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EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN

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Views and Opinions

Making A God

I FEEL impelled to step aside from my task of showing the identity of the Coronation Service with the most primitive of human superstitions, in order to draw attention to certain social implications of the May 12 ceremony. In the first place, I wish to express my gratitude to those who have helped in my main task by so plainly and so persistently advertising the essentially religious nature of the Coronation Service. To the clergy I made due acknowledgment last week; so far as newspapers and writers of books are concerned, I take the following from the *Daily Telegraph* of May 13, as representative:—

From the moment when the King and Queen entered the theatre and made their humble adoration to the altar. . . the service offered no moment of secular intrusion. . . All the leading men of Church and State . . . were seen as lay servers at the altar, assisting in the great Christian rite of Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ. Nothing which went before and nothing which followed after could approach in significance the Anointing. . . Without it . . . he would not be a Christian King, the Lord's Anointed. . . The solemnity of the silence and the prayer preceding told of the object of the Unction, the reception of the seven-fold gift of the Spirit—the Spirit of wisdom and government, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of Knowledge and true godliness and the Spirit of Holy Fear.

The *Telegraph* is absolutely correct. The moment the King entered the Abbey, he left all that we mean by education, science, and civilization behind him. The Archbishop was in command. It was all stark, unadulterated superstition decked out with diamonds and silks and furs in place of paint and feathers, with a great cathedral instead of an open "sacred" space, with the blare of trumpets and the peal of the organ in place of the beating of a "tom-tom," with spectators who, by writing themselves as civilized hope to disguise the fact of their lapse into primitive savagery.

I trust that those of my friends for whom the word "religion" has a fatal fascination will be reminded by the Coronation that this ceremony brings us back to the foundations of every religion in the world.

It is useless for the King, in real or affected modesty, to say that he is only an "ordinary man." He may have been that *before* the Coronation, but, unless the Archbishop is an impostor, he has, through the power of "holy oil" and magic spoon, endowed the King with a wisdom, divine power and knowledge, that he had not before the incantation, and produced a very different person. It is the working of a miracle we are witnessing in the Coronation. It converted George VI. into a vehicle of divine power as it converted George I., II., III., and IV. into persons filled with divine grace and wisdom. It is not surprising that even the staid *Financial Times*, in noting the Lanchester motor-car, said the present was "a particularly suitable car to review," because "the Lanchester company was formed in the year the King was born." There may be more here than meets the eye. Perhaps some drops of the "holy oil" were used for lubrication. We thank the clergy and the newspapers for making the essential nature of the Coronation Service so clear. But we wonder whether the Archbishop may not, for all his cunning, have overplayed his hand. Professedly civilized folk do not care to be so openly reminded that they are very little removed from savages.

* * *

It Pays To Advertise

Another aspect of the situation is of a more serious kind. I referred last week to the advertising campaign that has been carried on with regard to the Royal Family ever since the Jubilee of Victoria. The Coronation of George VI., originally planned for Edward VIII., marks its apogee. Begun twelve months ago for Edward, every kind of advertising resource was employed. The Coronation itself was well staged, and the public rehearsals have been unprecedented. From the King to the horses the machinery has been laid quite bare. The public were not merely invited behind the scenes to witness the performers practising their parts; they were asked to assist by shouting and cheering to accustom the horses to the antics of the humans. Whatever "sanctity" there was about the Coronation ought to have been wiped out by this publicity. It was pure Hollywood. The dullest might have asked themselves what would have happened if the "Holy Spirit," looking down on Westminster Abbey had endowed one of the performers who at first took the part of the King with the qualities enumerated by the *Telegraph*. Or if the "Holy Spirit," becoming confused, had passed over the actual ceremony, mistaking it for only another rehearsal. Which would have been worse—to have hit the wrong man or to have passed over the right one?

Surely, whatever solemnity was possible about the proceedings must have been wiped out by the tactics adopted. The solemnity became part of the show. The talk of "dignity" and "solemnity" had become mere showmen's talk. The people went out to see a gorgeous show and they got it.

* * *

Cheers, More Cheers!

There is, of course, the enthusiasm of the crowd, the long wait to see the King, and so forth—all, in newspaper jargon, impressive. But has anyone ever noted the enthusiasm of a whole town, the waving of flags, the cheers, the blowing of whistles that greets a victorious football team on its return to the "home town"? Or, the easy way in which a multitude can be brought together to witness any properly-advertised person or function. To assume that the cheering crowds, with its "We want the King!" were there out of personal love and devotion to the King is sheer nonsense. Twelve months ago the people had no greater expectation of the Duke of York becoming King than they had of Mr. de Valera occupying that position. Little more than six months ago the public was assured that Edward was the "people's idol." It was advertised that his Coronation would arouse such enthusiasm as had never before been witnessed. The Duke of York was then just a member of the Royal Family for whom the general public had no special feeling. How then could the crowds of May 12 have been animated by affection for George VI.? Devotion and affection are qualities that cannot spring up in a night like Jonah's gourd. It is a degradation to imagine that affection and devotion can be ordered by an Archbishop and a Prime Minister working through the medium of newspapers. To reply that the devotion of the public was to the throne and not to its occupant, is to admit what has already been said, that it does not matter who is King or what he is like—so long as he obeys the prescribed rules. You cannot have at the same time and in the same person a man who is no more than a symbol and who holds his place in virtue of the personal affection of the people.

The cheers of the crowd! I wonder how many remember the scene that followed the abdication of Edward VIII! No sooner was the abdication of Edward announced than the crowd swept round to the residence of the new monarch and cried, "We want the King"; and the King came out to receive their plaudits—as the brother of the man who had just been dethroned. There are some things that ordinary decency forbids, and not even for the crown of England would I have played that part in the drama. A family in which we had been assured domestic affection ran with unusual strength, and then within a space of time less than an hour, one brother accepting the cheers of a crowd for occupying the position from which another had just been thrust! There is something questionable about a duty that so outrages domestic feeling. A Dean Swift of the future might well find here material for comment.

I also wonder whether George VI. knows, or remembers a story that is told of the Duke of Wellington. During his brief career as Prime Minister, the Duke was followed home by an angry crowd. After he had entered Apsley House some stones were thrown and windows were broken. The Duke ordered them to be covered from the inside with sheets of iron. Later, when the Duke had regained his popularity a crowd again followed him home, and this time called for a speech. Standing on the steps of his house the Duke pointed in silence to the iron-sheeted windows, and in silence passed within.

The Dangers Of Mass-Movements

This easy manipulation of public feeling is a fact that should seriously concern students of sociology. Public passion is so easily created; it is so difficult to allay. It discounts understanding and detests the intelligent examination of a question. It has no appreciation of good and bad; it is capable only of like and dislike. It may be used for one purpose to-day and for an opposite purpose to-morrow. Admitting all that may be said in favour of a monarchy, and even of that most stupid of all devices, hereditary succession, the fact is sun-clear that before his accession the mass of the people knew little more about the private life and character of George VI. than they did of that of the Mikado of Japan. Whether ultimately justifiable or not, the enthusiasm of the Coronation crowds was machine-made. It was "mass opinion"; that is, it was not opinion at all. People may move together, they may shout together; the one thing that they cannot do is to think together. Opinion exists only so far and so long as there is an intelligent appreciation of another point of view. Without this there may be passion, there may be prejudice; there is nothing worthy of being called "opinion." Dictatorships everywhere depend upon their appeal to this "mass-opinion." Crafty statesmen trade upon it, honest ones dread it; and both know that its basis is ignorance and passion.

One cannot reflect on these easily created demonstrations of public enthusiasm without serious misgivings. And when they are allied with a resurgence of the most primitive religious superstitions the danger reaches its greatest strength. With the impudent avowal of the transformation of an "ordinary man" into an incarnation of divine wisdom, power and holy fear, I am not now concerned. But I am concerned with the susceptibility of huge masses of people—belonging to all classes of the population—to the power of suggestion. The ease with which a Prime Minister and an Archbishop convinced the public that a constitutional crisis had developed out of the amours of a King—particularly when one remembers how much of our "old nobility" owes its existence to the amours of past Kings, is almost amusing. But they believed this fable of a constitutional crisis, as easily as in October they believed that Edward was a great King, faithfully treading in his father's footsteps, only to believe in December that he was quite unfitted for the throne.

The people have been told that part of the glory of our throne is that it sets an example of domestic life to the whole of the nation. I am not saying a word against the domestic life of the Royal Family; it may be all that it is said to be. About that I neither know nor care. But I do resent that statement as an implied slur on hundreds of thousands of families in this country. However good the domestic life of the Royal Family is, it is no more than a copy of the vast majority of homes in this country. The statement I am criticizing reverses the order of things, for the average British home was decent and admirable when, for at least six generations the domestic life of royalty was an open disgrace and a flaming scandal. It was the decency of the average British home that ultimately forced the Royal Family into conformity with it, and had that conformity not taken place, there would by now have been no Royal Family to educate or to reform. Let anyone ask himself at what period of British history, and for how long he would have wished the people to imitate the Royal Family in its domestic life, and he will agree with what I have said. The education of Kings has come from the people, and not that of the people from Kings.

It is the ease with which public opinion is swung this way and that, which almost frightens me when

I reflect upon its potentiality for evil. If democracy is to last, it must be based upon something more enduring than mass-prejudice and a belief in the wisdom and power of god-endowed Kings. The creators of democracy were under no delusion on this head. They knew that real democracy must be based on intelligence, education, on a sense of personal dignity and individual strength of character. It would be well for their descendants to be equally alert to such vital considerations.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued)

An Atheist on Angels

"A chiel's amang ye takin' notes,
An' faith he'll prent it."—Burns.

