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

Views and Opinions

The Way to Manhood

WHOEVER was responsible for the speech which the King made in France on July 22, at the unveiling of the memorial of the Australian soldiers who died during the “Great War,” must have smiled over at least one phrase. The war, ran the speech, marked

the gateway through which Australia passed from youth to manhood.

From the point of view of policy, which is all we suspect that the writer had in mind, the passage might be justified. The Government is engaged in a huge armament policy, and it is being carried on largely under the influence of fear—fear of a war, fear of what might happen to those at home, fear of the wholesale destruction of property. The Italian and German armies in Spain, may have failed to conquer the Spaniards, but they have succeeded in frightening the people as to what may happen in Britain if we are again at war. Wars are no longer certain to be exported. Imports may overbalance exports. And that gives war a different aspect. The Government that gains its ends—whether they be legitimate or illegitimate, must achieve success by creating an atmosphere of fear. That our intentions are peaceful may be taken for granted. On that point we are at one with every country in the world. Each would rather have things as they wish without war than with it. But the use of gas-masks, as valuable against the enemy as peace-shooters against cannon, have played a great part in creating the war-mind. Merely talking about war and its horrors is not enough. Imagination is not quick enough with most for this to be adequate. But to see people arrayed in gas-masks, looking like a herd of porkers on market day, for some to wear them, is to foster the feeling that war is at hand. The gas-mask manoeuvre was as fine a way of making the public war-minded as one could conceive. And when Ministers

of State actually appeared wearing these masks, the job was complete. Whatever faults the existing Government may have, it understands propaganda, and war propaganda received a classical form in 1914-18. That war was fought under the impulse of the slogan, “No more war”; peace was made under the impulse of “keeping under” those who were conveniently charged with the sole responsibility for the war; and for several years now we have been living under the impulse of the feeling that war will probably come, and that the only way to preserve peace is to develop a “war-mind,” and to live in the expectancy of its coming. Unquestionably the gas-mask parade, with nurses, cabinet ministers, and even horses wearing masks, was a very clever exhibition of mob-psychology.

* * *

A Standard of Value

All the same another cause for praising the Australians than the one used might have been selected. Australia is “a young and vigorous nation.” First used by our own Government as a penal settlement, many of the “criminals” sent there were guilty of the crime of trying to lift large numbers of the people out of the filth and degradation in which they were living. The descendants of those “criminals”—with, of course, others—got rid of the influx, manufactured its own criminals and set about developing its own life. If the civic life of Australia had not lacked manhood it would never have been displayed in war. Australian born men and women, from all one can learn, are as worthy as men and women in other countries; they are more independent than are those in the “old countries,” being less tied down to custom and less habituated to “discipline”—that ideal of the incompetent and the drill-room. And they proved themselves as able as others to conduct their own affairs. But, if we are to take the sense of the passage cited, and not dismiss it off-hand as mere nonsense, the Australians had not reached manhood. And without the war—or some other war—(again according to our text) they never would have reached manhood. The Australians would have remained, as a nation of mere youths. To again quote the speech:—

Although unity had been achieved in Federation (political unity) there was as yet no outward stress to weld the people together, so that Australia might take her rightful place in the community of nations.

So we have the picture complete. A people may take possession of a land where none but “natives” exist, and they clearly have no right whatever to its possession; these settlers may cultivate the soil, exploit its mineral and other natural possibilities, build cities, create at least the beginnings of a native literature, build schools and universities, breed and perpetuate families, but these things would not be enough to raise them to manhood or to warrant them taking their

rightful place—remember that word—in the community of nations. We must bear in mind that Australia had sent men to take part in the Boer War, and that we have had Australian soldiers in those armies of ours that have taken part in some of the many “little” wars which, presumably, enabled us to achieve and maintain our manhood. But these small wars were not enough. They did not cost enough, they did not kill enough. It was a world-war that was required, and when it came, if Australia had not entered into it she would never have passed “from youth to manhood,” and would never have been able to take a proper place in the “community of nations.”

* * *

A Message to the World

We have the thesis complete. I am not blaming the King. He speaks only through his ministers, which means in practice that his ministers on any occasion that is of importance, speak through him. But we have the ethic of Christian civilization put into almost as plain language as that used by Hitler and Mussolini when they preached the glory of the “blood-bath” which purifies and strengthens a people. It is only under the stress of war that a people can be welded together. And presumably in the continued absence of war they will again fall apart, and be reduced to the miserable state in which a human being regards another human being, whether at home or in Timbuctoo, as a potential friend instead of a probable enemy. We preach “If thine enemy strike thee on the one cheek turn to him the other also,” we practice, “If the man outside thy gate offers thee the hand of friendship, take it, but remember to have a gas-bomb or a machine-gun ready in case of accident.”

The collective lesson follows on the line of the individual one. The “great powers” in the modern world have always been overwhelmingly religious—vociferously Christian. And they have their settled standard where “the community of nations” is concerned. Holland, Denmark, Sweden, have not been great powers for several hundred years. Before the war with Russia, Japan was not considered a “Great Power.” China was never seriously considered as such. Both might have been thought so by themselves, because they had had wars and so might be considered to have passed from youth to manhood, but the more knowing Christian smiled in amusement at a people thinking itself great because they had a philosophy, a literature, a culture of their own. But when Japan went to war with Christian Russia, it became at once a “Great Power,” as the Christian nations understood the term. Japan had passed from “youth to manhood,” and stood as an equal in the community of nations. We are seeing at present what exactly that manhood means. And if and when China surrenders its age-long philosophy of peace, its habit of placing the soldier at the bottom of the social hierarchy, and the agriculturist and the teacher at the top, then she may take her place in “the community of nations.” Other nations should read this lesson aright—that is, if they would pass from youth to manhood, and rank as an equal in the community of nations. “Ye must be washed in the blood of the lamb,” says the Christian religion. One may justly take the way of passing from youth to manhood through the gateway of war as the political and social application of Christian doctrine.

Just as we are writing the papers are still full of the recent visit of the King and Queen to Paris and its re-registration of French and British friendship. Quite good, and better still if it could have been a registration of real friendship of all the European peoples. But there

is a snag in the situation. Those who are not blinded by phrases cannot ignore the fact that it is the imminence of unfriendship between peoples that has given this demonstration of friendship its occasion. In the situation it is far more a registration of a temporary united front against other nations than it is of friendship pure and simple. It is good that in the presence of danger people should unite for common protection. That, again is a feature common to the animal world. But man should surely rise above this level, and not exalt the occasion that brings about the need for this kind of co-operation as an entry to manhood, ignoring the fact that the manhood which is exploited by war originates and develops in the qualities secured by peaceful occupation and co-operation. But it seems that even the ethic of international friendship in the Christian world has to fall into line with the thesis that a people enter into manhood through the gateway of war. I do not think I have ever read a more illuminating commentary upon the influence of the Christian Church on the civilization of the world.

