outside princes to attack the territories of those who disputed Papal claims. Nor was the Papacy content with the incitement of a foreign foe; it also stimulated civil disturbance with all its attendant evils. Filial affection, an alleged Christian virtue, was regarded as unimportant when the Church had an interest to serve, and the sons of rulers were incited to revolt against their parents when these latter incurred Papal displeasure. It seems a fair estimate that half "the troubles of medieval Germany were caused by rebellions fostered by the Papacy."



Papal investitures created discord not only in England, but on the Continent. In promoting its policy of establishing universal dominion, Rome repeatedly nominated for high and influential ecclesiastical office men who were likely to prove antagonistic to the reigning prince. Pluralities and the appointment of absentee Italian priests who enjoyed the revenues of sees they never even visited were commonplaces, while protests against these and other scandals were usually met with threats of interdict or excommunication which in that superstitious age were viewed with fear and trembling by the ignorant multitude.

The authority of the clergy in matrimonial affairs was exercised very capriciously. Several rulers were excommunicated for entering into wedlock with a first or second cousin. Yet, so small importance did the Papacy really attach to marriage within the prohibited degrees that a potentate was allowed to purchase not merely the right to espouse his first cousin, but his aunt or niece or, strange as it seems, his deceased wife's sister. Even in the nineteenth century the son of King Victor Emmanuel I. of Italy purchased leave to wed his sister's daughter.

At the time when the Church appeared triumphant over its temporal antagonist its prestige was in reality lessened. In the Dark Ages, Anti-Popes championed by rulers at variance with Christ's Vicar were not unknown, but their tenure was usually brief and uncertain. Even the prolonged residence of the Popes at Avignon apparently did little to diminish its influence in Rome. But when Gregory XI. returned to the Eternal City in 1377 discord began. Perhaps the Papacy commanded greater veneration at a distance than in its ancestral home. When Gregory departed this life the conclave of Cardinals was compelled by the Roman populace to elect Urban IV., but this choice was opposed by the French prelates, who proceeded to elect a rival in Clement VII., and for over forty years the Roman and French Cardinals each appointed a Pope. Thus Europe became separated into two obediences, the one at Avignon being recognized by France and the States friendly to France, while England, Portugal and most of the German princes acknowledged Urban IV. and his successors in Rome.

The recriminations of the rival Popes soon became a spectacle to gods and men. Each Pontiff in language of the most violent character bitterly excommunicated the other. There were mutual accusations of blasphemy, imposture, simony, black magic; indeed, nearly all the crimes in the Newgate Calendar. These very edifying proceedings caused the devout many misgivings, and the apprehensive ones were gravely concerned respecting the claims of the rival Pontiffs. Obviously, those who supported a spurious Pontiff ran the risk of being damned to all eternity in the world to come. Still, the subjects of the different States proved practically obedient to their respective rulers.

The divided allegiance of the fourteenth century was intensified in the period that followed, until it became imperative to end the scandal at any cost. Foreshadowing the League of Nations, a Conciliar Tribunal was established for the purpose of convening General Councils of the Western Church armed with authority to repress every evil, including the pretensions of the Popes themselves. In accordance with this laudable ambition, a Council assembled at Pisa in 1409, and this gathering pronounced illegal the election of the Popes then reigning at Avignon and Rome. It decreed their deposition and proceeded to the election of a third Pope, Alexander V. But Gregory and Benedict, the dismissed Pontiffs, flatly

refused to recognize the authority of the Council. Thus there were now three Popes in being, each bitterly cursing his competitors. The Council's choice died shortly after his election, and then the Conciliar body elected Balthazar Cossa, the infamous John XXIII. This highly tarnished ecclesiastic's past misdeeds were soon trumpeted to the world by his enemies. Oman opines that the Council had neglected to inquire into its nominee's earlier career, and recalls Gibbon's sardonic reference to the crimes imputed to Pope John by his detractors, when the great historian declared that, "the more scandalous charges being suppressed, the Vicar of Christ was only accused of piracy, murder, robbery, rape and gross sexual abnormalities." Yet, presumably, he was infallible in faith and morals.

In 1415 the Council of Constance compelled the resignation both of John and Gregory, while Benedict III. was reduced to impotence and Martin V. became sovereign Pontiff. But although the disruption was healed the scandals continued. Instead of undertaking reform the Curia undermined the authority of the General Councils, and deprived them of all supervision over the Papacy. A Council assembled at Basle approved a scheme for reformed administration in Church government which included Conciliar surveillance in place of that of the Vatican, but the now reigning Pontiff, Eugenius IV. stubbornly opposed all restraint. The Council was driven to desperation, deposed the Holy Father, and then nominated another to succeed him, but this divided Papacy proved unpopular, and the Council dispersed in despair, thus leaving Eugenius IV. as monarch of all he surveyed.

The Conciliar Movement having failed, the clerical reactionaries had a fairly free hand, although a few in authority favoured reform. By the end of the fifteenth century the scandals were as glaring as ever, and the Borgia Pope, Alexander VI., who ruled until the opening years of the following century, would have been a monument of iniquity in any time or land.

Meanwhile, the Holy Roman Empire which was to have established peace and good-will in Christian Europe was in ruins. The Emperor had become little more than a figurehead in a series of distracted States. As the fifteenth century closed, it was obvious that the Empire's mission had failed. Heresies and heretical movements once more appeared in open day. The "Donation of Constantine" was exposed as an impudent forgery, and the "False Decretals" shared its fate. Yet, it was a barren time whose only respectable figures were the reformers John Huss and Girolamo Savonarola and the heroic Joan of Arc, and as the historian sadly notes, "it burnt all three, after trials which were a disgrace to spiritual and lay authority in equal measure." Yet, in the succeeding sixteenth century civilization and culture made giant strides towards higher things.

T. F. PALMER.

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How can infinite power be able to do all things, and yet infinite goodness be unable to do evil? How can infinite justice exact the utmost penalty for sin, and yet infinite mercy pardon the sinner? How can infinite wisdom know all that is to come, and yet infinite freedom be at liberty to do or to forbear? How is the existence of evil compatible with that of an infinitely perfect being? For, if he will it, he is not infinitely good; and if he will it not, his will is thwarted and his sphere of action limited.—Herbert Spencer.



