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

Views and Opinions

Bradlaugh and Birth Control

To advocate "Birth-Control," which won the right to freedom of propaganda under the name of Malthusianism, is now a safe occupation. There are, of course, cases of legal interference that crop up now and again, and unofficial prejudice may operate in connexion with birth-control, as with other heretical subjects. But there are those alive to-day who will remember a time when it demanded both moral courage and intellectual strength to fight for the right of a man and a woman to say that the number of children they may bring into the world was a question that must be decided by themselves. And it certainly will not surprise anyone with a knowledge of the history of the last hundred years to be told that it was among the ranks of the heretics that birth-control found those who established its right to a public existence. These pioneers paid the price that pioneers have always paid for their daring. As the heresy won the right to recognition, many advocates came forward; and then with that genius for humbug where anything with a religious tinge is concerned, and which is so common a feature of "our island history," a new name is found for an old thing, and those who reaped the harvest sown by their predecessors loudly proclaim themselves as planters of the seed.

There was a string of birth-controllers before Charles Bradlaugh came upon the scene, and in this, as with heresy in general, Bradlaugh mainly followed the lines of his predecessors. A man of unflinching courage, a great orator, a commanding figure physically, the greatest compliment paid him was the hatred he evoked from those immortal twins—religious bigotry and vested interest. And next to the hatred excited by his Atheism, was the storm evoked by his advocacy of Malthusianism. His courage in this matter was the more marked because it was certain to handicap him, politically, and in my judgment, it was politics that was Bradlaugh's most natural field of operation. But his Malthusianism certainly evoked the

educated and uneducated blackguardism of Victorian morality at its uncleanest. There has always been a type of Christian to whom the very word "sex" evokes unclean ideas, and who have made indecent, things and subjects that have no necessary indecency about them. It is a type that manifests its publicly suppressed indecency by all kinds of winks and nods, lowered tones and semi-occult phrases. Bradlaugh challenged the Churches by his Atheism, he attacked aristocracy by his republicanism, by his exposures of the way in which the "common" people had been plundered. Malthusianism came as a complete demonstration of indecency to a society in which the exhibition of a woman's calf was enough to awaken the salacity of the Victorian male, and when children were saturated from their infancy with implications of indecency, and who so often advertised the nature of their training when they reached adolescence.

* * *

History as it is Writ

I am fairly familiar with the Bradlaugh period, but I must confess to feeling a little surprise when I recently came across, for the first time, a fine specimen of religious blackguardism in Mr. F. Hugh O'Donnell's *History of the Irish Parliamentary Party* (1910). In the first volume of that history Mr. O'Donnell gives a very garbled account of the fight over the oath question in the House of Commons. He says that he "simply laughed" at the appeal to respect the mandate of Northampton, and deliberately lies when he says that the Speaker was compelled to have Bradlaugh forcibly expelled from the House because of his "violence." Anyone who has read the account of the "scene" knows quite well that Bradlaugh's speech at the bar of the House was marked by a wonderful restraint, and by the manifestation of a respect for the House of Commons which it did not deserve. And it was not the violence of Bradlaugh which led to a "scene," but the violence used against him that might well have led to a riot had not Bradlaugh persisted in treating the House of Commons with a respect it had done so little to merit.

This first lie is companioned by another. The opposition to Bradlaugh, we are told, was not because of his politics, but because he "had been in trouble with the Courts over the publication of a book condemned as obscene." Mr. O'Donnell, is, or was, a Roman Catholic, and this is a typical Roman Catholic lie. A technically and legally "obscene" publication is converted into a man who has written with a low and obscene purpose, without the reader being informed that it was largely Bradlaugh's advocacy of Malthusianism that lifted the subject out of the atmosphere of indecency into which writers of the religious calibre of Mr. O'Donnell had plunged it, and lifted it to the level of an important question in a scientific sociology. The "indecency" of birth-control

was Christian. It was the Atheist who fought for the cleansing of the subject.

For downright scurrilous lying this account of Mr. O'Donnell's equals anything I have ever read, and surpasses most. He says that the entrance of Bradlaugh into Parliament was mainly due to his having published an "obscene" book, and that it was this that gave strength to the opposition. He also says that what has been published,

was not the half, nor the tenth of the story. . . . Bradlaugh had published a cheap edition of the beastly and abominable *Guide to Safe Lust* (this is O'Donnell's paraphrase of *The Fruits of Philosophy*), and had given it to swarms of children of the newspaper boy and flower girl class to sell at the London railway stations. . . . Bradlaugh afterwards explained that this was done to establish freedom of printing, or something of the sort. I bought from children outside Charing Cross Station half a dozen copies of the abomination, and brought them to the house and showed them to members. . . . I gave a copy to Lord Randolph Churchill. . . . He left the House of Commons on the spot, and getting out of the Underground at Charing Cross and Blackfriars Bridge, found the same group of miserable children engaged in the same infamous trade, a thousand-fold dishonouring to their youth and ignorance; heard the filthy little jokes of degraded little agents for Bradlaugh's wares. . . . and returned to the House with his proofs of one of the most hideous degradations of poor children and outrages on public decency which the most debased country could ever produce.

It was not, says Mr. O'Donnell, a case of

a comparatively high-priced (book) intended for a limited class of readers, as the current narratives of current historians imply, it was the sale of a cheap and popular edition by the hands of children, at our street corners which formed the ground of my determined hostility.

And this most righteous liar suggested to the House that Bradlaugh actually wished to get M.P. added to his name because it would be useful "upon the title-page of some vile and abominable pamphlet that was sold in the byways and lanes of our great cities."

I have italicized certain passages, because it illustrates the method of Mr. O'Donnell, which, while it paid, was employed by religious and tory propagandists. They were united in their hatred of the man who had written the *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*, and who was leader of the Freethought movement. At this time of day these passages have mainly an historic interest, but history in the past has its influence on the present, and, unfortunately, only a small minority of the present generation know what Bradlaugh was and what he did. One is quite touched by one of the witnesses selected by Mr. O'Donnell—Lord Randolph Churchill. Anyone who has read Frank Harris's account of Churchill, will appreciate the terrible shock it must have given him to come into contact with anything that was even branded as obscene. But the vilest suggestion of all is that *The Fruits of Philosophy* was printed by Bradlaugh and given by him to hordes of children to sell in the streets. I do not believe that the book was sold by "swarms of children in the streets," I have never heard of it, and one would not take the word of Mr. O'Donnell in this matter for the proverbial bunch of cats-meat. To say that Bradlaugh published the book merely to advertise himself or with a view to making profit of any kind out of it, is in every sense ridiculous. No one has ever accused Bradlaugh of being a fool, and he was certainly not jackass enough to think that he could promote his political career by rousing against him the suppressed and perverted sexual feeling and religious hostility of men of the O'Donnell breed. As a matter of fact some sort of

Malthusian literature had always been available from the time of Carlile and his school. Bradlaugh's purpose, both in printing *The Fruits of Philosophy*, and in selling it at a low price, was obvious and avowed. It was to vindicate the freedom of printing, and to place it before those who could not afford high-priced works. One of the lines of defence taken by Mrs. Besant and Bradlaugh at their trial was just this. They said that information that could be gained from a book published at a guinea, should be available to people who cannot afford more than sixpence or a shilling. It was even more necessary for the poor than it was for the rich, because to their lot was added the fact of poverty, and so led to those "swarms" of "degraded" children, the existence of which shocked neither Randolph Churchill nor Mr. O'Donnell. It was not the degradation of a nation which possessed swarms of children who could only live by standing in the streets in all weathers to earn food, it was the fact that Malthusianism was denounced by the Church and the political enmity of Churchill towards a man who had done so much to expose the nature of royalty and the peerage and the falsity of religious teaching, these were the real offences. And those who know what is going on are aware that even to-day it is not difficult for anyone who has money to waste to secure all the pornographic literature he requires. The authorities interfere when it becomes cheap, and the market for this kind of filth is kept alive by the social conditions that Bradlaugh spent his life trying to improve.

* * *

The Question of the Oath

Mr. O'Donnell has a brief account of the Oath question on which one may say a word, although after what has been said the reader will not be surprised to find it as deliberately untruthful as his account of Bradlaugh's fight on behalf of teaching that is now becoming generally accepted, and is even being encouraged by public authorities. Mr. O'Donnell tells us that according to the "Law of Parliament" the oath must be taken in the name of God. But the misleading nature of this statement is seen when we realize that the law had already made an exception in the case of Quakers, who do not use the name of God at all. And Bradlaugh was legally advised that he might affirm. But when the right to affirm was refused him, Bradlaugh with an honesty of purpose and statement to which Mr. O'Donnell is an obvious stranger, said that although the word "God" meant nothing to him he would take the oath in the spirit of a pledge of loyalty to the Constitution. Had he been as careless of intellectual honesty as many of the members were, he would have mumbled the religious oath without making any comment whatever. From this point the fight raged round Bradlaugh's assertion of his right to take the oath without any inquisition about his religious opinion. The opposition here was led by that very moral gentleman, Randolph Churchill, and supported by the truthful one, the author of the book with which I am dealing. And the soundness of Bradlaugh's claim was proven when in the new Parliament his right to take the oath was admitted without question. It was Bradlaugh, not the O'Donnells and the Churchills who made it possible to be honest on one point when first entering Parliament, although that left, as we all know, plenty of scope for hearty lying in the general conduct of parliamentary business.