* * *

The Paragon of Animals

That man will fight for what he values, offers nothing new in the world of living things. An animal will fight for its lair, it will fight for its mate, and fight to protect its young. A dog will fight for its bone, a wild animal for its “kill.” Some animals fight even for leadership. In none of these conditions of waging war does the human world differ from the animal world at large. In the aspects noted man is, indeed, at one with the animal world. The King’s speech was thus, broadly, depicting an animal level of existence. In these respects the memorial in France differs in no essential respect from the way an animal might act, if it could build monuments and make speeches. But man is not a mere animal. He has the power of speech, and can hand on to the coming generation records of his thoughts. He can make tools instead of depending upon those crude instruments with which nature has furnished him. He can harness the unseen forces of nature to his service, and kill without even coming into sight of his antagonist. He is the paragon of animals, a miracle of reasoning power, the recipient of a message from God Almighty himself. He is therefore able to put into set terms, with all publicity what the animal does merely by way of instinct. Man says in prepared terms, and with the whole world, thanks to the miracle of wireless transmission, able to listen to the words as they fall from his lips, that a whole nation might have fallen short of manhood but for the “Great War.” These thousands of men might have died sailing ships on perfectly peaceful business, they might have died digging coal from the depths of the earth, sacrificed their lives in the interest of scientific research, or have lived their lives in a mere round of productive labour, or in bringing the magic of music or letters to people all over the globe. These things would have brought no great international assembly together to chant their praises, there would have been but few monuments to the memory of their lives. They would never have passed from youth to manhood. They would have died without developing their manhood to its full stature. The great message of the Christian religion is out at last, prepared for utterance by Christian statesmen, endorsed by hundreds, if not millions of practicing Christians, given to the world through the lips of a Christian King, who was raised above the level of mere humanity by the magical ceremony of an Archbishop. Let us hope that the Australians will rise equal to the situation. In Melbourne or in Sydney they should raise a monument thanking God for the war of 1914-18. It enabled them to pass from youth

to manhood, and to take an honoured place in the community of nations to which, in the absence of war, they would have had no legitimate claim.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Hypocritical Heathenry

"You do not believe, you only believe that you believe."—Coleridge.

"It is still impossible to say absolutely that England is a Christian country or a heathen country," says G. K. Chesterton in one of his most provocative moments. This would seem to be the verdict of English history. Nowhere else in the world is there such a noisy profession of religion, with so little practice to correspond. Even the paid apologists of Christianity are forced to acknowledge the seeming inadequacy of their religion. It has been tried on a vast scale, over a period of near two thousand years, and what has been the result? This, on the very surface, that the English people, after adopting this old composite Oriental religion, and covering the country with cathedrals and churches, have all but universally acknowledged its insufficiency.

Naturally, this acknowledgement of failure was never made openly by the priesthood. How could they be dissatisfied with a system, however sordid or hypocritical, which gave them nearly everything, and made them the uncrowned kings of the country? Not that it ever made them real men. With all their posturing, robed in the needlework of Noodledom, they are, when tested by scientific standards of thought and action, merely mummers. They are not really educated, but only educated in the patter of their sorry profession. They have proved themselves barren in science and speculation, and they know nothing of the "mighty hopes that make us men." As a class, they are conceited, unprogressive, intolerant; in a word, all that really cultured men should not be.

How can the blind lead the blind? Here, then, we have on the very surface of English society written plain the failure of Christianity. The very people who attend churches on Sunday are secular for the rest of the week. The result is a division of the professing Christian into two parts, which is disastrous to ethics and life. When one professes Christianity, and is at heart a Secularist, his real life is invaded by superstition, and his reason debauched by religion. It is:—

"Fantastic mockery, such as lurks
In some wild poet when he works
Without a conscience or an aim."

Hypocrisy has always been a distinguishing mark of historic Christianity. Apologists have always been found to explain that this religion originally appealed to moral force and not to the sword. But priests did not scruple to use all the weapons of civil power as soon as they were strong enough to lay hands on them. There was a wondrous change in their attitude after the conversion of Constantine. Subsequently, Charlemagne's sharp sword had more to do with the conversion of the Saxons than all the vaunted preaching of missionaries. And, right down to our own times, ironical appeals have been made to that Christian Bible for authority to draw the sword against the enemies of their "god" and their churches; that same fetish-book that contains the Pacifist "Beatitudes" and the so-called "Golden Rule." To-day, paid professors of the "Religion of Love" christen battle-ships, bless regimental colours, act as army chaplains, and organize Te Deums for victory.

This hypocrisy extends from the priests in the pulpits to the people in the pews. On Sundays, worshippers loudly confess that they are "miserable sinners," but if one called them that on the other six days of the week, they would instruct their solicitors accordingly. Christians are taught not to swear at all. The result is that most of them use profane language all the time they are awake, and swearing is a recognized procedure in Law Courts, and there are even Commissioners for oaths. Whether this burlesque of Christianity is worthy to be considered a religion or not, this make-believe is what the average Englishman means by religion. Indeed, the mere fact that most believers appear to be unconscious of the basic duplicity of their beliefs is a truly topsy-turvy condition of affairs. For Englishmen are a people eminently practical and unspeculative, and are not unjustly described as "a nation of shopkeepers."

It would be cruel, perhaps, to push the parallel too far, but the fact of the failure of Christianity is patent. The real causes of its failure are that priests base their religion on ancient Oriental ignorance, and connect their faith with alleged supernatural agencies and a veritable Niagara of long-discarded superstitious fancies. In so far as it is intelligible, the teaching of the Gospels is directed toward simplicity of life. "Blessed be ye poor"; "Woe unto ye rich"; "Sell all that thou hast and give it to the poor," are typical exhortations. As a matter of fact no body of responsible people seriously disputes the fact. The clergy of every denomination accuses the other of obstruction, and declares they are false to the spirit and teaching of real religion. With every attempt at real reform the obstruction of the vast majority of parsons may be counted on, and must be reckoned with. In the case of the last war no party in the country functioned so bravely as creators of "blood-lust" as did the clergy, as General Crozier frankly admitted.

Nor is this all, for the bitterest irony is everywhere interwoven in this Christian Religion. "Blessed are the peacemakers," "Thou shalt not kill," have been shouted from millions of pulpits and platforms for near two thousand years. But the nations which profess to worship "the Prince of Peace" are in the stronger grip of Mars, the god of war. England alone, during the past hundred and fifty years, has engaged in scores of wars in all the four quarters of the earth. To such a pass, after so many centuries of the Christian superstition, has, not only England, but all the Western world come. It is the bitterest mockery of the Christian Gospel, which has proved itself to be the most impotent of all the great religions of the world. The Moslem does his best to obey the Koran; the Hindu orders his life as best he can in accordance with his religious belief; the Confucian is influenced by the maxims of the master; the Buddhist stumbles along "the path" towards perfection; but to the Christian his own Bible is of no more importance than a ten-year-old railway time-table. He is far more Secularistic than pious, and he cares for realities and not fantasies:—

"For forms of faith let graceless zealots fight,
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right."

This facing-both-ways attitude towards religion of the Englishman is a characteristic trait of the race. John Bull has an immense respect for law, custom, order, and stability, and he is essentially one of the kindest of men. If he is directed by authority to go to church on Sunday, he will go to avoid a row. If what he hears in that place-of-worship seems silly, he will promptly forget it. Anything for a quiet life. But, like old Lord Melbourne, he will not permit this religious silliness to interfere with his ordinary life.

The Roman Catholic priesthood, who have been at the game longest, know all this. By conducting their services in a dead language, no one knows whether the teaching is silly or not, and at least it sounds impressive.

It may be said with truth that Christianity has elevated neither the race nor the nation that adopted it as the law of its life. It has not impelled man forward along the path of liberty and progress. It has not been favourable to scientific research or social reform. It has not widened men's minds. Indeed, if this had been the case, Abyssinia would be one of the foremost nations of the world. For that unhappy country is not only Christian, but has been Christian for a longer period than Britain. Even our own British civilization, vaunted and overrated as it is, is not actually Christian. Our jurisprudence is based, not on the Gospel Beatitudes, but on the old Roman law, which we inherited after Julius Cæsar's invasion. The roots of our social system have been derived from many sources, Druidic, Saxon, Scandinavian, Roman, and even Norman. The compact fabric of British society is Occidental, and never has been Oriental. "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." That is the true explanation of the failure of the Christian Superstition, and also of the apparent hypocrisy of the English people. This alien religion has never really taken root in the soil of this country.

MIMNERMUS.