## Things Worth Knowing\*

### L.

#### RELIGION AND SOCIETY

NOBODY will deny that the common Religion added to the strength of the State, but it seems that its national importance has been over-rated. On the one hand, the political fusion between different communities took place before the religious fusion and was obviously the cause of it; on the other hand, the mere tie of a common religion has never proved sufficient to bind together neighbouring tribes or peoples so as to form one nation. The Greek States had both the same religion and the same language, but nevertheless remained distinct States. Professor Seeley's assertion that "in the East to this day nationality and religion are almost convertible terms" is very far from the truth. The Orientalist, Wallin, who had exceptional opportunities to study the felings of the different Mohammedan nationalities, observes that "every Oriental people has a certain aversion to every other, and even the inhabitants of one province to those of another. The Turk does not readily tolerate the Arab, nor the Persian, and these feel similarly towards the Turk; the Arab does not get on well with the Persian, nor the Persian with the Arab; the Syrian does not like the Egyptian, whom he calls inhuman, and the latter does not willingly associate with the Syrian whom he calls simple-minded and stupid; and the son of the desert condemns both." It sometimes seems as if the national spirit of a people rather influenced its religion than was influenced by it. Patriotism has even succeeded in nationalizing the greatest enemy of national distinctions, Christianity, and has well nigh revived the old notion of a national god, whose business it is to look after his own people and, especially, to fight its battles.

... Like the political influence of religion as a means of tying together the members of the same social unit, so also the moral influence of religion has often been greatly exaggerated. I can find no solid foundation for the statements that "the beginning of all morality is to be found in religion" (Pfleiderer); that "even in the earliest period of human history religion and morality are necessary correlates of each other" (Caird); that "all moral commandments originally have the character of religious commandments" (Wundt); that in ancient society "all morality—as morality was then understood—was consecrated and enforced by religious motives and sanctions" (Robertson Smith); that the clan-god was the guardian of the tribal morality (Jevons). It seems to me to be a fact beyond dispute that the moral consciousness had originated in emotions entirely different from that feeling of uncanniness and mystery which first led to the belief in supernatural beings.

The old saying that religion was born of fear seems to hold true, in spite of quite recent assertions to the contrary. It appears that in all quarters of the savage world, fear predominates as the initial element in the religious sentiment, that people are more inclined to ascribe evil than good to the influence of supernatural beings, and that their sacrifices and other acts of worship more frequently have in view to avert misfortunes than to procure positive benefits.

\* 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.

Of the gods of many uncivilized people we are directly told that they are of a malicious nature and mostly intent on doing harm to mankind.

... It seems that most gods of uncivilized peoples are thoroughly selfish beings, who care about nothing else than what concerns their own personal interests—that they are utterly indifferent to men's behaviour towards their fellow-men, neither disapproving of vice or punishing the wicked, nor approving of virtue or rewarding the good. That this is the case with gods who are of a malicious nature, follows from the fact that altruistic feelings are an essential source of moral emotions; but even a friendly supernatural being is by no means *ipso facto* a guardian of men's conduct towards one another. In Morocco the patron saint of a town, village or tribe is not in the least concerned about any kind of behaviour which has not immediate reference to himself.

We are told by competent observers that the supernatural beings of savage belief frequently show the utmost disregard to all questions of worldly morality. According to Spencer and Gillen, the Central Australian natives, though they assume the existence of both friendly and mischievous spirits, have not the vaguest idea of a personal individual other than the actual living member of the tribe who approves or disapproves of their conduct, so far as anything like what we call morality is concerned. The Society Islanders maintained that "the only crimes that were visited by the displeasure of their deities were the neglect of some rite or ceremony." Of various tribes on the West African and Gold Coasts, Major Ellis writes: "Religion, at the stage of growth at which we find these . . . groups of tribes has no connexion with morals, or the relations of men to one another. It consists solely of ceremonial worship, and the gods are only offended when some rite or ceremony has been neglected or omitted. . . . Murder, theft, and all offences against the person or property, are matters in which the gods have no immediate concern, and in which they take no interest, except in the case when bribed by a valuable offering, they take up the quarrel in the interests of some faithful worshipper."

... When we pass from the gods of simpler peoples to more civilized gods we notice a marked difference. Among peoples of a higher culture the gods are on the whole benevolent to man when duly propitiated. They resent by preference, offences committed against themselves personally; but in many cases they at the same time avenge social wrongs. . . . The gods have thus experienced a gradual change for the better; until at last they are described as ideals of modern perfection, even though, when more closely scrutinized, their goodness and notions of justice are found to differ materially from what is deemed good and just in the case of men.

Men have selected their gods according to their usefulness. . . . Among the Maori of New Zealand, a mere trifle, or natural casualty, will induce a native (or a whole tribe) to change his Atua. The Negro, when disappointed in some of his speculations, or overtaken by some sad calamity, throws away his fetish and selects a new one. . . . North American Indians owe all their good or bad luck to their Manitou, and, "if their Manitou has not been favourable to them they quit him without any ceremony, and take another." . . . Men not only select as their gods such supernatural beings as may be most useful to them in the struggle for life, but also magnify their good qualities in worshipping. Praise and exaggerating eulogy are common in the mouth of a devout worshipper. In ancient Egypt the god of each petty state was within it said to be the ruler of the gods, the creator of the world, and the giver of



all good things. So also in Chaldea the god of a town was addressed by its inhabitants with the most exalted epithets, as the master or King of all the gods.

The benevolence of a god, however, does not imply that he acts as a moral judge. A friendly god is not generally supposed to bestow his favours gratuitously; it is hardly probable, then, that he should meddle with matters of social morality out of sheer kindness and of his own accord. But by an invocation he may be induced to reward virtue and punish vice.

*Early Beliefs and their Social Influence,*  
by E. WESTERMARCK, pp. 21-30.

## Acid Drops

There are a number of calculated attempts in this country to stir up feeling against the Spanish Government on the score of its alleged Atheism, when it is thought that the bugbear of Communism will not sufficiently serve. The more responsible papers, both in London and in the provinces, are free from this, but those that cater for the ignorant, and regularly trade on their constant clients are acting up to their reputation. The *Daily Mail* follows, in company with the *Daily Express*, that it is fighting against Atheism, and therefore champions the rebels who are reported as blotting out whole villages, either when they advance, so as to be sure not to leave an enemy in its rear, or as an act of vengeance where they are forced to retire. The *Universe*, in its issue for August 14, somewhat incautiously refers to the rebels as "the Catholic forces," and writes as though all that was being aimed at by the Government was the destruction of the Churches and of religion. As this represents the rest of Spain as being made up of Atheists, it should be too foolish for anyone but readers of such papers as those mentioned to swallow. "Catholic forces" is worth remembering.

It will be remembered that it has been pointed out by more than one correspondent of such papers as the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Times*, that the churches in Spain have been used as hiding places for ammunitions by the revolting generals, and that priests were actually using Church towers for sniping the people. This accusation was made in set terms by no less a person than Madame Montessori, the famous educationalist, and a very strong Roman Catholic. And it is also worth while placing on record the following message sent to the *News-Chronicle* by its special correspondent, Mr. Langdon-Davies, on August 14:—

In making an impartial judgment of the Spanish Fascist revolution it is impossible to ignore the fact, astonishing to any Englishman, that in most parts of Spain every church has been burned by elements within the anti-Fascist movement in support of the legitimate democratic Government.

