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Views and Opinions

God's Dilemma

FROM time to time we have offered suggestions that might be of use to the clergy. We have even gone so far as to suggest to the clergy that they might make a real attack on Freethought if they took the precaution of really understanding what modern Freethought is, and to that end invited a representative Freethinker to speak in their Churches. At present the clergy seem to be divided into two classes. A very small class that do know what Freethought actually is to-day, and a much larger class that have obviously taken their account of Freethought from other parsons who have never advanced beyond the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. Their shots never really damage the enemy because they never reach him. The fight that is supposed to occur never happens; the ordinary Christian attacking modern Freethought is like a man-of-war of Nelson's time fighting a modern battleship.

I have gone even so far as to suggest that the weapon of the strike, which has played so large a part in the disputes between capital and labour, might also be utilized to deal with the troubles of the clergy. It occurs to me that there are two ways in which this might be done. One is in relation to God, the other in relation to man. In the first instance it is clearly the duty of the clergy to see that certain natural things occur in their proper, and in their due, order. The securing of proper harvests, of a desirable quantity of rain, and of the "expulsion" of disease, have, from very ancient times, been the chief functions of the priests of all denominations. So much so, that there is not an official prayer book in the world, whether Christian or other, there is not a single tribe of believers, that has not stressed the functions named as belonging peculiarly to the priesthood. Even in modern England, when there is a marked and prolonged shortage of rain the priesthoods of the various sects make it their business to remind the Lord that he has not paid attention to one of his cardinal duties.

And the efficacy of the intervention of the priesthood is shown by the fact that in every instance, provided we have patience, and leave the matter in the hands of God, rain does come—sometimes in a very generous measure.

* * *

The Decline of the Gods

The other matter I have in mind is in relation to Church attendances. If God is to do his part in the world, as ex-Dean Inge and very many eminent preachers have told us, man must do his. Man lives by the grace of God; but gods also live by the service of man. Anyone who studies the history of religion must have observed that the greatness of God, any god, depends ultimately upon the number of his worshippers and the continuity of their service. Hundreds of gods, probably thousands, that were once powerful are now dead. The great gods of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and Greece are now no more. Why? They did all that later gods have done, and did their job with much greater publicity. But, as the number of their worshippers declined, so did their might and majesty, and many an ancient and once mighty god can now be traced lurking in some backwood catering for a mere handful of superstitious peasants, or figuring in fairy tales that are published for the entertainment of children. But, these, in their day were *real* gods, doing their job themselves, prompt in both service and punishment. They did not hide in the background, leaving things to be run by such deputy agents as "natural laws." They were great because they did something; they did something because they were great.

But one after another they passed from the scene. Why? There is only one answer—the number of their worshippers declined. The modern educated believer would indignantly deny that gods eat or drink by way of sustenance. Their food is of a more impalpable—but not less important—kind. Every god subsists upon the number of his followers. If they decline, he declines; as they become more numerous and more assiduous in their service he becomes greater and is able to grant them greater favours. If man would have favours from his gods he must nurse their strength by his prayers and sacrifices. It is not that God would not help man in the absence of prayer and service; it is simply that he cannot. A decline of worship that moves to its complete neglect is a condition of the passing of every god that has existed, and it is a fate which threatens every god that still exists.

* * *

Why not a Strike?

It is in connexion with these aspects of the existing situation that I think the weapon of the Strike might be used. In the first case it is obvious that God does not carry out his job as many simple and sincere believers think he ought to. Every now and again the priesthood has to call the attention of God to the fact

that he has sent too much rain, or too little rain, that he has permitted some deadly disease to ravage the land, that one army has asked for victory and the opposing one has won the battle. Of course these complaints are camouflaged somewhat, but the plain fact is that all petitions for rain, or fine weather, or for the removal of a disease, is a polite way of saying that something is wrong with God's management. But why not let it be known, plainly and in set terms, that whenever, and for so long as the land is suffering from want of rain, whenever there is an epidemic raging, and so forth, all Churches, chapels and other places of worship will be closed, no prayers will be offered, no divine service will be rendered? That would certainly call God's attention to his carelessness. He would feel the consequence of the strike exactly as a man who had been accustomed to three square meals a day would feel if he was suddenly reduced to one spare meal of bread and water per day. God would find himself just as his predecessors had found themselves—fading away owing to the withdrawal of the "food of the gods." Either God would have to mend his ways with regard to man, or the ways of man would end the God altogether. At present, God loses little by his inattention, and man profits nothing from his refusal to use the instrument of the Strike.

With regard to Church and Chapel attendance the position is not quite so clear. If the clergy dealt with the declining attendance at Church by refusing their services, there is the possibility that after a little time the laity might cheerfully settle down to their exclusion. It is, in fact, the actual attempt of a priest to bring his parishioners to heel by this method that set me writing these notes. The Rev. Hugh Menzies, of Barony Church, Dysart, Scotland, discovered that out of a total membership of 1,600 there were five hundred "slackers," that is, men and women who either never came to Church at all or came irregularly. So Mr. Menzies has announced that, after the holiday season, he intends appointing a vigilance Committee who will deal with these "slackers." He may, he says, appeal to the law (having some old Scots law in view), or he will simply shut them out from the Church. That is a very drastic step to take, but like the previous one it has its dangers. Mr. Menzies evidently thinks that by shutting these "slackers" out of Church on Sunday, by casting them into the outer darkness of golf-courses, Sunday excursions, motor and cycle rides, these backward ones will see the error of their ways and will become regular subjects of his ministrations. That, of course, is a possibility. But suppose they are not so affected by their exclusion from the rollicking joyousness of Mr. Menzies' sermons, suppose the 1,100 are infected with the conduct of the 500, what then? Suppose that after the 500 have been kept out of Church for, say, a year, the fields are as green, the crops are as plentiful, with this five hundred as with the 1,100 suppose that these 500 have as good health, and as good fortune, as the faithful 1,100, what then is going to happen? Is it not likely that the Church attendants, at least many of them, will follow the course taken by the evil-doers? After all, going to Church is not a habit that people have acquired after voluntary and mature consideration. Church attendance begins with sending a child to Church when it would rather play in the garden, or go for a ride, or indulge in some ungodly enjoyment. I do not think that anyone ever heard of children, of their own volition, begging their parents to send them to Sunday school or chapel, or even that the majority of adults look forward to going to Church as providing them with the week's joyous occupation. Mr. Menzies' experiment is a daring one, but I question whether it is not a trifle reckless.

The situation is a curious one. Those who have voluntarily given up going to Church not merely deny that they have lost anything worth having, they actually swear they are better in mind and body for not going. And one judges the importance of whisky as a daily beverage not by those who take it and swear by it, but rather by the health and conduct of those who do not take it and swear at it. These non-Churchgoers have God in a corner—so to speak. If to punish them he withholds the rain and spoils the harvest, he punishes his friends as well as his enemies. And even though he punished the stayaways with some terrible disease, disease-germs are poor theologians, and the Lord's followers would run the danger of infection. If, on the other hand, God takes no notice of those who do not attend Church, then those who do are bound, sooner or later, to ask themselves what benefit do they derive from worshipping God in the company of Mr. Menzies. Might they not just as well stay an extra hour or two in bed, lounge about the garden, play a game of cards, go for a ride or a walk, or otherwise behave as ordinary intelligent human beings? In that case Mr. Menzies would find himself with no congregation at all. He would be slaying Satan before non-existent spectators, issuing tickets to heaven to those who declined to make the journey. I think, if I were in Mr. Menzies' position, I should hesitate before I excluded people from my Church. Parsons cannot afford to choose in these days.

* * *

A trying Situation

The dilemma that faces Mr. Menzies goes to the roots of religion. If God withholds his benefits from mankind, man may reason that he has nothing to thank or praise God for, and this will mean that the food upon which gods live will not be forthcoming. It will not be a case of "night-starvation," but of continuous starvation. And, if God goes on as usual, and gives to man whether he praises him or not, then man will find no particular reason for praising, and the process of starving God out of existence goes on. Here is the situation in a nutshell. If gods are to live they must be regularly fed on the belief that man has in them. If that worship and belief fades—as it is fading—the gods have less power to do things, and they pay the price of their feebleness by more men ceasing to believe. And the less power the gods display the greater the tendency not to bother about them. If the clergy try to help God by excluding men from church, they will stay away, and the force of example—in this case the benefit of the staying away—will induce others to do likewise.

As usual, when one looks at this question from a strictly scientific point of view, one realizes that it was the first step that mattered. When the gods kept everything under their control, the motions of the stars and the movements of the earth, the fruitfulness of the harvest and the multiplication of cattle, the cure of disease and the incidence of good and bad fortune, while this state of things persisted, the gods were fine lusty fellows living royally upon the food supplied by their worshippers. But the gods took the fatal step of surrendering one bit of their power after another. They gave up keeping the planets in their places and providing the food upon which men lived. They left off punishing the ungodly with thunderbolts or striking them with disease. They gave the world they once ruled completely over to this or that science. Man was left, more and more, to manage for himself. The gods did not starve man so man starved the gods. Some of the gods died soon, others lingered a little longer. To-day the most powerful is obviously suffering from a chronic anaemia.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Defect of Democracy

"To impart the gift of thinking to those who cannot think, and yet could in that case think: this one would imagine, was the first function a Government had to set about discharging."—Carlyle.

ONE of the most important functions of the State during the past half-century has been the education of the people. Those who took a part in the emancipating labours of those years were animated by the highest ideals, and were very sanguine as to the result. But some sturdy Democrats to-day are by no means satisfied as to the results so far obtained, and there is a little murmur of discontent. Educationalists assert that the masses of the people are now raised to a higher intelligence than formerly. Granted that the State has erected a vast machinery for promoting national education, the question yet remains: Is this machine producing those benefits expected of it? Is it fulfilling the ideals and justifying the faith of the pioneer educationalists?