I have gone over this case for several reasons. We are about two generations removed from the fight with which I am dealing. How many of our contemporaries know to whom they owe the present standing of such a subject as "birth-control"? It is still not

profitable to mention the names of the Freethinkers who fought so well for all kinds of reforms during the past century. It is much more profitable to trace it back to some solitary Christian who would himself, were he alive, be surprised to be told what he had done. And it is even more profitable to come forward as a reformer, by preaching what is now comparatively safe, without making any reference whatever to men of the Bradlaugh type. And much as I would like to see these old heroes recognized, I am not complaining overmuch at their being ignored. I recognize that the real reformer must always, as I have so often said, be in front. He cannot be with a crowd, for the moment he is one of a crowd his days of greatest utility are gone. Those who imagine that they can ever make Freethought a large and popular party have yet to learn what Freethought means. Pioneers must be pioneers, and pioneers are those who are in front blazing the trail, not members of a multitude who tread a wide and open road. A reform is something to be achieved, but once achieved, by its very establishment it becomes the property of all, and it is not long before we have a new manifestation of the old fight on another level. This is the essence of progress.

But the recognition of this truth should not rob us of a sense of gratitude to those who have gone before. It should rather intensify our sense of the debt we owe. I have only been again trying to reply to the slanders and the misrepresentations of those who show no appreciation of either the processes of history, or the character of the men who make it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Silent Revolution

By the irresistible maturing of the general mind, the Christian traditions have lost their hold."—Emerson

"Nought may endure but mutability."—Shelley.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH who was, in his own characteristic way, a keen theological critic, declared that religions do not die, but they change, and that the Christian Religion itself was undergoing a transformation. This was a shrewd thrust, and it lost nothing by this alteration taking place so quietly that it appears to have been wrought with the almost complete unconsciousness of clergy and congregations alike.

In England, the Rev. Frederick Denison Maurice, Dean Farrar, and other "advanced" clergymen, towards the end of the nineteenth century, seem to have been the prime movers in this silent revolution. In order to avert the criticisms of the Freethinkers, they tried to camouflage the barbarous crudities of their religion, particularly with regard to the teaching of hell-fire. With quiet persistence, they told their congregations that "hell," contrary to belief, was slightly less monotonous than "heaven," and that everlasting punishment meant, in the last analysis, but an eternity of deprivations. Indeed, they overplayed the parts of injured innocents, for their gullible congregations began to believe them, with the result that blood and brimstone have since been eliminated from the utterances of the educated clergy. Only the Romish Church, and the cave-men of Nonconformity, remained faithful to religious barbarity. After that came the deluge, which has brought upon its flood undogmatic religionism and Nothingarianism, which is now recognized as the Christian religion, although it has much less resemblance to historic Christianity than margarine has to butter.

This dilution of dogma has had its disintegrating

effect upon almost all the Christian Churches. Instead of relying upon the lever of fear, the clergy now concentrate upon the less unpleasant aspects of religion. But the less people are afraid, the less they attend places-of-worship. In the long run, this care-free attitude can have but one result; it is the secularizing of Christianity. What was adopted as a mere temporary expedient, has not only become a habit, but is a custom which grows upon what it feeds on. The diluted theology of the present-day has nothing to do with the historic Christian Religion, taught for near twenty centuries. It shocks one; it is almost like meeting one's pet dog in the form of sausages.

Nor is this all. In their intense desire to harmonize their two-thousand-years'-old Oriental superstition with modern conditions, the clergy have begun to eliminate the worst passages from the "Book of Common Prayer." Changes have been made and barbarous portions of the "Psalms" deleted. It has even been suggested that the language of the marriage service requires adjustment. It is a retreat all along the line, and a victory for Freethought.

The Christian Religion is crumbling. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism, as at the present time. Never have men and women attended churches and chapels so little; never have they attended hospital and philanthropic meetings so assiduously. The Christian Religion is being displaced by Secularism. The alleged supernatural element in Christianity no longer satisfies, for no faith can satisfy for any length of time which is based primarily upon outworn ideas and outgrown ignorance. The mind of man is vigorously bestirring itself. Scepticism means approach to truth, and truth cannot consort with the barbarous superstitions of the remote past. Men are no longer wholly illiterate, and, nowadays, do not accept upon mere trust the religious beliefs of their credulous and ignorant ancestors. The fast-emptying churches represent the reign of a once-dominant Priestcraft, which is now decaying and which is the voice of the Past. Secularism sounds the triumphant note of the future: Liberty and Fraternity. For near twenty centuries the priests have been praying "Our Father," and taking the collections, and the day of human brotherhood has remained but a dream. Secularism does not pray, but it works for the service of man, which will lead ultimately to the abasement of superstition and to the glorification of humanity.

Straws show which way the wind is blowing. Priests of all ranks, from archbishops to mere curates, from leading Nonconformist preachers to travelling evangelists, all now pretend to be concerned with education, child-welfare, fair wages, housing conditions, and no longer insist with the old vehemence on the fall of mankind and the shocking perils of eternal punishment. The dreadful dogmas of historic Christianity are being relegated to the lumber-room, and have become of less importance than the installation of moving-pictures in places of worship. Nor, in the particular circumstances of our time, is this so entirely surprising. Such awful facts as the wars in Abyssinia, China, and Spain, with their unspeakable horrors, must make thoughtful men and women pause in reciting the Christian abracadabra. Few sensitive folk, we imagine, feel inclined to refer to a "heavenly father" at the very moment when the very conception implies that he is devouring his own children by tens of thousands. Their hands would be less inclined than usual to go up to "that inverted bowl we call the sky." Indeed, such awful horrors as are associated with modern warfare are very hard to reconcile with any consolatory scheme of religion whatsoever.

And, mark you, who is it that hears and answers the

pathetic cry of humanity in extreme anguish? Is it "Jehovah," who is said to have created the world? Is it the thorn-crowned Messiah with his thousands of angels, or the "Divine Mother" with cohorts of cherubim? Is it the Holy Spirit, who is said to take such an active interest in the selection of bishops and cardinals, who comes to the succour of the unhappy fugitives, the wounded babies, the violated women, the mutilated men? Not at all! Mankind is left to its own resources, and it is to the ready sympathy of their fellow men and women that the poor victims have to turn to in the bitterest hours of sorrow and disaster.

Such a spectacle should bring home to every sensitive and thoughtful person the growth and change of ideas. Knowledge has widened in ways never dreamed of in the primitive Oriental philosophy of the Christian Religion. New tones have grown into human sentiment. All the lights and shadows of life have shifted, and its whole surface has been dyed in different colours. Naturally, we are progressing beyond the reach of primitive ideas and outworn ideals. They voice entirely different views which men have outgrown. They can no longer make direct response to them. At their note their minds and feelings rouse to little movement except amazement, even incredulity. They come like "the horns of Elfland, faintly blowing," and modern men realize that they were meant for far other ears than ours, and are but an echo from the far-off days of ignorance, cruelty, dirt, and bigotry. The plain, blunt truth is that, at long last, the conscience of the race is rising slowly above the dogmas and the ignorance of the Christian priesthood. Based on fables, supported by brute force, trading on ignorance, the Christian Superstition is being found out. For any purpose connected with the real and permanent welfare of the people Christianity might as well be relegated to the limbo of forgotten things as it will be, inevitably. One day its sacred relics will be museum exhibits, and the Christian Religion will be as remote as when the star of Ormuzd burned out in the unquiet Eastern skies. For the gods are now in twilight, and are vanishing.

MIMNERMUS.

Words

"But words are things, and a small drop of ink falling, like dew, upon a thought produces that which makes thousands, perhaps millions, think.—Byron.

"To examine the perfection or imperfection of words," says Locke, "it is necessary first to consider their use and end: for as they are more or less fitted to attain that so they are more or less perfect." (*The Human Understanding*, Book III., Chap. ix., Sect. 1.)

To be able to let ink, like dew, fall upon the most suitable words presenting themselves, when trying to find fitting expression for our thoughts, is to achieve a great ideal—a good style.

In the North of England some sixty years ago (to examine one word), the meanings of the word *respect* all seemed definite enough, but the meanings given to the word *respectable* all seemed dubious. It seemed to have more to do with clothing than aught else. We were all respectable on Sundays, even when drunk—respectably drunk!

Our Calvinistic clergyman who delighted in covering his ignorance with a curious and inexplicable web of perplexed words to procure the admiration and wonder of his congregation:—

For untruth being unacceptable to the mind of man, there is no other defence left for absurdity but obscurity.

in other words, though he only sometimes preached a dry sermon to the young, he always—if one might judge from results—preached a very dry one to the aged. One old elder I remember once remarking that "he generally had enough Hell Fire in a sermon to raise an awful thirst." And while our forbears were washing these hot sermons down, I remember how we boys—

"The very bodiment of happy sin"—

on more than one occasion robbed the old innkeeper's orchard.

If anything was said to be only *respectable*, its value was put as being "Middling fair; or Moderate." Amongst working people the word was not of much account. It was regarded as priggish. To be *respectably* dressed was not to be well dressed, but only pretty-well dressed. *Respectable* blackguards were common. The character of men and things deemed *respectable* may have determined its many meanings—slick, smooth, sleek, smug, etc. The poet Browning tells us:—

"Smooth Jacob still robs homely Esau."

Jacob was a skilful deceiver. He had shamefully lied to his dying father, and so robbed his brother of both birthright and blessing. He was a highly respectable man, nevertheless, prosperity, however come by, being always considered a proof of that. Yet, why should Esau complain? He was promised that his dwelling "shall be of the fatness of the earth," and "of the dews of heaven from above." A great blessing surely, all to be honestly his, and not got by dodging with cattle or aught else. What could Esau have desired better than "the fatness of the earth, and the dews of heaven"? But—

"till taught by pain
Men really know not what good water's worth."