There are explanations, apart from Marxist and anarchist antagonism to religion.

The complicity of five Church dignitaries with Fascism cannot be denied.

The vast treasures found in sacred places were an insult to the general poverty of the parishioners and were naturally regarded as sinews of war for their opponents.

Moreover, the conscientious, mildly religious Englishmen should remember the kind of religion that has been thus destroyed here, which is well exemplified by the fact that the Bishop of Camplona has just granted 100 days' plenary indulgence to anyone killing a Marxist.

A minority of Left fanatics have organized "destruction squads," concentrated in the industrial towns and charged with the duty of destroying Church property.

They went from village to village raising the populace to the burnt sacrifice, but hardly had the flames arisen than hands were stretched to put them out. Many things were saved by anarchists and syndicalists themselves.

Wherever the Catalan Left Republican Party was strong the damage was negligible.

Meanwhile, one of the rebel generals threatens to use the blood of the Government troops as cement to rebuild the Churches that have been destroyed. So much for the one leader of the "Catholic forces." These "Catholic forces," it should be added, include coloured Mohammedan tribes who have a standing reputation for blood-thirstiness and outraging women.

The *Daily Herald*, having at heart the education of the people, in a recent issue, informed them, in display type, that the Churches had arranged for more sun in order to save the crops. Now that a little fine weather has set in, the next step for the *Daily Herald* to take would be to inform the world that the finer weather followed the prayers, and to draw the logical conclusion therefrom. That might send up the circulation of the *Herald* among the chapels. But the prayers should have been whole-hearted and have asked for the restoration of the spoiled crops. That would have been an answer worth chronicling. The *Herald* is one of the papers that talks much of the need for quickening the intelligence of the working classes.

The Rev. John Maillard is appealing for £74,000 to purchase Milton Abbey, where he will carry on the Faith-healing business. Maillard describes his job as "the work to which it has pleased Almighty God to call me." It seems presumptuous to allege that God will be "tickled to death" (as they say in the Movies) just because a "Worm" gets £74,000 to buy a luxury house. But Maillard will get it all right. Barnum was right.

The Rev. J. S. Rattenbury says of the "Divine Guidance" of the Oxford Groups that "superstitiously followed" it leads directly to the lunatic asylum. It is strange that even when the average parson says something sensible he is nearly always impelled to say it in an idiotic way. This is probably due to the power of training of the force of habit. By "superstitious" Mr. Rattenbury means "logical," and this is only another way of saying that if one trusts to divine guidance he is bound to go wrong. Divine guidance can only be trusted so long as it agrees with what we believe is right. To be sensible God's advice must agree with a sensible man's judgment. And the logical conclusion is "Why bother with God at all?"

The Rev. J. T. Bell, in the *Methodist Times*, declares that "the supreme task which confronts the Christian Church to-day is the ethical reconstruction of society." Well, "ethical reconstruction" is not religion. It has nothing to do with imaginary heavens or hells, or miracles, or Mass, or any of the nonsense which distinguishes Christianity. The Church may or may not have a social mission, but the one object it really exists for is "to bring men unto Christ," which is just as devoid of ethics as to bring men unto Jupiter. This insistence on "ethics," however, is a sign of the times. True Christianity does not seem very palatable nowadays to intelligent people.

Canon Armytage, who is also an M.A., lectured, the other day, on "Fundamentals of the Faith."—and quite naturally, declared, "Firmly, I believe, and truly God is three and God is One." He gave as a convincing proof of his proposition that "only the trinitarian view of God can satisfy the whole man, his intellect, his emotions, his creative intuitions." And so that one can see how unanswerable is the Canon's logic, he "assumes" first that "all of you believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God." After that, on the same assumption, we are ready to believe in Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp.

According to the Canon, "the idea of God as one, alone, in isolation is intolerable to our reason," which, of course, is why Christians insist that there is a Mother



of God, who is also his Virgin Wife, and also a Son of God who is himself, with a Holy Ghost, who is both God and the Son, thrown in, so to speak, to make the inevitable Trinity. All this is beautifully clear, and we are quite certain that most of the Canon's readers and listeners will go away convinced Trinitarians—as, no doubt, they already were.

As for us, we prefer the simple explanation once given to us by a Trinitarian who showed that it was quite easy to get the "hang" of the matter. He used as an analogy the homely cup of tea. It consists, he said, of tea, sugar and milk—three things combined in one cup of tea. We really think this a better argument than that about God's loneliness.

The Rev. J. A. Calata, writing in the *Church Times* admits that in his own country, Africa, "Christianity is undergoing one of the severest tests of its life's time." He points out that the failure of the League of Nations "to save the last African independent country from being grabbed by foul means by a European Christian power has created a lasting wound in the heart of Black South Africa." The native races see little of the Christianity preached so ardently by missionaries, practised by European nations in their dealing with the blacks; and Mr. Calata points out that "some of our South African Europeans are inclined to underestimate the native anger," and that the recent "jollifications held to celebrate the occasion of the African disenfranchisement" seemed like "gloating over a down-trodden people."

Many examples are given by Mr. Calata of the way in which the Christian South African Government is treating the native who looks upon all this legislation as "closing the door to the native political advance to a full common citizenship in the land of their birth." And what he says goes far to prove that Christianity looks like having but a thin time in South Africa among the natives—which is all to the good if only they knew it.

A Roman Catholic editor settles the query that "Jesus is God" in a very simple way. "Jesus claimed to be the Son of God and proved His claim by His miracles, etc. Therefore he is worthy of belief in His claim." Therefore "Jesus is God." When anyone can establish such a claim in this easy way, why go to the trouble of writing big books on theology? Perhaps some people are more impressed with millions of words than with the "sweet simple story of Jesus," told so wonderfully in a few.

The fly in the pie, however, comes in the Editor's admission that the "chronology and sequence of events of Our Lord's childhood are rather uncertain." Rather uncertain indeed! Yet the miracles, "etc.," are quite certain!

We are glad to note that Mgr. Gosselin quoted the Pope, the other day, as saying, "That the Church's aim is to evangelize, not to civilize." This is quite true and should be sufficient answer to those people who are constantly confusing "ethics" with "religion." The idea of Christianity is to make people believe what the Church says they ought to believe, no matter how silly or stupid. And these things do not belong to the domain of ethics as such.