Cock-Fighting

SITTING at my grandmother's knee, a little boy, some sixty-odd years ago, listening to her strange stories about witches, warlocks, worricows, and the Deil himself, I was often agreeably entertained.

The South of Scotland must have been a curious place when granny was a wee lassie, over one hundred and thirty years ago.

Of her school days she often told me, contrasting them with mine. One strange experience of her's related to a Shrove-Tuesday custom. Scholars who possessed game-cocks took them to school in the morning of that day. The floor of the school was made into a cock-pit. The schoolmaster was umpire. And the children stood on forms to witness the fights. The *fugees*—pacifists (the cocks that wouldn't fight)—became the property of the dominy. But he didn't get many. The Cocks were carefully selected beforehand, and any suspected of being *fugees* were kept as a rule, along with any moulting fowls, reserved for the vicar's man collecting tithes. The afternoon was devoted to playing games.

But stranger still were the stories told by her forebears. One story told by her grandmother was about a Shrove-Tide custom too—"Beating the Fat Hen." In the South of England it was known as "Threshing the Fat Hen," suggesting flails being used, or that the boughs were used like flails. Tusser Redivivus gives a fairly good account of this custom: "The hen is hung at a fellow's back, who has also some horse bells about him, the rest of the fellows are blinded, and have boughs in their hands, with which they chase this fellow and his hen about some large court or small enclosure. The fellow with his hen and bells shifting as well as he can, they follow the sound, and sometimes hit him and his hen, other times, if he can get behind one of them, they thrash one another well favour'dly; but the jest is, the maids are to blind the fellows, which they do with their aprons, the cunning baggages will endear their sweethearts with a peeping-hole, whilst the others look out sharp to hinder it.

After this the hen is boil'd with bacon, and store of pancakes and fritters are made." Variations of this custom may be found, but this description is a fairly complete one. The hens generally chosen for this Feast were those "that did not lay eggs before Shrove Tuesday."

Throwing at cocks was another brutal practice on Shrove-Tuesday. Brand tells us that "it was common in many schools in Scotland—throwing sticks till it was killed." Schoolmasters presided at these battles. Shying at leaden-cocks followed this custom. Then, in the process of evolution, shall we say? came cock-fighting. If people didn't need shriving before Shrove-Tuesday, they seem to have been very anxious to do something that day to make them need it!

Cock-fighting was practised by the Greeks. Themistocles (550-460 B.C.) was an ardent advocate of cock-fighting. Once when marching against the Persians he saw two cocks fighting. He pointed out to his followers the heroic way in which these birds contended though they fought for neither family, liberty, nor country. The Persians were defeated, and the Athenians, as a memorial of the battle and this incident, ordered annual cock-fighting in the presence of the whole people.

The last words of the dying Socrates were—"Crito, we owe a cock to Esculapius." Was this cock a fighting-cock? Who can tell us? Socrates was something of a vegetarian. He lived mostly on lentils and water. It is difficult to realize that Xantippe, his wife, would cook a chicken for him. Yet, maybe, more difficult to associate Socrates with cock-fighting. But, one never knows!

Pliny says cock-fighting was an annual exhibition at Pergamus. And Plato (427-347 B.C.) laments that both boys and men breed fighting birds. But the Greeks got their fighting-cocks from foreign countries. The English imported the strongest and best of theirs from abroad, especially from Germany. Cæsar mentions the English cocks in his Commentaries. But the earliest mention of cock-fighting in England is by Fitzstephens, who died in 1191:—

Yearly at Shrove-tide, the boys of every school bring fighting cocks to their masters, and all the forenoon is spent at school to see the cocks fight together.

Cock-fighting was prohibited in England under Edward III. and Henry VIII., and even later. But Henry VIII. delighted in cock-fighting. 'Twas he who built the Royal cock-pit in Whitehall.

James I. was a lover of cock-fighting. He paid a larger salary to the men who had charge of his fighting-cocks, than he did to his principal Secretaries of State!

Beckman says, "that as the cock roused Peter, so it was held an ecclesiastical duty 'to call the people to repentance,' or at least to church, therefore, in the ages of ignorance, the clergy frequently called themselves 'The Cocks of the Almighty.'"

Cock-fighting, as we have made it, is a man-like sport. We have added to the animal's power to kill and maim, by fixing large steel spurs to its legs, and we call it a *brutal* sport. Why? Animals have no blood sports. The poet Tennyson thought that we should by moving upwards give the ape and tiger a chance of dying in us. When we have ascended to the moral level of the animals we shall probably cease talking nonsense about them. The animals do not make poison gases, nor do they drop bombs on their little children, their palsied old, blind, or sick and afflicted. Could we but interview the animals and learn what they—deer, fox, hare, grouse, pheasant, partridge, etc., think about us?

"Wisdom is often nearer when we stoop,
Than when we soar."

Not until we give up vainly thinking that we are akin to angels, and try to realize how very low down in the animal scale we really are, can we hope to make any advance whatsoever.

Reading the above depressed a very old lady. Impressions seem very personal things, and altogether unaccountable. A recitation of "Ædigus on the Hill" (Historical Songs and Ballads, by Dorothy Margaret Stuart), restored her mental balance. Great is the comfort of words!

The following verses acted on her, she said, like a powerful anodyne:—

"Thou pitiful earth, thou scarred and cloven one;
In thee the fair gifts of the gods endure;
The carven acorn, and the iris pure,
And the sweet firstlings of the reborn sun;
So canst thou fashion of this stained clay,
Once in thine arms laid low, a blossom sweet,
And thou canst lift from these transfixed feet
The purple crocus of a distant day.

"The herbs that heal, the pools that purify,
These for thy happier sons . . . For me but this,
To be no more than the brief wind-flower is,
That withers in one changing of the sky;
No more than the brief blanching of the sea
Between the dark breasts of the moaning wave;
Lord of the narrow lordship of a grave,
Discrowned among dead kings and one with thee."

GEORGE WALLACE.

Economic and Social Patterns in Early Christianity

(Continued from page 475)

HOWEVER the subjective interpretation soon weakened this hatred of the rich as soon as the Church became an institution with "responsibilities." The hostile attitude to the rich remains only as a device for getting donations. Hermas, for instance, says that as a round stone not suitable for a building must be lopped to fit in so must wealth be cut off before the wealthy of this age can be useful to God. Riches interfere with the spiritual life; men who grow old in riches do not lay hold of the goods of the future; and so on. *Didache* classes among the doers of abomination the men cruel to the poor and comforting to the rich, the lawless judges of the needy, and so on. But this is only a watered-down version of the language of the prophets, not of the Gospels.

We find the preachers looking more and more to the rich. Hermas exhorts the rich to buy afflicted souls rather than fields and houses. They were given their wealth by the Lord for these ministries. "The poor man gives offers up the prayer in which he is rich, and the rich man likewise gives to the needy the riches that he receives from the Lord. This is a great work and acceptable to God."²⁹ Clement of Alexandria completely reassured the rich that they had nothing to fear from the Gospels; everything had to be taken metaphorically, spiritually, symbolically; as long as they gave a certain amount of alms as insurance their souls could be saved.³⁰

²⁹ Hermas, *Vis.* iii. 6, 6. *Sim.* iv. 5; ii. 5; *Vis.* i. 8. *Didache*, v. 2; Hermas *Sim.* ii. 6, 7, 9.

³⁰ See especially *Quis Dives Salvetur*, a masterpiece of priestly tact which set the highest standard of casuistry for the task of making the rich feel safe in the world. Clement himself was a man of considerable means. His whole work, seeking as it does to eat away anything clear and revolutionary in the Gospel with a subtle acid of symbolisms, was of

The dreary tale of this dilution can be endlessly filled out. The business of the instituted Church has been to supply these consolations and to defend property as a "sacred trust." Typical of the way that excuses were found in the Gospels for the Church's behaviour is the following from Augustine on *John* xiii. 2-9.