But our preacher was beyond criticism. He was a born orator, never at a loss for a word, the bigger and more meaningless the better. He was of all men the most eloquent! He justified Locke's words:—

Eloquence, like the fair sex, has two prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And it is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving wherein men find pleasure to be deceived. (*Book III., Chap. x., Sect. 34, Ibid.*)

But, in his Bible Class where we could question him, he urged us to search diligently, never to be indifferent. Some of us took his advice. We searched diligently but we did not find. Locke explains why. Hear him:—

Many a man, who was pretty well satisfied of the meaning of a text of scripture, or clause in the code, at first reading, has by consulting commentators, quite lost the sense of it, and by those elucidations given rise or increase to his doubts, and drawn obscurity upon the place. I say not this, that I think commentaries needless; but to show how uncertain the names of missed modes naturally are, even in the mouths of those who had both the intention and the faculty of speaking as clearly as language was capable to express their thoughts." (*Book III. Chap. ix., Sect. 9, Ibid.*)

Some time ago one of our leading journals told us that: "Respectability is not religion; but it is in many grades of society a working substitute for it." But for respectability we should have no religion. Some personal friends are so poor that the two sons of the family have only one respectable suit of clothes between them, in which one boy goes to chapel in the morning and the other in the evening. The poverty of this family, due to circumstances over which they have had no control, has been checked for the past

three years by the self-denying heroism of an atheistic father, who is not considered respectable, while his Christian wife and her two sons are looked upon as being highly respectable, but according to the meaning given to the word in the North of England, they have nothing to be proud of.

Now, words having various meanings should be, wherever possible, avoided. The synonyms of the word *respectable* are: worthy, laudable, praiseworthy, honourable, good, sound, estimable, honest. But nowhere have I ever heard it used to denote any of these.

Over two thousand three hundred years ago Antisthenes, the Cynic, was of opinion that the first step in education should be the study of words. And two hundred and fifty years ago Locke seems to have held the same opinion:—

Were the imperfections of language, says he, as the instrument of knowledge, more thoroughly weighed, a great many of the controversies that make such a noise in the world would of themselves cease; and the way to knowledge and perhaps peace too, lie a great deal opener than it does. (Book III., Chap. ix., Sect. 21. *Ibid.*)

The word *respectable* is only one of many that might be taken as having a variety of meanings. *Officious* is another. What an interesting book a dictionary is! A few moments ago, while checking some statements made above I dropped on this sweet morsel:—

IDIOT. A man in private life, is contradistinguished from one occupying an official position, it being presumed that the highest intellect and education—nay all the education—would be found in the Government service.

Locke in his interesting essay on the human understanding devotes Book III. (104 pages) entirely to words and their uses. These 104 pages contain so much common sense that quoting becomes easy and leaving off difficult. I may be pardoned, though, for concluding with this:—

I leave it to be considered, whether it would not be well for mankind, whose concernment it is to know things as they are and to do what they ought, and not to spend their lives in talking about them, or not to spend their lives in talking about them, or tossing words to and fro: whether it would not be well, I say, that the use of words were made plain and direct; and that language, which was given us for the improvement of knowledge and bond of society should not be employed to darken truth, and unsettle peoples rights; and raise mists and render unintelligible both morality and religion; or that at least, if this will happen, it should not be thought learning or knowledge to do so. (Book III., Chap. x., Sect. 13, *Ibid.*)

It is about 250 years since this was written, and D.D. still means Doctor of Divinity!!

GEORGE WALLACE.

INGERSOLL.

The man whom above all others I should have wished and hoped to meet if I had visited America during his lifetime.—*Swinburne*.

I envy the land that brings forth such glorious fruit as an Ingersoll.—*Bjornson*.

How deep he goes and how high he soars.—*Whitman*.

His services for the promotion of the truth I value most sincerely.—*Haeckel*.

Writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy.—*Gladstone*.

The Thralldom of Superstition in Spain

In his book, *Behind the Spanish Barricades*, John Langdon-Davies sheds what must be, for many, a fresh light on the war in Spain.

"The astounding truth," he says, "is that in all loyal Spain there is not one Catholic Church open, and in some parts there may never be a Catholic Church reopened, unless the Moors save Christianity. Spain, more Catholic than the Pope, has rooted out the sacred symbols. Let us consider the matter in a manner free of cant. Who burned the churches? Why did they burn the churches?"

Mr. Davies declares that Moscow had as much to do with it as with Oliver Cromwell's men when they knocked their heads off all the saints in Norfolk churches.

"They," he proceeds, "whoever 'they' are, burned the churches—not because they did not believe in the symbols painted and plastered all over them—but because they did believe most terribly in them, and considered them to be enemies to be overcome with their own magic. Remember that black magic is the other people's magic; and if you believe in any magic at all, you believe as much in the other people's as in your own.

Here we begin to get the motives by which the burners were prompted.

The destruction was not due to irreligion. Directly was it the result of religion—in other words, the superstition created and fostered in the people by the priests throughout a long course of years. There was widespread belief in the magical power of the saintly symbols. Thus, to prevent this being used to the injury of the loyalists, the obvious course was to ensure the destruction of all such priestly contrivances.

Mr. Davies gives enlightening examples of the superstition prevalent in Spain.

"For hundreds of years," he remarks, "a sneeze has been regarded as dangerous, especially if it has meant the loss of a little moisture, for some evil spirit may get hold of the moisture and do you wrong. So your friend protects you as you sneeze with a holy name. To-day the holy symbol is *Salud*. In Spain I have seen many a parson cross his mouth with a finger to prevent a devil entering the wide gate of a yawn."

A practice in Santiago has been for the Church to sell printed notices, carefully enclosed in coloured cloth, with these words in Latin: "Get thee behind me, Satan. Never canst thou persuade me to vanity. Thy libations are evil, thy potations verily poison. May the holy cross be my light—may the Serpent not be my leader." There are other printed notices to the same effect.

"To put it concisely and bluntly," proceeds Mr. Davies, "the people of Santiago are encouraged by their Archbishop to believe that, if they wear these magic letters round their neck, it will do them some sort of good, always provided they have paid a local priest to confer magic power on the letters in the appropriate manner. It is clear that the purchasers will be illiterate and uninstructed in Latin. All they will know is that the letters are magical; that they have been blessed by the priest; and that they have supernatural powers."

Witchcraft of all sorts abounds in Santiago under the blessing of the very princes of the church.

"One day," says Mr. Davies, "I had been looking at the sublime *Portico de Glorio*—that epitome of dogmatic theology set down in stone for illiterate men to read. Any Englishman can see a plaster cast of it in the South Kensington Museum. It is one of the great achievements of the medieval mind. On the other side of the main column, humbly placed in the gloom of the vast interior, is a statue of the sculptor himself—*Mateo*. This portrait bust has many little holes burrowed into it like the burrows of marine animals in rock pools. Undergraduates from the local university come and dig their pencils into the stone—and knock their foreheads against it—before sitting for examinations. Pregnant women come and rub their stomachs against *Mateo's* nose as an aid to safe delivery. Why? Because deep down in their superstitious minds there is a reverence for the creator of this *Portico*, whose merit they do not fully under-

stand. Mateo created that doorway. He has, then, a very powerful magic. Is it not natural to hope that his magic will prevail against the demons of the examiner—against the torturing devils who endanger childbirth?"

Pages of revelations of this character are supplied by Mr. Davies, who considers the information to be very helpful if we wish to understand why the attack on the Church has been so incredibly complete. It was to put a stop to such spells being used again.

"The priests," he represents the Loyalists as saying, "are your enemies. They work evil against you with their magic and their symbols. Burn their symbols, and leave them impotent to harm you any more. You have been told a thousand times by the priests that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. Very well! The witchcraft of your symbols can prevail at last against the witchcraft of theirs. Burn their magical aids. You cannot have a revolution without destroying the spiritual sources of their power. The Fascists have arms and gold; but they have also got as allies the powers of the air, principalities and dominations. Burn the crucifixes; burn the altars; burn the relics; burn the images. For it is these that are being used to keep you under the thrall of the Fascist."

Of course, Mr. Davies does not imply that this was the sole cause of the burnings. There were other elements behind the destruction wrought in this respect. But very largely were the people prompted by the belief that, in getting rid of the symbols, they were protecting themselves from magical aids that could be used against them by the rebels.

Nor were the Loyalists so ruthless as to send up in flames everything contained in the churches.

In the building occupied by the Chief of the Office of Works at Gassol, writes Mr. Davies, in reference to what he himself witnessed, "there was great activity. In every corner were piles of saints and virgins, crucifixes and paintings and carvings; men going this way and that with new boxes of objects just arrived; and women at tables typing lists of treasure sent in to the Government for safe keeping. From burned churches and convents—from private mansions and palaces—came the plundered deposits of all the ages to be sorted, and finally placed in public museums. The authorities reckon that the art treasures that have been taken out of dark seclusion where nobody saw them—the books that have hitherto been imprisoned for life in private libraries where perhaps one man read them, or looked at them, or had them catalogued and priced for insurance or probate—far outweigh in value the comparatively few things lost in burning."

Side by side with the fear as to the power exercised by magic, relates Mr. Davies, there are certain things that all progressive people in Spain feel against the Church as it has functioned in that country.