ANGELS play a somewhat important part in that salmagundi known as the Christian Religion. Yet these purely imaginary beings have no more reality than fairies, spooks, witches, and other fictitious creations. Angels came in shoals in parish magazines, on cinema screens, picture postcards, and framed, highly-coloured lithographs in working-class homes. During the World War the "angels" at Mons, and other places, were a nine-days' wonder, but the alleged celestial visitors received far less attention than enemy aeroplanes. It really seemed as if this generation was beginning to lose its childish credulity, in spite of the untiring and well-paid efforts of forty thousand Christian clergymen and their satellites in the newspaper press.

The old scholars of the ages of faith used to discuss, with untiring industry, the functions of angels. But Charles Lamb, with some irreverence, asked his friend Coleridge how many angels could dance on the point of a needle? Maybe, Lamb's question was only a specimen of his jocosity and love of "leg-pulling." Did he not say, on another occasion, that Coleridge's oracular excursions into theological metaphysics were "only his fun?"

Artists are to blame for modern ideas of angels, for they have all along created these celestial visitors, just as they have invented the accepted portrait of the legendary founder of the Christian Religion. In the old illuminated Saxon manuscripts the dear angels are dressed in shirt and undershirt in the sartorial fashion of that austere period. With Perugini, Luini, and Raffaele died the old, simple, and ascetic angelhood. The more modern varieties are eloquent creatures, and the latest resemble nothing so much as the charming ladies of the chorus of musical comedies.

From the iconography, the written or drawn images of angels, to their osteology, is but a step, but it is the one narrow step that divides the sublime from the ridiculous. With Michelangelo, George F. Watts, and other famous artists, the skeleton might be left to take its chance under voluminous and beautifully coloured draperies. The point of juncture of the ponderous wings with the body of an angel has always caused artists fever of the brow, as well it might. Concerning the articulations necessary for a six-winged angel, like the handsome creature figured on a stained-glass window at Merton College, Oxford, the least said is soonest mended. Such discussion is mere word-spinning, more or less resembling the differences between the Big-Indians and the Little-Indians which Jonathan Swift laughed at. The fact emerges that Christian theologians borrowed their angels with so much else of their composite superstition. Christian art is not entirely to blame for angelic construction, with all its enormities and peculiarities. Some of the responsibilities for the ridiculous iconography of the angel must be thrown on the old-world Greeks, who, according to their own ageless and imperishable

works, possessed backs broad enough for the burden. The "winged victory" of the Greeks is unquestionably more sublime than any feathered creature of the Christian imagination.

"Angels' visits are few and far between," declares the popular and untruthful proverb. According to popular belief, these celestial beings are said to fly from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven; to act as celestial boy-messengers, and to assist at an everlasting Hallelujah chorus. But, if the Christian Religion be true, there is ample scope for more extensive occupation for these feathered celestials. For their Holy Scripture declares that man will have to account for every idle word uttered, and also that the hairs of our heads are numbered. Does not the mere mention of these things conjure up visions of a heavenly "Idle Word Department," and of a "Hair-of-the-Head" Bureau, much on the lines of our own Civil Service? And, as the "good" deceased human beings will be playing golden harps, or blowing trumpets, it seems highly probable that the enormous secretarial work must fall to the angels. Even the devils would not be available, for they would be working overtime in the Infernal Bargain-Basement in that "immortal fry, of most of those born to die."

If I were a great artist, I should like to paint a picture of the Celestial clerks hard at work. It would be so much more novel and satisfactory than stereotyped holy families, or last suppers. Think, also, of the work done "upstairs." Take the "Hair-of-the-Head Department." There are about 1,742,000,000 human beings alive at this moment. An account must be kept of each, from babyhood to the grave. Monthly haircuts, and cases of ringworm and skin disease would have to be noted. And, presumably, if a man became completely bald, his account would be closed. If the man wore a wig, would the clerks have to start all over again?

The "Idle Word Department" must also work very hard. For example, hairdressers talk all day long, and they adapt themselves, conversationally, to their customers, whether they be burly bookmakers or timid Sunday-school teachers. A hairdresser must use a great number of idle words. How do the celestial scribes deal with him? Do they enter the number of funny stories he has told, or the unnecessary exaggerations used in selling hair-dye, or recommending a permanent wave? Think also of the hard-working commercial travellers, who have to patter all day long to earn a crust. They must use thousands of idle words, and on a bad day, even a few "damns" and other expletives. Even clergymen and evangelists would have accounts opened in their names. Think of the lies they tell in the pulpit and on the platform. As for actors and actresses, one trembles at the number of idle words they use, for they live in a world of spoof and make-believe.

It cannot be all "beer and skittles" if one is an angel. Being immortal, these unfortunate creatures would work continually, and have no knowledge of an eight hours' day. Nor could they become eligible for retirement and a pension at sixty-five years of age. It is to be feared that the writer of that beautiful hymn: "I want to be an angel," had not fully considered the case.

Indeed, the most attractive of all stories concerning angels is that of two pretty fair-haired, blue-eyed English children taken to ancient Rome as prisoners. An Italian dignitary asked where they came from, and was told they were *Angles* from East Britain. "Say angels rather than Angles," was the rejoinder. This story, unlike so many religious yarns, has the true human note. For, as old Landor has so finely said, "There is nothing on earth divine beside humanity."

MIMNERMUS.

A New Religious Strategy

A WELL-PRINTED pamphlet of twenty-eight full octavo pages has just come into my hands from the U.S.A. It bears the intriguing title of "A New Strategy for Theological Education," and professes to be the reprint of an article published during April of this year in a periodical called *Christian Education*. It is, therefore, quite up to date.

As an unqualified opponent of my own former religion, I could not help feeling grateful to the unknown sender of this pamphlet for his unwitting betrayal of enemy tactics. And as one who is always willing to learn, even from (nay, *especially* from) those with whom I disagree, I was curious to discover what new methods might have been devised by the protagonists of superstition to bolster up their dying cause.

Was I to read of some new and stupendously powerful Christian organization that was to be set in motion against the forces of Freethought and Rationalism? Were the numerous and hitherto antagonistic Christian sects at last about to combine into a United Front, complete with Back and Sides, not to mention Top and Bottom? Or would the pamphlet disclose some cunning mode of attack, whose originality and novelty would take us unawares and destroy our forces before we could realize what was happening?

Such questions as these raced swiftly through my mind as I opened the first page. I thrilled in anticipation at the secrets which would soon be revealed to my startled eye. The suspense was intense! Nevertheless, with a *sang froid* which astonished even myself, I read that pamphlet through from cover to cover without as much as missing a single heart-beat. A summary of its contents will explain the miracle.

"There is a wide-spread feeling," writes the author, "that we must find a better way to educate our ministers. . . . One of the most general charges against them is that they are stolid and irresponsible, antiquated and obsolete, utterly out of touch with the actual needs of this very modern day."

Here is a sweeping indictment indeed! But the author quickly calms our agitation by declaring that it is nothing more than "just another of those popular fallacies that afflict our enlightened age." Far from there being any justification for the indictment, he maintains that "our theological seminaries and faculties of divinity have been very sensitive to changing demands of the times." So we are left to infer that the "popular fallacy" is simply the result of lies spread by the accursed infidel, and that it is not in any way founded upon the complaints of the faithful. Yet on the very next page our calm is shattered by the announcement of a revolutionary project—nothing less, in fact, than "the proposal to *revise the whole theological curriculum* from center to periphery"! Evidently the word "sensitive," as applied to theological seminaries and faculties of divinity, should be understood as the rhinoceros understands it!

Under the heading "The Call of Our Day," we are told that "the threatening advance of secularism calls for a new strategy in theological education." For it appears, curiously enough, that the sensitiveness to modern demands has only resulted in what the author describes as "the spiritual futility and the social ineffectiveness of present-day Protestantism." Moreover, he declares that "American Christianity to-day is in the demoralizing grip of low ideals."

We gather from this that American Christians have not, as a whole, shared in the general improvement in moral tone which, according to reliable statistics, is

one of the most noticeable features of modern society as compared with society of fifty or a hundred years ago. How, then, does our author explain this phenomenon? He does so quite simply by an implicit denial of any such general improvement in morality. Christian morality is not what we poor fish call morality, and he definitely asserts that the ideals of American Christians are *low* because their "religion is comprehended in benevolence and social service and other good works"!

The conclusion is obvious. Away with benevolence! Down with social service! To Hell with good works! These are but the debased ideals of secularists. What has Christianity to do with such namby-pamby sentimentality? Christians ought to be tough guys! "Protestant Christianity," says our author, "must learn to divorce itself from the moral temper of its age. . . . Our preachers need to be suffused with the moral sternness of the prophets." This alone "will bring God near and send ideals soaring. It will exorcise the demon of secularism, and will annihilate the pestiferous nit of prudential morality and probationary ethics which this evil spirit has spread through the whole fabric of American life."

This burst of gangster-like oratory is followed by a sentence which seems to be a sort of chorus to the general theme. It is repeated almost word for word at least eight times in the next twenty pages. "Our preachers," says the author, "ought to know their Bible better than any other book." To which statement we Freethinkers can only reply with a hearty "Amen"!

Most of us have often complained of the ignorance of Christians concerning their own religion and Holy Book. It would seem from the foregoing that our complaint had been taken to heart. We may at least hope so. For there is nothing more damaging to the Christian cause than a thorough knowledge of the origins, history and real contents of the Bible. Unfortunately, in view of the mental confusion already exhibited by our author as to the distinction between *low* and *high* ideals, we may fear that his conception of knowing the Bible *better* does not tally with our own.