It is impossible to avoid contrasting the present with the immediate past. National education has been in existence nearly seventy years, but already the glowing dreams of the old Radicals have been cruelly shattered. These men were ardent and sanguine, genuine lovers of freedom and progress, and they believed in the powers of education. Not only that, but they thought that a well-informed population would benefit the cause of government by the people. So far from precipitating a Millennium, national education has slowly sunk from the attitude of a high ideal to the far more humble position of a State Department, with more than a suggestion of the circumlocution Office. Even when the machinery of education is complete, something more than mere mechanization is required to create a real lasting system of education, which should introduce sweetness and light into the minds of the rising generation.

Paradoxical as it may sound, it almost seems as if some unknown powers were endeavouring to sabotage this national education. Money is poured out like water, yet the results are so entirely unsatisfactory. It is true that many schools are costly, equipment ample, and the educational programme impressive on paper. But it is all far too much like stage-scenery, only to be viewed from the front. In all this welter of bricks and mortar, parqueted floors, stained-glass windows, modern equipment, elegant officials, and red tape, the one thing that has been overlooked is the child. It is not the fault of the teachers, for they have to do what they are told to do. It is the fault of the system itself, which is so admirably calculated to benefit builders, school-equipment manufacturers, officials, even caretakers, but which seems to regard the unfortunate scholars themselves as necessary evils in a beautiful bureaucratic machine.

If you are a believer in the value of national education, you will no doubt notice that the curriculum itself is artfully constructed so that everywhere it is favourable to reaction and not by any means to innovation. Children are taught a smattering of many subjects, but not one solitary thing thoroughly. And of the things that really matter, no smattering at all. The old Radicals used to believe that when the rising generation was educated, we were well on the way to the realization of a Golden Age. They were confident that education meant peace, and that, whereas in the bad, old days human blood was shed like water for purely political or dynastic ends, henceforward saner methods of settling disputes would prevail. They thought, with characteristic optimism, that crime would be lessened, and homes would be happier. One would have to be very optimistic indeed to think that

these desirable things were happening in our midst. To take a look at national education and its results, and to contrast it with the dreams of its founders, is to turn from the golden sunshine of a summer day to the grey days of winter. The nineteenth century hid, under its splendid exterior, much that was absolutely hateful. But the twentieth century shows little signs of improvement, with its machinery, its widespread militarism, canned music, distorted art, potted knowledge, and widespread ignorance.

The greatest drawback in present-day education is that it is reactionary. And the reason why this regrettable state of affairs prevails is because national education is in the grip of the clergy. The attitude of the Anglican bishops to the education of the people has always been one of steady and pronounced opposition to popular control. That the clergy had not previously proved equal to this responsibility is proved by the mere fact that the State had been obliged to take this matter in hand, and also by the additional fact that to-day the hundreds of Church schools are the worst equipped, worst staffed of all the educational establishments of the entire country.

The clergy have no real regard for education as such. Their centuries'-old hatred of science proves this beyond cavil or dispute. Their sole concern is the promotion of purely religious knowledge, and the manufacture of young worshippers. To them the school-teacher is but a servant of the rectory, of no more concern than a lackey or church-organist, and to be treated accordingly. And holding the school-teachers so very cheaply, how could the reverend pastor and masters be said to reverence education itself?

This indifference to real education is not the only indictment that can be brought against the clergy. For fifteen centuries they were in a position of undisputed power, and they were as utterly indifferent to the welfare of the people as an African chief to the sufferings of his slaves. They tolerated with fearful composure the burning-alive of people for mere opinion, the horrors of the torture-chambers, and, later, the infamies of the slave-trade, the press-gang, the barbarity of our criminal code, and the horrible conditions of life of the working-class. A decent man may well turn pale at such a record, and ask himself if such people were entitled to hold the balance of power in a matter of such great importance as national education.

"The past is made for slaves," says Emerson. We understand what he means when we think of popular education. The result of dwelling in the past is that progress becomes hateful. One would have to be very optimistic indeed to think that the present elementary school education was guided by either intelligence or sanity. It costs, and has cost, millions of money, but the main result has been a half-educated proletariat. If it were not so, would this country be so indifferent and careless as to the real facts of existence? What is the sense of boasting of the partial success of a few score of secondary schools, whilst people conveniently forget about our half-starved and wholly degraded two millions? And of the Niagara of nit-wits churned out of our elementary schools in order to further debase our boasted civilization? Our towns and villages are swarming with half-sized, half-starved, badly clothed, ignorant children, who will either become unemployed, or be temporarily engaged in purely blind-alley occupations. These festering masses will grow up to increase the sunken population who have to be supported by their fellow-citizens. Owing to their fecundity, this undesirable population is increasing in inverse ratio to its value to the community.

"Depend upon it," said one of the greatest of our Premiers, "it is in the masses of the people that the

deepest fountains of true life reside." But what sort of foothold has our boasted civilization if the masses of the people include whole armies of the homeless, half-starved, and hopeless? These unfortunates are cheated of their lives. The State, which should be the foster-mother, has committed the unpardonable sin of maiming, if not actually destroying human personalities. At a time when so many people are trying to turn us into new cogs in the machinery of State, or of mass-production, we should do well to pay some heed to people more helpless than ourselves. The problem is urgent, for the two millions of the submerged may grow to such monstrous proportions as to imperil the entire fabric of our civilization.

MIMNERMUS.

Economic and Social Patterns in Early Christianity

(Continued from page 407)

III.—THREE LATIN WORDS

AMONG the lately-discovered *Logia* of Jesus there is one, "Become ye good Bankers." This phrase succinctly pits the whole philosophy of the many injunctions in the Gospels to lay up treasure in heaven. As we have seen, the idea of Treasure has two elements, which were harmonious while there was communal ownership, but which now are in extreme contrast. The Land, and the Sense of Bond of Unity. The Land is the primary source of wealth in any pre-capitalist society; at any stage in class-society it is the prime symbol of what has been lost. Therefore the Gospel injunctions that restitution must be made, that wealth must be handed over to the poor, all have their root in this primal sense of loss, this need to regain the earth. The bidding to give all to the poor is only an incoherent expression of the emotion that produced the idea of the Jubilee Year.

What is the use of commerce, this emotion runs, when wealth does nothing but increase the disruption of the bond? Under the stress of violent crisis the sufferer turns to the abstracted Bond as the only hope of security.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust doth consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal, for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also. (Matt. vi. 19-21).

Let us now take the three Latin terms of Creed, Faith, Sacrament, and see how they reveal the pattern of commercial relationships underlying this abstraction of the Bond.

Creed, belief, derives from *credere*. The dictionary definition goes, "Originally belonging to the language of business, to give as a loan, to loan, lend, make a loan to anyone. 'Without orders from his master, let the steward trust, have faith in (*credat*), no one,' Cato *De Re Rustica*." It is later "transferred beyond the circle of business." We get the meanings of "committing or consigning something to someone for preservation, protection." Then the meaning of "bestowing confidence, trusting to or confiding in a person or a thing." From this we come to "trusting to or confiding in a person or a thing." From this we come to "trusting someone in his declarations, etc.," or on to "believing a thing, holding it to be true."⁷

We see here the pattern indicated above with regard to the Oath. First the object appears as the emblem or instrument of an act of social contact or exchange. Then, in an expanding society, the object rays out its "influences," and dissolves in subjective mists of relationship. The simple business-trust of Cato becomes "belief in God," *credere in Deum*. The nexus of relationship is abstracted from the object altogether, from the world of fact, and personalized in hypostasis. In the bewildering world of increasing discords, the individual can no longer merely trust the object; in order to keep on living, he has to trust somehow in the Bond abstracted from the social and economic processes going on about him. The final object of trust or faith is thus not merely a hypostasis of business-trust; behind the business-activity lies the productive world which is genuinely drawing men closer together in mastery of nature. The business-form is filled with a social content which it cannot sustain; and therein lies the discord, the intolerable pang. Because the business-form has become an abominable thing, men have to abstract the social content, the underlying Bond, and thus find something worthy in which to trust, something which can reconcile them to the historical prowess. Yet involved with this abstraction there is the structure of legal and social contacts, in which men are continually trusting their fellows, accepting their word, their money-bond, their assurance of good-will.

These two sides of *credere* persist in the two words derived from the verb. Creed, the faith; and credit, the business-form.

Now to our second word, Faith.

Unity seems the root-meaning of *Fides*. The dictionary says, "Root is Sanscrit *bandh*, unite; Greek *heithw*, *persuadere*, *heiomk* cable; Latin, *fidus*, *Deus Fidius*, *fœdus*. Compare, *fascis*, *fascia*." There is, however, another suggestion that the root is another word meaning "to wait." In view of the generally accepted root-meaning of *religio* as "biding," the interpretation of *Fides* as that which unites or binds together is very tempting. In any event there is the relation to *Deus Fidius*, which shows the trail of the Oath.

In the earlier usages of *fides* we find that the word always applies to worldly goods, especially in the form of credit. *Res fidesque* is the term for a man's whole resources; his property and his credit, all that he is worth in visible and invisible goods. There are many instances of *fides* as commercial credit; but it is in these phrases where it is coupled with *res* (the actual and immediate resources, the available object) that we find the word at its most dynamic. "To go bankrupt," is "to lose both *res* and *fides*," the object and the invisible nexus of trust.⁸

Fides is thus the whole business of give-and-take in the economic sphere, the whole unseen network of commerce, the trust which a man can command from others, and which he himself has in his future.