"Remember," he says, "the damning extract from the New Catechism as used until yesterday in all the churches in Spain. Ralph Bates quotes it with much effect: 'Question: What sin is committed by those who vote Liberal? Answer: Usually, mortal sin.' Remember that very recently the Church authorities condemned all women's clubs out of hand as being contrary to decency and religion. Finally, remember the confessional. It is, of course, perfectly true that there need be nothing worse in the practice of the confessional than—and as much good as—comes from a visit to the psychoanalyst. But does anyone pretend that the confessional in Spain has not been used as a political weapon? Take, for example, the question and answer quoted from the New Catechism. How many thousands of men and women have been intimidated by fears of hell if they have anything to do with any progressive party? Everybody who has had anything to do with elections in England knows that in rural districts landlords often announce during the campaign, that if the Reds win they will have to dismiss half their employees. Imagine the power of such pressure when, as in Spain, the reactionary cannot only threaten misery in this world—but worse in the next."

Briefly, there are two salient facts revealed in Mr. Davies' forceful indictment. The first is the deplorable, suppressory power so overwhelmingly exercised by

the Church. In addition, the very burnings are directly due—that is, in a very large measure—to the superstitious ignorance so assiduously implanted in the popular mind by the priests themselves.

For my own part, I would like to add that there are a few questions regarding the Spanish tragedy that must present themselves to many people—to those professing religion no less than those rejecting it.

What is there in the practice of Christianity if—in a country where it has been so rigidly exacted and enforced for, say, fifteen hundred years—the result is what we are still witnessing in Spain?

Are not all the events in Spain a complete, withering refutation of the pretence that the Church is anything in the way of an uplifting force—humanizing and benevolent?

And, further, if it is in defence of Christianity that Franco is fighting—or, in other words, the restoration of the Lord to his throne in Spain—why do not the powers above so intercede as to immediately put the issue beyond all doubt, without the appalling sacrifices that are being made in human life, and without Franco having to culist—not merely the mercenaries of Germany and Italy—but even the non-Christian Moors?

FRANK HILL.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

Acid Drops

A German refugee escaped from a German ship lying at Southampton. His only offence was that he had opinions with which the gangsters in power in Germany disagree, and that he tried to escape to what he believed was a freer country than his own. A magistrate has now ordered his deportation, which, if carried out, means that on returning to Germany he will, after a due course of torture, be "shot trying to escape," or will duly commit "suicide," in order to keep down the number of official murders. There was a time, less than a century ago, when it was our boast that England penalized none for political opinion, and when the moment a political refugee stepped on British shores he had the protection of English law. But that was before we had a Home Secretary, a Chancellor of the Exchequer, and a Prime Minister, who hold that we must act in that direction which pays us, financially, best. The older British teaching was that the "best" way was the way of decency, dignity and humanitarianism.

We are sure that Lord Reedsdale, and Lord Londonderry, and others of our highly placed admirers of Goering and Co., in their pastime of ill-using old men, outraging women, assisting "suicides," robbing whole groups of people, and overcrowding prisons and concentration camps, have not overlooked the very old practice of book-burning. Many tons of books written by Jews, Socialists, and Liberals, which embrace some of the best of German literature, have been burned. Germany is marching steadily along the lines that, if persisted in, will make the Reich a nation of sadistic morons. But we are convinced that no peoples in the world will ever march for ever along the road that the governing gang in Germany has marked out, and for which some of our own Englishmen and women express admiration. There are millions in Germany who hold the steady degradation of the German public in detestation, and these have time and the inevitable influence of other peoples on their side.

One of the most "strange and wonderful" revelations of the effects of religion occurs in some reminiscences appearing in a Sunday paper from C. B. Thomas, a well-known boxing referee. Of his first important commission, he writes:—

I was dubious about the job because the almanac showed me that the date was a Sunday.

I hold certain religious convictions, and for that reason debated the matter in my mind for days before accepting the offer.

A sermon preached by the Rev. E. Adams finally decided me. . . .

His words on the particular Sunday morning remain etched in his memory. They were founded on a statue the parson had seen on a visit to Rome, which—the reverend gentleman explained—was intended to represent Opportunity :—

I knew then, as I sat in the pew, that I could take a tip from the lesson in the sermon and referee on the following Sabbath.

adds Mr. Thomas. Which he accordingly did; and, as a sequel :—

received innumerable congratulations on the way it was controlled . . . while the bells pealed from a distant church.

Divine guidance is sought by, and, apparently, freely given to, one who recalls another contest in these words :—

Poor Sammy was a gory and fearful sight. Although he looked as if he had been through a threshing machine he refused to retire.

That Modernist leader, the Rev. J. C. Hardwick, confesses to a certain admiration for the "most part" of nineteenth century Freethinkers. We fancy the qualifying "most part" is there because most of the nineteenth century Freethinkers are dead. Dr. Hardwick says that these Freethinkers were "high-minded, sincere, altruistic and idealistic." We daresay that a Christian Dr. Hardwick of the twenty-first century will find the Freethinkers of the twentieth equally admirable. In fact we have a suspicion that if all the Freethinkers of today would only commit "hari-kari," Dr. Hardwick might find even these quite decent men and women. Dr. Hardwick reminds us of the Freethinker whose friend, a Christian, was trying to convince him that a Freethought funeral was very unsatisfactory. At last the Freethinker confessed that personally he would much rather see a Christian funeral than that of a Freethinker.

But Dr. Hardwick says that when the nineteenth century had done their work (a part of which was to make it safe for such men as Dr. Hardwick to voice their heresies) they left a "vacuum." He means they left the world without a god, but here Dr. Hardwick uses the wrong word. The Freethinkers did not *leave* a vacuum, they discovered one—God, and promptly filled it with humanizing truths and influences.

"The Catholic Advisory Council" (a Church of England organization, we believe) protests against the conduct of some of the members who signed the *Report on Doctrine*, but who publicly profess belief in "facts of revelation which they deny in private." The protest is quite uncalled for. There has hardly ever been a time when a proportion of the Christian clergy have not professed in public what they deny in private. What can one expect when men in their teens, or early twenties solemnly take an oath to believe certain things for the rest of their lives, or when their living and their social standing depend upon the profession of particular beliefs. Of course there are some kinds of parsons that can go on without ever changing what they are pleased to call their minds, and there are others who are adepts at being able, by every trick of language and cross-eyed reasoning, to persuade themselves and others that they still believe all they profess. But established religion is bound to lead, and always has led to either humbug or hypocrisy.

It may be conceded to some of our clerical readers, and we are pleased to say that we have many, that this type of mind is not confined to parsons. It is found wherever social or financial pressure is strong enough to force a man to play double. As we have so often said, few men wish to lie—as a matter of fact, it requires greater mental exertion to lie than to speak the plain truth—but where the conditions are such that to say publicly all that one thinks about certain subjects evokes

social boycott, business loss or other inconveniences, then we shall always have a minimum of honesty—and morality—in public life. The only way to avoid this is to make honesty of speech secure from penalty. Until that is done anyone who connives, either by expressed words, or by his general conduct, at penalties for the free expression of opinion is helping to manufacture hypocrites.

A very nice sort of gentleman is the Rev. C. R. Kotze, of the Dutch Reformed Church. In the *Cape Argus* (S.A.) for March 30, there is a report of a speech by Mr. Kotze to the students of the Normal College. To these Mr. Kotze, who is a Christianly "nice" man with a very nasty mind, delivered an address on dancing. Here is a sample from bulk :—

If people were honest they would admit that dancing simply meant bringing the sexes closer together. Many young girls went to dances for the pleasure of the social intercourse. They saw no sin in it because sin never came into the open.

If at dances she was squeezed by her partner she still did not believe that there were any sin in dancing. She became braver and more brazen as time went on, and in this atmosphere of liquor and scantily clothed women she became immunized against the evils of dancing.

Mr. Kotze admitted that a dance called the "tickiedraai" might be practised because in this "the partners did not get so near each other and did not hold on to each other for too long." A very "nice"—Christianly nice—man is Mr. Kotze. All the same we should be inclined to keep a watchful eye on him where women were concerned.

Boosted and brazoned widely some time ago, the "spiritual healing" centre of the Church of England, at Milton Abbey, near Dorchester, under the Rev. J. Mallard, appears in another press "puff." A youth, blinded by accident at 16, is reported to be recovering sight, and, except for the unjustified use of the word "prayer," the case is simply one such as may happen at any time, to anyone, in any place. The "centre" publishes bare statements only, as it "keeps all cases anonymous."

The *Northern Echo* is to be congratulated upon opening its columns to a discussion on the Bishop of Durham's recent, and true to type, panegyric on the Bible. The interesting thing about the correspondence is that the Oracles of God have not only a poor time of it argumentatively, but have even difficulty in obtaining champions. With equally fair treatment from the other organs of the press, the bladder of *God's Holy Book* inflated by the hot air of those who "support the system whence their honours flow" would soon be pricked, and the pretentious and brightly painted gaud flop to its proper level.

Without any permission having been obtained from anyone :—

On Sunday, March 20, immediately after the 11 o'clock Mass at St. Peter's Roman Catholic Church, Seel Street, the Jesuit fathers attached thereto wearing their vestments, attended by the altar servers and accompanied by members of one of their organizations, marched in procession from their church to the new dwellings in Lydia Ann Street, and in the quadrangle chanted a Solemn Litany. When this was concluded the priests visited each dwelling, blessed the occupants, and sprinkled the lintels of the door with holy water. . . .

The Roman Catholic Church's actions and doctrines have raised many and varied emotions in the human breast, but no one has ever doubted for one minute their colossal impudence.