The little Norfolk village of Walsingham illustrates in a remarkable degree the old allusion to "more money than sense." Once upon a time King Henry VIII., in the intervals of marriage, bestowed on "The Virgin of Walsingham" a valuable gold necklace—probably collecting it afterwards when despoiling the even then too wealthy Monastery. To-day when the village contains only a few hundred inhabitants, a vast church is being built, 300 feet long, capable of accommodating

thousands of worshippers. From Nazareth is being imported special stones wherewith to build an exact replica of the "Holy Shrine."

The churches are beginning to wake up to the fact that the constant reiteration of the facts regarding the attendance at Church and Chapel in this country, is not good business. "G.J.," who writes the "Free Church" column in the *Manchester Guardian*, observes that this publicity is "bad psychology," and seeing the criticism that may arise from Christians saying things not because they are true, but because they are good "psychology" is reducing the Church's attitude to that of commercial huckster, he makes some attempt to show that the attendance at Church is not so bad as all that. Well, if anyone knows the facts, it is the Church. They could publish figures if they liked. We still believe, in the absence of documentary evidence from them, that the very recent attempts that are being made to show satisfaction at the state of Church-going, are just the result of the recognition by the wiser business elements in the Churches that to let the public know the truth is "bad business."

"G.J.'s" crumbs of comfort are obtained in this wise. He has taken a few personal observations during holiday Sundays, two in large cities, two in small towns, and has often found a difficulty in getting into the services. "G.J." knows that the influx of attendants on these occasions is caused by the opportunity given to people when on holiday to "attend service" in a fine, perhaps historic, building, and/or hear one of the "crack" preachers. This custom is still recognized as one of the ways of spending Sunday in Christian England, which sees to it that other more congenial ways are barred.

"G.J." admits, as he must, bad psychology or good psychology, the falling off in Church attendance. All he says is the situation is not as bad as it is painted. This is a small point. He attributes this to some extent to the Big War. But the situation was becoming critical long before then. When Joseph Cowen was editor of the *Newcastle Daily Chronicle* about forty years ago, one Sunday morning he planted a checker at the door of every place of worship in Newcastle-on-Tyne. The results created a sensation over the whole of Christian England. The only criticism ever offered was that at the time of the census many communicants were away on holiday. Perhaps the numbers were affected slightly because of this. But on the other hand the turning up of these units in bulk at Churches like St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey and Brompton Oratory, would be creating the impression in the minds of the "G.J.'s" of that day, that all was well with Christian England.

### The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is:—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try and secure some of them?



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E.R.—Asks us to “take a look at the faces that pass you in the street, that front you in the bus, tram or tube. How many people, educated or otherwise, are too damned lazy to do their own thinking?” We are afraid the answer is, very few. But the better way to put the question is surely, How many are capable, given proper conditions, to do their own thinking? Put in that way the situation is not nearly so hopeless as it appears at first glance.

I. R. MACFARLANE (Lake Loon, Canada).—Pleased to receive your interesting letter. We appreciate your intellectual loneliness, but education, generally, is a slow process. We are sending you copies of the paper, and you will find there some indication of useful reading matter. We commend to you the works cited in the series, “Things Worth Knowing.” This is intended to be a guide for reading, apart from the interesting excerpts. We only cite from books that will well repay study.

J. ALMOND.—The review of *We Europeans*, by Sir Arthur Keith, appeared in the *Sunday Times* a few weeks after the issue of the book. The editor of the *Sunday Times* or the publishers, Jonathan Cape, would be able to give you the exact date.

F. C. HOLDEN (California).—Thanks for papers, which are always acceptable and often useful. We are gladly sending copies of paper to the address given.

M. FELDMAN.—Much obliged for addresses of likely new readers. Paper being sent for four weeks.

A. HANSON.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader, paper being sent for four weeks.

F. MUSTON.—We are obliged for the new subscription. These are steadily increasing.

J. CHAPPELL.—Many thanks for new reader, and for your efforts to increase sales.

E. PARIENTE.—Your securing two new subscribers in so short a time is excellent. It is an example of what may be done.

W.C.—Sorry to hear the sad news of Mr. E. C. Griffiths' death. Obituary will appear next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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.”

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

## Sugar Plums

A number of people have availed themselves of our offer to send to new subscribers a year's supply of the *Freethinker* with five shillings worth of selected literature for the usual subscription of 15s. After the first year the regular subscription will rule, and we do not expect that many will give up.

The *Literary Guide* in calling attention to our “Circulation Drive,” remarks that we are fortunate in having so devoted a body of followers. We are, and we have always been alive to the fact. And although we have never worked for it, we trust we have done something to deserve it, and also trust that we shall never do anything to lose it. There, so pretty a speech ought to make those who have not yet started the hunt for a new subscriber to do so at once.

Nothing connected with the *Freethinker* of late has given us greater satisfaction than the appreciation with which the “Things Worth Knowing” series has been received, and which has now been running for nearly a year. We are, of course, responsible for the selection only, but we are certain that no better series of articles have ever appeared in any paper. Care is taken that the selections shall be from good books only, and we pride ourselves that there is a unity of aim in the selections that gives them an additional value. The letters of appreciation we have received make us feel proud of our readers, for they reflect upon their mental characters pleasingly.

The pleasure we have had in prowling round our bookshelves and making the selection, has made us realize what a pleasant work it would be if we could devote time to a bibliographical catalogue giving an outline of important books (without regard to age), notices of the authors, and a critical appreciation of their works. It would be a labour of love and a useful labour, but it is one that we are never likely to have enough leisure to accomplish. “Things Worth Knowing” must be taken as a very faint foreshadowing of what we should like to do.

A notice of Mr. Cutner's *Pagan Elements in Christianity* appears in the *Harrogate Herald* for August 5. The writer does not like Mr. Cutner's style, which is quite a matter of taste, but he does agree that the points are “made shrewdly,” agrees that he clearly establishes his point “that what we call Christianity is merely paganism in a new guise,” and thinks the booklet “should prove of great assistance to those who are tempted to embark upon more detailed and serious study.” And this is really all that matters. We hope our readers will take the hint, and secure copies of a useful little pamphlet. It will be sent post free for sevenpence.

Mr. G. Whitehead's week in Leeds was one of the most successful of the whole tour. Seven really good meetings were held, and interest was maintained until the end. Many promises to join the local N.S.S. Branch were received. This week Mr. Whitehead will be in Blackburn, and will lecture in the Market each evening, also in the afternoon of to-day (August 23). Full particulars will be found in the Lecture Notices column. There is a Branch of the N.S.S. in Blackburn which will co-operate at all the meetings.

At the West London Police Court, on August 14, a man was charged with creating a disturbance at a Fascist meeting. A man who was present at the meeting volunteered a statement, and the magistrate said he would hear it. On discovering that the man did not believe in the Bible he was told to stand down. The accused man asked for a week's remand, but this was refused, and he was fined £5.