When St. Paul talks about Faith as "the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen," we perceive what has happened. He has abstracted the meaning of *Fides* as the opposite, yet concomitant of *Res* (the immediate material world). *Fides*, the invisible network of social contracts, is abstracted as the Bond of Trust, taking as its content the reality of productive energy which is the core of the living Bond of Unity. *Fides* thus turns (in fantasy) into its opposite, *Res*. It becomes the "real

⁸ As this is an important point, here are the references in Plantus. *Cure.* 4.2; 18; *Truc.* 1.1.24; 38; *Most.* 1.2.64; *Ep.* 2.2.36. Sallust also has the phrase in this sense. Cicero plays on the connexion of *res* and *fides* (Cat. 2.5.10) as also Livy.

⁷ All definitions from Lewis and Short Latin Dictionary.

reality," the higher truth. The socialized methods of actual union are abstracted in the terms of the discordant relationships. The sufferer who wishes to deny the validity of the money-relationship is compelled to use the terms of the money-relationship to express his sense of the Bond which money outrages.

Faith has become the readiness to believe in a future for which there is no material evidence, no *res*.

Here are two quotations from the Fathers which will adumbrate these analyses. Augustine, commenting on *John* xii. 1-11, writes:—

The ointment with which Mary anointed the feet of Jesus was justice. It was therefore a pound. It was ointment of spikenard (*pistici*) too, very precious. Pistis is Greek for Faith. Dost thou seek to do justice? The Just liveth by Faith (*Heb.* x. 38). Anoint the feet of Jesus by good living, follow the Lord's footsteps. If thou hast a superfluity, give to the poor, and thou hast wiped the Lord's feet. For the hair is a superfluous part of the body.⁹

That is: Faith is the act of justice, the obedience to the gospel injunction to render up to the poor. If all men make restitution, then the Bond is restored and Faith is justified.

Or take this by Augustine on *John* xiv. 1-4. He adds:—

In my Father's house are many mansions, by way of an assurance to them in their trouble, that they might with confidence and certainty look forward, after all their trials, to dwelling together with Christ in the presence of God. For though one man is bolder, wiser, juster, holier, than another, yet no one shall be removed from that house of God, but each mansion suited to his deserts. The penny indeed which the householder paid to the labourers who worked in his vineyard, was the same for all. For life eternal, which this penny signifies, is of the same durations to all.¹⁰

That is: He who has faith will be paid in a coin which has been purified from all the disabilities and disadvantages of the coin as known on earth. The coin on earth creates the hell of social discord which destroys Faith. But this coin of Faith is the living relationship of man to man dwelling in harmony, each man getting his true deserts and finding his rightful place of activity. Gregory emphasizes the nature of social equality which results from the Coin of Faith (as contrasted with earthly faith in the coin):

The many mansions agree with the One Penny, because, though one may rejoice more than another, yet all rejoice with one and the same joy. . . .¹¹

Now to our third word, Sacrament.

The basic meaning here was juridical, though closely allied was a use in relation to military training. *Sacramentum* meant, "The sum which two parties to a suit at first deposited, but afterwards became bound for." It thus came to be used for the suit itself. In military language it meant "the preliminary engagement entered into by newly-enlisted troops, followed by the proper military oath." Then it came to mean the oath of allegiance itself. From this meaning it came to suggest any "solemn obligation." In ecclesiastical Latin it developed the meanings of a secret, the gospel revelation, a mystery, a sacrament, and the office of the ministry.

Here we see again the direct oath-pattern. The

concrete object becomes the emblem of the social activity in which it is used; it sucks into itself all kinds of implications and potences, and ends as a purely subjective factor. The allegiance to the state has become under the stress of discord the allegiance to the unknown of hope and fear.

The analysis of Creed, Faith and Sacrament thus shows us the economic pattern dissolving into "spiritual" meanings. The cleavage between relationship and method—method drawing men together and relationship cutting them apart—necessitates this process of abstraction in which the upbuoying emotion derived from the socialized methods fills out with a new meaning the terms of unsatisfactory relationship.

JACK LINDSAY.

(To be continued)

The Big Bonus

THE offer of a Big Bonus is a feature of the Christian Religion. In this they are in line with big business generally; it is the method of the tradesman, big and little alike. Big bonuses, of course, are easy to offer. It is merely a matter of a stroke of the pen or an inflection of the voice. Payment of the Christian promises has never been proved, and it is realized that proof of payment will never be demanded. This is a truism. But another aspect of the Christian Promissory Note has received rather less attention. That is, its conflict with fairness. Not only are prizes offered too liberally, but they are offered for attributes that are not admirable. There is little connexion between rewards and deserts. Like the Honours List, there is little or no "Damned Merit" attached to it.

The Jesus of the Gospels said some quite good things, but he had a painful partiality for offering the big bonus. Here Jesus got over the ankles in an ethical muck heap. His incessant theme was "Great is your reward in Heaven," and "Your father who seeth in secret will reward you openly." The rewards were not only meant to be pleasant, but were invariably extravagant. There were also very terrible punishments to be meted out. Punishment was even eternal, which means infinite punishment for a finite offence. And the worst punishment of all was assigned to wrong belief, which cannot be an offence at all. Jesus ruled out effectively any relation between the punishment and the crime, and where there is not justice there is nothing but moral chaos. *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark is an easy achievement compared with the elaboration of an ethical system without justice as its fulcrum.

With such a startling negation of morality as a main feature on its prospectus one cannot be surprised at the poor show the Christian puts up ethically—as a Christian. The word "Morals" he shouts from the house-tops, but he has never systematized morals. In fact when a Christian speaks of morals, he generally means one thing, and that is sexual conduct—an important branch of morality, but only a branch. This is what comes of bringing other-worldism into human affairs. Man, when he tackled this business of living (which he had to do), devised ethical codes to suit his social circumstances. The process went on naturally and goes on naturally; otherworldism only obstructs the process. Christianity proclaims the high value of Psalm Singing, Sacrament Taking, Church Frequenting; actions which have a relish about them of the Happy Land Above. These are religious actions, they have a harmful effect on this business of living, here and now. The Big Bonus is offered by the Church for the performance of these religious tasks. These tasks are easy; being a good citizen is more

⁹ Tr. li. 6. The pound (*libra*) is Justice because *Libra* also means Scales (the Scales of Justice). Meun say also, "the feet, the poor who are his members." Note, however, how Augustine is attempting to escape the implication of "giving all," and speaks of a "superfluity." Here appears the question of Alms which we later discuss.

¹⁰ Tr. lxvii. 2.

¹¹ *Super Ezech. Hom.* xvi.

difficult—a bird of quite another colour. Your word may be your bond, a conception of fairness may be noticeable in all your actions, but this will not get you to Heaven; this will not enable you to enjoy God's presence. For this you must recite the Creeds and say you believe them; you must believe that one is three and three is one, and that Jesus was born of a virgin, or without doubt you will perish everlastingly. This is the quality in which a Christian sees *merit*. For such a man the Gates will open. Peter will receive him, and to the accompaniment of most delightful music he will be led over golden streets, past brilliantly be-jewelled heavenly buildings to the Foot-Stool of God, round about whom, in close proximity, will be clustered the saints, including that little gang of Vicars of Christ, who have seen to it that Christ's Kingdom has been furthered on earth whenever necessary by blood, rapine and slaughter.

To merit the bonus, obviously, the best thing for us to do is to choose our parents properly, to pick a father and mother who will see to it that in childhood their children will be served with the correct card. This initial choice gives you the best chance, almost the only chance, of reaching the Footstool. But, please, don't make any mistake about choosing that father and mother, for it is all important—they must be of the stuff that can be absolutely depended upon to do their job well. Choose parents who take no chances; who supplement their personal discipline by sending you frequently to Church and Sunday Schools to have you still further plugged with the Blessed Mysteries.

The plugging must be persistent during your younger years when your brain is pliable. For, you see, God has made the Devil and, in his wisdom, has allowed him to put thoughts into your head which suggest that the Blessed Mysteries may be but inanities which the fresh air of reason may disperse. Omnipotence believes in tempting his creatures to prove their Christian worth, for he is not going to open the Pearly Gates to any save those who have been subjected to the temptation of independent thinking and withstood it. He is going to put plausible thoughts into their heads; he is going to suggest to them ever so cleverly that the Christian God is not what they would call good, but only good in an esoteric sense, that he is really a nasty old gentleman. The Devil (i.e., God) is going to surround the whole edifice of Christian Truth with elements which suggest to the best of men that this building isn't at all what it is cracked up to be. And when after all these blasts of fresh air and decent ethical feeling, if, in spite of all these, the religion taught by papa and mama, the religion hammered into them by the priests, the religion they speak reverently of in the schools, triumphs in the conflict (as well it might), then the trumpets will blow up above, the Pearly Gates will slowly open, and a Settee near the Divine Presence will be brushed ready for you, you will be supplied with a churchwarden and tobacco to choice, and other luxuries, and there you can loll your luscious length for a billion and one days looking God in the face, feeling comfortably certain that he is a Good God and knows Merit when he sees it.

Christians may prate of "morality," but then their Kingdom is not of this World, whilst the kingdom of morality is of this world; conduct is an affair of here and now. There is only one thing more contemptible than this essential belief, and that is the dishonest attempts made to-day to hide its ethical nakedness. Those whose natural decency has outstripped their creed meet together and exude perspiration trying to make its disgusting main features respectable. But Christianity is past reform. It is vicious in its fundamentals. Those who know better and find themselves, by training and environment, in an unwhole-

some atmosphere, cannot hope to cleanse the Augean stable. They must come out of it and help in the erection of a new philosophy, one dedicated to humanity, and calculated by the encouragement of the finest brains that appear on this earth to make happier men, women and children in a distressingly irrational world.