Our Lord then had bags, in which he kept the oblations of the faithful, to supply the wants of his own followers or the poor. Here is the first institution of ecclesiastical property. Our Lord shows that his commandment not to think of the morrow does not mean that the saints should never save money, but that they should not neglect the service of God for it, or let the fear of want tempt them to injustice.³¹

Nothing could be further from the emotion of primitive Christianity. Any contact with money was there accursed, since it was money, the very existence of money, which was conceived as holding back the great Reversal. Sell all thou hast. Trust to be fed as the birds are. There could be no question of taking off a few hours from the service of God to deal with money-matters, since the meaning of the service of God was to reject money and money-value in entirety.

The betrayal of the original impulse is thus complete. And yet there could have been no other result. It was the terrific uncompromising revolutionary impulse in primitive Christianity which enabled it to grip the souls of the dispossessed and set up its concept of unity against the state-unity of the *Romanum Imperium*. In history the revolutionary impulse, being cloven through by impossibility of actualization at that stage of things, could only operate by setting on one side the sense of unity, and on the other an acceptance of the bad frame of things as an irresistible evil. As the Church began to draw in all kinds of cultural forces and to become more and more enmeshed in social action, its function could only be fulfilled by the betrayal which we have sketched.

Once more the problem of the old prophets asserted itself. The declaration that if one gave up the money-nexus and trusted to the sense of unity, continually changed into its opposite: that God was the giver of all good things, and that the rich were therefore the men successful in grace. This problem was perfectly stated in the passage quoted from 2 *Corinthians* above; and it is a problem which goes to the roots of the contradictions in a class-society. It is the problem which insolubly vexed men as the conflict between Grace and Good Works. If one trusts wholly to Grace, the sense of unity, how can one be prolific in Good Works, which are devices of the Law?

This dilemma is well shown by the following comment made by Chrysostom on the passage from *John* which we have seen Augustine using to defend church property:—

How was it that he who forbade scrip and staff and money, carried bags for the relief of the poor? It was to show thee that even the very poor, those who are crucified to this world, ought to attend to this duty.³²

prime importance in making Christianity palatable in the educated classes of the later Empire. "In Clement's day the proportion of the Church's wealthier members was tending to increase. . . . Origen's . . . wealthy patroness, and his later friend, Ambrosius, belonged to the same class. Carpophorus, with the aid of Callistus, carried on a considerable business as banker for the faithful at Rome, where persons, distinguished for their wealth, were coming over to the Church in considerable numbers." *Clement of Alex.*, by R. B. Tointon, i. 305.

³¹ *Tr.* lxii. 5.

³² *Hom.* lxxii. 2. To show the wavering attitudes over this question of money we might instructively take all the passages giving us information as to how the primitive Christians

It would be hard to find such a confused statement. The poor are the Crucified. That is a statement perfectly in key with the primitive elements we have analysed. The primitive duty was to make restitution of all things and join the ranks of the poor oneself. Chrysostom says that the flagrant contradiction of making the master who forbade all dealings with money carry money himself, is only a way of saying that the poor must give alms to one another. But that would be true only if all men, or at least all Christians, had made entire restitution and reduced themselves to the ordered status of salvation. Then they would need to look after one another, to actualize unity in method and relationship both. But is this the lesson which the preacher draws? No, he merely moralizes over alms and lays an extra-burden on the poor.

VII.—REDEMPTION

We have seen in the terms Creed, Faith and Sacrament the development of a similar pattern. An Oath-object becomes a "spiritual reality," which saves the worshipper from a threatening world. By finding identity with this "higher reality," the sufferer escapes the present, the unworthy actuality. The process shown in these three terms finds its concentration in the idea of Redemption.

Redemptio meant a "buying-off or a buying-back." *Redimere* meant in particular to buy the freedom of a "war-prisoner or a slave." Redemption had as its primary social colour the notion of being bought out of slavery. A secondary meaning is worth mention. To buy oneself out of military service was *redemptio sacramenti*; the redemption of the oath of allegiance to the State of Force.

We are not surprised then when we find central in all early Christianity the belief in Christ's blood as the redemption expressing itself as the belief that the blood had "purchased" the release of the suffering individual. "The belief that the Redemption was essentially an act by which man was bought by God from the Devil prevailed among theologians during the first ten centuries of Christianity. It was accepted by S. Irenæus, by Origen, by S. Augustine."³³ In Greco-Roman society the slave could purchase his redemption (if his master followed the custom, not legally binding, of allowing him to accumulate savings); or the master might follow the common custom of releasing all his household-slaves or his favourites by his will. The death of the master was then the literal redemption of the slave. The terrible mass-yearning for the escape from the whole oppressive weight of a slave-economy is reflected in the idiom of Redemption.

But underlying this idiom there is also the whole animistic psychology, which appears in full primitive form in the notion of the External Soul; the notion that the "real self" could be cut out and located in an external object, the caul or a stone. This notion is allied with the belief that the "real self" was lost at birth; and the search of the sufferer for his lost-self links up with the search for the lost birthright, the clue to transformation, which we have sketched above. The imagery of the birth-trauma become merged with the sense of social loss, above all with the sense of loss

lived; their reputed community of goods. I do not mean that one can place much historical trust in such a work as *Acts*; but the varying statements are of value as showing the veering impulses and tendencies in this matter. It is clear that men understood that some form of Communism was the only legitimate method of life in response to the Gospel injunctions; but in the absence of any method of actualization the impulses towards Communism could only express themselves as extreme generosity in alms to all needy brethren. When a writer like Tertullian speaks of community of living, he certainly means only that the needy were looked after.

³³ *The Gospel History and its Transmission*, F. C. Burkitt.

of the land (the mother earth). We have no space here to analyse the complicated mechanism of substitutions involved in these developments; but it is necessary to point out how the increasing sense of loss creates the hope of finding fulfilment of identification with some form of the "external soul." The desire for the scapegoat, the *pharmakos*, clots into the image of the vicarious redeemer.

In this development Christianity was no different from the other saviour-cults, especially those of Osiris, Attis, Osiris, Orpheus and Dionysus Zagreus, in which the peasant's sense of loss had been expressing itself for centuries. The ritual aspects of Christianity can all be reduced to the common denominator of the general saviour-cult. What cannot be reduced is the new concentration in terms of the claims of the poor, as analysed above.

JACK LINDSAY.

(To be concluded)

Memory and Blasphemy

"CURIOUS thing, memory," remarked my friend Bloggs, after taking his first sip of the whisky that had been served to him—"Yes, and blasphemy," he added.

"Possibly," I said; "But why do you pair them up?" "That's what I propose to tell you," he replied. "It's about the story I heard illustrating the waywardness of memory. And the curiosity of this story is that when I've told it in mixed company—I don't mean males and females, but Theists and Atheists—it has always got the Theists divided between themselves as to whether it is blasphemous or not."

"Ah, that should be interesting," I prompted.

"Well, the story goes like this. A banquet is held, at which certain 'lions' are being entertained. It has been arranged that the gentleman presiding shall open the proceedings with a few words of welcome and introduction. He is a benevolent old boy, and well up with the times in general knowledge and so forth. But he has an atrocious memory for names. It is a one-way traffic-system, so to speak. Give him a name, and he can tell you the achievements that made it famous. But give him achievements, and he's stumped for names.

"So he is provided with a written list of names, and his neighbours have duplicates from which to prompt him. For his sight is none too good, and he can only read through his pince-nez, which sometimes dangles elusively on its ribbon when he reaches for it in the course of any impromptu remarks he may be making. Add to this that he is slightly deaf, and you have the cardinal points of the story.

"This is how it goes. I cite names to illustrate it. Any names will do for this purpose, because, between you and me, its authenticity is not clearly established.