The number on the rolls of religious Sunday Schools last year decreased by 180,000. That is a good sign, but by some unrevealed process the *Newcastle Chronicle* for April 28, links an alleged but, we think, not well grounded increase of juvenile crime with the "laxity of attendance at Sunday School." We should like to see the *Newcastle Chronicle* undertake an investigation as to what number of these juvenile criminals have had religious homes and have attended Sunday Schools. We quite agree that this method of linking up "crime" with

attendance at, or absence from, Sunday Schools would have very little scientific value, but it would be well up to the level of the *Newcastle Chronicle's* sociology. Actually, we do not believe there is an increase of "juvenile crime" when we compare the present state of centres of population with what they were fifty years ago. But we must not take the *Chronicle* out of its depth by entering upon that line of investigation.

History is a strange thing as written by Christians with an eye to the glorification of their religion. It always has been when it was so written. There have, of course, been eminent historians who were professed Christians, but they were reliable only when writing without the fixed intention of exalting their creed. When that occurred their histories were as misleading as those of writers of the type of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, whose recent book, *The Crisis of our Civilization*, is as deliberately dishonest as any book we have come across for some time. It is Roman Catholic history at its falsest, and in it its most artfully dishonest form. Had it been less cleverly done one might have taken some of its statements as merely wrong. The ability shown in their enunciation ruled out that consideration.

Here is a sample of the ingenuous manner in which Christian falsities are stated. In the *Methodist Recorder*, the Rev. Dr. Waterhouse says that "Modern democracy is found only in Christian lands," and also "moral democracy is of Christian origin and is maintained by Christianity." It would take a long time to exhaust the falsities of a thesis of this kind, but consider the following:—

- (1) The example of and the impetus to democracy comes to us from the ancient Roman and Greek civilizations.
- (2) The Bible has no democracy, only a theocracy, and the New Testament has nothing to say on the question of social organization, except to command obedience to the powers that be, as being ordained by God, and advising people to look to the approaching end of the world.
- (3) The Christian Church has shown itself ready to support any kind of Government that supported the Church. It gave Czardom support in Russia; it has always supported the robbery and degradation of the people of Spain. It supports Fascism in Italy, and is quite ready to support the murdering and robbery in Germany, if Germany will only support the Church in turn. The Church gave its ardent support to the robbery and ill-usage of the people of France before the Revolution. And it was the staunch upholder of the worst anti-democratic forces and influences before the creation of an English democracy.
- (4) Of the democracies now existing, the English one largely grew out of the consequences of the anti-Church and anti-religious influences of the French Revolution, and the industrial revolution (the worst feature of this was well sanctioned by the Church). The French democracy was a consequence—putting aside other non-religious forces, of the anti-Christian movement that had been going on in France for three parts of a century, and the American democracy was effected mainly by influences that were at most deistic, but decidedly non-Christian. And in the formation of both the American and French democracies, the direct appeal was not to the Church or to the Bible or to the New Testament, but to the inspiration of Greek and Roman examples.

But we ought not to be too hard on Dr. Waterhouse. The fact of having so docile an audience, where history is concerned, must be a great temptation to him.

In *Journalist's Wife*, Mrs. Lilian Mower, English wife of an American journalist, relates a meeting with Cardinal O'Connell, of Boston, who was attending the coronation of the Pope in Rome. His comment thereon was "'Twas a foine, pretty ceremony, but between you and me, me dears, Zeigfeld would have done it better.'" (Zeigfeld was the theatrical producer famous for his

"Follies"). Some of these Roman priests have certainly a humorous way with them; one could hardly imagine the Archbishop of Canterbury commenting thus on the coronation.

President Roosevelt informed a gathering of pressmen that he had a liking for books of the sea, whilst Mrs. Roosevelt preferred treatises on sociology and history. Which prompts the *Evening News* gossip-writer to reveal that Mrs. Chamberlain likes history and enjoys Thackeray, but dislikes Dickens. "Books dealing with ancient religious observances attract her," and, he adds, "*The Golden Bough* accompanies her on most journeys." The manner of the pressman's allusion to the famous work rather indicates that he presumes it to be a book of "devotions."

On behalf of the Rev. Wm. Paxton, Minister of Islington Union Chapel, and President of the Brotherhood Movement, we can challenge anyone to controvert the argument he employs on a supposition that he has "only one sermon to preach." Like his resurrected Christ, *it isn't there!* From the bald assertion: "But there is no need to-day to prove the Resurrection. It is an attested fact," to a claim that we owe family life to the Resurrection, Mr. Paxton puts forward old assumptions, differing only from type in that he ropes in every good and creditable trait of humanity to the profit account of the Resurrection. One really cannot wonder that recently, it is reported, an infant was fully ordained as a minister of religion.

Forty years ago the then Bishop of Oxford opened a new church at Maidenhead, and in his sermon referred to the "profanation" of Sunday by the "sensational dissipation" of—BOATING! Woefully he lamented: "We cannot set clergymen or Scripture readers to preach to people who are going by on bicycles or in boats." After all, we do progress, however slowly and painfully. But the clergy need not despair. Civilized intelligence is not yet sufficiently developed for all to recognize the parson for what he is—the representative of the primitive medicine-man, and modern defender of vested interests and outworn ideas.

Fifty Years Ago

CHRISTIANITY'S triumph over Paganism is considered by Mr. Gladstone as a miracle. He cannot otherwise understand "the victory of the world's babes and striplings over its philosophers and scholars, and the serried array of emperors, aristocracies, and statesmen." Well, look at Mormonism, look at the Salvation Army. These systems have grown faster than Christianity did. But they have arisen in a period of vital and progressive civilization, and consequently their spread is limited. Christianity spread while the Roman Empire was decaying, and the ancient civilization was slowly breaking up for reconstruction. Paganism itself had broken up also. The old national religions had perished, because the Empire had annihilated the national barriers. But the instinct and the material of superstition were still left. There was a splendid opportunity for a new universal religion. Christianity arose and occupied the field, and had it not done so another system would have taken its place. It was victorious by adjustment. Its ecclesiastics altered and improved it judiciously, adding here and lopping there, until it fitted the superstition of every race in the Empire. Christianity incorporated from all preceding creeds, and its triumph is a striking illustration of the Darwinian law of natural selection.

We do not, however, allow the truth of Mr. Gladstone's statement without reservation. Christianity did not triumph over "emperors"; it triumphed at last by emperors. Constantine made it the State religion, though its adherents only numbered one in twenty of his subjects; and though it took three centuries to convert that fraction, the residue were bought over in less than a century by the persuasive eloquence of fine, imprisonment, torture and death.

The Freethinker, May 6, 1888.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. PAYNE.—On consideration you will find that "infect" in the passage noted is quite in order. The essence of the word is to indicate something that passes from one to another or from one thing to another. Commonly it is used in connexion with disease, but we have it in such expressions as "he infects one with his good humour," "infectious mirth," "his laughter is infectious," etc.

C. BEESLEY.—The Dean of Durham evidently thinks discretion the better part of valour. The worst feature of these parsonic gentlemen who write regularly is that they are shielded by the editor from criticism. Otherwise we do not think they would contribute for long.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the Freethinker.—A. E. Stringer, 5s.

The offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 63 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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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.

Sugar Plums

We publish, in this issue, the Agenda for the N.S.S. Conference at Glasgow, on June 4-6, arrangements for which are now nearing completion. There is certain to be a record number of members present. The resolutions, while not being of a very contentious character, are of importance to the movement. Special arrangements are being made so that all London members may travel together on the outward journey. They will reach Glasgow before six, so that they will be in good time for the reception in the evening. Sunday, will be devoted to business, as usual, to be followed on the Monday by a trip to Loch Lomond, and by a reception by the Lord Provost and members of the Corporation in the evening.

Admission to the Civic Reception will be by ticket. We believe the number of delegates is restricted to three-hundred. We are not quite certain of the exact number, but more applications for tickets have been received than are available. At the Reception there will be speeches by the Lord Provost and others, to be followed by a concert, dancing and refreshments. These last are provided by the Corporation of which body the N.S.S. Members are the guests.

There was a curious "howler" in the concluding paragraph of last week's "Views and Opinions." Mr. Cohen was made to say, "The heresies of to-day were the orthodoxies of yesterday." Of course, it was the complete reverse of this that was intended. But the real meaning of the sentence was so obvious that none of our readers is likely to have been misled by it.

The value of the late W. J. W. Easterbrook's estate has been returned for probate at just over £11,000. There are a number of legacies and an annuity to be paid, and the bulk of the legacies will not take effect until the death of the annuitant. After all the liabilities are dis-

charged there will be, probably, a residue of about five thousand pounds, which will be received in equal parts by the National Secular Society, the Secular Society, Limited, and the Freethinker Endowment Trust. Mr. Cohen and a legal friend of Mr. Easterbrook are the Executors.

Now that the campaign of the Great Lie Brigade has broken down, the new move is that the International Union has little or nothing to do with Atheism, and consequently opinion is divided as to whether it ought to be permitted. On these points we may help the exposed Lie Brigade with the following information. The constitution of the World Union of Freethinkers does not exclude Deists, but they are in a small minority, and one could even then reasonably argue that if they understood their own position better they would call themselves Atheists. Secondly, the International Congress will be held whether certain Members of Parliament or even Members of the Government like it or not. They have no power of interference and are not likely to obtain it. Not only will the International Conference be held, but we prophesy that it will be a pronounced success. The Conference will help Freethought on the Continent, and it should also help it in England.