T. H. ELSTON.

The Bible in Wales

It has been claimed, especially by Welsh Nonconformists, that Wales is pre-eminently "the country of the Bible." This year Wales celebrates the 350th anniversary of the translation of the Bible into Welsh. A special pamphlet has been written for the occasion—to boost "the Book." I was brought up on the Bible: I was expected, when a boy, to learn by heart a certain number of verses each week, and to recite them in our Sunday School class before the lesson commenced. I cannot honestly say that I disliked even this more or less enforced Bible study. I believe that I always looked upon the Bible stories in the same light as that in which I regarded the "Mabinogion" (The Arthurian Legends), namely, happenings in a world of fancy and romance. I remember quite well the shock I had when I realized that the "Land of Promise" was a country on this earth, and that it could be visited like France, Italy or Greece!

But the majority of my countrymen had not the benefit of any daydream of the kind mentioned. To them the Bible—from cover to cover—was the Word of God, and it was sacrilege to doubt any statement in it. The various denominations, it is true, argued and disputed about parts of it, but their differences were those of interpretation. The result of these discussions and disputations was that we *did know* our Bibles. I mean, of course, the Welsh translation of the Bible, which by the way, is far and away a better production than the "authorized version" of the English Bible, both as regards accuracy and literary style. It is a pleasure to read the Welsh Bible for its style alone. So far as I am personally concerned, I simply cannot stand the artificial style of the English Bible, which style the authors of the Revised Version did not have the courage to discard.

But what is the position of the Bible in Wales to-day? Some years ago the late Rev. Cynddylan Jones, D.D., an ex-Moderator of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, stated in a report on an examination of candidates for the ministry that "their Biblical knowledge was woefully weak." He added, "I hope that they all keep the Ten Commandments, but they certainly cannot recite them." In *Y Tyst* (The Witness), the weekly organ of the Welsh Congregationalists, dated May 5, 1938, there appeared a remarkable candid article on "The Bible To-day," by the Rev. Idwal Jones, Rhydyfro. After referring to the controversies which followed the publication of Darwin's books, and the spread of Biblical criticism, he goes on:—

But what about the place of the Bible in the Church itself? Having been terrified through seeing the deplorable state of the churches in this matter, I took it upon myself to enquire of my brethren as to their experience, and to take advantage of every opportunity in Sunday Schools to endeavour, as well as I could, to see how things stand. There is only one word which can be used to describe the state of things—deplorable in the extreme. If anyone imagines from this statement that I am suffering from inherent melancholy or un-called-for pessimism, let him do a little self-examination. It is assumed that the rest of ministers and preachers have long since

realized that our congregations are ignorant. It is impossible to take too low a view of the Biblical knowledge of our hearers. It is an every-day occurrence in our Sunday Schools to hear someone asking, "What page is Matthew," and seeing others looking for the Gospel of St. John alongside of the Book of Job. It is not of children that I speak. Last month I asked a class of youths, whose ages ranged between 17 and 21 years, after marvelling at their slowness in answering simple questions, if they knew the facts of Our Lord's life. They admitted, quite honestly, that they had never learnt them, although every one of them had been members of the Sunday School since their infancy! The Bible to-day—the spring of 1938!

These are not the most serious examples that could be given. I am not, either, referring to the place of the Word on our hearths, although it has a very funny place in some homes. . . . And the greatest horror, of course, is to remember that the present deplorable position is not the last—nor the worst. . . . The common complaint is that the Sunday School is deteriorating. As a rule its numbers are meant. There is not the slightest doubt as to the accuracy of that statement but more than that—however deplorable its size, more deplorable is its condition.

In referring to possible remedies, Mr. Jones cites another article, which appeared in the same periodical a few weeks ago, in which the writer stated that it was necessary to "establish a priesthood in the denomination, and in other denominations if possible." Mr. Jones concludes his article:—

The Churches, acting together, could influence education authorities so as to secure more co-operation between the day school and the Sunday School, and even to secure an understanding in the matter of Biblical examinations. Together, they could influence the B.B.C. also. The influence of the radio is by no means small, as has been shown in more than one series of broadcasts for children. And, given co-operation, who knows that we might not do something useful through the most effective educational medium of them all—the Cinema. We cannot afford to turn up our noses at any instrument to teach the Bible to-day. The need is great. "Wanted a priest."

How are the mighty fallen! The Welsh Nonconformists fought for a generation for the Disestablishment of the Church of England in Wales, and were, at last, successful. Now they advocate the establishing of religion—for children—in the day schools! Adversity makes some strange bed-fellows! Who would have thought, even thirty years ago, of seeing the phrase "Wanted—a priest" in a Welsh Congregation periodical. Milton was right when he wrote that "Presbyter is but Priest writ large."

THOS OWEN.

Acid Drops

"France is delighted that the death of the Queen's mother will not prevent the King and Queen visiting Paris." That is the way the newspapers put it. And one wonders how many out of the millions of French people care a brass button whether the King and Queen go to France or stay at home. What it really means is that shopkeepers and hotel-keepers in Paris are glad the King and Queen are going to Paris; as it may stir up trade, and that the French Government is pleased the King and Queen are going to Paris because it may indicate that those behind the King and Queen, and who pull the strings, will act in accordance with what the French Government desire. But what a difference in the two pictures which the newspaper paragraph conjures up! One indicates the whole of the French population delir-

ious with joy over the King and Queen. The other simply that the arrangements of the two Governments may work a little more smoothly. But this is the way in which the newspapers help to stop the people thinking out things in a serious manner.

The Rev. Mr. Jremonger is retiring from his post of Religious Director to the B.B.C. Whether a bigger job will be found for him, as in the case of Sir John Reith, we do not know. But the job of Religious Director carries with it the censorship of Sunday programmes. Which means that a parson is set to the task of seeing that nothing is done on a Sunday which he, as a parson, and as a Christian, thinks other people should either see or hear. The opinions of other people do not matter. That is the way we set up dictatorships in this country. We do not openly deny liberty to anyone. But we curtail it and cripple it. Abroad, they are more clumsy in their methods. They laugh at the idea of freedom. We strangle it with a smile and in the name of liberty.

We consider that Joe Louis ought to think himself fortunate that he did not knock out Schmelling in Germany. For Hitler had already decreed that he was the future champion of the world, and had published a telegram to that effect. In Germany Joe Louis would have been sent to a concentration camp for acting disrespectfully towards Hitler, and Schmelling would probably have been imprisoned for not obeying orders.

Meanwhile the conversion of Germany into one of the most complete of slave States in the history of the world continues. After being ordered what to read, what to say, and what to "think," after being ordered to come out and demonstrate whenever Hitler passes, and to decorate each of their houses, or be sent to prison for not subscribing to Nazi charities, commanded to turn on their radio to order, forbidden to listen to any broadcast from foreign countries; to these things conscription of labour has been added, and every German must, on order, go to work when he is told, must do the kind of work he is told, must work as long as he is told, and voice his content with whatever he gets. Germany could give points to any other slave State the world has seen. In brutality it has for long held first place. One almost ceases to pity those who are put to death—in Germany. It seems the official guarantee of one having dignity and self-respect.

All royalties are wonderful people. The other day the papers gave prominence to a picture of the daughter of the Princess Juliana, of Holland. The picture might have passed without comment. But one paper drew special attention to the fact that the baby had actually achieved the rare feat of sucking its thumb. There is a divinity that doth hedge a King and which shows itself in such wonderful performances. But these things help in the art of governing—or fooling—a people, and interest in them stops people taking an interest in other things.

The Archbishop's Recall to Religion is in full swing. The foolish glorification of the Bible is also going strong. The largely fictitious claims of the Bible to have had a profound influence on English literature—often enforced by non-Christians, whose appreciation of literature consists in praising what others have praised before them, and giving applause to writers they have never read—is being repeated on all sides. And no one has yet pointed out a time when the English of the Bible was ever written or spoken by any of the greatest names in our literature, or by anyone in ordinary life. And we offer Christians a challenge. For each of the benefits the Bible is held to have conferred upon the English people, we undertake to give at least one evil influence that has left its mark on our civilization. That the Bible is a "well of English undefiled" is one of the most rubbishy sentences that was ever written. That its influence has made for great evil is a charge easy of substantiation.

Now let us suppose that the world that has been under the influence of the Christian Church, had been, to the same extent and for the same period, under the influence

of, say, Mohammedanism, and suppose that at the end of that period, a Christian had written of it:—

The picture that presents itself in a world composed of national units, each seeking to be economically independent of a world characterized by the minimum of international trade and exchange, a world in which every obstacle is placed on the peoples dealing with one another, and a world where the life of every individual is limited and conditioned by the constant fear of a potential enemy.

Would not Christians regard that as an indictment of Mohammedanism? Yet these are the words that Lord Weir used, the other day, when describing the existing state of Christendom. And the case was put mildly, for when one lays bare the motives that underlie many of these preparations for war, the lies told by the heads of governments in these Christian trained countries, and the rooted distrust of each Christian country with the other, one may well ask, could it have been worse had Christianity never appeared? Consider the world as it was at the date of the supposed birth of Jesus, consider the influences then alive that made for general culture and the humanization of life, allow for nearly two thousand years of development from them, and consider whether the chances are not that the world would have been immensely better had Christianity never been born.