"Well, here it is. The guests are assembled and the chairman rises:—

"Ladies and gentlemen,—it is my privilege to-night to bid a hearty welcome to our guests of honour in your name. I will make brief mention of those who have been able to accept our invitation and are now present.

"Firstly, we have Mr. —."

"Here he fumbles for his pince-nez, while his neighbours to right and left whisper up to him behind cupped hands.

"— Mr. Bernard, er, er — (aside) thank you, thank you (to the audience) Bernard Shaw, Mr. Bernard Shaw—(here he lowers his pince-nez and sweeps the audience with a bland smile like a searchlight)— 'whose brilliant plays, prefaces and other literary achievements have made his name a household word in the four quarters of the globe.' (Hear hear, and loud applause.)

"Secondly, we have Mr. —er— Mr. H. G. — H.G. (interval for pince-nez and prompting as before) oh, yes, yes—thank you—Mr. H. G. Wells (another sweep of the smile) whose visions of things to come are being

fulfilled in contemporary events with the same exactitude as that with which, presently, the items on the menu are going to be translated into material symbols of hospitality and means of subsistence.' (Loud laughter and applause.)

"Next, we have Miss, er, er — Greta (interval for more peering and prompting)—Garbo, yes, yes, thank you, Greta Garbo, whose histrionic genius hangs in the firmament of fame with the brilliance of the Star of Bethlehem.' (Respectful silence punctuated with sporadic bursts of applause.)

"Now, then," continued Bloggs, taking another sip of whisky," the old boy ploughs through the list in the manner, and I will skip forward to the end.

"And now," proceeds the chairman, 'the last—but indeed not the least—name is that of our very dear friend on my right here, the Bishop of — er—er (business as before) oh yes, Boloney—the Bishop of Boloney, whose learned dissertations on Christian evidences have done as much to stem the tide of infidelity as any other efforts in any other quarters. I will not embarrass him by any elaboration of his masterly achievement, for he likes to do good by stealth, and we must spare his blushes.' (Polite applause.) 'Ladies and gentlemen, my pleasurable task is now completed, and I will stand no longer between you and the *hors d'œuvre*, which the waiters, I observe, are ready to administer to you. There remains however, what I may call a spiritual *hors d'œuvre*, which I am sure you will agree should take precedence over the material one—I mean Grace before Meat. Accordingly I will call upon our Right Reverend friend, the Bishop of Boloney, to ask for a blessing on our proceedings in the name of the Lord—er—er—' (Here a prolonged pause, during which the chairman fumbles for his pince-nez, while the Bishop tugs and whispers at him with increasing agitation). '— pardon—oh, of course, of course, thank you, thank you —' (and then, out loud to the audience with a benevolent sweep of smile, arm and pince-nez, embracing the entire assemblage) "— our Lord — er — JESUS CHRIST."

"There's one thing," I said, "about this story of yours that I believe, and that is that it couldn't have happened."

"Never mind that," said Bloggs, with a twinkle in his eyes "the point is whether the story is blasphemous. What's your reaction?"

"Well," I said, after a pause, "it isn't really blasphemous, but yet it sounds blasphemous."

"Precisely," ejaculated Bloggs in triumph. "You've said it. And there is one thing that makes me purr at the thought of, and that would be if this story were to be printed, and the publisher proceeded against. Can't you hear Counsel for Christendom trying to unravel the structure of the story —"

"Well, why not try it and see," I challenged him.

"I might. But I am too lazy to write it. How about you? Have a shot. You talk so little that you ought to write easily."

"Very well, I'll try," I said.

"Good man," said Bloggs, "and if you can plant it on a publisher all the drinks shall be on me when we meet again. Now — just one for the road, and we'll have to be moving."

Well, I have written the story, and am now waiting to know if the drinks are going to be on Bloggs.

THOMAS DALTON.

Child: "Daddy, how do you know what to put down on the paper?"

Minister (writing his sermon): "God tells me."

Child: "But daddy, if God tells you what to write, why do you go back and scratch out so much?"

Little Jackie: What are prayers, Mummy?

Mother: Why they're little messages to God, son.

Jackie: Do we send them at night to get the cheaper rates?

Acid Drops

The following from Dr. H. D. C. Major, the well-known Modernist, and editor of *The Modern Churchman*, is taken from the issue of that journal for July 22, in which Dr. Major deals with the outcry against the World Union of Freethinkers Congress, which will be held in London in September:—

The issue raised, like so many of the issues "which touch our ease," is a mixed one. Some who are altogether in favour of the use of reason in the sphere of religion are not in favour of the public raising of acute religious controversy, nor are they in favour of the dissemination of the startling utterances of anti-religious propagandists in the popular press.

On the other hand Christians who claim rightly that the spirit of truth and the spirit of freedom combined with the spirit of love are the very essence of the religion of Christ, have to exercise extraordinary care that they do not place their religion in an attitude of opposition to the free exercise of reason. This is the more needful to-day because in her long history and in so many countries, e.g., Russia, Italy and Spain, the Christian Church has again and again shown herself the enemy of both freedom and truth.

If the Bolshevik and his anti-God comrades have as their motto: Religion is the opiate of the people, they have had much experience to justify their conclusion. Too often religion has been not only on the side of intellectual and moral stagnation, but it has been on the side of ecclesiastical and political oppression.

What Christian England needs when faced with such a dilemma as that which the Congress of Freethinkers presents is to grant the freedom claimed by the Freethinker with the request that as a responsible and rational being he will not permit liberty to degenerate into license. All the better organs in the British Press can be trusted to report such proceedings with discretion and a due sense of public welfare.

We cannot sufficiently stress the urgent import of this occasion. If the Christian Church in this land would concern herself with demanding the acceptance of only the great simplicities of the Christian religion as needful for membership and office in her communion and would purge her teaching and public worship from obscurantist and superstitious elements—"that ancient good" which an increasing knowledge of the truth has rendered "uncouth"—she would have nothing serious to fear even from anti-God Congresses.

Dr. Major adds some curious talk that "the serious and conscientious Freethinker ought to have his place within the Church," but with that we are not concerned. The idea that modern Freethinkers can have a place inside the Christian Church does not betray a very close acquaintance, or a very satisfactory knowledge of modern Freethought, although it may please some who shrink from the name of "Freethinker," while that name remains unpopular. We do not see how any religious body, that is, genuinely religious body, can have nothing to fear from Freethought. It has. But that has nothing to do with the real issue, which is whether any form of opinion should be suppressed so long as it is expressed with due regard to ordinary decency. And when it is unmistakably not so expressed, the ordinary law as it stands at present can deal with it. It is the question of the right to express anti-religious opinions that is at issue, and great as is the expressed sympathy of Sir Samuel Hoare to suppress it, we do not think he would dare to make the attempt on this occasion.

From the *Edinburgh Evening Times*, *apropos* of the Roman Catholic appeal to the Government to suppress the Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers:—

THE "GODLESS" CONFERENCE

O that the guid auld days were here
When men, inspired by godly fear,
Huntit the heretic far an' near
For his ain sake,
An' cut his blasphemous career
Aff—at the stake!

When through the Kirk th' Almighty spak'
Wi' red-hot pincers, wi' the rack,
Thumbscrew an' wheel-machines to mak'
The unbeliever

Forswear his unbelief an' tak'
Releegious fever!

Could we no' gi'e the "godless crew"
A taste o' that auld-fashiont brew?
(A Campbell, we maun a' allow,
Th' affair could han'le it!)
A second St. Bartholomew
This side the Channel!

DAVID WILSON.