A perusal of the next few pages justifies our expectations. After complaining of the "baneful effect of sectarianism" in various forms, the author declares that "no more potent solvent of divergencies among Christians can be found than raw contact with the Scripture records," and he asks, "What better means of training against fanaticism than the Bible?"

To the unprejudiced student of European history such remarks as these are priceless. For no sooner had the Bible been translated into the vernacular, enabling the masses to read it for themselves, than it promptly laid the germs of every known schism. This in turn led to an outburst of fanatical heresy-hunting and heretic persecution such as has never been witnessed or rivalled in the history of all mankind. However, this apparent contradiction is easily overcome by our author, who declares that it is "not the Bible itself, but the segmentation of the Bible, its use only in parts and sections, that has produced this unlovely confusion of tongues. Taken as a whole the Bible is the soundest stabilizer of religious experience that is known to Church History."

Here, then, is the clue to the new strategy. In future the Bible must never be taken in small doses. It must always be swallowed whole. Doctrine must not be based and sermons must not be preached upon this or that verse, but upon the whole blooming book. If anyone wishes to read his Bible, he must presumably begin at Genesis i. 1, and go right on at one sit-

ing to Revelations xxii. 21. No more "lessons" in the old style to be read in churches. Always the whole Bible. If anyone should want to quote what Jesus said upon such and such an occasion, don't listen to him. Make him quote the whole Bible. And all this is to be done by what our author describes as a "Biblio-centric curriculum." A staggering scheme indeed!

But how will it work? How is it to be put into operation? The still small voice of doubt will insist upon being heard. Well, the answer is simple. "In order to indicate more concretely," writes our author, "what is intended by such a curriculum, we suggest an inspection of an institution where the strategy has been tried." It is none other than the Biblical Seminary in New York, which is under the able guidance of Dr. Wilbert Webster White, and which has already been putting its "new" strategy into practice since 1900.

"The new strategy, therefore," concludes our author, "is no longer a mere theory or experiment. . . . Observing the outworking of the idea in the lives of thousands of the institution's graduates as they go out into their varied fields of labour at home and abroad, these observers join in a chorus of high approval."

Strange, is it not, that the names of Dr. White and his seminary should be so unfamiliar to us. Strange that we have not heard the faintest echo of that "chorus of high approval." Stranger still, that after thirty-seven years of operation, the world at large seems utterly oblivious to the all-conquering effects of this "new strategy"!

* * *

The dim echoes of my memory seem to recall previous "Back to the Bible" campaigns—several of them in fact. And they all fizzled out without so much as a mild bang to advertise their existence. But this "Swallow the Bible Whole" scheme has interesting possibilities. It may breed a new generation of super-tough Christians, who will stop at nothing because of their capacity to swallow anything—from miracles to cold-blooded murder.

Possibilities, such as the revival of mass persecution, torture and burning of heretics, occur to our mind. Or perhaps a series of larger and bloodier crusades against the unbeliever will be inaugurated. Perhaps even we shall be faced with gangs of God-inflamed theological students who will lump us off piecemeal as we sleep in our beds. We ought really to keep a watchful eye on the Biblical Seminary in New York.

On the other hand, perhaps this wholesale Bible-swallowing has given all those embryo doctors of divinity such severe indigestion as to incapacitate them permanently for any practical service in the world. The results—or, should I say, absence of results—of thirty-seven years' training seem to support this conclusion very strongly. Poor fellows! Let us hope that some of them at least were able to spew out the poison before it was too late!

C. S. FRASER.

Henry Hetherington—1792-1849

(Continued from page 325)

THE National Union of the Working Classes was foremost in protesting against the brutality displayed at the Coldbath Fields meeting. After the verdict of "Justifiable Homicide" upon the policeman killed at the meeting, a letter appeared in the *Poor Man's Guardian*—signed *Palafox Junior*, but really written by Julian Hibbert—containing something more than innuendo, in an advice to the people attending such meetings in future to take bread and cheese with them, and a *good, long, sharp-pointed, and strong-backed knife* with which to cut it. Of course, it was not to be expected that this would pass unnoticed, and Julian Hibbert, from the moment that he learned Hetherington was in danger of another imprisonment in consequence of the publication of the "Palafox" letter, set him down in his will for 450 guineas; nor did he cancel the gift when the proceedings were abandoned.

This unprovoked outrage upon the public by the English White Guards, alias the New Police, was but the first of the innumerable attacks upon the people which have occurred down the decades from 1833 to the present day.

Thus far is an account of the activities of Hetherington and his co-workers in the working-class movement exactly a century ago. It would occupy too much space to follow their efforts in the Chartist and Owenite Movement which followed. What strikes one most forcibly is the grit, determination and aggressiveness displayed which are conspicuously absent in the labour leaders and trade union officials of the present day.

When Hetherington was in Clerkenwell Prison (1832), serving a monstrous six months' sentence for selling the "Unstamped" he came frequently in contact with the prison chaplain, the Rev. D. Ruell. "That rev-gentleman (during my unjust and illegal imprisonment) laboured assiduously and with apparent sincerity to 'convert' me (as he termed it) to a belief in the important truths of religion. I declared that I was already a firm believer in the *truths* of religion, and, as far as my knowledge extended, in all other truths. This plain declaration on my part did not satisfy the reverend chaplain. He appeared exceedingly anxious to elicit from me scriptural proof of the *orthodoxy* of my religious opinions; and, therefore, desired me to sit down seriously to the task of refuting what I considered the gross absurdities contained in some hypocritical '*religious tracts*' presented to me by R. McWilliam, Esq., one of the magistrates. I candidly told him that I would not devote the smallest portion of my time to such an uninteresting and unprofitable employment," observing at the same time, that he had fully made up his mind upon the subject of religion. The reverend gentleman held frequent conversations with him on the subject and, says Hetherington, "having declined his invitation to employ myself in refuting the absurdities contained in the peculiarly stupid tracts above referred to, he still urged me to enter upon the study of religion generally; and, deeming such an occupation an effectual antidote to infidelity, he earnestly exhorted me to commit my thoughts to paper for perusal. I enquired whether he would undertake (if I complied with his request) to induce the Society for promoting Christian knowledge to publish the results of my study as a '*religious tract*.' He would not undertake to do that, but, nevertheless, strongly recommended me to write one. In vain I pointed out to him the *impolicy* of his repeated importunities, assuring him that I

A surgeon, an architect, and a politician were arguing as to whose profession was the oldest.

Said the surgeon: "Eve was made from Adam's rib, and that surely was a surgical operation."

"Maybe," said the architect, "but prior to that, order was created out of chaos, and that was an architectural job."

"But," interrupted the politician proudly, "somebody must have created the chaos!"

could deduce a rational and practical religion, fully equal to the salvation of every human being, and yet so simple and efficient in every particular, as to supersede the necessity of priests to explain it—jocularly observing, that it would be a curious circumstance if the publication of my 'religious tract' should cause him to lose so good a situation as Chaplain to Clerkenwell Prison at a salary of £300 a year. He appeared to doubt the possibility of such an 'untoward' event; but, *rather less urgently*, as I then thought, requested me to make the attempt. The tract, therefore was written, and is the result of my Sunday occupation in Clerkenwell Bastille, while my spiritual pastor was doling out (for £300 a year) his pious nonsense to the filthiest and scabbiest flock (in a moral sense) that ever came within the fold of the church 'by law established.' Several of my friends, who have perused it, thinking it would be useful to 'babes in grace,' have requested me to publish it; I have complied with their request; and though I regret in this instance, my tract is not ushered into the world by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, I shall be much gratified to learn that the Society (appreciating its merits) have done the next best thing namely, *purchased a large quantity for general distribution.*"

This pamphlet, which had a deservedly large circulation, was entitled "*Cheap Salvation; or an Antidote to Priestcraft*," written at the express desire of the Rev. D. Ruell (Chaplain of Clerkenwell New Prison) by Henry Hetherington."

In 1838 Charles Junius Haslam commenced a series of pamphlets, under the title of *Haslam's Letters to the Clergy of all Denominations*. The first series ran to twenty-four penny numbers, and had a large circulation reaching four editions. The Church was alarmed, and using its influence prosecutions followed. Mr. Cleave was first placed on trial for selling the fifth, eighth and thirteenth numbers of Haslam's Letters. He pleaded "Not Guilty," but was convicted (notwithstanding the able and convincing speech of his counsel, Mr. Chambers), "by," says Hetherington "as stupid a Jury as ever sat in judgment on an honest man." The Judge sentenced him to four months' imprisonment and a fine of £20. Such was the force of public opinion, however, on the injustice and impolicy of such prosecutions, that Mr. Cleave was liberated, upon paying the fine, after five weeks' imprisonment. The trial of Mr. Heywood, the original publisher, came next. His known integrity and respectability had attached to him many influential friends, who represented to the Government the folly and injustice of these proceedings, and Lord Normanby at length yielded to their importunities, by agreeing, on condition that he pleaded guilty, that Mr. Heywood's prosecution should proceed no further. Mr. Heywood complied, and was left at liberty, on entering into his own recognizances to appear when called upon. Public opinion unequivocally declared that such prosecutions were indefensible, and it was generally believed that the Government would abandon them from a conviction of their injustice and impolicy. "Instead of which," writes Hetherington, "they proceeded against me for selling the same numbers of the identical work that Messrs. Cleave and Heywood had been prosecuted for selling, though the punishment of Mr. Cleave was remitted, and the Government compounded blasphemy in the case of Mr. Heywood." It may be mentioned here that some years after, Mr. Heywood became Mayor of Manchester.

AMBROSE G. BARKER.

(To be continued)

Where we doubt we do not believe.—Thomas Paine.