Neither the daily nor the weekly *Express* is noted for its regard for truth, in fact for telling or suggesting what is false it is second only to the *Daily Mail* among the yellow press. But its untruthfulness never reached greater heights than when it offered an implied apology for the German savages in the ill-treatment of Jews than when the *Sunday Express* (June 19), printed the following:—

Half a century ago the Jews owned a great part of the agricultural land of Russia. Then it was that a Russian agitator stood on a tub and declared that the Jews used Christian blood to make their Easter bread. There was a riot which spread from village to village over the whole of Russia, and ten thousand Jews were killed. The Russian Government joined in the persecution by confiscating the country possessions of the Jews, and forcing them to live in ghettos in the towns. The only Jews allowed out at night-time were girls who applied to go on the streets with a yellow ticket.

There is more to the same end, and a more villainous tissue of deliberate lies we have never read.

We cannot go into the matter in detail, but here are a few comments. The statement that the "ghetto in Russia or elsewhere" is only fifty years old cannot be made in ignorance, it is a deliberate lie. The ghetto in the towns had nothing to do with the conduct of Jews in the villages. They were instituted for the towns and date to medieval times. (2) There had been a continuous series of persecutions for many generations, and these instead of originating in the villages usually began in the towns, and were generally engineered, as they are in Germany, for political and religious reasons. (3) The stupidity of the lie is shown by the fact that the Jews were generally forbidden to own land. (4) Vilest lie of all is that concerning the "yellow (prostitute's) ticket." Outside the Pale the Jews could not go without a police ticket. They could not study in Universities outside the pale, and there were none within. But a Jewish girl might reside in these University cities if she held a ticket, and some did so in order to pursue their studies. But having bribed the police to get the prostitute's ticket, she next had further to bribe the police in order not to be sent back for *not practising her profession*. We repeat, of all the filthy and cowardly lies we have ever read the *Sunday Express* comes easily first. The persecution the Jews are undergoing would have raised a little compassion in the breast of anyone but an absolute brute. The *Express* finds in it a reason for further vilification, and a vilification that has not even the courage to express itself with complete honesty.

Writing in the *Times* for June 23, the Rev. R. A. Edwards, says that while nothing should be done to prevent the World Congress of Freethinkers meeting in London, it is none the less to be deplored. He also speaks of the Freethinkers as "thinking they can usher in a secular millenium," and ends up by saying that "Karl Marx may have been an admirable economist, but his theology is sadly out of date."

We never thought of Marx as an authority on theology, or even mythology, the data for a genuinely scientific study of theology and mythology at large were not nearly so handy or so well understood in his day as it is in ours. But we cite Mr. Edwards because he illustrates a type of clergyman to which we have often referred, a type that simply cannot meet the issue raised by a scientific Freethought because they do not know what it is. They do not realize that just as science gives a new presentation of known facts with every advance of knowledge and understanding, so the critical attack on religion undergoes a change in form in similar circumstances. We are continually pointing out that the form of Freethought which most clergymen have in their mind when they attack it, is that which was current a century ago. They are either wilfully or unconsciously blind to the scientific Freethought of to-day.

We offer Mr. Edwards just one illustration of this. Every student of anthropology knows that there is at hand a mass of information which proves—not merely suggests—that all religious ideas are built upon a misinterpretation of facts, physical and psychological, every one of which is now satisfactorily interpreted in non-religious terms. That is, the question to-day is not, scientifically, whether religious beliefs are true, but how people came to believe in them, and what are the forces that cause religious ideas to persist. In other words, the study of religious ideas is to-day, scientifically, the study of the origin and perpetuation of an illusion. For nearly fifty years we have been asking the religious world to deal with a simple question "Granting the story that science has to tell us of the origin of religious ideas, what is the use of arguing whether religion is true or not?" One might as well ask whether the visions of a dipsomaniac are true. The study of religion is to-day the study of the origin and perpetuation of an illusion. Hitherto we have never met a religious controversialist who would face this issue.

Fifty Years Ago

No one can read the Lives of the Saints without being shocked by the way in which these devoted persons trod on human affection, in order to make their own salvation sure. When the mother of St. Thomas Aquinas besought him to stay in the domestic circle he rejected her love as the instigation of the devil to keep him from the religious life, and he induced his sisters to follow his example. The terrors of religion have been exhibited, not only in the blood of the battlefield and the fires of the *auto da fé*, but in the tears of parted relatives, the agony of hearts harassed by doubt and riven by fear. It is difficult for Freethinkers to realize the anguish and terror caused by real belief in a devil, who might at any moment tempt and ruin the soul for ever. And this devil mind is called "the prince of this world" (John xii. 21). He can work miracles (Rev. xiii. 14; xvi. 14), and transform himself into an angel of light (2 Cor. xi. 14). How hard the task for finite erring man to combat against fiends, who for thousands of years have held their own against Almighty God? The horrible records of this belief are written in the history of religious mania and the persecutions of witchcraft, a history not to be read without shuddering and tears, and which warrants the affirmation that all the good which Christianity can claim to have effected, from its first promulgation to this hour, can never atone for the injury it has inflicted by this doctrine alone.

The Freethinker, July 1, 1888.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. WALTON.—Next week.

C. A. MORRISON.—Shall be pleased to meet you whenever convenient. The fetishism and crass superstition was always present in Christianity, but as its intellectual level sinks—and it was never lower than it is to-day—the cruder features of the creed exhibit itself more clearly.

J. HUMPHREY and F. C. HOLDEN.—Thanks for cuttings.

D. MAPP.—The location of the place for the next International Congress of Freethinkers must have reached the *Universe* by inspiration. Glad you enjoyed the Glasgow Conference.

J. GLASSBROOK.—Pleased to hear from another fifty-year-old reader, and to know that your interest in the paper remains undiminished.

H. BERLIS.—We are obliged for addresses of likely new readers; also your kind interest.

W. COLLINS, J. HUMPHREYS, E. N. JONES, J. CLOSE, R. STRAUGHAN, and W. BOURKE.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

A judgment by Lord Chief Justice Greenshields, in the province of Quebec, has established the principle that the "blessing of the Church" has "nothing to do with the validity of a marriage." This is asserting that marriage in Quebec is essentially a civil marriage. This brings the law in Quebec, and we assume in the whole of Canada, into line with the law in this country. Marriage is a civil contract, although it may be accompanied by any religious ceremony the contracting parties desire; but the person performing the marriage ceremony must be licensed by the civil authority to perform such ceremony. The Roman Catholic Church is, in a place where it usually gets its own way, naturally up in arms at the decision. But we can hardly imagine that the decision of the Lord Chief Justice will be successfully challenged. The point of view of the Roman Church is that no marriage is proper unless a Roman Catholic priest performs his mummerly over the couple.

During the past six or seven years we have often had occasion to point out that many of the laws passed affecting freedom of speech and publication were not passed with a view to immediate use, but with a view to using them in the future, and when it would

be possible for the authorities to appeal to existing laws. The protests of the Governments responsible for the passing of such acts, that they were not intended to muzzle speech, may be set aside every time. No one with any knowledge of affairs would pay the slightest attention to the protests that any Government makes on such occasions. Our working code of ethics is such that responsible Government officials will lie without stint whenever and wherever they believe it to be their duty to do so. The spate of official lies during the Spanish War will provide many instances of this.

In illustration of what we have said, we note the recent issue of a four-page "broadside," by the National Union of Journalists in connexion with the "Official Secret Acts." This Act is now being applied in ways that it was strenuously affirmed by those who were responsible it could never be applied. It is being turned into a weapon that seriously affects the freedom of the press. If the press had been more alert, or more concerned with the general liberty of the subject when the Act was passed, or with various amendments to the Act that have been passed, the present situation might never have arisen. We have not the space to give details of the cases that have arisen in connexion with the working of this Act, but those who would like a copy of the four-page leaflet may, we assume, obtain it by writing The National Union of Journalists, 7 John Street, Bedford Row, W.C.1.

We are asked to announce that the West Ham Branch N.S.S. have arranged an excursion for Sunday, July 3, to which members and their friends are cordially invited. Those joining will meet at Forest Gate Station at 10 o'clock and book to Grange Hill Station—fare tenpence. Tea will be provided at Forest View tea-rooms, Lambourne End at 4 o'clock. Members must make their own arrangements with regard to luncheon.

We are glad to see in the *Inquirer* for June 18, a spirited protest against the attempts to prevent the holding of the Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers in London. The editor acknowledges the receipt of a circular from the "International 'Pro Deo' Commission" of Geneva asking for support in working to banish the headquarters of the World Union from Belgium, and to prevent the International Congress being held in London. Rightly the *Inquirer* says that the whole agitation is a Roman Catholic move, and it has clearly been engineered from abroad. The pity is that it should have drawn a number of British Protestants into the trap. Bigotry, we surmise is truly international, and the gross dishonesty and the unscrupulous methods of the Roman Church is what one would have expected. The *Inquirer* concludes:—

To use the freedom we have won in order to deny it to others is to undermine the foundations of our own freedom; but this, we gather is a point which the Pro Deo Commission is incapable of appreciating, though we should have thought that Christians in this country would have had no need of the reminder.

This is a sample of the methods of the Roman Church, that it should have engineered an agitation from abroad in order to try to prevent a perfectly lawful meeting being held in London on the ground that it will have visitors from abroad. How many of the dupes of the Church are aware of the facts of the origin of the agitation? Pity that Sir Samuel Hoare did not take the trouble to investigate a little before writing his miserable letter to "dear Ramsay."

One would like someone to explain the difference between Roman Catholics receiving their orders from Rome, and the supposed but false case of English Freethinkers receiving orders or advice from Russia? Roman Catholics should not aim at monopoly of undesirable courses. The Church has always had the lion's share in this matter.