Not content with the pillaging of Jewish homes and shops by Hitler's Storm Troops and Brown-shirts, the new German decree which is to take all property and money away from Jews, offers nothing new substantially in the history of Germany, although it was never done before on so general a scale, and with such brutal accompaniments. Those who wish for information on the historic aspect of the subject will find it in *Nuremberg, The Unholy City*, by J. Podro, published by Anscombe, London, 6s. The book gives an outline of the history of the Jews in Nuremberg from the thirteenth century until to-day. It is told with no show of rhetoric, or picture writing, but its cold retailing of facts is the more deadly. The deliberate forcing of the Jew to create business and robbing him, after he had made it, in order to gain permission to live, is a thumb-nail sketch of a process that has had much to do with shaping one aspect of Jewish history, at least that of money-making. For it was the Christian who taught the Jew that the only way he could gain a relative and a partial security was by money. It was largely the Christian who was the great money-lover; it was the Jew whom he compelled to make it. Mr. Podro has written a very interesting book, the better because of its brevity and its restraint.

As we strike others—from a newsagent:—

Requested by a customer to supply the *Freethinker*, I chanced to read same before delivery. I would like to congratulate you on what I consider the sanest journal I have ever read. No other paper can compare in its common-sense attitude.

This new admirer says he is quite ready to display the paper. We are leaving this part of the letter in the hands of our business manager. But we appreciate these spontaneous compliments to what has always been one of the most fearless papers in existence.

We wonder whether there is a "literary bloke" in London who has to do some writing, and is, or was, in need of a typewriter? If there was he will now rest satisfied. For the other day the N.S.S. Office was burgled. Not in the night, but directly after the Secretary had left. And all that was taken was a Royal Typewriter. There was some loose cash in one of the desks, but this was untouched. So were other things. All this burglar's soul hungered for was a typewriter—and he got it.

To-day (May 8) Mr. Rosetti will speak for the Bethnal Green Branch N.S.S., in Victoria Park, near the Fountain, at 6.30, and Mr. J. V. Shortt of Liverpool, at present in London, will speak for the West Ham Branch N.S.S., at the corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, at 7 p.m. In both Branches the officials are anticipating full support from the local saints during the season.

The Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society writes to the Church of England paper, *The Record*, pointing out what he calls the "fantastic stories" circulated concerning the "International Congress," and pointing out that the "godless" Conference of the National Secular Society, will receive a civic welcome from the Lord Provost and Corporation of Glasgow on Whit-Sunday next. We welcome Mr. Harfitt's attitude, but we do not think he can believe that his protests against the cry for the suppression of the International Conference, will prevent a very common type of Christian from believing in the forcible suppression of opinion with which it is in disagreement, or do anything more than alter the form of their lying. Mr. Harfitt supports the idea of organizing religious meetings on September 11. That is quite in order, but to make it really impressive, why not arrange for meetings of Christians to be addressed by Freethinkers, and *vice versa*? We would join in.

The only complaint we have with the abridgement of Dujardin's *Ancient History of the God Jesus*, by A. B. Sanders (Watts & Co., 5s.), is that there is not enough of it. The translation might have covered a larger quantity of original. The thesis of the book is that Jesus was the God of a prehistoric mystery religion in Palestine. The author does not ignore the introduction of elements from other sources, so that he does not lie under the accusation of monomania. For our own part we think that the fundamental thesis here is sound. It is plain, even from the New Testament, that at the time given for the reappearance of this God, there was nothing startling to the people of Palestine, but it was also inevitable that in the then existing state of the world even the revival of an ancient local belief would hardly escape the influence of other mythological elements. This is not a large book, but it is very "meaty." That is why we ask for more.

Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Liverpool for the week commencing to-day (May 8). There is a strong local Branch of the N.S.S. which will co-operate at all the meetings, where details of membership may be had from any of the officials present. Pioneer Press publications will be on sale or may be ordered if necessary.

The National Secular Society

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

JUNE 5, 1938

AGENDA

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by South London, West London, Manchester, Liverpool, West Ham, Chester-le-Street, Burnley, and North London branches :—
"That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive :—
"That Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by West London and North London Branches :—
"That Mr. H. R. Clifton be re-elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Mr. H. I. Theobald is eligible and offers himself for re-election.
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. F. A. Hornibrook and Mrs. H. B. Grant, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot and Mr. A. C. Rosetti, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough and Mr. T. H. Elstob, nominated by Sunderland, North Shields, Newcastle and Chester-le-Street Branches.

N.W. GROUP.—Mr. E. Bryant and Mrs. E. Venton, nominated by Liverpool, Blackburn, Bolton, Chester and Burnley Branches.

S.W. GROUP.—Mr. G. H. Wood, nominated by Plymouth Branch.

MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Junn.) nominated by Birmingham Branch.

SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. H. Preece and Mr. J. Seibert, nominated by South London and Kingston Branches.

NORTH LONDON.—Mr. L. Ebury, nominated by North London Branch.

EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.

WEST LONDON.—Mr. G. Bedborough and Mr. J. Horowitz, nominated by West London Branches.

9. Motion by the Executive :—

"That this Conference offers the heartiest welcome to the Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers, to be held in London in September next, and pledges itself to do whatever lies in its power to make the Congress a pronounced success."

10. Motion by Mr. G. Bedborough :—

"That in view of the operation of the Education Act of 1936, which in effect provides for the building and maintenance of sectarian schools out of public funds, and opens the road to the victimization of teachers, this Conference reaffirms its conviction that the policy of exclusively Secular Education in all State-supported schools is the only one that will secure justice to citizens and to the child; it further urges Freethinkers to take advantage of Parliamentary and municipal elections to bring this subject before the general public."

11. Motion by Liverpool Branch :—

"That this Conference, recognizing the tradition and practice of the N.S.S. with regard to the equality of the sexes, impresses upon Branches the desirability of developing and utilizing the services of women upon N.S.S. platforms."

12. Motion by Birkenhead Branch :—

"This Conference reaffirms its opposition to dictatorships in all its forms, and its conviction of the necessity for Freedom of Speech and assembly for all. It condemns all organized interference with public meetings, and considers that such interference provides the opportunity for further legal restrictions of existing liberties."

13. Motion by Mr. T. H. Elstob :—

"That this Conference protests against the abuse of their positions by coroners and magistrates, which in some instances goes to the length of denying witnesses their legal rights, with regard to the administration of the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888. It urges upon Freethinkers the duty of insisting on their right to affirm in all circumstances where an oath is usually required, and to refuse to answer irrelevant questions, and to agitate for an amending of the Act that will abolish all questioning of witnesses who desire to affirm."

14. Motion by Executive :—

"That this Conference reaffirms the non-political character of the National Secular Society."

15. Motion by West London Branch :—

"That this Conference welcomes the issue of the *Report on Doctrine*, by the Church of England, with its surrender of doctrines against which Freethinkers have been so long fighting, as a confession of the influence of Freethought, and so strengthens the case in favour of the abolition of those legal and social privileges which have grown out of these discarded and admittedly questionable Christian beliefs."

16. Motion by West London Branch :—

"That this Conference deplors the absence of a central meeting place in London, and recommends that the Executive considers the possibility of establishing a Hall in London or a Club and Institute."

17. Motion by Glasgow Branch :—

"That the Annual Conference shall decide the venue of the succeeding Conference."

18. Motion by Chester-le-Street, North Shields, Newcastle-on-Tyne and Sunderland Branches:—

"This Conference protests against the legal remission of rates and taxes to religious places of worship; it also protests against the practice of Local governing bodies enlarging this disguised endowment of religion by its extension to Institutes and other places used for secular purposes, and against the practice of fixing a low assessment to halls owned by religious bodies, and which are let for secular or business purposes; this Conference urges Freethinkers to rouse local opinion on this matter, and suggests that the Society collect and publishes information on the subject."

19. Motion by Mr. H. S. Wishart:—

"That this Conference, noting the sectarian motives dominating the interference of religious bodies in social and political life, and noting also that the main object is the establishment of sectarian preferences, calls upon Freethinkers to oppose this policy by every means in their power."

20. Motion by Nelson Branch:—

"This Conference calls the attention of all concerned to the growing influence of the Roman Catholic Church in the press, in politics, and in local government, and regards the spectacle of a body of people receiving orders on the discharge of the duties of citizenship by the historic enemy of human freedom and progress, as a direct threat to the welfare of the people."

21. Motion by South London Branch:—

"This Conference calls attention to the increasing interference with civil liberties by the police, Parliament, and local governing bodies, and by interference with the telephone and postal services, and suggests a campaign of protest be carried on through the press and other avenues of publicity."

22. Motion by Executive:—

"That Clause 3 in Rule 2 be deleted."

23. Motion by Executive:—

"That while viewing with alarm the development of the present competitive armament struggle between the peoples of the civilized world, which, if persisted in, can end only in a world-war, regards the existing state of affairs as evidence that during their long history the Christian Churches have not merely failed to secure the existence of an international court for the settlement of all differences between nations, but also have collectively sanctified and moralized militarism, and intensified national differences."

24. Motion by Mrs. Whitefield:—

"That all Branches shall submit an annual financial statement to the Executive."

25. Motion by Kingston Branch:—

"That Rule 5, subdivision 2, be amended to include the office of Vice-President, in order to alleviate some of the arduous duties which are carried out by the President."

26. Motion by North London Branch:—

"That a copy of the Rules of the Society be sent annually to each Branch."