The glorification of the Methodist Church on the recent occasion of Wesley's bi-centenary, is now fading away. Methodists are beginning to realize that no new Wesley has appeared, or that if he did he could galvanize a 1938 crowd into believing the nonsense which was "the undisputed faith" of Christians in 1738. Meanwhile the following facts (taken from the current *Methodist Recorder* article by the Rev. Aldom French), will show what Methodism is up against:—

All the Conferences since the Union of 1932 reported decreases as follows:—

	Membership	Sunday Schools
1933	2,682	28,134
1934	5,451	38,384
1935	1,524	62,613
1936	6,028	64,256
1937	8,531	66,625
1938	3,564	49,000

It needs only simple arithmetic to enable the followers of Wesley to calculate how soon the end will come if these figures represent the facts. We believe they underestimate the present tendencies in all the churches.

Dr. Rhondda Williams has been considering the question of God's "invisibility." He quotes the contradictory texts: "No man can see God," "No man hath seen God"—and "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." He omits to quote the text that Moses and other people saw God face to face and talked with Him. He explains why men believe in a God they cannot see. He says the human mind would never have made the effort to conceive God if there had been no Reality behind this conception. It is an old "apology" for God. But the same argument tends equally to prove the Reality of pink rhinoceroses with blue wings and red teeth. Dr. Williams's further argument that man's idea of perfection ("the pressure in his life towards perfection") "is a proof that a larger life than our own is impinging upon us." One might as well argue that tomorrow's weather depends on what we want it to be.

The *Catholic Herald* reports that the "Anti-God Congress" is "causing great indignation," in Gibraltar, and the Roman Catholic Bishop is asking for signatures to a protest against its being permitted. Well, well! We recall the fact that it took the Bishop's Church 200 years officially to admit that the earth went round the sun, but it did so, nevertheless. The Roman Church has about as much chance of stopping the Congress as it has of sending the sun once again travelling round the earth.

Cardinal Innitzer, who so warmly welcomed the German Nazis in Austria, and advised his flock to support its inclusion in the German Reich, is up in arms against the new Nazi Marriage Laws. They will affect nearly 75,000 Austrian marriages as well as about 250,000 children. The reason for this is that just after the war when the Socialists were in power, they passed a law allowing divorced people to re-marry. These marriages were later prohibited and made illegal retrospectively by Dr. Dollfuss. They remained illegal under Dr. Schuschnigg, and the Catholic Church was delighted. Now they have become legal again, and pious Catholics in Austria are beginning to see that the "Paganism" behind the Nazis will be as fatal to their religion as it is to liberty of all kinds. One would like to know what Cardinal Innitzer thinks now of Hitler and his gang.

As would be expected the *Church Times* is violently opposed to the new German marriage laws, and says that one would have expected them from Hitler had he been brought up "in a Freethinking set in a Protestant

town in Prussia." Whether Hitler is responsible or not for the new laws we do not know; but the truth is that Hitler is a Catholic, and we doubt very much whether he has completely outgrown his early religious beliefs. But we are quite ready to admit that whatever is good in the new marriage laws may be due to "Freethinking." Marriage is and should be a civil contract, and divorce should be permitted whenever the parties are unsuitable, or from other legally stated cause, Jesus or the Church notwithstanding. There is no compulsion on any religious person tied to an incurable lunatic to sue for divorce, and those who decline divorce on any grounds whatever will be free to indulge in their fancy.

Nothing could better illustrate the fundamentally anti-social character of the Roman Catholic Church than the outburst of the Roman Catholic preacher, Father Delaney, head of the English Dominicans, in a sermon at Westminster Cathedral on Sunday last, on the verdict of "not guilty" in connexion with the Dr. Bourne case. The common judgment of all decent-minded men and women was in agreement with the doctor's action in bringing about abortion. It was a brave action since it might have had serious consequences to his professional standing. But the Roman Church will have none of it. It holds that it is a woman's task to bear children, that nothing may be done—openly—to prevent a child coming to birth, the soul of the child is "the immediate creation of God," and to prevent the birth of a child is murder. Such people as these priests, whether they are in power or not have their power curtailed, are a greater danger to the community than the professional criminal.

Father Delaney said that "members of the jury who had any religious convictions were invited to leave the jury-box, Catholics and others with Christian principles were considered unfit to act as jurors in such a trial." These Roman Catholic advocates, whether laymen or priests cannot be trusted to speak the truth in the simplest matters that affect their creed. What the judge did was common in many trials—if any jurymen had already made up his mind, or if he had strong prejudices that would prevent him acting with impartiality, he was permitted to leave. That is as it should be, and judges often decline a case for much the same reasons. It was to secure an unprejudiced trial that the judge acted. He would have been unfit for his post had he acted otherwise. Father Delaney would have probably packed the jury-box with Catholics.

But we agree with the substance of Father Delaney's statement. If the judge thought that where religion is concerned Roman Catholics and people with strong Christian principles were not to be trusted to act justly, we agree with him. History agrees with him. Life agrees with him. Undiluted Christian principles never act with fair play; they cannot act with fair play, because it is part of the historic Christian practice that the other side ought not to be heard, that Christians alone must decide how non-Christians shall act, and how far they shall be allowed to speak. If Father Delaney goes on letting the cat out of the bag he will soon be barred from Roman Catholic pulpits.

Fifty Years Ago

CANON WILBERFORCE says he wants to separate beer and Bible, gin and Gospel, parson and port. He will have his work before him. Mohammed separated alcohol from the Alcoran by a simple but effective prohibition. If the wine-bibber Christ had desired a similar separation why did he not prohibit strong drink?

Canon Wilberforce also complains that two Dublin cathedrals were built out of the profits on beer and whisky. Very likely; but the Canon should not look too closely into such matters. Three-fourths of Church property was obtained by frightening dying sinners out of their wits.

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THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FOR Circulating and Advertising the *Freethinker*.—L. H. Bury, 5s.; D. Fisher, 4s.

G. ADDY.—The only edition of the *Bible Romances*, by G. W. Foote is that published by the Pioneer Press at 2s. 6d. We agree with you, it is a very powerful piece of writing.

H. THOMPSON.—We know of nothing that would alter the standpoint taken up with regard to Spiritualism in our *Other Side of Death*. There is no scientific evidence for Spiritualism. There are only the beliefs of certain scientists, and testimony of a kind that was once produced to justify the existence of witches and devils. But scientists are not science. Science must build on evidence that can be repeated, and so clearly separated from delusion or worse. When one takes from Spiritualism all that is due to fraud, illusion, the operation of abnormal mental states, etc., there is so little left that it looks ridiculous in face of the gigantic claims made for it.

W. W. SMITH and E. W. WESTMORELAND.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers paper being sent for four weeks.

J. HAYES.—We are obliged for papers. They are being used, and retained for use in the future. It may one day be useful to compile a history of the agitation against the holding of the Congress in this country.

D. W. STRANG (Leeds).—We are obliged for paper. We know nothing whatever of the matter, and it is not one in which we are in a position to make enquiries.

W. BARRETT.—Pleased to hear from another of the old stalwarts. Unquestionably the factor you name plays a part in the German Government's hostility to the Church. But a more serious consideration is that if Hitlerism is to create the complete Slave State, every form of thinking that is not under State control must be completely controlled. And it must begin with the child. The Roman Church is actually in complete agreement with this policy, with but very slight modifications, but its international aspect prevents it being worked out as logically.

J. ALMOND.—Thanks for the suggestion, but the article would be, in form though not in fact, a little out of date just now. We may return to the subject presently.

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. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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Sugar Plums

We must ask the indulgence of some of our correspondents this week, but Mr. Cohen has been taking a five-days holiday, although not free from work, and there was a frightening number of things needing attention when he returned. However, all will be dealt with in due course. We must leave the rest to the good nature of our readers.