Acid Drops

As an educational exercise we wish that everyone would study Low's drawing of Mr. Baldwin's nose. Low himself is reported to have admitted that it is not like Mr. Baldwin's nose, but he explained, it is more like Mr. Baldwin than the nose that Mr. Baldwin wears. The nose that Low gives Mr. Baldwin is a work of genius and a miracle of interpretation. And the task of the creative artist is to make people see what they would not see without his assistance.

We call attention to this as furnishing the best comment on a part of Mr. Baldwin's address to "Empire Youth" at the Albert Hall. That speech was very Baldwinian. It contained much that his hearers would not clearly understand, much that might be all right if one took it in a sense different from that which Mr. Baldwin intended, and much that meant nothing. And some of it would have been worthy of the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom Mr. Baldwin has been in such truly Christian agreement ever since the affair of Edward VIII. I have space only for one or two of Mr. Baldwin's gems, and here is one:—

Put your duty first, and think about your rights afterwards.

That, I think, must have come direct from Low's version of Baldwin's nose. If a man has no rights to fight for or to guard, what kind of a duty has he? His only duty then is to obey. It is the kind of advice the sergeant-major gives to his recruits—"Do as you're told and don't bother to ask any questions, your duty is to obey." It is the lesson the slave-owner gives his slave, it is the counsel the priest gives to his dupes, it is the cry of Hitler to his people, the order of Mussolini to his legions, the age-long command of the lord to his serf. "Never mind your rights, they can wait. It is not your duty to see that you have rights, your right only is to do your duty, that is, to obey. Do not listen to those who tell you that if you have no rights, then you have nothing that is worth fighting for. You must put the right of duty before the duty of right. Do as you are told. That is your duty. Rights can wait, and if they never come, nay, if they are prevented coming because you have been diligent in doing as you were told, never mind. The slave will have done his duty to his owner, the serf to his lord, the dupe to his priest, and the citizen to the tyrant. Rights are a secondary matter." Do, for goodness sake, study Low's conception of Mr. Baldwin's nose.

Mr. Baldwin, in his farewell to politics, did not forget his friend, the Archbishop, and he gave him a helping in his "Recall to Religion," campaign, in the following:—

Expel the truth of our religion and what follows? Intolerance and domination and the cruelty of despotism.
... Live for the brotherhood of man, which implies the fatherhood of God.

Well done thou good and faithful friend! Those who are of the kind that thinks of duties without rights will not stop to reflect that it was during the unquestioned reign of "our religion" that human rights and freedom were definitely trodden underfoot; that "our religion" denied freedom of thought and speech to man, and equal rights to women, and education to the people. Baldwin probably felt that if listeners followed the simple rule, "Do as you're told and don't ask questions," they are not likely to remember that "our religion" remained quiet while women worked in coal pits as though they were cattle, and children were murdered in factories to secure profits, some portion of which helped to build churches and chapels for the preaching of "our religion." And in those days preachers and governors were quite clear in their advice to the people that it was their duty they should think of, and not of their rights. It was the wicked unbelievers of those days who said to the people, "Your first duty is to assert your rights, establish your

rights, and take care that once established they are not filched away from you by cunning clerics and artfully honest politicians." Study Low's conception of Mr. Baldwin's nose, and you may realize why its owner puts duties first and rights afterwards. It is written in the book of Low for all who can read it rightly.

"The brotherhood of man, which implies the fatherhood of God." The cant of it! "The Empire is a union of Christian States." The impudence of it! The lie of it! The brotherhood of man if it exists at all, must rest upon a sense of the common nature of human beings and a fundamental identity of interests. To make this depend upon "our religion" is a piece of impudence worthy of the lower type of evangelist, or of a charlatan. When will the political colleagues of men such as Mr. Baldwin develop sufficient self-respect openly to resent such silly insinuations? And the talk of the British Empire being a collection of Christian States, is simply a falsehood. There are many many millions of men and women in that Empire who deliberately repudiate Christianity. What of India with its three hundred and fifty millions of people, to say nothing of other parts of the Empire? This cheap religious cant will not do. Probably Mr. Baldwin mixed up a talk with youth and a talk to infants or a church gathering. But in either case, one runs the risk of there being a sufficient number of youngsters with enough common sense to see through the game.

The brotherhood of man! Mr. Baldwin's confidence in the simplicity of those he was addressing must have been very great for him to feel sure that none present might bethink themselves that it is the Government over which he presides that so long as it dared tried to stop food being taken to the starving people of Bilbao, to a country with which we had no dispute, and had therefore no right in international law to prevent its being done. It was his Government—a Christian Government on his own definition—which even did its best to prevent English ships transporting children from the Spanish hell, until discontent in the navy, and the action of British merchant skippers by telling Mr. Duty-first-and-let-rights-wait, Baldwin to go to the devil, forced his hand. And it was the same Baldwin-led Government that, when it was forced to permit some of the Spanish children to land here, accompanied it with the condition that it must not cost a penny of public money. Surely, one of the meanest conditions of permitting help that history can furnish. "Suffer little children to come unto me," says Mr. Baldwin's Government, but if it is going to cost anything let them stay in Bilbao and be bombed. Do read Low on the Baldwin nose.

If one wishes to get another glimpse of the psychology of Mr. Baldwin, we advise all to study the manner in which he took the word-bemused inflated vanity of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and reduced him to nothing and a mere figure of fun. Macdonald reached high enough to become Prime Minister. He ended in being chief organizer of a gigantic national circus. Mr. Baldwin took his measure. "J.B. is sly, tough, sir, but devilish sly." I suppose people still read Dickens.

When readers who take our advice commence studying Low's picture of Baldwin's nose, they might turn to a study of the Archbishop of Canterbury's eyes. The intense cunning of the eyes, and the "artful honesty" depicted by Low in the nose of Mr. Baldwin are unrivalled. The difference is that the pencil of a cartoonist was needed to expose the quality of the Archbishop's eyes. But the nose and the eyes do explain why the two have worked together for the theocratizing of the country. The deification of the King is an essential step in that work—unless we have the fortune to develop a Hitler or a Mussolini, and even they appear to find some form of theocracy essential to the realization of their aims.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, and the other Archbishop, together with the other bishops, all believe they are "Called by God" to function. That is the theory. But they come *via* the acting Prime Minister. That is the fact. Nevertheless the Archbishop believes that he is speaking to the people as the mouthpiece of God, and in the holy oiling of the King, he was acting as the conduit through which the holy unction operated. Consequently the Archbishop of Canterbury was adamant in his refusal to allow any Nonconformist minister to lend a hand in the greasing of the King. Many Nonconformist ministers were very angry at their not being permitted to take part in what the author of "1066 and All That" calls a "good thing," from the advertising point of view. To pacify them the Archbishop agreed to their being present as spectators, but so as not to be out of tune with the other performers—for which the King and the peers dressed in their funny robes and funnier hats looked like a glorified march of the golliwogs—the Nonconformists had to wear black silk stockings, shoes with silver buckles, black silk scarfs and three-cornered hats. One wonders what the earlier Nonconformists would have said of these men who profess to disbelieve in State Church, and above all deny that the Archbishop of Canterbury has any special call to act or speak for God, playing their part as they did? The fact is that if they had been permitted just to hand the Holy Oil to the Archbishop they would gladly have taken a part in what to earlier Nonconformists was rank blasphemy. But the wily Archbishop knows well his brethren in Christ, and they probably know him. They are in the same business.

In the circumstances we are glad to see George Bernard Shaw writes in the *Time and Tide* expressing his contempt for coronation dresses, which remind him, he says, of nothing so much as a Russian ballet. That seems rather hard on the ballet. Mr. Shaw adds that rather than go through the "tomfooleries" of the coronation ritual, he would "renounce fifty limited monarchies," and thinks Edward VIII. is well out of it. We believe that in addition to the divorce question, it was Edward's plain dislike to these religious mummeries that had a deal to do with his dismissal. With the lady the rule was, you may live with her and have our blessing. With the magical business it was, "You may not believe in it, but you must pretend you do."

We are really sorry that Mr. Shaw did not take a hand in the exposure of these tomfooleries earlier. We had no desire to be either the first to expose the real nature of this holy oil-rubbing, and have no desire to be persistently at it. But there is something more serious here than the exposure of the jungle magic of our principal medicine-man. We are probably on the eve of a period of serious reaction, and the advertisement of the consecration of the King is part of the game. And not for the first time in history has the decay of a nation been marked by the revival of primitive superstitions. Christianity owes its rise to power to this. That is why we have been so insistent in getting people to realize the real "symbolism" of the coronation, and all that it implies.

But Mr. Shaw is quite wrong—history was never his strong point—when he says that the coronation invests the King with powers "that he no longer wields, and of which it cost us two revolutions and several regicides to deprive him." Legislation and custom have made the monarch little more than a figurehead, and that, for the present, is settled. The Coronation was never more than a ceremony of religious magic, and has nothing whatever to do with the secular position or powers of the King. It is a revival of the savage belief in the King as an incarnation of a god. "Revival" is not perhaps quite the correct word, because the anointing and the consecration were never anything else. What is fresh is the open announcement of the fact to the public, and public opinion must have weakened very considerably for our artful Archbishop publicly to advertise it. And the men who

manœuvred the "abdication" of Edward are not likely to stick at much to achieve their aims. So, quite seriously, we bid those who have any concern for the welfare of the country to be on the alert. Vigilance was never more needed than it is at present.

Dean Inge says that you cannot have a theology that suits both the philosopher and the kitchen maid. We are inclined to agree, and without taking it for granted that the intelligence of a kitchen maid is of necessity lower than that of many self-styled philosophers, it is obvious that the churches aim at capturing the kitchen maids.