This looks to us like a case for an appeal. The magistrate may have been within his rights in refusing to hear a witness, but he was certainly not justified in refusing to listen to a man because he did not believe in the Bible. It is really time that the Lord Chancellor (we think he is the official concerned) took some notice of these police court magistrates who use their position to



vent their own prejudices. If the case is as reported, it is a scandal that such a thing should have happened. Not believing in the Bible is an offence, or a disqualification, unknown to British law, and as the man was witness for the accused, and the latter was found guilty, the offence becomes the more serious.

We are pleased to receive good reports of Mr. J. Clayton's lecturing campaign in East Lancashire. Mr. Clayton breaks much new ground, and it requires both courage and address to go into the "wilds," often unsupported by anyone he knows and deliver the gospel. It says something for Mr. Clayton's address that he is able to do this, not merely in the face of strong opposition from many of the audience, but also to hold his own against police interference. We wish Mr. Clayton continued success in his work.

Nearly forty children were taken by the Liverpool Branch N.S.S. to an outing to Thurstaston Common, on August Bank Holiday. The youngsters all enjoyed themselves, the weather was good, and those who were responsible were thus repaid for their efforts. There must have been many a worse day's work on that Bank Holiday, and we congratulate the Branch on the success achieved.

Those of our readers who are on the look out for good books at reduced prices are advised to scan the list of remainders on the advertising pages of this issue. The Pioneer Press takes care not to handle books that cannot be commended for serious reading. We specially comment in the list the books by W. J. Perry, and Sydney Hartland, without in the least decrying the remainder. Only a limited number of copies is available at these reduced prices.

Colonel George Easton, in a letter to the *Morning Post*, relates the following amusing story:—

When I was a subaltern a Church Parade was ordered to march from a camp on the River Humber to a small town about four miles off.

The Roman Catholics were separated from the rest, and, as there was no Roman Catholic place of worship in the town, they were allowed to remain in camp, where the adjutant, a Roman Catholic, addressed them—there being only half-a-dozen of them.

The Anglicans had a weary march under a hot sun and then, after the service, had to march back.

On the following Sunday a similar Church Parade was ordered, but when the order, "Fall out Roman Catholics" was given, at least 50 men did so.

The adjutant told all those who fell out to say the Lord's Prayer. Those who said, "Who art in Heaven," remained in camp, but the "Which art in Heaven" had to march to church.

We are indebted to the *War Cry* (New York) for the following information:—

The Society of the Godless is one of the divisions of the Junior Atheist League functioning in the high schools and colleges of the United States. Various local college groups operate under such names as God's Black Sheep, the Devil's Angels, the Damned Souls Society, the Circle of the Godless, the Legion of the Damned (the head being called "His Satanic Majesty"), the Hedonic Host of Hell-bent Heathen.

Freethinkers and their friends in the West Ham area are invited to join the local Branch party in an outing to Grange Hill on Sunday, August 30. Train 9.45 a.m. from Forest Gate Station (L.N.E.R.), cheap day return fare ninepence. Lunch will be carried, and tea will be arranged for at Lambourne End. If the present fine weather can manage to hold out until the 30th, there should be a large party, and a happy day in store for each member.

## The Church in Spain

(From *Creed and Character*, by Chapman Cohen)

(Concluded from page 517)

THE Moriscos had been tortured, threatened, imprisoned, and murdered into a nominal avowal of Christianity. Conversion under such conditions always supplies room for doubt; and there were gradually formed two parties within the Church for the purpose of dealing with the question of the Moriscos. One advocated expulsion, the other extermination. The suggestions offered were so monstrous that I prefer to summarize a few of these in the words of so eminent an authority as H. C. Lea:—

The Venetian envoy, Agostino Nani, writes that the idea has been entertained of a Sicilian Vesper, at others the castration of all male infants. . . . Hideous as was this project, it was resolved upon at one time and came near being attempted. In 1581, when Philip II. was in Lisbon, a junta of his chief counsellors . . . concluded to send the Moriscos to sea and scuttle the vessels. . . . It was resolved that when the fleet returned from the Azores the matter should be executed by Alonso de Leyva, but it was abandoned, because when the fleet arrived it had to be sent to Flanders. . . . A variant of this was the proposition, in 1590, that the Inquisition should proceed against all the Moriscos of the Crown of Castile, without sparing the life of a single one—either inflicting natural or civil death, or perpetual exile or the galleys for life. Not much more humane was the suggestion of Archbishop Ribera to enslave all the males of proper age and send them to the mines or galleys. Ferocious and inhuman as were all these projects, they evoked no scruples of conscience. Theologians there were in plenty to prove that they were in accord with the canons. By baptism the Moriscos had become Christians; as such they were subject to the laws of the Church, and as heretics and apostates they had incurred the death penalty. . . . A common sentence involving them all would be a service to God. So reasoned Archbishop Ribera. . . . Even more outspoken was Fray Bleda, who proved by irrefragable authorities that the Moriscos could be massacred in a single day. . . . He urged massacre in preference to expulsion, arguing that it would be a work of great piety and edification to the faithful and a wholesome warning to heretics, and when expulsion took place his aggressive piety found expression in the hope that, when piled upon the African coast, they would by dying aggravate the pestilence which, the previous year, had carried off 180,000 Saracens.

It must be remembered that the people against whom these measures were to be used were neither turbulent nor criminal. They were the most desirable of subjects, and, with the Jews, formed substantially the industrial, commercial, agricultural, and scientific parts of the nation's life. Their sole offence—none other is even alleged—is that they were not Christians.

The growing barbarity of the Christian peoples was, indeed, very intimately related to the development of Christian organizations. It was accompanied by a great increase in the number of religious buildings in Spain, and a development of religious feeling among the people. According to Buckle, there were at this time upwards of 9,000 monasteries in Spain, and one may assume a proportionate number of nunneries. The diocese of Seville boasted of 14,000 chaplains. This rapid growth of religious houses and of the clergy represented a severe drain upon the material resources if the nation, and a still more terrible hindrance to the development of its intellectual life.



Philip II. was statesman enough to shrink from many of the proposals submitted. Philip III. was more complaisant. He was completely under the influence of the Church, and it made the most of its power. The first proposal for expulsion was made in 1602, but it was not until September 22, 1609, that the fateful decree was published. This decree commenced in the usual way, with a declaration as to the danger the country ran in harbouring the Moriscos—first, because of their treasonable correspondence with the nation's enemies; second, because of their heresies. It was, therefore, necessary to avert the anger of God—an expression of which had been seen in the recent defeat of the Armada against England—by expelling them the country. Within three days after the publication of the edict, all Moriscos, of both sexes, were to leave the kingdom. The punishment for disobedience was death. They were permitted to take as much property with them as could be carried on their backs, but no more. For three days prior to their embarkation they were to remain in their homes, and after that time any found wandering about could be robbed by the first comer, or killed. But the value of the Moriscos to the country was admitted even here, as, in order to preserve the rice crops, irrigating canals, etc., six per cent of them were permitted to remain in the country to instruct Christians in the art of doing something useful.