Judge F. W. R. Silke writes from Cape Town:—

I was gratified to receive a visit yesterday from a young coloured man, who has asked me to speak on Free-

thought at a meeting of some club for coloured youths in this town. My visitor has found your *Pamphlets for the People* of great value, and appears to be doing some excellent work in a field which is generally looked upon as somewhat barren. I have promised to address them next month, and there will be a number of unconverted at the meeting.

We know that Freethought is having its influence among coloured people, and there is no reason why it should not. We are also pleased to learn that our *Pamphlets for the People* are being found of use in this direction. They are in growing use in Australia, New Zealand and America and India. Modesty must not prevent our saying that they are generally acclaimed as the most useful series of cheap pamphlets yet issued. Mr. Cohen will add to their number so soon as he can find time to write them, but the volume of his work grows.

Commencing on July 2, Mr. G. Whitehead will be in Swansea for a fortnight, and meetings will be held on the Sands each evening at 7.30, and on Sundays at 7 p.m. The circulation of literature is an important feature of our propaganda, and Pioneer Press publications will be available at all the meetings.

Pro Deo Mendax

THE provocative propaganda directed from foreign sources against the London International Congress of Freethinkers has received a check at the hands of the Home Secretary. His open letter to Captain Ramsay reveals, to the understanding eye, the brazen disregard of truth displayed by the enemies of intellectual liberty. Nevertheless the campaign continues unabashed. Scotch and Liverpool Catholics do not hesitate to reiterate misstatements imported from Belgium and Geneva.

The astonishing impudence which accuses the international body of being under the control of the "Soviet Union of Militant Atheists" is only outdone by the astounding statement that this Congress has been banned in other countries. The Russian body supports the World Federation, but it can no more alter the two essential conditions of support than can the N.S.S. Those two conditions are Freedom of Thought and No Politics. Such essentials are in direct contrast with the guiding principles of the Roman Church as clearly set forth in the encyclicals to which I had occasion to refer in a recent article, *De Rerum Novarum*, *Quadragesimo Anno* and *Against Atheistic Communism*. In all these Liberalism is condemned as utterly as Socialism and Communism. The brazen impertinence declaring that the English Freethought movement can be directed from abroad, lies in this that a true Roman Catholic can have no national attachment—the Church of Rome claims all his allegiance and, by the declaration of the Vatican Council of 1870, is supreme over the State in all lands. If there is a movement which is directed from abroad by a foreign power, it is that known as the Roman Catholic Church.

No other country has been given a chance of banning the 1938 Congress, for in no other country has the World Union proposed to hold its international gathering.

The proposal to invite the Congress to come to London was put to the Executive of the N.S.S. early in the Spring of 1937, and the N.S.S. decided to join in inviting the International Congress to be held in September, 1938, at its Annual Conference, Whitsuntide, 1937. The formal invitation by the four English Societies was sent in July, 1937. Here are the facts; but it is in vain that truths are cast before some Christians.

Another misstatement, which has the aspect of a deliberate lie, is that the 1936 International Congress at Prague was "revolutionary and political." As one who was there, I can say that it was neither. On p. 39 of the Official Report of that Congress, appears the following clause to which all supporters of the World Union then agreed:—

"The immediate formation of a single International organization which shall unite all Freethinkers of the whole world *without distinction of race, nationality, social opinion or political party.*"

The two Russian delegates who spoke did so in Russian, so that they were unintelligible to 99 per cent of their hearers, and, for that reason, and because their addresses were of considerable length, they spoke to a somewhat empty hall. To say that they were given "frenzied applause" may be truth as a Catholic knows it, but does not belong to the realm of fact.

It is said that the coming Congress is a cloak for Communist propaganda. Not so; but the attacks on it are a cloak for Catholic propaganda. Let no man have a doubt as to that!

A most surprising declaration is that "it was originally decided to hold the London Congress under the auspices of the Union of Militant Atheists, but the Russian leaders were of opinion that the susceptibilities of the British people might be offended by an obnoxious title." (*Edinburgh Evening Dispatch*, June 15, 1938). The writer of this would have borne off the prize in old Heywood's *Dialogue of the 4 PP.* This egregious individual also pretends that the World Union of Freethinkers has "more or less complete control over the societies of Freethinkers throughout the world" (!) The Union, unlike the Pope, pretends to *no control whatever* over its supporters. This writer finishes his letter by requesting an opponent to "distinguish between liberty and licence," a fitting termination to a tissue of uncontrolled mendacity (no doubt A.M.D.G.).

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Freedom of Speech Censorship in the Empire

"The evil that men do lives after them," and the example of the British Broadcasting Corporation, a Government controlled monopoly, has set an example of denying freedom of speech in other parts of the Empire. The fitting tool for this dishonest—because unavowed—censorship was found in Sir John Reith. He has had his reward, and it is hoped that with a new head the B.B.C. will show more regard to honest dealing with the public than it has shown, and also that our publicists will develop enough self-respect to refuse to assist the existing censorship by refusing to submit to censorship. We have little hopes that either step will be taken, but if the censorship is not abolished the letter "M" (Men) might be used for those speakers who will not submit to censorship, and "R." (Rabbit) for those who have permitted a manuscript to be cut and otherwise altered by a body of intellectual nobodies.

The latest example we have come across is from Australia. The well-known Judge Foster had prepared an address on freedom of speech. The speech was submitted and duly censored. But the censorship was such that Judge Foster refused to deliver it. We are indebted to the *Sydney Truth* for May 8, for a full report of what Judge Foster would have said had he been permitted to speak. Here is the speech as printed—the speech in itself is well worth reprinting:—

I take as my text a passage from Milton's *Areopagitica*, dated 1644, "Censorship will conduce to the discouragement of all learning and the stop of truth not only by dis-exercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made, both in religious and civil wisdom, if the waters of truth flow not in perpetual progression they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition."

"I now skip three centuries and quote General Smuts: 'The rise and progress of Europe, indeed of Western civilization, has been based in the last resort on the inviolability of the human personality, and the person's practical freedom and security in the reign of the law.'"

"I now express my own emphatic opinion: That of all the things that society is organized to achieve none is more important for its well-being than the securing to each individual the largest measure of freedom of thought and expression, but I have not time to-night to justify this statement. I refer my listeners to Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought*. John Stuart Mill's *Liberty*, an essay just recently banned in Japan, where the rulers regard it as important to suppress such freedom and have established a powerful department for 'controlling dangerous thoughts' as they call it.

"Freedom is the very basis of democracy, not that it has always been found, even in the most democratic countries. The absence of freedom is a mark of the Servile State so vividly pictured by Hilaire Belloc in a book by that name, while the Fascist and Nazi administrations justify the abolition of personal freedom in the superior claims of the 'totalitarian' State.

"The world owes much to the early Greeks as the originators of liberty of thought and discussion, but by the Middle Ages, we find reason in chains, and a long fight for freedom against the powerful oppression of the organized Church began and has not been completely won yet. The Church's desire to drive out heresy may have been perfectly well motivated, but it nevertheless resulted in enormous physical suffering as well as the almost complete suppression of freedom. Heresy included all matters from opinions about the circulation of the blood for which Harvey was condemned, to the denial of a Geocentric universe for which Galileo suffered imprisonment and worse.

"As late as the beginning of the last century, 16 booksellers in England were in prison at the one time for selling Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, and as recently as 30 years ago a Victorian publisher was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for publishing a facetious article on a religious topic. Penalties for blasphemy, which, of course, are penalties on opinions, are still imposed by our statutes. Though the common law offence still exists, it has been considerably whittled down by judicial decision.

"Even my own excursion into theological realms when a couple of years ago I told a somewhat scared boy witness who assured me that he would go to hell if he told lies, that there was no such place, provoked one well-known Melbourne weekly to urge that I should be deported forthwith to Mexico. If you are interested in knowing something of the martyrdom that the fight for free speech has caused, I commend *Penalties on Opinion*, by Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner.

"And that the persecution still continues is evidenced by the treatment at the hands of the executive of the Commonwealth of Egon Kisch and Gerald Griffin. Kisch, who was a Czech, came to Australia to attend an anti-war Congress. He was intercepted by Commonwealth police at Fremantle, kept under surveillance on the voyage to Melbourne, where he leapt from the boat and fractured his leg. Then follows an amazing story of harsh treatment and a long series of legal proceedings, the net result of which is best told by Kisch himself in *Australian Landfall*. 'Your client' (wrote the Commonwealth Solicitor to Kisch's solicitor) 'can do as he wishes, we will not take the matter further. We will reimburse him his costs and send him his passport so that he can leave. We hope that this will happen very soon.' The costs were high enough, £1,524, and so ended Australia's humiliation.

"Griffin was a New Zealander and sought to attend

the same Congress. He received a sentence of six months' imprisonment. This ill-advised executive action not only failed to keep Kisch out, but it multiplied his appeal a hundredfold. He at once became headline news throughout Australia, but it also held, and will hold, the country up to ridicule and contempt in every country where Kisch's book is read. It is now clear, of course, even to those responsible that the expression of Kisch's views did not harm the Australian democracy half as much as the Government's attempted suppression.

"Our liberties in Australia are held on a precarious tenure, and exist superficially only because the law is not enforced. It only awaits a crisis of any sort to encourage the Executive to enforce the law, and under the wide terms of the Commonwealth Crimes Act to shut down upon that liberty of speech that has all along been regarded as the birthright of us all. It is interesting to note in passing that the development of Executive action is one of the gravest menaces of democracy. It was seen at its worst during the Great War, when the legislative powers of Parliament were largely usurped by the Cabinet.