How history is written. The *Sunday Referee*, in its issue for May 23, explains to its readers that Queen Victoria founded the "House of Windsor." We imagine that no one would have protested more strongly than Victoria against publicly disowning her German descent or associations. In a household where German was the regular language, and where intermarriages with Germans was common, it could hardly have been possible. It was George V., either on his own accord, or acting on instructions, who decided on changing the family name from Wettin to Windsor. It was a war-time policy, at a time when the papers and paid publicists were shrieking that "never again" would the British people have any association with Germans.

Some issues of the *Referee* are more faithful to fact than the above. In its issue for May 16, it gave prominence to the fact that when the King was signing the Coronation Oath, he got some ink on his finger, and wiped it off just as a schoolboy would, and that while the King was being crowned, Princess Margaret Rose was swinging her legs as she sat on her seat, just as an ordinary child might. It is such marvels as these that endear the Royal Family to the people, and the *Referee* does well to chronicle the facts. They help to knit together the British Empire.

M. André Maurois has written a book called *The Miracle of England*. If we may judge by the extracts given in reviews, the work is rightly entitled "The Miracle." This is how one newspaper summarizes it:—

It is a supreme excellence of this book that M. Maurois recognizes a factor which historians are apt to ignore. That factor is faith, and particularly a faith nourished on the English Bible. It is impossible to account for careers of men like Gladstone, Salisbury, Baldwin and King George V. if this factor be ignored. M. Maurois has not overstressed the religion of Britain.

M. Maurois is unkind in his references to God's apparent discriminations. He does not explain the first four Georges, or even the two latest Edwards, to say nothing of less worthy characters in our history. It is a reflection on the divine intelligence that it should be exercised in this apparently casual manner.

Father Franklyn Kennedy of the *Milwaukee Catholic Herald*, gives publicity to what he describes as the "Secret Diaries" of 6,000 young schoolboys and girls. Knowing as we do the irresistible attraction "moral" nastiness has for certain clerics, we are not surprised that Father Kennedy discovered that "purity was the quality most desired in a girl or boy friend," and that "drinking came in for heavy condemnation." We can imagine few things less wholesome than a priest's inquisition into the "secret diaries" of thousands of school children. Nor do we believe that 6,000 school children chosen haphazard anywhere (except in monastic segregation) would be concerned about these questions which arouse the greatest concern of prudish prelates.

Prayers for fine weather for Coronation Day were badly needed, and poorly answered. Perhaps even Almighty God himself quailed at such a prayer as that of a native Indian visitor, Mr. Fredoon Kabraji (we quote from the

British Weekly), who asked God—or the Clerk of God's weather that even

if the whole summer were to be ruined let England have her May 12 dry!

We prefer the child's prayer, "Dear God, send us a nice motor-car—and if you're out of stock lend us an umbrella for the day."

According to Viscount Sankey, chief talker at the Annual Meeting of the Bible Society, "the Bible is a guide to the problems of the future." It certainly solves the problem of Housing, for it says that the vast majority of the human race "will be cast into Hell." Capital Punishment will be abolished, because the victims of divine wrath will become immortal in order that they may be tortured for eternity. Problems of precedence, such as worried certain pecesses at the Coronation, will be settled by creating universal monarchies; there will be nothing but Kings and Queens wearing golden crowns and even having constant supplies of spare crowns to "cast down before the Lord of Hosts."

The Rev. Wilfrid Hannam B.D., makes no secret of the fact that the Methodist Church is losing all along the line:—

As it is, we have but a sorry tale to tell each other as we meet in Synod, and prepare for our Annual Conference. Far more serious than a decline of some ten thousand members is the lack of buoyant, expectant faith amongst those of us who remain. We are busy to breaking-point with schemes and plans in every circuit; we are fertile in devising new methods for raising money, so sorely needed to keep things going; but we are desperately barren of spiritual power.

It is a startling admission. But we doubt if the conceit of this and every other church will ever permit Christians to cease posing as the only authority as to Marriage, Divorce, Birth-Control and Sunday trading.

Dr. A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol, has written a book on *The Moral Teaching of Jesus*. We agree very heartily with Dr. Lindsay's opinion that "You cannot take the command to resist not evil literally without giving up all law and justice." But the only sane conclusion to such an opinion is to discard so foolish and impracticable an idea. Dr. Lindsay, being a Christian, chooses the sinister pathway of "explanation" instead of repudiation. He also believes that you can love your enemies! How? "By resisting forcibly the evil they are trying to do." Dr. Lindsay is completely at sea. You may love Franco's victims and be compelled to "resist" Franco's assassins in doing so, but you manifest no love for the assassins or Franco (or Mussolini or Hitler).

Fifty Years Ago

LAST Sunday more than half the Members of the House of Commons marched behind the Speaker to St. Margaret's Church, to commemorate in a special service the "fiftieth year of the reign of her Majesty Queen Victoria." Joining in the responses these legislators told God Almighty—"We have offended against thy holy law, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us." We thoroughly believe them. Yet if they were told so outside church they would resent it as an insult. So much honesty is there in the piety of these gentlemen.

Some of the crowd who watched the legislators going to church cried out, "Where's Bradlaugh?" Bradlaugh was engaged more sensibly elsewhere. It is refreshing to learn that there was a scanty attendance of Radical members.

The Freethinker, May 29, 1887.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTL

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- W. A. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for paper. The intolerance of the Birkenhead Council should be made as widely known as possible.
- C. HARPUR.—Much obliged for the 1823 cuttings. Quite useful. There is a concerted plan in the press at the moment to work on the latent superstition of the people with regard to anything that bears upon the monarchy. If the superstition of the King's touch to cure disease was revived, we are certain it would have large numbers of believers. It is at critical moments such as the present that genuine Freethinkers should be active.
- J. A. MUGGRIDGE.—Sorry, but the subject has been discussed many times in these columns, and we are at present very much overcrowded with copy.
- H. MATHEWS.—Letter far too lengthy for the importance of the subject.
- G. W. NORTHBRIDGE.—It is far more important to see what can be done to make Freethought stronger than it is in N.S.W.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

All cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

We should be greatly obliged if readers would help us to compile an account of the various attempts that are being made all over the country to establish greater clerical control over, and a larger measure of religious instruction in, elementary schools. This takes various forms such as inducing teachers to conduct children to religious services, circulating religious tracts in the schools, giving to religious organizations the names of children who do not attend Sunday schools, etc. If we can compile anything like a complete list we may publish something on the subject, and probably get the matter raised in the House of Commons.

We hope that the general scientific press will deal more generously with the Russian achievement in reaching the North Pole than the general newspaper press. We ought not to ignore the fact that the Russian endeavour had the Government behind it, and it is said by competent observers that where science is concerned, the question of cost hardly enters, whereas our own efforts had to mainly depend upon private subscriptions. But allowing for everything the Russian effort was a great one and a complete and splendid success. It deserves all the praise that can be lavished about it. But to-day even science is dragged by ill-balanced advocates into the field of economic and political theory, and a large part of the

press has become converted into the worst kind of organs of propaganda. We had the same thing during the war with regard to German science, when men in this country—who must have known better—were selling their pens to prove that Germany had contributed little or nothing to science. We think that what has occurred with regard to Russia and the North Pole helps to enforce what we have said so often as to the danger of transferring to the field of science and sociology religious thinking and methods.

We have often said that the two men to whom we owe most for whatever is clear and definite in our thinking are Spinoza and Herbert Spencer. And not the least of the debts we owe them is that they taught us, by methods of thinking and fearlessness of criticism, to criticize them. For this, among other reasons, we welcome a pocket edition of Spencer's *First Principles*, ("Thinker's Library," Watts & Co.), at the low price of two shillings, with an introduction by T. W. Hill. There are one or two parts of this introduction which call for criticism and adjustment. But whatever adjustments and corrections may be necessary in Spencer's philosophy, his work stands out so prominently in the history of the nineteenth century, is so comprehensive in its sweep, that no man is justified in considering himself educated who has not an acquaintance with it. We hope to review this edition of *First Principles* at some length when other things are out of the way.

We wish to draw the attention of our readers to the letter headed "An Appeal from India," which appears in the correspondence column of this issue. A Freethought organization in India works under great and special disadvantages. The press laws are more rigorous there than they are in this country, and the authorities have much greater facilities for suppressing unwelcome propaganda than they possess here. In view of the facts we commend the appeal for financial help to our readers.

We are pleased to see that Mr. Auld, a member of the Birkenhead Council, raised a protest against the exclusion of the *Freethinker* from the public library. Mr. Auld is a Chyrehman, and that adds to the merit of his conduct, nor does the fact of his protest unavailing diminish that credit. Bigotry, as is usual, fell back on falsehood for justification. The excuse put forward was that literature of a propagandist nature was excluded. But in what way is the *Freethinker* propagandist and a religious paper not so? We fail to discover any difference that is material to this issue. The plain reason for the exclusion of the *Freethinker* is bigotry, bigotry, and yet again, bigotry.

As an example of the way in which religious qualifications are demanded in public duties, where religion has no legal right to be, we may instance a letter in the *Bolton Evening News* for May 14, in which the writer says that one of the conditions of permanent employment in the Bolton Fire Brigade is that a man "shall abstain from the expression of political or religious opinion which may in the slightest degree be calculated to give offence." What type of man is likely to enter the public service where such degrading conditions are laid down?

Mr. G. Whitehead will spend three weeks in Scotland, beginning with a week in Glasgow, which commences to-day (May 30). The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate, and saints in the area are asked to give full support. Pioneer Press literature will be on sale at all meetings, thus avoiding the trouble and delay of ordering requirements through the post. Particulars of membership in the N.S.S. may be obtained from any of the officials present.