The *Church Times* reports that it has been asked by the British Empire Union, whether it can rely upon the support of the *Church Times* to help in bringing pressure on the Government to suppress the Conference. The *Church Times* has replied that it cannot, and more that it will "do everything in our power to oppose any such campaign." It adds that "it is a poor sort of a religion that falls down in a faint at the mere blast of an Atheist trumpet." Quite so, and while congratulating the *Church Times* on its sense of fairness, we would, with all gentleness, point out that the blast of the Atheist trumpet has before now shown itself as powerful as the fabled trumpets that were blown before Jericho.

Meanwhile, we may remind our readers that the programme for the Congress is now almost complete. Applications for tickets, as announced in last week's issue of the *Freethinker* are now coming in rapidly, and it looks as though many may have to be refused. We may again repeat the main facts. The reception on the evening of September 9, is open to Freethinkers only, and admission is by ticket. This is also the case with the business meetings of the Congress held on September 10, 11, and 12. There will be a limited number of reserved seats for the Public Demonstration held on the evening of September 11. Tickets for the Dinner at the Trocadero Restaurant on the evening of September 12, will be 10s. 6d. each. The price of the railway ticket to the meeting that will be held at the grave of Charles Bradlaugh on September 13 is 2s. Applications for tickets may be made to the Organizing Committee of Congress of the World Union of Freethinkers, Johnson's Court, E.C.; from the Offices of the National Secular Society, or from the *Freethinker* Office, 68 and 61, respectively, Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

One lives and learns. A Mr. C. C. Lewis enquires in the *Weekly Review* for July 14, asking if the International Congress "is not in any way connected with Communism," why "those Fascists or Nazis who are also Freethinkers are not going to take part in it." So far as we are concerned we have never heard of any Freethinker who is a Fascist or Nazi, and we are quite certain they would have a short life and anything but a merry one if they showed themselves in either Italy or Germany. The Freethought movement has room for all sorts of opinions on all sorts of subjects. But it has no room for those who believe in the absolute denial of the right to think and speak and write for or against any opinion or institution. The Freethought movement is for men and women, not for performing animals.

In *The Outline of Rationalism*, Mr. Chandra Chakraberty has compressed a mass of information rarely found in so small a compass as 132 pages. His précis of physics, astronomy, evolution, and science in general, together with a very full account of the story of mankind—considering the limitations of space—is excellently put; and his chapters on education, marriage, love and the family, are in line with the latest in modern thought. Mr. Chakraberty must have read widely—and what is more to the point—and well. His last chapter, on the "Freedom of the mind," shows his uncompromising Freethought, as when he says that "religion becomes the refuge of the intellectually ignorant who cannot understand natural laws, or of moral cowards who cannot face the realities of life." Unfortunately the little book has a number of misprints, and certainly some errors of fact which, fortunately, do not affect the main thesis of the author. But if the *Outline of Rationalism* was more carefully edited, it would prove an excellent handbook for Freethinkers. It is published by Messrs. Vijaya Krishna, Bros., 31 Vivekananda Road, Calcutta, at a price of one rupee.

Those who like propaganda served up in a comic guise may find *L'Arche de Noé*, by H. Gillard, to their liking. The author takes the sacred narrative, as related in the Holy Bible, of Noah and his Ark and, writing it up again in modern—and slangy—French, reconstructs what may have happened. He allows his imagination full play, and

does his best to show the utter absurdities with which the Bible is abundantly strewn. Whether M. Gillard is successful depends on the reader. Some crude drawings accompany the little work which recall Leo Taxil's *La Bible Amusante*. *L'Arche de Noé* may be had from the author at 13 Avenue des Gerfaux, Boitsforts, Brussels, Belgium, for five francs.

The Sunderland Branch N.S.S., which does useful work in a number of directions, will have Mr. G. Whitehead speaking for them each evening for the week commencing July 31. The circulation of literature is an important part of our propaganda, and a supply of Pioneer Press publications will be available at all the meetings.

The Praying Mantis

It was God, in his passion for infinite variety, who made the insects, and if, in his heart of hearts, he had a favourite child, it was surely the Praying Mantis (or the *Mantis Religiosa*, Lin.). God has told us, in his kindly way, to go to the ant, consider her ways and be wise. If useful lessons are derivable from the ant, such should follow from a study of any of God's creatures. They are all special creations, and it is ridiculous to suppose, despite the number and variety of specimens, that Jehovah, like Homer, ever nodded. It is difficult for omniscience and omnipotence to nod. Let us go to the Praying Mantis, therefore, and note special points, not only for emulation, but for correction and reproof. The most noticeable feature in connexion with this insect is its pose. In its characteristic attitude, its forearms are raised as if in supplication to the heavens above. The Mantis is representative therefore of *prayerfulness*, the quality that God likes best. This lesson is plain enough for those who run to read, and the name of the creature furnishes proof of this. The Praying Mantis has been designed according to God's wishes; God's plan has not been thwarted in their case by giving them *Free Will* which, in a moment of inadvertence, he is said to have given to you and me. 'This has enabled you and me to trifle more than a little with the plans of the All Knowing and play the deuce with all his intentions save his Vengeance—which is, alas, inescapable.

The praying Mantis belongs to the Orthoptera, and although the Orthoptera are vegetarians, this insect is an exception. In fact, it lives exclusively on living things. It is helped by God to secure its prey by almost perfect methods of concealment; in appearance, it is like a twig with a branch or two attached. Its head turns as if on a swivel, and it is the only insect that can direct its gaze. And special facilities have been given to it for butchering.

Observe, now, one of God's crickets wandering about looking for food. There is a convulsion in its path. The Mantis has appeared with a jerk—but not in its prayerful pose. It stands vertically on its four hind claws, a creature four or five inches high. Its fore arms are opened fully, forming, appropriately, a sign of the cross with its body. The cricket is so surprised that it forgets to use its main protective device (with which God furnished it) of leaping. The Mantis shoots out the talons of the forearms and drags its victim back between its thighs. God has made the thighs of the Mantis ever so cleverly. They are like two saw blades fitting one into the other. The cricket is held in this particularly effective form of vice, and struggling becomes useless. The meal of the Mantis can at once start. It is God's reward for the prayers of the Mantis; prayerfulness is a fine quality, and we have always been told, is something that God encourages and rewards liberally.

The Mantis does not live on crickets alone. It has

an armoury so irresistible that it can overcome creatures much larger and much more formidable looking than itself. It can even feed, by the Grace of God, on the Ephigera (which carries a sword in its abdomen) and other terrible creatures. God has made numerous weird creatures and furnished them with wondrous methods of defence, but the day he made the Praying Mantis he excelled himself. True, he negated by so doing, much of his previous ingenuity. Even Omnipotence, it would appear, gets better and better. It is a curious game this upsetting of one's own work. It would be tiring to anyone falling short of omnipotence. A limited brain, as well, might even fail to see any sense in the process.

It is clear, therefore, that if we consider the Mantis, the first thing we learn therefrom is the usefulness of prayer. But there are other things that appear on scrutiny. The creature is a prototype of the institution of Holy Matrimony. Let us see how God handled this delicate question in his younger days.

The male and the female Mantis are attracted to one another as is common in all God's creatures, and the result of the attraction is the fertilization of the female. On the same day, his usefulness having come to an end, the female seizes her partner and gnaws through the back of his neck. She then eats him up, the wings being the only part that remain uneaten.

Fabre at this point experimentally introduced another male to the female. This was made welcome by the female, both for his embrace and the subsequent feast. The same thing happens to a third and fourth. "In the course of two weeks," wrote Fabre, "I have seen the same Mantis treat seven husbands in this fashion." Once he surprised a male "holding the female tightly embraced—but he had no head, no neck, scarcely any thorax! The female, her head turned over her shoulder, was peacefully browsing on the remains of her lover! And the masculine remnant, firmly anchored, continued its duty!"*

"Once the ovaries are satisfied the two species of Mantis conceive an antipathy for the male; or rather they regard him merely as a particularly nasty species of game."