Resistance to this savage edict was prevented by the massing of troops at various centres. The Christian population, accustomed for many years to regard the Moriscos as people without rights, took the publication of the edict as the signal for wholesale robbery and destruction. One writer states that in going from Valencia to San Mateo he saw the roads full of dead Moriscos.

The further application of the edict of expulsion to all parts of Spain where the Moors were resident went on as rapidly as possible, and in all cases there were the same scenes of spoliation and outrage. Some twenty-five thousand passed from Aragon through Navarre, or over the mountains, into France. These were refused admission at first, and only finally allowed to enter under very restrictive conditions. A band of four or five thousand old men, women, and children was sent to the summit of the mountains on the Bearnese frontier, and was left with but scanty provisions. Fourteen thousand paid a sum of 40,000 ducats for admission into France, which was then refused them, with the result that on the way back the majority died of pestilence or starvation. Many of those who voyaged to Africa never reached their destination, the crews often murdering the men and outraging the women. Those who did land on the African coast brought with them the reputation of possessing money, and this exposed them to still further dangers in their efforts to reach the Mohammedan States. It is said that, of 140,000 that sailed for Africa, upwards of 100,000 suffered death within a few months after their expulsion from Spain. Whichever way we turn there is the same story of greed, cruelty, and religious intolerance.

How many of the Moriscos were expelled it is impossible to say with certainty. The estimates vary greatly. The figures range as high as one million, and as low as 150,000. Lorente calculated that 100,000 perished or were enslaved, and 900,000 were exiled. Mr. Lea leans to the opinion that the number was probably about half a million. But neither the larger nor the smaller estimate alters the magnitude of the crime. The suffering is as great in the one case as in the other, and one's judgment as to the evil influence of Christianity on the destinies of Spain can hardly be affected by a variation in statistics.

The effects of the expulsion—first of the Jews, and later of the Mohammedans—on the mental and material life of Spain was soon apparent. It denuded the country of all that was valuable to its existence. It was, again to cite from Lea, "universally recognized that no Spaniard brought up his children to honest industry. Those who could not find a career in the army or service of the State were thrust into the Church; a single daughter would be furnished with a marriage portion, and the rest would be placed in convents. Navarrete deploras the existence of four thousand Latin schools, crowded with the sons of peasants, while the fields were deserted, and those of the pupils who with a smattering of learning could not gain a living in the Church became beggars or tramps or robbers."

The Church had "purified" the country, and the price of purification was quickly apparent. Large tracts of land were left uncultivated, and ran to waste. Agriculture was neglected; and in the towns, in many cases, a state of semi-starvation existed for some time. The cultivation of rice, cotton, and sugar, the manufacture of silk and paper, practically ceased. Instead of manufacturing at home, the Spaniards were compelled to purchase abroad. Before the expulsion, Seville alone possessed 16,000 looms, giving employment to 140,000 persons. After the expulsion, only 300 looms were working. Toledo possessed fifty woollen manufacturers; in 1665 it had thirteen. The whole of the trade had been carried away by the Moors. Toledo lost its silk manufacture, Cordova its leather. In the sixteenth century Spain was famous for the manufacture of gloves; in 1665 this source of wealth had disappeared. Wealthy cities were reduced to beggary, and even many of the nobles had to apply to the State for relief, their incomes having disappeared through the driving out of the Moors.

More serious than the influence of the Christian Church on the material life of the Spanish people was its effect on the intellectual and moral life of the nation. It is the fashion of many writers to attribute the rapid decadence of Spain to foreign wars and the drain of colonization. But the wars of Louis XIV. and of Napoleon exhausted France to a much greater degree; yet France recovered, while Spain decayed. And in colonization England did more than Spain ever attempted. But in France intellectual vigour and intelligent industry remained; and while these continue the recuperative powers of a nation are incalculable. Of these elements Spain divested herself by the Jewish and Moorish expulsions. The intolerance of her Christian rulers was gratified, and her success in extirpating heresy could not but secure the progressive impoverishment of the people.

Finally, there was secured a closer identification of the religious and the secular powers than existed anywhere in Europe. And this was necessarily fatal to the progress of the nation. For several centuries the struggle for the reconquest of the country had gone on, and it was maintained against rulers who professed an alien faith. The consequence was a fusion of the nationalist and religious sentiments, perhaps as strong a combination as can be formed. The best culture of Spain had been Mohammedan, and those who understand Christian prejudices will realize what this contributed towards keeping Christians in a state of hostility towards the higher learning. The fight against the Mohammedan power brought the secular rulers of the country more and more under the influence of the Church, until there was finally no power and no influence that could successfully oppose its demands. For several centuries Mohammedan Spain had stood as the most civilized country in the world. It became Christian, and



from that time Spain stood before the world as a striking example of how easily a country may be brought to the very verge of ruin once the Christian Church assumes complete control. The consequence of that control was well summed up by Buckle:—

While every other country was advancing, Spain alone was receding. Every other country was making some addition to knowledge, creating some art, or enlarging some science. Spain, numbed into a death-like torpor, spellbound and entranced by the accursed superstition which preyed on her strength, presented to Europe a solitary instance of the constant decay. For her no hope remained; and before the close of the seventeenth century the only question was by whose hands the blow should be struck which would dismember that once mighty empire whose shadow had covered the world, and whose last remains were imposing even in their ruins.

I have taken Spain as an example because it enables one to see Christianity at work. And I have limited my survey to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in order that the issue should not be clouded by more recent events which might give rise to other questions. We can see the country Christian and non-Christian; we can note its re-Christianizing, the steady suppression of heresy, and the decay of the greatness and prosperity of Spain. There is no need for a recondite theory to explain the national decadence. Least of all, need we invoke the popular superstition of racial decay. A people are what their institutions make them. Given healthful institutions, and a nation may secure practical immortality, but given unhealthy ones, and national degeneration is assured.

In Spain the principal cause of decay was the preponderating influence of the Church. For generations the country had been depleting itself of its finest intellects and of its most independent spirits. It became dangerous to think, suicidal to express one's opinions. By a dual process of elimination and terrorism, Spain divested herself of all that was best in her national life, which would have enabled her to weather those storms to which she was exposed. Such intellect as the country possessed ran more or less to religion. The Churches were crowded but the fields were deserted. Spain made itself the most Christian country in Europe. It also ensured itself being the most backward.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## The Curse of Blind Belief

It is sometimes argued that since, in one form or another, belief in a supreme being is practically universal, there must be some essential reason for it, and that this belief points to the actual existence of deity. That there must be some ground for the belief is certain, but that the belief itself corresponds to the object believed is as certainly wrong.