We are asked to announce that a lecture will be delivered by Miss Edith Moore on "The Church in Spain." The lecture will be delivered on June 7, in the National Trade Union Club, 24 New Oxford Street, W.C., and commences at 8 o'clock.

National Secular Society

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

THE Annual Conference of the National Secular Society was held in the Stork Hotel, Queen Square, Liverpool, on Whit-Sunday, May 16. The morning session commenced at 10.30 a.m. The following delegates attended:—

Ashington, J. C. Edwards; Birmingham, W. H. Williams; Bethnal Green, P. Goldman, C. Samuels, F. A. Marshall; Bradford, Mrs. M. Bulmer, H. Bamforth, H. Rogers; Bolton, J. Entwistle, H. Hankin, W. H. Sisson; Blackburn, E. McCarthy; Birkenhead, W. Fletcher, Miss H. Wilson, R. S. Standfast; Chester-le-Street, J. T. Brighton; Glasgow, Mrs. M. Whitefield; Hants and Dorset, W. Parry; Hetton-le-Hole, R. G. Mahomed; Kingston-on-Thames, W. J. Pringle; Liverpool, S. R. A. Ready, J. V. Shortt, A. Jackson; Leeds, D. Fisher; Manchester, W. Blaney, W. A. Atkinson, Mrs. M. McCall; Newcastle, S. D. Merrett; Nelson, J. Clayton; North London, L. Ebury; North Shields, Mrs. Ready; Plymouth, W. J. W. Easterbrook; Pontypridd, Mrs. A. Shortt; Preston, F. Coward, R. E. Phillips, G. A. Smith; Swansea, G. Whitehead; South London, Mrs. H. Grant; South Shields, C. J. Harrison; Sunderland, W. Collins; Seaham Harbour, Mrs. J. D. Macdonald; Tees-Side, R. E. Rossler; West London, C. Tuson, G. Bedborough, H. J. Savory; West Ham, H. S. Wishart. Among the private members were Mr. Bayard Simmons, T. H. Elstob, H. Black, G. H. Taylor, Mrs. M. L. Heath, Miss Dora Seed, Mrs. S. C. Blaney, Mr. and Mrs. Carlton and Mrs. Merrett.

Before the formal business commenced the President read a cablegram from Councillor Naydu, on behalf of the Freethinkers of Northern India, who sent hearty congratulations and wished the Conference success. Another message was received from the Executive Committee of the World Union of Freethinkers presenting their greetings and congratulations and wishes for the Conference's success.

On the motion of Mr. Shortt (Liverpool) seconded by Mr. Jackson (Liverpool) it was agreed that the Minutes of the previous Conference, as printed in the *Freethinker*, be taken as read.

The President pointed out that at the last Conference it had been agreed that the Report should be printed so as to be circulated before the Conference Meeting. That had been done. One of the effects of that was that any amendment of the Report would mean reprinting with its attendant cost.

It was moved and seconded that the Report be taken as read.

Mr. Shortt (Liverpool) moved:—

"That the motion formally carried out and passed at last Conference, which practically prevents the possibility of amending the Report be rescinded, and the previous procedure be returned to."

Mr. Ready (Liverpool) seconded. Mr. Bedborough spoke in favour and then, it having been agreed that the question be put, Mr. Shortt's motion was carried. The Report then became open to discussion.

Mr. Fisher (Leeds) pointed out that no mention was made in Report to the Sunday Trading Restrictions and Shops Act.

Mr. Wishart said that last year he had raised the question of affiliation with the Council for Civil Liberties, and the President had said that the matter would be borne in mind. There was not, in his opinion, any body so worthy of support.

The President explained that the N.S.S. was not affiliated with any other organization. What the Executive did was to co-operate with other societies for

specific purposes, but when they did co-operate they co-operated as equals or not at all. As President of the N.S.S. he considered it part of his duty to see to the Society receiving the respect which was its due. But many of these outside Societies were more ready to receive our help than publicly to acknowledge it.

Mr. Atkinson (Manchester) said that the Manchester Branch wished to know whether it was in order to instruct the Executive to carry on propaganda work in the North of England. The work could be extended considerably if the Executive were prepared to give grants.

The President said the Executive expected that the Branches in an area met and discussed such matters together. The Executive could only instruct the lecturers that they engaged and they did, as far as they could, spread the lectures over a given area. The Executive was prepared to consider anyone who was prepared to do useful work and they would be glad if they could lay their hands on more agents.

Mr. Savory and Mr. Blaney also raised points in connexion with the Report. Mr. Shortt moved its adoption. This was seconded and on being put to the vote was unanimously carried.

The Financial Report was then considered.

Mr. Tuson (West London) asked a question with regard to the Benevolent Fund. That the amount of money in hand should be considerable for this he considered a matter of importance. The President explained that although it was a rule of the Society that each Branch should make a collection for the Benevolent Fund, and it was expected that every Branch would do its best to see that such a collection was taken, it was impossible to enforce such a rule. It could be taken, however, that no deserving case was ever refused, irrespective of the amount of cash standing to the credit of the fund.

After other questions had been asked and satisfactorily answered, the Report was adopted.

Mr. Cohen then vacated the chair in favour of Mr. Shortt, the President of the Liverpool Branch, during the election of the President.

Mrs. Grant (South London) moved that Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S. It was to her obvious that Mr. Cohen was the man to occupy this high office. It was now the twenty-second year that Mr. Cohen had occupied the position, and she hoped he would continue to do so for many years to come, for the undoubted benefit of the Society.

Mr. Bedborough (South London), in seconding, said that Mr. Cohen was, in the opinion of the South London Branch and in his personal opinion, the best Chairman the Society could have. They felt that the leadership would be in safe hands, and expected that the vote would be unanimous.

Mr. Blaney (Manchester) said that the Manchester Branch wished to be associated with the motion.

Mr. Ready (Liverpool) said it was the greatest honour the Society could confer upon Mr. Cohen, and the greatest honour Mr. Cohen could pay them was by accepting the post.

Mr. Brighton (Chester-le-Street) said that considering the quality of Mr. Cohen's twenty-one years' work, his re-election was clearly indicated.

Mr. Black (Manchester) said that not only was Mr. Cohen's re-election a pleasure, but in the interests of the Society it was inevitable. Other delegates spoke in favour of the motion which was then put and carried unanimously and with acclamation.

Mr. Cohen then reoccupied the chair. He said that the only thing that he wanted to say could be said in a dozen ways, and that was "Thank you." He had only had one preoccupation and that was the Freethought movement, and he would be glad to serve it

longer. He appreciated the honour conferred upon him more than he would have done had the position been that of Prime Minister or the principal figure in a Coronation Ceremony.

It was moved by the President on behalf of the Executive that Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary. The President said that Mr. Rosetti gave more than actual help; he gave a feeling of security that whatever had to be done would be done with despatch. His work did not only consist of correspondence and routine duties. Many important duties were not known outside the office, and could only be properly appreciated by those who were in close touch with him.

Mrs. Whitefield (Glasgow) seconded. She emphasized the very prompt attention that Mr. Rosetti gave to the desires of the Branches. Mr. Bedborough, Mr. Samuels (Bethnal Green), Mr. Wishart, Mr. Ready, and others, all paid tribute to the promptness and efficiency of Mr. Rosetti's services. Carried unanimously and with acclamation.

Mr. Savory (West London) moved and Mr. Williams (Birmingham) seconded that Mr. H. R. Clifton be appointed Treasurer. Carried.

Mr. Bayard Simmons moved and Mr. Sisson (Bolton) seconded, and it was agreed that Mr. H. L. Theobald be appointed Auditor.

Mr. Williams moved and Mrs. Whitefield seconded that the nominations for Executive as named in Agenda be accepted *en bloc*.

Mr. Standfast (Birkenhead) asked why there were two nominations more than the number authorized by the rules? It was pointed out that in 1930 representation for Wales and Scotland was increased by two. The rules Mr. Standfast had were printed before this later rule was passed.

Mr. Goldman pointed out an infringement of rule inasmuch as there were more than two members from one Branch in nomination. The error was adjusted by Mr. G. Bedborough offering to withdraw, which offer was accepted with regret.

A question was asked regarding the attendance of a certain delegate, and the Chairman replied that the delegate in question had undertaken responsibilities which for some time prevented regular attendance, and offered resignation. The Executive suggested that the delegate remained in the hope of regular attention in future. This, it was understood, was now probable. On another question it was pointed out that in the present construction of the Executive, a member nominated by an area consisting of one or more Branch, once upon the Executive represented the Freethought movement of this country as a whole.

It was also pointed out in reply to another question that when an area did not send in notice that they wanted a name withdrawn, the Executive assumed that it agreed with the names sent for a previous year.

Mr. Fletcher (Birkenhead) said his Branch thought that the Branches were entitled to a little more detailed report of Executive Meetings than appeared in the *Freethinker*. The President said that he did not think it obligatory on a delegate to send detailed proceedings of Executive meetings. If a delegate agreed to send regular reports that was entirely at the good will of the delegate. If any Branch of the Society required fuller information on any subject on which they were entitled to receive it, the proper course was to write to the General Secretary for it. There were many matters occurring on an Executive which did not concern any Branch of the Society other than the one with which the Executive happened to be dealing at the moment. Many things which occurred on any Executive were of a quasi confidential nature.

Mrs. Whitefield asked for the proper procedure by

which a Branch of over 25 members were entitled to appoint another delegate to the Executive. The President said that as it was an appointment and not a nomination, the extra member could be appointed by the Branch at the time. The Nominations for the Executive were then put to the vote and carried.

The Conference at this point adjourned for lunch.