"The War Precautions Act had conferred powers on the Government-in-Council to make regulations upon almost any subject. This power was freely availed of, and laws in the shape of regulations were turned out overnight at secret meetings by Cabinet—sometimes two members only. Under these regulations, all the fundamental liberties were curtailed or destroyed—trial by jury, sanctity of home, Habeas Corpus, Magna Charta, Free Speech.

"The story of some of these regulations would make astounding reading to this generation. But now to talk about free speech. During the two conscription campaigns I opposed the Government's proposals and engaged myself upon the publicity side of the anti-conscriptionist campaign. I thus had an opportunity of becoming acquainted at first hand with the suppressive rigours of the censorship imposed under the W.P.A. Concerning these times, Dr. Bean, Dr. Jauncey and Professor Scott have all written, but none of them has by a long shot estimated the extent and severity of that censorship. Few public men on the anti-conscription side escaped prosecution or conviction, though they, as it turned out, represented the majority of citizens and soldiers. I myself was prosecuted and subjected to a long trial for a speech I made in a city hall, in which I had the audacity to criticize the then Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. W. M. Hughes. Fortunately, I escaped conviction.

"Rarely did any speaker of prominence speak without the services of police officers as shorthand writers. Military squads were continuously posted in printing offices where anti-conscription literature was being printed. Matter for publication had first to be submitted to military officers for their approval, and whose prohibition was final. No such requirement was placed upon the Conscriptionists, who were free to publish what they would, whether it was true or not. I remember on one occasion, the day prior to the vote, the morning papers published a two-column article under the heading, 'Jacka, V.C., favours conscription.' Now we know that he didn't. The article purported to be based on a letter written by Jacka to Mr. —, a butcher, of Linda Crescent, Wedderburn. Jacka's father happened to be in Melbourne—he was approached, and emphatically denounced the newspaper articles as fabrications. There was no Mr. —, a butcher in Wedderburn, nor was there any Linda Crescent. 'I've been there for 27 years,' he added. 'Will you make a statutory declaration as to these facts and that your son is not in favour of conscription?' he was asked. 'Certainly.' It was prepared to be sworn. I waited on the Deputy Censor. 'Might we publish it?' A shrug of the shoulders. 'Very well, let us see the Censor himself'—the same result, but I urged, 'You allow the papers to publish lies, can't we publish the truth?' 'No.' 'Why not?' 'Because I say so.'

"However, the occasion, it was thought, was important, and 50,000 copies were printed at a secret printing press, the leaflet bearing, as did most of the forbidden leaflets, the imprint of C. Ensor, Collingwood.

"The printers of anti-conscription literature were prosecuted many times. Hardly a Labour anti-conscriptionist editor escaped conviction. I appeared as barri-

ster for many, and if we succeeded in finding a loophole in the regulations, it was immediately covered up by another regulation the next night. The ordinary avenues of post and railway carriage were largely closed so that it became necessary to organize a secret method of transmission. I remember an occasion when three military officers without warrant entered the home of an editor and seized, among other things, his love letters written him before his marriage by his wife. They were never returned. Nothing was found which justified a prosecution. I could multiply these experiences a hundredfold, and they indicate what I have before said, that our liberties are held on a precarious tenure. After the war, the W.P.A. was continued, and was only repealed to be reenacted in part of the Crimes Act.

"We pass over the intervening years and come to 1938. A crisis occurs in England. Mr. Eden resigns. The League of Nations seems further endangered. We seek to discuss it here. A Minister of the Crown frowns upon us. A civic authority—was it inspired—denies us the use of the Town Hall. There is good reason to believe that a Government censorship of international matters is being now imposed. Surely it is a sign of the times that this year of grace 1938 finds in existence a band of earnest citizens organized in defence of civil liberties! It is forever true—the price of liberty is eternal vigilance."

Now what did the Australian Broadcasting Commission object to?

We are not surprised at the paper from which we quote asking, "What did the Broadcasting Commission object to?"

Death has no Terrors

SIR JAMES F. GOODHART, eminent English physician, who, when a resident in Guy's Hospital, arranged to be present at the bedside of every dying patient. He reached the conclusion that "there is nothing terrible to the dying person in death itself. The veil between the two worlds is but a cloud, and one passes through it imperceptibly."

This opinion has been corroborated by other distinguished physicians—by Sir Benjamin C. Brodie, for instance, and by Sir William Osler. "Dying," says Dr. Alfred Worcester, former Professor of Hygiene at Harvard, "is always easy at the last." In its final stages, cancer is usually one of the most painful diseases; yet Dr. J. Shelton Horsley, well-known cancer specialist of Richmond, Virginia, is authority for the statement that "the actual process of dying is apparently not accompanied by pain or by any marked conscious discomfort."

One of the truly comforting facts of life is this: those experiences which we fear most as we anticipate them nearly always lose much of their terror when actually encountered. That is true of death. When it comes close, it is friendly.

About 15 years ago, a big jovial fellow on a lecture tour lay stricken in a Boston hotel. Suffering from an internal hemorrhage, he was told his chances were slim. "At last I knew that I was very near the borderline between life and death," Irvine S. Cobb recalls. "I began to sink. It was a physical feeling. I was sinking, gently, slowly and easily, into a darkness which rose to meet me. There was something soothing, almost alluring, about this darkness. I knew that if I completely surrendered myself to it I should rest. I accepted the prospect of impending death as most of us accept the prospect of continued life—as a matter of course."

"The blackness had almost completely enveloped me before a force within me asserted, 'If I quit now, I'm yellow. I'm leaving things undone.' Slowly, wearily, I dragged myself up. I fought to live."

"Some may look upon death with a shrinking dread in their souls. To all such, I who have skirted the Valley of the Shadow say that we will face it without fear and without bitterness, without reluctance and without repining, without suffering, whether physical or mental;

we shall find it, at the last, but a peaceful transition, an eternal change mercifully accomplished."

Bruce Barton tells of a similar drama. In a hospital room a cultured middle-aged man lay dying of pneumonia. The crisis came. Neither the doctor nor the nurse, who held his hand as if to keep him from slipping away, could be sure whether their patient was alive or dead. Then the moment passed; the man lived.

"The doctor says you were almost over the threshold," Bruce Barton said to the patient some time later. "What did you think or feel?"

He answered: "Nothing! I had no interest whether I lived or died. I was just terribly tired, and I thought, 'Now I can sleep.'"

An unusual study of the sensations of dying is reported by Dr. Edward Hammond Clarke in his book entitled *Visions*. One of Dr. Clarke's patients agreed to report his feelings as he sank into the unconsciousness of death. A system of signals by finger movements was arranged so that the patient could answer questions when no longer able to speak or shake his head. To the very last, after he had apparently lost consciousness, he wiggled ^{no} in answer to Dr. Clarke's oft repeated question: "Are you suffering?"

Thousands now living have been dead—actually, legally, biologically dead! So says Dr. Alexis Carrel—Nobel Prize winner, biologist, surgeon, author of *Man, the Unknown*.

Death, says Dr. Carrel, is not instantaneous. There are two stages: general death or the death of the individual, and local death or the death of the organs. General death takes place with the last pulsation of the heart, for then all vital functions cease and personality vanishes. But each organ does at its own rate. The brain dies in a matter of minutes; the kidneys can live for more than an hour.

Dr. Carrel calls the first stage "reversible death" because life can be restored by immediate first-aid measures if the vital organs are not diseased. The second stage is "irreversible death." A swimmer is dragged to the shore unconscious; a motorist is found slumped over the steering wheel of his car, the garage doors shut and the engine running. The doctor can feel no pulse, sense no respiration. He orders a pulmotor. Minutes speed by. Occasionally life returns.

Yet, according to Dr. Carrel, the victim had been dead—as dead as he will ever be in so far as his bodily totality, including his consciousness, is concerned. Persons who respond to the pulmotor differ from those who remain dead in only one respect—their vital organs have not been destroyed.

What do those who have been revived from death by drowning tell us? They almost always say that they experienced no suffering whatever after the initial struggle. The original distress gives way to a feeling of drowsy comfort. Thus one of them, Grant Allen, distinguished British author, wrote:—

The knowledge that I have experienced death has had a great deal to do with my utter physical indifference to it. Dying is as painless as falling asleep. It was only the previous struggle, the sense of its approach, that was at all uncomfortable, but even that was not half so bad as breaking an arm or having a tooth drawn. There was a total absence of craven shrinking.

Sound scientific reason explains our attitude toward death as the hour approaches. The simple process of physiologic degeneration is responsible. Each succeeding beat of the heart pumps the blood with a little less force than the one before. As the blood pressure sinks to ever lower levels, the brain is soothed by the gentle anesthesia of receding vitality. The turbulent tidal wave of individual vitality ebbs back toward the sea of universal life whence it came, a recessionary undercurrent, flowing on and on into the quiet deepness far below the surging surface. We relax, and in our relaxation we face life's greatest adventure with serenity—

"Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

LESTER HARVED PERRY.

Editor *Pennsylvania Medical Journal*.
Reprinted from *American Digest*.

Correspondence

PSYCHO-ANALYSIS AND RELIGION

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In Mr. Paul Goldman's article entitled "Free-thought and Psycho-Analysis," he states that he fails to see any value in the fact that the conception of the Deity may be shown to be the "projection" of the early conceptions of the parents, and goes on to say that the cure for the continuance in religious beliefs would seem to be Secular Education and not Psycho-Analysis.