The Conference will sit in the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross, Glasgow, Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only Members of the Society are entitled to be present. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., price 3s., will be provided in the Grand Hotel. There will be a reception of Members and Delegates at 7 o'clock, on Saturday evening, June 4, in the Grand Hotel, and a Public Demonstration on Sunday evening at 7, in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

A Civic Reception of delegates and friends by the Lord Provost and Corporation of the City of Glasgow will be held in the City Chambers, Glasgow, on Monday, June 6, at 7.30 p.m.

By order of the Executive,

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President.*

R. H. ROSETTI, *Secretary.*

Religion at Bay

"None do you like but an effeminate prince,
Whom like a school-boy you may over-awe."

ONE does not need to be an Encyclopædia to know that a Recall to Religion is being sounded. The strident tones of that Recall can be heard and read throughout this once Christian land. To judge by the tone of that Recall, many official Apologists for Religion are afraid that the "Recall" is going to be the "Last Post" in the Camp of Religion: "Lights out"—for Religion!

All this is clouded over by the nonsense, and worse than nonsense, that emanates from the Apologists for Godism. To *understand* what is happening—not merely to know that it is happening—a basis of facts is necessary. Then, scientific or logical reasoning has to be used upon these facts. We are not likely to get either from the Apologists for Godism. What we *do* find is something very different: something in the nature of Dialectic smoke and poison gas.

The Recall started with Arch. Cant.'s broadcast; and, when I heard it, I said to a young friend, "What brazen-voiced, impudent, arrogant, hypocrisy!" From him it spread to all sections of the Christians, down to the little lay preacher. All are shouting their religious wares, along with the Recall; BUT, the more loudly they shout, the more apparent is the failure of the effort. Anyone, who looks around with open eyes and logical observation, can see that this tremendous attempt again to force Religion on the People has failed—so far, at least. All the noise the "Parsons" make cannot conceal the fact. *And*, what a noise they do make!

To understand this attempted Revival of Religion, some Facts should be borne in mind. Let me, briefly, outline six of these facts. They will help greatly to understand the Recall, the attempted Revival, and the innumerable "stunts" employed.

1. First of all, this Recall came after an admitted decline in Religion. Using the word "Parson" to denote all who live by speaking in the name of God; "Parsons" of well-nigh all branches of Religion had openly lamented that Decline. That is indubitable Fact No. 1.

2. Along with this was the fact that the Political Re-actionaries were in great difficulties. The various political parties which may be said to have Progressive tendencies were gaining ground. Mr. Baldwin, the then Leader of the Re-actionaries, promoted his two circuses—the Jubilee and the Coronation—to obtain a United Front of Re-action, and to "dish" or split the Labour Party, which is—numerically—the strongest of the "Progressive" Parties. This suited the leaders of Christianity, from Archbishops downwards; because they were in a far more desperate and disunited state than the Political Re-actionaries. Besides, the public part of their business is a circus; so they joined in, heartily. They were willing, even, to leave the lion's share of the circus to the Church—the Anglican section—provided only that they had a little part in the clowning. Out of all this, we had the most pitiful exhibition of primitive superstition that has taken place in Britain for more than sixty years.

Fearing Baldwin's schemes and hoping—in their turn—to "dish" him and his knavish tricks, the Labour Party joined-up in the superstition and the circus. In many places, Elected Representatives cut capers fit to make a Radical of mid-Victorian times shed tears—or curse. How Baldwin must have chuckled, as he retired! *AND*, it yet remains to be seen whether Labour has gained or lost by that folly.

4. Fact No. 4 seems to me to be of utmost importance. It is that the Evil Influence of Religion

cuts across all Political Parties, and through all Social Classes. Peer and Plebian; Tory, Liberal, Labour, and Communist; Trade Union Leader and Combine Boss; and so on, in wild confusion mixed; all can be found infected by the same pernicious Religious Belief. At times, they can be found on the same Religious platform. With such confusion, all around; 'tis no wonder that ordinary folk find it far from easy to understand the National and International dangers and difficulties that beset us.

No. 5 is akin to that. The Apologists for Godism claim to be guided by an All-Powerful, All-Wise, Infinite and Eternal, God—whatever these words may mean. Those who speak in the name of the Christian Gods assert that theirs is a "Revealed" Religion; although, even had there been such a "Miracle," the "Revelation" is now much worse than second-hand. In spite of all this, not one section of the Christians, nor any form of Religion, has been able to offer any sure guidance towards National and International Safety, Peace, and Security. Religion has failed: miserably failed. No institution has ever had the chance that Christianity has had to prove itself. It has *proved itself—a failure*. This is being recognized, more and more, by ordinary people—particularly the younger ones. They do not understand, scientifically, that Religion is a Lie; that it is an Evil Influence in our life; and that it is our inheritance from Primitive, "Savage," Humankind; but their Common Sense and the hard logic of events has made them realize that: "Religion's no damned good to anyone, except those who live upon it." It is *our* business to supply the scientific backing and foundation.

6. The sixth fact—and last for the present—is that, while Religion has failed, while Religion has been a serious factor in the development of the confusion and danger around us, the Professional Religionists are now—more vociferously than ever—trying to force their discredited quack remedies upon a distracted and apprehensive people. They will do anything at all in their desperate efforts to regain the hold they once had on Human Life. As ever, they have no scruples. They willingly make their "Lord and Saviour" anything that may help to catch the gullible among the public. While "Jesus Christ" is on the side of Franco, Chamberlain, Mussolini, and all that lot; he is also on the side of Pacifism, of Socialism, of Social Revolution, of Communism. What an Unutterable fraud! What a Lie!

There is one feature in which Godism, the essence of Religion, does *not* vary. That is, in its Intolerance. Religious Zeal is, not only historically, but in its very nature, Persecuting and Intolerant. THOSE WHO SPEAK IN THE NAME OF GOD, OR OF ANY TRANSCENDENTAL ABSOLUTE, DO NOT FAVOUR TOLERANCE OF OTHER IDEAS. THEY ARE EVER THE POTENTIAL—IF NOT THE ACTUAL—DICTATORS.

This attempted Revival of Religious Dominance is not likely again to enslave Humankind in Britain. Still, the danger is here; and it has very powerful support, open and secret; Financial, Social, Military, Political. It behoves all Freethinkers who value what of Equal Freedom we have won; who wish to maintain what has been gained, and to develop it further; to help—as they can—in the Non-Political, the scientific, Freethought movement represented by the British National Secular Society.

"I'll take thy word for faith, not ask thine oath;
Who shuns not to break one will sure crack both."

H. STEWART WISHART.

Death is the most important transaction of the religious life.—*Anatole France.*

A Common-Sense View of Paul and Christianity

BUT for the genius of the individual known to us as "Paul," who as a propagandist inspired by religious fervour must have been an outstanding figure of his time, it seems probable that the religion associated by a section of the Jews with a more or less mythical Jesus, would have shared the fate of Mithraism and many other cults with which it has much in common. (This opinion is scarcely a new one.)

But in Paul's age a new religious synthesis was possible. The mythology of Greece and Rome, though officially the State religion, was not taken seriously by the intelligentsia, and it had probably become, like many of the beliefs of the Churches now-a-days, a stereotyped and lifeless form of religion which scarcely touched the masses of the Roman World. So the religion preached by Paul, which was not to be that of one race or one class only, but of *everybody*, and which carried with it the conviction of a life to come which could remedy and atone for the evils of this life, held prospects of success.

Hence the later Gospels, which had to be framed out of the most meagre details to meet the demand for a living Christ, and which were, as has been indicated, largely composed of material which we find in other oriental religions, and which became associated with a life passed in such obscurity that there is no authentic record of it by contemporary historians. The gap that existed between the Epistles and the actual life lived by Christ, probably called the Gospels, as selected for the present Canon of the New Testament, into being; and one of their most striking features is the editorial finger.

Apart from the Vision—whatever its physical basis may have been—which Paul regarded as the starting-point of his mission, he appears to have had no information of the many details of the career of Christ which found their way later into the synoptic gospels and that of John.

But the belief in the resurrection of a crucified Saviour and Son of God was certainly current, and also much disputed in Paul's time. When the Athenians "heard of the resurrection of the dead . . . some mocked"—so we read in the Acts—an expression which has a tinge of modernity about it. This belief, however, forms the basis of *Paul's theology*, and Paul was before all things, a *theologian*. And although a Jew and apparently reared in a strict and narrow sect, his general un-Jewish outlook may have been influenced by his Roman citizenship. This may have swelled his audience in Roman provinces, as well as securing him, as according to the Acts it did, from captivity.

In an article on the "Historical Value of the Fourth Gospel" (*Hibbert Journal*, January, 1938), the writer, I. V. Leslie-Garland says:—

Everyone in Judea must have been aware that a great prophet had arisen in Galilee, and had been put to death by orders of Pontius Pilate at the instigation of the Sanhedrim.

This passage takes the existence of a historical Jesus for granted, which is far from being the case with everyone now-a-days—and the writer adds:—

But in the next generation when most of the contemporaries had died out . . . that figure became obscured by mists of speculation, and these sometimes took the form of a denial that the facts were facts at all in the ordinary sense of the word. . . . Docetism the representative of Christ as a mere phantom, had already shown its head, and by the time of Ignatius (40-115) was a formidable enemy.

The thesis of the article from which this quotation is taken is to uphold the veracity of the Fourth Gospel as being nearer to the events which it relates than can be claimed for the synoptics. Pauline theology would have excluded Docetism, since a phantom needs no resurrection!

In the second of his articles, "Where Stands Christianity?" (*Freethinker*, January 9, 1938), Mr. H. Cutner, writing on the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, "This monument of analytical criticism of the Bible," which "was published nearly forty years ago," alludes to "a Dictionary of the Bible somewhat akin to the *Biblica*." In this, he says, "all sorts of new hypotheses were confidently made; the most famous, of course, being Van Mansen's analysis of the Pauline Epistles, which he claimed could never have been written by Paul, but were the products of the second century."