On the resumption of Conference the President, on behalf of the Executive, reported on the question of Vice-Presidents remitted from last Conference. He stated that on the instructions given to the Executive at the last Conference to consider a plan for the election of one or more Vice-Presidents, it was stated that the Executive (having in view that the object of the recommendation was to provide help for the President) quite failed to see how this could be done by the election of a Vice-President or Vice-Presidents. The only way to secure continuity of policy was to provide an efficient Executive, so that in the absence of the President from illness or from other causes, the work could be carried on.

An amendment that a Vice-President be appointed was put to the meeting and lost.

After a brief discussion of the Executive's report the next business was moved and carried.

Mr. Cohen moved for the Executive, Mr. Easterbrook (Plymouth) seconding, and Mr. Shortt supporting (and after the acceptance of slight amendment) :—

"That in such cases where the electoral area does not nominate its full representation the Executive may fill any such vacancies, after consultation with the area concerned, and that this rule be put into operation forthwith."

Carried.

The President moved on behalf of the Executive, and Mr. Williams seconded :—

"That the word 'two' be deleted from Rule 7 (clause 2), and 'three' be substituted."

An amendment of the Liverpool Branch failing to find a seconder, the motion was put and adopted.

Mrs. Whitefield, for the Glasgow Branch, moved :—

"That a system of rotation be devised by which the Annual Conference be held in the chief centres in the country, commencing with Glasgow for 1938."

She spoke of previous occasions when Glasgow, a city with a fine tradition for Freethought and radical opinion had been, by accident, deprived of the Conference, and thought that the opportunity that other places had enjoyed of drawing together and strengthening the Freethought elements in their area, was much overdue.

Mr. Ebury seconded. A number of delegates having spoken in favour of the resolution, the Chairman pointed out that this would mean the rescission of the rule governing the fixing of the venue of the conference and suggested that as there were many obvious difficulties in the way of their selecting a place for future Conferences, the Conference might pass a resolution recommending Glasgow as the place for the 1938 Conference.

Mrs. Whitefield asked the permission of the Conference to withdraw her motion, which was granted. Mr. Fletcher moved and Mr. Phillips (Preston) seconded that the Standing Orders be suspended for the purpose of moving a resolution *re* next year's Conference, which was agreed to.

Mrs. Whitefield then submitted for the consideration of the Branches that the Conference for 1938 be held in Glasgow. Mr. Fisher seconded, and the submission received the approval of the Conference. The next motion by the Plymouth Branch "that the Annual Conference be always held in London" was by the

passing of the Glasgow motion, automatically defeated.

Mr. Ebury moved and Mr. Mahomed seconded (after slight amendments had been agreed to by them):—

"That with a view to avoiding the disintegrating influence of party politics, this Conference reaffirms its non-party-political attitude."

This was agreed to unanimously.

Mr. Bedborough moved, after having first accepted some slight amendments:—

"That this Conference deploras the renewed competition in armaments among the Governments of Europe, with its logical and almost necessary ending in war; it regards the present state of Europe as a crowning demonstration of the failure of Christianity as a humanizing factor in life, and asserts that its removal would constitute a valuable step towards universal peace."

He thought that although hours might be spent in discussing his motion, in the end all differences would be resolved into questions of terminology, as there would be little doubt as to the intention of the resolution and its being received with practical unanimity. It aimed at the creation of a United States of Europe, and if we can move towards the fulfilment of this ideal of Thomas Paine, we shall feel very proud at having as Freethinkers played our part. Mr. Collins seconded, and the motion was accepted.

Mr. Goldman moved on behalf of the Bethnal Green Branch:—

"That this Conference expresses its strong disapproval of the relations now existing between the N.S.S. and the League of Nations Union."

He objected that the League of Nations was not a League of Nations but a League of Politicians. Lately it had been lying as only political institutions could lie. What the N.S.S. could support was a League of Peoples. Mr. Phillips seconded. There was much discussion on this motion, which on being put to the Conference was lost.

Mr. T. H. Elstob moved (after accepting some amendment of his motion):—

"That this Conference deploras the steady deterioration of certain sections of the Newspaper Press of this country as shown by its policy in combination for definite political, religious or other ends, of the constant reiteration of one point of view, and the deliberate suppression of information and opinions opposed thereto, thereby constituting a more subtle and more dangerous form of attack upon the freedom of opinion than were the older methods of open hostility and persecution."

He said that the extent of the deterioration could be best gauged by looking at the files of a conservative paper such as the *Times*, of a hundred years ago. Not only the *Times* but all newspapers then based their policies on a belief that man was to some extent a rational animal. The great break with tradition came with the advent of Alfred Harnsworth, who by successfully running an illegal lottery—became wealthy, and, automatically, great. As Lord Northcliffe he professed to give the people *what they wanted*, but he also found out a way of making them want what he, and his friends, wanted, and that was by the suggestion of a number of ideas by constant reiteration. It was not necessary for a Freethinker to have a high idea of man's rationality; but it was to man's reason, whether large or small, to which the Freethought party had always appealed and would continue to appeal. Mr. Fisher seconded and the motion was carried.

The President moved:—

"That this Conference is in favour of an invitation to the International Union of Freethinkers to hold its Congress for 1938 in London."

This was now one of the few countries where such a gathering could be held.

Mr. Bayard Simmons seconded. He pointed out some of the difficulties that could be anticipated, but thought we could do nothing else than give the Congress generous welcome. It would mean a considerable amount of work. Carried unanimously.

Mr. Wishart moved:—

"That only the 'Principles and Objects' be printed on Membership Cards; the Immediate Practical Objects being separately printed."

Mr. Standfast (Birkenhead) seconded. There was much discussion and after being put to the meeting the motion was lost.

Mr. Brighton moved:—

"That the continued refusal of the British Broadcasting Corporation to provide sufficient varied alternatives to the sermons and religious talks on their Sunday programmes, thereby impelling many listeners to connect with Continental Stations, is a policy in direct opposition to democratic rights, derogatory to national prestige, and an offensive reflexion upon by far the greater number of licence-holders."

The motion was seconded by Mr. Rossler (Teesside) and carried.

Mr. Wishart moved formally:—

"That bearing in mind the degree to which Churches and Chapels are seeking to compensate themselves for the decline of religious belief by permeating social movements, this Conference urges all Freethinkers connected with social and political parties to do all that lies in their power to prevent the operation of an influence that cannot but make for retrogression."

This was seconded and agreed to.

Mr. J. Clayton moved:—

"That this Conference protests strongly against the arrangements between Education Committees and Committees of clergymen, whereby a stronger religious influence is brought to bear upon both school-children and teachers, and calls upon those who do not agree with the State teaching of religion to show their disapproval by withdrawing their children from religious instruction in all State-supported schools."

Mr. Clayton gave instances (Blackpool, Wakefield, Paisley, etc.) of underhand attempts to force Religion upon the children in our State Schools, and emphasized the need for vigilance and action.

Mrs. Whitefield seconded and Mr. Savory supported. Carried unanimously.

Mr. Cohen in concluding the Conference thanked the Liverpool Branch on behalf of members and delegates for attention paid to their comfort. He trusted that all would go away feeling heartened, and resolving to take active and aggressive part in promulgating Freethought.

Whatever religion may be in the ascendant, the influence of its ministers is invariably strengthened by a long and dangerous war, the uncertainties of which perplex the minds of men, and induce them, when natural resources are failing, to call on the supernatural for help. On such occasions the clergy rise in importance; the churches are more than usually filled; and the priest, putting himself forward as the exponent of the wishes of God, assumes the language of authority, and either comforts the people under their losses in a righteous cause, or else explains to them that those losses are sent to them as a visitation for their sins, and as a warning that they have not been sufficiently attentive to their religious duties, in other words, that they have neglected rites and ceremonies in the performance of which the priest himself has a personal interest."

Buckle, "History of Civilization."

Making Progress

Forward from Liberalism, by Stephen Spender (Gollancz, 7s. 6d.; also Left Book Club, for January, 295 pp.).

Forward from Liberalism is, as the author says, a personal book with a more general application. Doubtless, many Liberals will have found themselves faced by similar questions to those which Mr. Spender tries to answer. A background to the questioning is outlined by the author, who sees no hope for the fulfilment of the idealism of Liberalism except in Communism. This, however is not a formal exposition of Communism, about which Mr. Spender has still much to learn, but his exposition of the inevitable failure of Liberalism and his reaction to certain aspects of Soviet Russia will interest many readers.

Mr. Spender is quite clear as to the use to which democratic ideas and institutions can be put at the present time; as when he says, "so useful to the governing classes is the Democratic Illusion and so gullible is democracy, that the argument 'we must protect our liberty' is always used when ex-liberal, ex-cabinet ministers propose that Fascist methods should be introduced into English government." p. 85. At the same time he warns us against underestimating those liberties which we have under liberal democracy.

From the first part of the book—*Journey Through Time*—one gathers that it was impossible for Liberalism to work out its idealism and retain the Capitalist form of society. Liberalism became, in fact, the "political philosophy of the successful middle classes," with economic freedom for the rich and political freedom for the masses, the latter being made ineffective in proportion to poverty and ignorance. (p. 84.)

There is full appreciation of the known and unknown devoted reformists, and a reminder that "you do not put time forward by abolishing the achievements of one hundred or even one thousand years; but by clearing away the obstructive and destructive forces which at present prevent those achievements from civilizing the whole of our democracy." (p. 106.)

Gladstone is presented as an example of the Liberal politician striving to realize the idealism of Liberalism in actual life. Perhaps there is some justification for this in the fact of Gladstone being a popular figure; but a much more heroic example could have been found in the life of Charles Bradlaugh.