Although I agree that Secular Education would do much towards eradicating religious beliefs, yet there still remains the "unconscious" to be reckoned with, and the repressions and sense of frustration experienced by the child from a very early age, have already been relegated to that compartment—if I may use the word—and firmly entrenched therein before Secular Education is allowed to begin. As Dr. Jones says: "If the sources of religious feeling are traced to their origins in the unconscious mind, it will be found that they are always interwoven with the child's conflicting emotions about his parents," and therefore Secular Education alone would not suffice to remedy this because, generally speaking, education is administered "en masse." The method of psycho-analysis is essentially individual, and in this respect has the advantage over education. Owing to the length of the treatment, and the comparatively few opportunities for its practice, I am not prepared to say that, at the moment, the former is more practicable. Furthermore, in view of the widespread distrust and suspicion with which Psycho-Analysis is still regarded, it would seem that Secular Education should be striven for first, assuming that half a loaf is better than no bread.

Were Secular Education here in fact, we should possibly find that in the course of two or three generations the belief in a supernatural religion would have died a natural death in the case of so-called "normal" people, but there would still remain the neurotic type who would still retain a belief in a supernatural religion, for, to quote Dr. Jones again: "any searching investigation of the human mind, such as Psycho-Analysis, must concern itself with such a fundamental constituent of it as Religion is, especially since it is so often involved in neurotic conflicts." (Italics mine), and it is this type of person who would still need psycho-analytic treatment even though he or she were enjoying the benefits of Secular Education. If we remember that the origin of religion is fear, and that fear of some kind or another is the basis of neurosis, we shall not have much difficulty in coming to the conclusion that once the patient has been brought face to face with this fear and made to understand it, then it must of necessity disappear.

Of course, not all psycho-analysts are concerned with ridding the world of religion, any more than is the ordinary practitioner, for the psycho-analyst is primarily a doctor of the mind, but in cases where they discover that the neurosis is caused fundamentally by a fear engendered by religion, and which is so often the case, directly or indirectly, then, as part of their work, and if they wish to obtain successful results, it is necessary for them to eradicate the cause of this fear. Again, it must be remembered that in Psycho-Analysis, as in other branches of science, there are several differences of opinion, and some doctors, retaining their religious beliefs, would be reluctant to attribute some of the neurosis to a religious origin. We occasionally meet with scientists who, in some way known only to themselves, still manage to blend religion with science and rest content with the mixture.

I should not like to be so dogmatic as to say that, because Freethinkers have always fought for the right of scientists to express their opinions that it is the duty of those who are aware of this fact to assist Freethinkers in their task. Such assistance is invaluable and very welcome, but I think the most we can do is to hope that, when the need arises, those who are honest enough to have this awareness will not fail to come forward and rally under our flag.

PENSADORA.

SIR,—Much of Mr. Goldman's animadversion on my articles on Psycho-Analysis would have been obviated had the Editor seen fit to retain the footnote saying that they were the substance of a lecture delivered by request before the Rationalist Press Association. Mr. Goldman is quite right in supposing that I should have written them very differently had they been destined for the readers of the *Freethinker*, though that does not, however, give him the right to be so dogmatically certain about my state of ignorance, e.g., of the important difference between the Free-thought and Rationalist Movement in this country. It has, for instance, not "entirely escaped the notice of" the writer that Freethinkers and many Anthropologists have long asserted that human beings invented the idea of Divine ones. What I had to say on this point, however, was something very different, namely, that Psycho-Analysis has been able to show in detail both the inner nature as well as the inevitability of this process.

I should like to add that, from the point of view of Psycho-Analysis, as from that of any other Branch of Science, I must restrain my sympathy for Mr. Goldman's tendency to measure the value of scientific information by its propaganda value for particular purposes.

ERNEST JONES.

CREEDS AND CASH

SIR,—This city of (Portsmouth) is a very important one, for the present Archbishop of Canterbury was a vicar here in the Parish of Portsea (St. Mary's), others stationed there were the Bishop of Ripon (Lunt), the Bishop of Salisbury, etc.

The Bishop of Salisbury (Lovatt) now receives £5,000 per annum; he was first Bishop of Portsmouth, who only received £3,000; the same old story, more "money."

The average pay of fourteen vicars here is £488 per annum. I traced in Crockford's Directory, the highest £951 (a Canon of St. Mary's); and the lowest, (£338 and house). I have attended many senior mens' Bible Classes at St. Mary's; not being a member I always played cricket and asked my questions last. I noticed that the elderly students enjoyed my attack on the parsons.

St. Mary's, by the way, has a Canon-in-charge, whose stipend comes from Headquarters (London, etc.). Ten young parsons average £240 per annum. This is not bad for learners—they do not stay very long. They are moving or have received a call this season already.

As usual the church is in debt after 50 years of existence. The ten parsons' money or stipends comes from the voluntary subscriptions, also for three deaconesses, two at £150 each, one at £90 per annum; population of parish 34,000. The Holy Clock has dropped a hand off the northern face, but it is still going, and yet they are collecting for repairs; amount required £100—a box placed on the wall daily, amount collected £27 in nearly three months.

At one of the Sunday meetings I asked one of our local distinguished surgeons: "If any medical examination had revealed the soul," or if he could enlighten me. As you may expect, I had to bring him back to earth for evading my question. On February 19 I attended the Annual Mens' Conference, 3 to 8 p.m. The Canon (£937) sent out a memo. a few weeks before, stating that he would like written questions at least a week previous to the Conference—so I told him that I objected to a week's notice and asked him why? His reply was that he did not know everything. So I told him promptly that he as a man of God should call on his God for guidance. After other questions the Canon came and shook hands, and said, "We can still be friends, can't we?" My reply was that I understood priestcraft, and still maintained that it was a good business, and reminded him of the colossal Balance Sheet.

The attendance by the way for the Annual Conference (I drew his attention to the failure of churches to-day) was only 21, including myself—a non-believer.

A.W.S.

FROM SOUTH AFRICA

SIR,—As one of the younger readers of the *Freethinker*, I write to express my sincere appreciation of the high intellectual standard maintained, and also to mention that it was with enhanced interest that I re-read, for the first time in book form, the *Essays in Freethinking*, contained in the fourth volume of the series.

May I suggest that you include in the next volume, your articles treating of the Abdication and Coronation Ceremony, and your contribution entitled "About Books," which appeared in your issue of February 6 last.

B. A. WILTER.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JUNE 23, 1938

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Bryant, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Bedborough, Horowitz, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read. Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Glasgow, Liverpool, Birkenhead, Bethnal Green, South London, West London Branches, and the Parent Society. In reporting the Annual Conference in Glasgow, the President described it as one of the most successful Conferences held. The programme provided by the Glasgow Corporation for the enjoyment of the large number of guests present marked the Civic Reception as a fitting climax to a happy and interesting week-end. A vote of thanks to the Glasgow Branch for its work in connexion with the Annual Conference was passed unanimously. Items remitted from the Conference were discussed, and in connexion with the motion concerning the possibility of establishing a Hall, or Club and Institute in London a sub-committee was appointed to examine the position.

Correspondence was dealt with from Greenock, Blackburn, Derby, Burnley and Glasgow, and instructions issued.

Messrs. Clifton, Rosetti (A.C.) and Mrs. Quinton were elected as the Benevolent Fund Committee for the ensuing year.

Mr. W. Griffiths was co-opted to serve upon the Executive. A number of minor matters were dealt with and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

Branch News

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH

NEARLY fifty members, wives and friends of the Birkenhead Branch, N.S.S. spent a thoroughly enjoyable time on Saturday, June 18, when they were the guests of Mr. R. G. Morton at Beacon Tor, West Kirby, Wirral. The whole trip was covered by the generosity of Mr. Morton, and the arrangements were made by the Branch Secretary, Mr. Walter Fletcher.

The party left Birkenhead in the afternoon by private coach for West Kirby, where some time was spent on the beach and the miniature golf courses before tea was served at the Blenheim Cafe. Members then made their way up the hill to Beacon Tor, where they were welcomed by Mr. Morton, and spent a jolly evening in the grounds and in the house, playing bowls, quoits, rifle-shooting, billiards, bagatelle, table tennis, darts, rings, and other games. Refreshments were served during the evening, which concluded with dancing, a merry entertainment and a sing-song. Speeches of thanks were expressly taboo, but there was no doubt about the feeling with which the company sang "For he's a jolly good fellow."—R.H.S.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc.—"Philosophy and the Physicists."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, L. Ebury.

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, 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): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, Mrs. R. Grout. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, Friday, 8.0, Mrs. R. Grout.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Miss E. Millard, M.A., Messrs. E. Bryant and G. Barnes. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Tuson. Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. W. B. Collins. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin and Mrs. N. Buxton. Friday, 7.30, Mr. G. Barnes.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"Secular Education."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield—"A White Girl Looks for God."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road): 8.0, Tuesday, M. I. Whitefield. Peel Street, 8.0, Wednesday, A. Copland. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday, M. I. Whitefield. Albion Street, 8.0, Friday, T. L. Smith. Albion Street, 8.0, Sunday, A. Copland and others. Literature on sale at all meetings.

GREENOCK BRANCH N.S.S. (Grey Place): 8.0, Wednesday, M. I. Whitefield. Literature on sale.

HIGHAM: 7.30, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, Stevenson Square, 7.30, Sunday. Chorley, 8.0, Tuesday. Also Alexandra Park Gates at 8.30 on Saturday, if possible. Speaker at all meetings, Mr. W. A. Atkinson.

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

NELSON (Chapel Street): 7.45, Wednesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.

PRESTON (Market): 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

ROCHDALE (Cattle Market): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (The Sands): 7.30, each evening; Sunday, 7.0. For fortnight commencing July 2. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak.

WHEATLY LANE: 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

WIGAN (Market): 8.0, Monday, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

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