Such opinion, whatever its grounds, shows how largely conjecture must enter into attempts to verify chronology in the absence of contemporary history, which is above suspicion of being written *with a purpose*. We have also to bear in mind that much of the Pauline theology, as given in *Acts*, was, so to speak, vouched for by miracles such as are associated with the life and teaching of the Christ of the Gospels.

One conclusion, however, seems possible, and that is that without the Pauline Epistles and the Pauline Theology, Christianity would not have survived its rejection by the land of its birth, and that "Jesus of Nazareth" might, except as a legendary character, have disappeared from history. But Paul had a genius for Religion.

Apart from the views of those who have been termed "the more extreme critics," it is, of course, commonly admitted that Paul is no longer held to be the writer of all the Epistles that use his name.

Mr. H. Cutner—to quote him again—writing in the *Freethinker*, October 22, 1933, on "The Origins of Christianity," mentions that when, early in the last century "German critics began to investigate Biblical problems with a greater thoroughness than had hitherto prevailed, and the famous Tübingen school arose . . . it came to the conclusion that only four of the Epistles of Paul were really genuine, Romans, Corinthians I., II., and Galatians." Paul was accepted as a real personage, and "his vigorous style and personality were unmistakably present in the four Epistles."

The conflict between opinions respecting the extent of Paul's authorship, does not, however, upset the fact that Christian theology was founded on the Pauline Epistles, even though harmony may in some instances be lacking. Neither does it upset the theory that the career of Christ in Judea, if its historicity apart from its mythical setting in the Gospels is granted, was not in itself of sufficient distinction as a departure from Jewish orthodoxy, to account for the spread of Christianity long after the crucifixion, and for its final emergence as a world-power in Religion. The part played in this by Paul, and by the writers who used his name, is recognized perhaps as much inside the churches as it is outside them. The Dean of St. Paul's, in an article, "St. Paul," which he contributed to the *Spectator*, March 11, opened it—so I saw afterwards—with words something similar to those with which this essay commences. His words are:—

Judged by almost every standard, Saul of Tarsus was one of the most important men who ever lived.

But there is a great difference in the attitudes. To the Christian Church Paul is the Apostle who presented Jesus of Nazareth to the Gentiles as a God.

(LADY) MAUD SIMON.

The Politics of the Churches

ONCE upon a time there was a popular conception of Christ the ostler saddling the proletarian ass for its capitalist rider.

But in time the ass got restive, and the ostler found that a new technique was necessary. Consequently the ass is now being stroked and petted.

No writer, however, has yet shown this development with such effect as to expose the ostler's intentions to the unfortunate ass, with the result that the poor beast has met his advances with almost complete faith and confidence. Religion insidiously eats its way into practically every political movement, even to the extreme Left.

Nothing, then; could be more timely than *The Churches and their Politics* (International Publishing Co., 3d.; 24 pp.) by a Freethought speaker, Allan Flanders.

The Roman Catholic Church has special treatment since it aims at becoming the master, and not the servant, of the State, and its readiness to ally with Fascism is the subject of a special chapter. The author's conclusions are supported by quotations from the Popes' Encyclicals and utterances, Italian newspapers, the *Catholic Times*, and the actions and utterances of De Valera, Sir James Sexton, the Industrial Christian Fellowship, Church Assembly Reports, the L.C.C., the Birkenhead C.W.S., etc., etc., even to the anger aroused by Low's "cruel cartoons."

The Roman Catholic Church, however, is not alone in its search for a political force which it might profitably court. J. M. Robertson showed in his *Dynamics of Religion*, that priests have ever thought more of their income than their doctrines, and the Freethinker to-day might consider how far the Churches may cover up doctrinal weakness by posing as friends of the oppressed.

As a Socialist, Mr. Flanders sees in this a weakening of the militancy of the subject class; as a Freethinker I view with concern the abandonment or relegation of Secular Education in nearly all programmes.

Mr. Flanders concludes by constructive suggestions. He brands the Catholic Guilds as an organized penetration of "pro-Fascist nuclei within the trade union movement." (I am aware that a case could be made out for disruptive Communist penetration), and calls for Roman Catholics to state publicly "whether they take their politics from their church or from the principles of the movement which they claim to represent."

G. H. TAYLOR.

Correspondence

FREEDOM OF THOUGHT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I thank Mr. Chapman Cohen for his rejoinder. There is so much on which he and I agreed that it would be pleasant to record that all difference of opinion between us had been ironed out. Neither of us love argument for argument's sake, and both are inspired by our N.S.S. motto, "We seek for truth." Yet I remain unconvinced by Mr. Cohen's thesis, and he asks in puzzlement wherein, seeing that we have so much in common, a difference arises.

I don't want to take up valuable space (nor to have a last word), but I think I ought to explain that the dispute appears to me to be one of just where one "draws the line." I draw it, perhaps, earlier than Mr. Cohen. To be specific, we both grant the Fascist the right to his opinion, a right we claim for ourselves. I am prepared (and I take it that Mr. Cohen is) to allow him to ex-

press his belief that I should be deprived, by force, of my right to express my belief. I am even ready to listen to him, and to argue, on occasion, against his belief. This is only my duty as a good citizen and a democrat. But I am not prepared, as Mr. Cohen, apparently, is, to take the further step of assisting the Fascist to spread his damnable gospel. Again to be specific, I am not prepared to lend, or hire, him a hall in my ownership or control to preach murder, torture, and robbery, of myself, my fellow Freethinkers, and all who oppose his ideals, his Führer, and his organization. To do so is to run flatly contrary to commonsense; to stultify my own belief; and to discourage my comrades in "the best of all causes."

Thou shalt not kill, but needst not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

I know nothing of the Glasgow case, but when the local magistrates refused to lend their hall to the followers of Herren Hitler, Goering and Mosley, they were probably fulfilling their first duty, to preserve the King's Peace. The King's Peace may be rotten, but riot is worse, and in it the still small voice of reason, which it is our duty to propagate, gets small chance of a hearing. To condemn the Glasgow folk in the name of Freethought; to adopt an olympian rôle, *au delà de la mêlée* (above the battle, as the French say), is perhaps magnificent, as it is certainly officious, but it is not war. Worse still, as it encourages the enemy and discourages the simple folk on our side (who don't understand olympian standpoints), it offends against those utilitarian grounds to which Mr. Cohen and I both appeal. It is not sufficient to avoid evil, we must also avoid, if we can, the *appearances* of evil. To appear to plead for Fascism in the name of a theoretical Freethought is to risk the loss of freedom, and that "all-round bettering of human life," for which Mr. Chapman Cohen has striven so manfully and ably for so many years.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

[Mr. Simmons has misread me. I have not suggested that I would assist the Fascist, or lend him a hall that was my own private property. But I would assist him, as apparently would Mr. Simmons, in vindicating his right to be heard. And where a hall is public property, that is belongs equally to the Fascist and myself, I do not see what ground I have to say he shall not have equal rights in it with myself. Mr. Simmons is rather careless in his use of such words as "murder, robbery," etc. The Christian claim used to be, and so far as the Roman Church is concerned, still is, that Freethinking leads to murder, robbery, torture, etc. Actually Fascism does result in these things, and forms part of our objection to it, but Fascists do not call them thus. As Freethinkers we must be careful in the use of epithets when we are discussing principles. I can imagine either a Fascist or a Roman Catholic using Mr. Simmons' expression to justify Hitlerism and the policy of the Roman Church.—C.C.]

Obituary

MR. CHARLES W. HUBAND

We regret to record the death of Mr. Charles W. Huband. Mr. Huband was well known to Freethinkers in the North of London, and for long worked at Freethought propaganda in that area. The cremation took place at Golders Green on April 30.

Every advance in science, every improvement in the command of the mechanical forces of nature, every step in political or social freedom, has risen in the first instance from an act of scepticism, from an uncertainty whether the formulas, or the opinions, or the government, or the received practical theories were absolutely perfect; if whether beyond the circle of received truths there might not lie something broader, deeper, truer, and thus better deserving the acceptance of mankind.

J. A. Froude.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, M.A., D.Lit.—"Rational Religious Sentiment."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mr. J. W. Barker.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool) A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Milliard, M.A., Mr. E. Bryant and Mr. G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Thursdays, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) 7.0, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Social Crimes of Religionists." Literature on sale.

COLNE: Wednesday, May 11, 7.45, J. Clayton A Lecture.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (The Mound): 7.0, Mrs. M. Whitefield (Glasgow)—A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Dumbarton): 8.0, Tuesday, Armadale, 8.0, Thursday, Shots, 8.0, Friday. Muriel Whitefield will speak at each meeting. Literature for sale.

HIGHAM: Monday, May 9, 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton, A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): Sunday and Monday. Crown Square, Tuesday. Edge Hill Lamp, Wednesday. High Park Street, Thursday. Woolton Village, Friday. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at each meeting; all of which are due to commence at 8 p.m.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexander Park Gates): 7.30, Saturday, Speakers: W. A. Atkinson and F. Spencer. Stevenson Square: Sunday, 3.30 and 7.0. Platt Fields, 3.30, Messrs. W. A. Atkinson and F. Spencer at both places.

CLIVIGER: Friday, May 6, 7.30, J. Clayton, A Lecture.

WHEATLEY LANE: Tuesday, May 10, 7.30, J. Clayton, A Lecture.

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