In the third part—*The Means and the Ends*—the author reveals his reactions to events of the past few years, and is seen to have no illusions as to the future of Democracy, if an end is not put to the career of Fascism. He is clear as to the fact that Social Democracy cannot defeat the forces of reaction by methods of timid reform and collaboration with the governing classes, who are adepts at making demagogic promises. Mr. Spender also warns the Pacifists that "it is simply untrue to say that violent means always lead to violent ends." (p. 253.)

Of the Soviet Union, Mr. Spender has many good things to say: but his criticisms give the impression that he has not yet freed himself from the attitude of those who talk as if the Soviet Union ought, by now, to have set up a perfect Communist Society, by the simple process of ignoring all difficulties and obstacles. Especially where human nature has to be dealt with. Mr. Spender's book should interest Liberals who are concerned as to which way they should take in the future.

The Position of Women in the U.S.S.R., by G. N. Serebrennikov (Gollancz, 7s. 6d., 288 pp.) is a work which will be welcomed by students of the position of woman in society. Especially as it deals with what has been accomplished for women, during a short period, and is a document of social progress. After devoting a chapter to the Soviet Laws on the Rights of Women, the author surveys the general results of woman's development in the Soviet Union; her position as a skilled worker; her work in collectivization; and her place in the intellectual professions and administration.

Cultural growth, social activity, physical culture are all reviewed in relation to the colossal transformation which has taken place in Russian life; while one of the

most interesting chapters is that which deals with the new life for women in the once backward National Republics.

F. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Signs and Portents

ALOYSIUS, the Acolyte, was in audience with the Reverend Father. He had a report to make. For three hours, standing unostentatiously under a sun-blind, he had observed the people passing up and down Fleet Street, and their attitude when approaching a builder's ladder. The Reverend Father had, previously, exactly outlined his duties and was now prepared to listen to the outcome.

"I chose a ladder which was so placed that passers-by could equally choose to go under it or around it," he said. "I chose a time when they were for the most part moving leisurely—and not one of the rush-hours." "Good!" said Father Richard.

"Generally speaking, the direction taken by them was the one which did not involve any inconvenience. But in about one case out of seven, there was a determination shown not to go under the ladder." "One in seven," said the Father, "Is that all?" "Well, it may have been one in five or six. It is, naturally, impossible to give exact figures."

"These figures are rather disappointing, my son. In my early days, very few people would walk under a ladder. But things are, alas, not what they were. What can you tell me more?"

"There was one man refusing to go under the ladder, to about four women."

"That is as I anticipated. Anything else?"

"I noticed, Father, that with those of the younger generation, those say about 20 years of age, there was hardly a case of one, male or female, who deviated an inch from his or her path, to avoid walking underneath the ladder."

"Are you sure of that, Aloysius?" "Yes, Father."

"The tidings you have brought me, perturbs me, my son."

"I am sorry."

"Nay, the fault is not with you my son."

"Father, if it please you, can you explain to me why it is that the report I have made to you, gives you grief?"

"Nay, my son. You will receive enlightenment upon this matter, all in good time. Leave me now, for I would rest. I am getting old and sleep is a valuable boon. Besides there is little pleasure I now get in meditating upon this corrupt and ungodly age. *Pax Vobiscum.*"

T. H. ELSTON.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

AN APPEAL FOR INDIA

SIR.—The Rationalist Association of India has, during the last seven years, been engaged in fighting the formidable forces of bigotry, superstition and ignorance in this country. It has met with some measure of success, but many a vital problem awaits an immediate solution.

Reason, the journal of the Association, has been carrying the message of Rationalism to various corners of India. But it has to fight the same financial difficulties that every Freethought journal meets with.

The bond of Rationalism uniting all Rationalists and Freethinkers of the world, makes us bold to appeal to you to come to our aid in our present financial needs.

We need not say that the progress of Rationalism among a fifth of the world's population inhabiting India would be the greatest step towards the final victory of Freethought.

Donations may be sent to our Representative, Mr. Roshan Mahomed, Faraday House, 66 Southampton Row, London, W.C.1, or to the Treasurer, The Rationalist Association of India, 5-12 Queen's Road, Bombay, 2, India.

Wishing you all success in your efforts for freedom and intellectual liberty on your side of the globe.

G. V. DESHMUKH.
President, Rationalist Association of India, Bombay.

WIDENING THE FREETHOUGHT FRONT

SIR.—The article by Mr. Jack Lindsay, under the above heading, in the issue of May 16, with its many useful suggestions, displays a very creditable zeal. But, after reading the article carefully over, more than once, it seemed to me that the writer had something at the back of his mind, which he somehow failed to fully express. It would appear that he is not satisfied with the weapons that are being used in the Freethought attack upon theological and social superstitions. He compliments the *Freethinker* for occasionally dealing with questions that have a social and political bearing, but "would like to know what Paine or Carlile would have to say about the strange notion that 'rationalism' can be separated from social questions." Is Mr. Lindsay not creating his own difficulties? Are there any Freethinkers or Rationalists who entertain any such "strange notion," and who stand aloof from questions of social and political interest? I have been a reader of the *Freethinker* for some forty-five years, and although the editor allows his contributors a good deal of latitude, I have never once seen the suggestion of such a strange notion in its pages. It is indeed a "strange" notion, as the writer himself admits. Instead of that lack of interest in social questions, which the writer assumes, it seems to me that the animating force underlying all Freethought activities is the desire for intellectual freedom and social justice. As to how these are to be best attained is a matter of opinion, and not of dogmatism, and one false step might prove a serious set-back. There may be times in history when force must decide the contest, but let us be sure that the circumstances are such as to justify any such appeal.

No man ever had greater provocation to retaliate upon his persecutors than Chas. Bradlaugh, when he was refused entrance to, and man-handled by the police at the door of the House of Commons. At a signal from him, his thousands of staunch followers would have forced an entrance and wrecked the building, and probably flung many of its leading ministers into the Thames. But—the signal was not given; although it must have required an almost superhuman effort to let the opportunity pass. We can only assume what the result would ultimately have been if physical force had been let loose upon the House but I think posterity will acclaim the restraint that Bradlaugh was able to exercise over himself and his followers, as sound judgment.

The question of the relations between the individual and the community, which the article raises, is one of those bugbears that everybody likes to have a fling at, but seems to defy all attempts at a satisfactory adjustment.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

THE ALL-ROUND SPORTSMAN

SIR.—The following is an excerpt from a leading article which appeared in the *Field* not long ago; it is an apt corollary to Mr. Todhunter's article.

Shooting always had many boy votaries at Christmas time, and if hunting was impossible because of the weather, the boy who preferred hunting would, as a matter of course, turn his attention to shooting, and this sort of boy it is that develops into the all-round sportsman in due course. Some time ago we met an old friend who owns a large estate, and asked him after his two boys. "One hunts," he said, "and if he is not hunting he spends his time in the stables; the other shoots all day, and when he is at home spends his time in the gun-room."

We hear much nowadays of the dispersal of large estates. If one of the results of this is the elimination of a type which has no ambitions higher than those described and lives only to destroy, we shall regret their passing less.

EDGAR SYERS.

[A number of letters are held over till next week.—
EDITOR.]

Obituary

MR. W. S. CLOGG

It is with the very deepest regret that we have to record the death of Mr. W. S. Clogg, of Chatham, at the age of 72. Our first acquaintance with him dates from the meetings held in Victoria Park in 1890. To those meetings he gave steady and effective aid, although not of the showy and spectacular kind. But when work was to be done he was there, and whether the conditions were rough or smooth, he was always at the post of duty. His Freethought was something to be lived, not to be brought out on special occasions, and in safe company.

Many years ago Mr. Clogg removed to Chatham. He played an active part in the life of the town, and won a very wide-spread respect. He was President of the Blind and Crippled Guild at Gillingham, and a tribute to his services appeared in the local obituary notice. His interests in other public work brought forth testimonials to his worth as a citizen and a man. He was the last to seek recognition for his services, but it will have been pleasing to all his friends to know that appreciation was not stinted. The cremation took place at West Norwood Crematorium on May 19, and a Secular Service was conducted by Councillor Briggs. The ashes were scattered over the Garden of Remembrance.—C.C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc

LONDON

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, J. Langdon-Davies—"Edward Gibbon (Bi-centenary)."

OUTDOOR

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. Tuson. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.45, Sunday, Mr. Preece. South Hill Park, Hampstead, Monday, 8.0, Mr. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 6.30, Sunday, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, near Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. P. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. H. Preece.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7, Mr. Leacy.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Evans. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Leacy, Connell, Carlton and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Carlton and Tuson. Friday, 7.30, Messrs. Barnes, Perry and others. The *Freethinker*, *Age of Reason* and Mr. Chapman Cohen's latest pamphlets on sale outside Marble Arch Tube Station every evening.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLITH (Market Place) : 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

COLNE : 7.30, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

FOULRIDGE : 7.15, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Grant Street) : 8.0, Sunday, Mr. G. Whitehead. Albert Road, 8.0, Monday to Friday, June 4, Mr. G. Whitehead.

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park Gates) : 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. V. Shortt. Platt Fields, 3.0, and Stephenson Square, 7.0, Sunday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson—"Religion and the Modern World."

MIDDLESBROUGH (Davison Street) : 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Thursday, 7.45, Mr. H. Dalkin—"Atheist Death Beds."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market) : 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NELSON (Chapel Street) : 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton. PORTSMOUTH (Todmorden Valley) : 7.30, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Preston Market Place) : 7.15, Mr. Jackson (Liverpool)—"Flashlights on the Bible."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place) : 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Cross, Stockton) : 7.30, Monday, Mr. T. Abrook—"Science and Religion."

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General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

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THE National Secular Society was founded in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

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

If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The Trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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