The very origin of the word "God" is obscure. It has never been definitely ascertained what is the origin of this word. The Concise Oxford Dictionary says it is perhaps derived from the Aryan "gheu," to invoke or sacrifice. This may give us presumptive evidence of the origin of the belief in some imagined power as the progenitor of natural phenomena to whom sacrifices and petitions were offered. But once in existence man develops the idea, and in ways that inflict injury upon himself and his fellows. He mistakes ignorance for knowledge. Diseases and disasters, instead of proving to him the absurdity of believing that this God he has called into existence is

good or is able to protect him from evils, leads him to offer prayers and sacrifices, and to attribute the diseases of cattle, the misfortunes of man, and the occurrence of devastating natural phenomena, to the gods he worships.

No evidence has ever been given that will convince an unprejudiced mind of the existence of a God. If I am asked whether it can be proved that God does not exist, I may answer, No. But on what grounds do the teachers of religion advance as incontrovertible a teaching that rests on no better ground than that it can't be disproved? One might enquire of the priest, "Why do you put forward as a fact, as incontrovertible, what cannot be more than a bare possibility?" Does not the constantly changing form of religious doctrine prove that much of the priestly attitude involves deliberate lying of the most despicable kind?

Is it not time, therefore, that priests should act and think logically and honestly, and at most preach their doctrines as nothing more than a pack of postulates, often at variance with our experience, but certainly not as comprising anything that can honestly be called truth. Is it consistent with honest thinking to preach as incontrovertibly true that which may at any moment be shown to be unmistakably false? Priests may be animated by good intentions, most people are, but even they ought not to forget that nothing really good can be built on such a foundation. Nature has given us brains and heart, that is, intelligence and sympathy, and it is to these the clergy should appeal, not in furtherance of some external command, but in harmony with natural law, and in obedience to an intelligent appreciation of the duties of communal life.

It is clear that doctrines enunciated in the name of religion, in these days, fail to secure obedience. On the other hand, if these are placed on one side and morality taught on its true basis, and our education suited to such teaching, the childish notion of a heavenly existence after this life would be discarded, and man left free to create his own heaven on earth. Love of truth should convince all that no doctrine that contradicts experience can be taught with profit to society. There is much connected with ourselves and nature that still lies beyond our power of explanation, and the less we know about things the more ready are people to listen to the religious explanation that is offered, but long experience should have taught us that the religious explanation holds its ground only so long as positive knowledge is lacking. When that exists the religious explanation disappears. There is only one great heresy—heresy to truth; that is the one form of heresy that no church and no religion has ever denounced.

Consider the moral and scientific aspect of religious teachings. The Bible is the doctrinal source of Christian belief. But it makes no mention, and shows no consciousness of the extent of the universe that God is said to have created. It knows nothing of the nature of the various planets, or as to whether any of them may be inhabited or not. If they are inhabited it does not tell us how these can escape damnation, since it is only by Jesus Christ that men can be saved, and we are not told that he goes to every planet on which life exists to die for the salvation of that planet's inhabitants. And by what means can one man be morally saved by the sacrifice of another? Nature teaches, and science endorses the truth, that man must bear the natural consequences of his acts, whatever these may be. One can no more bear the moral consequences of another's actions than one can take on the physical consequences of another's conduct.



Why was man created at all? God could not be in need of him. He could give God nothing, but man having been created had a right to demand that he should be treated justly and fairly. But he was not treated fairly. He was placed amid dangers, the natures of which he could not appreciate; endowed with passions and appetites he could not control. And then he is damned because of the exercise of these passions, and because he succumbed to the dangers he could not protect himself against. If man was intended for heaven, why was he not placed there at the beginning?

Consider also the subject of prayer. That for which we pray must either be just or unjust. If it is just, a God who is the personification of justice and love should have given it to us before it was asked for. And if it is unjust, does it not look as though we are trying to bribe God by praise and flattery to do that which is wrong? The very act of prayer implies that God is neither vigilant in his care for us, nor just in the granting of his favours. The good man who does not pray will receive nothing; the bad one who does may receive everything.

When we thank a fellow creature for his kindness to us, we imply that he might have withheld that kindness. Do we really believe that if we do not pray to God to be kind to us that he will, as a consequence, be unkind? Christians tell us that we must not measure God by human standards. Well, what other standard of measurement can anyone apply?

Can we imagine a greater lie than that told by the priests that all earnest prayer will be heard? A prayer is always earnest; it is not less earnest because it asks for something we regard as bad. The prayer for destruction of an enemy is not less earnest than prayer for the curing of a sick man. And all earnest prayer is not heard and answered. People pray for those at sea, but how many are drowned! People pray for the safety of those belonging to them who work in mines, but how many of them are killed! All earnest prayer is not heard, or if it is heard, it is certainly not answered.

The very notion of prayer, or propitiation, points unequivocally to the primitive origin of gods. For all prayer is supplication, and it is a supplication to some person, more powerful than himself, which primitive man addressed to the supernatural being or beings which his own ignorance and fear had created. There is no need to go back to primitive times for evidence of the truth of this. It is present in every act of prayer. Man never prays for that which lies within his grasp. It is always when he is in a state of bafflement, mental, moral, or physical, that he prays for help from God. Prayer is a confession of ignorance, weakness, helplessness. It is said that it brings comfort. This may be, but too often it is the kind of comfort that man gets from the whisky bottle; a comfort that weakens in the act of comforting.

Blind relief cannot but act as a corrupting influence in human conduct. It appeals to man at his lowest, not at his highest. It teaches him to rely upon the help of some purely imaginary being instead of on his own intelligence and strength. The proof of this is shown in the fact that it is where the greatest reliance is placed upon prayers and petitions, masses, sacrifices, the help of God, that civilization is at its lowest. The whole history of mankind shows that the lower the standard of civilization the more fervent the religious belief, the less tendency there is to question the truth of religious doctrines. The study of human history in any part of the world will fully demonstrate the truth of this. Priests have confessed this to be the case when they have so bitterly opposed new ideas and obstructed much-

needed reforms. When man learns to rely upon himself he ceases to depend upon God.

Blind belief is a principle that can never enable man to reach anything of real or permanent value, and nothing of lasting good can be built upon a basis of primitive superstitions and primitive paltering with the truth. To assert that man's moral life is threatened by a rejection of religious beliefs is, on the face of it, absurd. Morality does not rest on so flimsy a foundation that it can seriously be injured by a resolute attempt to follow with regard to human conduct that same line of investigation that has been found to be profitable with regard to other aspects of human life. The exigencies of ordinary everyday life, combined with what man has learned of his own past history, and supported by the discoveries of science, are surely enough to supply man with all the knowledge and inspiration he requires. Once we get rid of the numbing effect of inherited influences and the way is clear for man to make new efforts probably and profitably to direct his own life. There can be no true progress which does not recognize the true relation that exist between man and the world around him. Devotion to God is then replaced by service to man, and fear of the unknown and of a mythical after-life, with all their paralysing influences on human will, disappear for ever. Man is left with devotion to knowledge, art and rational recreation, with the desire to do good to all, and with the knowledge that in doing good to all, he is also reaping the benefit of his actions. It is an unpardonable offence to aim, as so many are doing, to keep mankind upon the level of savages.

Not until blind belief, with all its hypocrisy, shall have been replaced by real, intelligent love for one's fellows; not until our education and our lives shall have been replaced by a genuine love for true morality and respect for honest thought, will it be possible to touch the fringes of an ideal existence. You cannot build a desirable life on lies.

Religious doctrines have ever been, and can be naught other than, the curse of mankind.

W. MAURICE.

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## Correspondence

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### CHURCH AND BIRTH-CONTROL

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—It has been implied that the root of the hatred of the Churches for birth-control is pure selfishness. It is much worse and more dangerous. If the Churches were merely seeking their own interest, they could annex birth-control as easily as they have annexed birth, marriage, and death. But their religion is at least partly genuine; that is, they believe in a jealous God who dislikes to see us enjoy anything very keenly except worshipping him, and whose approval is best won by fasting, celibacy, and self-denial in general, the more futile the better. Now some unknown power, presumably not the Christian God, has given men and women a sex instinct which makes possible an enormous amount of happiness at no cost. So it is the first duty of a Christian to reduce this happiness to a minimum. See Pope Gregory's letter, quoted in Bede, on the essential wickedness of sex-pleasure, even in marriage. Now birth-control enables more people to have more of this pleasure at less cost; hence the Christian is bound to oppose it, his perfectly conscientious belief that every human desire is wrong (except perhaps, the desire to inflict pain, a desire the Bible nowhere condemns).

CALDWELL HARPUR.



## FIXED IDEAS

SIR,—My request that you be generous enough to publish this letter, is prompted by the desire to assist those of your readers, who may have been present, but did not understand my question put to Mr. Whitehead at his meeting at Leeds on the 10th inst.

If a person is suffering under the dominating folly that he is the Holy Ghost, he is placed in an asylum. But those persons who are dominated by the stupid chatter about the sacredness of Morality, Legality, Humanity, and a thousand other children of spookology, are allowed to roam at large and preach their hallowed doctrines, because the world asylum is so extensive. Fixed, like a madman's delusion, these ideas have a firm hold. Touch their fixed ideas, then you may have to defend yourself against the vindictiveness of the maniacs, whilst the stupid populace hounds the desecrator of its sacred nonsense. Under the power of the Christian Church the heretic was the unbeliever, worthy of death and hell fire. To-day the heretic is he who laughs, scoffs, and desecrates morality, etc., and is relegated to the "thieves kitchen," by the fanatics who ridicule Christianity! There is no essential difference between the Christian and the Atheist. The one appeals to God, the other to "truth, light, justice, etc." He who attacks morality has both to deal with; the sacredness of God is exchanged for the sacredness of morality. The Atheist rages and hurls his ideological bombs at the head of the Christian, without being conscious of the fact that he himself remains—a moral Christian; who believes in a spiritual hierarchy. The Atheist certainly gets rid of the narrow idea, the God, but creates another and calls it morality or some other spook; he remains religious, bound to an idea.

Rationalists, Atheists, oppose Christianity in the State, and exalt Morality, Legality, etc., to the hierarchic chair as the "pillar of social life and the State." The Christian makes God the lawgiver; the others overthrow God and replace him with man; man with his revelations becomes God.

The "bad" man exists only in the heads of the "good," who denounce him and relegate him to hell or the equivalent. That is the limitation of the moralist, legalist, humanist; they are possessed by police sentiments.

For them, a person is either moral or immoral; they never consider putting the idea, morality itself, to the annihilating power of criticism. The moral world is full, cram full of liars, cheats, thieves, seducers, etc. And so the virtuous vegetate in virtue as subjects do in subjection.

Only by the annihilation of this world of spookology, can we come to self-determination, and be free from ideological fanatics.

A. S. E. PANTON.

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**Obituary**


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**WILLIAM JAMES (BILL) WILLIAMS**

THE many friends of William James Williams will hear with regret of his death, which took place in the Bolton Royal Infirmary on August 5. He was well known in Bolton Socialist activities, being a member of the local party, also a member of the Clarion Cycling Club. His Freethought opinions were well known, and appreciation of the late G. W. Foote and Colonel Ingersoll were favourite topics of his conversation. He was buried at Atherton on August 10, where before a large number of relatives and friends an impressive Secular Service was conducted by Mr. H. M. Partington.

There is no absurdity so palpable but that it may be firmly planted in the human head if only you begin to inculcate it before the age of five, by constantly repeating it with an air of great solemnity.—*Schopenhauer*.

**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**
**OUTDOOR**

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. A. Leacy.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner: 8.0, Mr. Saphin. South Hill Park, Hampstead: 8.0, Monday, August 24, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, August 25, Mr. P. Goldman. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, August 28, Mrs. R. Groat.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson and Connell. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Wood, Evans, Tuson, Lacey and Connell. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Wood. Friday, 7.30, Mr. A. Leacy and others. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

**COUNTRY**
**OUTDOOR.**

ASHINGTON (Grand Corner): 7.0, Friday, August 21, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane): 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. D. Robinson, A Lecture. Literature on sale.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market): 3.0, Mr. G. Whitehead. Mr. Whitehead will speak in the Market at 7.30 each evening until Friday, August 28. Literature for sale at all meetings.

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.30, Tuesday, August 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Bridge End): 8.0, Friday, August 21, Mr. H. Dalkin—"An Examination of the Evidence for the Existence of God."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, A Lecture. St. James Mount, Liverpool, 8.0, Wednesday, A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields): 7.0, Mr. W. A. Atkinson—"Humanity and War."

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, August 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, August 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PADIHAM: 7.0, Sunday, August 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

READ: 7.30, Monday, August 24, Mr. J. Clayton.

SHEFFIELD (Barker's Pool): 7.30, Mr. E. V. Birkby—"Christianity and Anti-semitism."

STOCKTON (Market Cross): 7.0, Monday, August 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Davidson Street): 8.0, Tuesday, August 25, Mr. H. Dalkin—"The Roman Catholic Church in Spain."

WORSTHORNE: 7.30, Friday, August 21, Mr. J. Clayton.

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