Some ultra-feminists will perhaps see a kind of rough logic in the attitude of the female Mantis: But before the male appears on the scene the females attack and devour *each other*.

There are threats, horrid encounters, and cannibal feasts. Once more the spectral pose is seen, the hissing of the wings, and the terrible gesture of the talons outstretched and raised above the head. The two females could not look more terrible before a grey cricket or a Decticus. Without any motives that I could see, two neighbours suddenly arose in the attitude of conflict. . . . Then one of the grappling hooks with a sudden spring flies out and strikes the rival; with the same suddenness it flies back and assumes a position of guard. At the first sign of blood on the soft abdomen, or even at the slightest wound, one admits herself to be conquered and retires. . . .

Very often the matter turns out more tragically. In duel to the death the pose of attack is assumed in all its beauty. The murderous talons unfold and rise in the air. Woe to the vanquished! for the victor seizes her in her vice-like grip and at once commences to eat her; beginning, needless to say, at the back of the neck. The odious meal proceeds as calmly as if it were merely a matter of munching a grasshopper; and the survivor enjoys her sister quite as much as lawful game. The spectators do not protest, being only too willing to do the like on the first occasion.

Go to the Praying Mantis, be thou sluggard or otherwise, consider her ways, and come to the right conclusions.

T. H. FLSTOB.

* See *Social Life in the Insect World*, Pelican Books, 6d.

The Conversion of the Saxons to Christ

The Romans introduced the Christian faith into Britain during the later stages of their occupation of the island. But with the Saxon invasion and settlement in south-eastern Britain, this Oriental cult was driven with its adherents into Cornwall, then known as West Wales, and into what is now the Principality itself. There the religion survived as a blend with a more archaic Celtic cult.

The later conversion of the Anglo-Saxons by missionaries from Rome was naturally accompanied by a partial restoration of Pagan civilization and culture. Traditions of Rome's former glories lingered in Britain, and this doubtless assisted the Mediterranean evangelists much as the prestige of the modern European impresses the native races of Africa.

Odin and Thor worship was the religion of our Scandinavian and Saxon ancestors. Unlike the cult of Christ this was not a fearsome faith. The Nordic warriors and pirates troubled themselves little concerning their souls' salvation. Their priests exercised small authority and the tribal attitude was distinctly masculine in its idealization of heroic actions on land or sea. Sincerity and fidelity in comradeship, and a robust, if rude code of honour were esteemed. Cowardice, desertion and false witness were deemed more reprehensible than homicide itself, and were more severely penalized by public opinion.

In remote Continental regions human sacrifices sporadically survived, but were apparently unknown in Saxon England, although animal oblations were customary. These offerings were accompanied with feasting and revelry, and were afterwards converted into Church feasts and ales.

In his brilliant *History of England* (Longmans, 1937), that eminent writer, Professor G. M. Trevelyan notes the pronounced distinction between Teutonic heathendom and Christianity, in their concepts of life and death: "Instead of covering its temples with frescoes of the tortures of the damned, it taught people not to be afraid of death. Its ideal was the fellowship of the hero with the gods, not merely in feasting and victory, but in danger and defeat. For the gods too are in the hands of fate, and the Scandinavian vision of the twilight of the gods that was to end the world, showed the heroes dying valiantly in the last hopeless fight against the forces of chaos—loyal and fearless to the last. . . . It contains those elements of character which it was the special mission of the Nordic peoples to add to modern civilization and to Christianity itself."

If this dauntless attitude lacked the more sentimental virtues, it was completely devoid of that persecuting spirit which has ever disgraced the chronicles of Christendom. No Roman emissary was ever maltreated, much less martyred by the heathen Saxons. Moreover, Teutonic heathendom, as the late York Powell termed it, supported no organized sacerdotalism which might have combated the Roman missionaries. Thus, the British Isles ultimately succumbed to the blandishments and spiritual terrors of the foreign faith some four centuries before the old Norse divinities were finally dethroned in the Scandinavian peninsula itself.

According to Catholic tradition a Jew named Peter became the first Pope. Historically, however, the earliest Pontiff of pronounced ability was Gregory the Great, who, amid the ruins of Imperial Rome undertook the task of restoring an impoverished and discredited episcopacy to something resembling prosperity. This objective he attained in little more than

a decade. An opulent Roman patrician, the future Pope early displayed marked administrative capacity as Prefect of the Eternal City, and he was the prelate who despatched Augustine and his adherents to Britain to evangelize the Pagan Anglo-Saxons.

The wife of Ethelbert of Kent was already a Frankish convert, so Augustine found a friend at court. The King, and, of course, his courtiers, accepted the new cult, but it is erroneous to suppose that Augustine converted the country, for, beyond the Kingdom of Kent, progress was extremely slow. Moreover, the missionaries were banished from London after a short stay there, for its citizens were impenitently Pagan. This explains the circumstance that Canterbury became the metropolitan see, instead of the City on the Thames.

King Edwin of Northumbria was also blessed with a Christian wife, and this monarch's conversion by Paulinus was so far the most notable missionary success outside the borders of Kent. Northumbria being the most powerful kingdom in England, this conversion seemed to have turned the scale. But the court's adoption of the Roman faith made little impression on the people, and for at least a generation the position of the Church varied with the victories or defeats of ever warring kingdoms or the inclinations of contending rulers.

Penda the Mercian monarch, treated the introduced cult with contempt, and two Northumbrian Kings who warred against him were slain on the battle-field. Still, Penda was not a persecutor, and any of his subjects were at liberty to listen to the preachers or even to become converted to the cult of the cross. But, as Bede tells us, Penda did not conceal his scorn when the converts' lives belied their pious professions, while the Christians, when they rose to power, pursued with diabolical animosity the remaining adherents of the native divinities.

Professor Trevelyan notes the ironical circumstance that: "Penda's allies against Northumbria were the Christian Welsh under their King Cadwallon, savage mountaineers who revenged the wrongs of their race on the Northumbrian Christians with a cruelty far exceeding that of the heathens of Mercia against their brother Saxons."

Despite the religious revival, the period continued one of rapine and slaughter. Constant warfare occasioned the decline of Northumbria, while expanding Mercia encroached on the territories of several minor kingdoms in Middle and East Anglia, and even drove powerful Wessex to the south of the Thames. Still, a reduced Northumbria retained its independence until the Viking invasion and maintained its supremacy in art and letters during the era of Cuthbert and Bede.

In the seventh century Aidan arrived in Northumbria, which still embraced much of the Scottish Lowlands, to restore the faith that had been shattered during Penda's campaigns. Melrose monastery became the centre from which the Lothians were evangelized. In emulation of the religious house of St. Aidan of Iona, the celebrated monastery at Lindisfarne was planned and erected on Holy Island, where Aidan was appointed both Abbot and Bishop.

The energetic and enterprising monks of Iona recovered a relapsed Northumbria, reconverted Essex and brought Mercia to its knees. Hermits from far-away Ireland arrived in Sussex to implore and persuade its still heathen inhabitants to repent and save their imperilled souls. But the earlier enthusiasm waned, and the clergy in Northumbria and elsewhere declined in virtue and esteem. This, however, proved unimportant at a period when the Roman system had become so skilfully organized that the sincerity and zeal of monks and missionaries were no longer valued.

Also, the signal success of Aidan and his disciples

restored and intensified the rivalry of the Celtic and Roman Churches. While the former Church confined its ministrations to remote Celtic districts, Rome practically ignored its existence. But, as soon as the contending Churches competed in missionary labours in Saxon England, a settlement of disputed claims became imperative. The Celtic Christians celebrated Easter at a different date to that recognized in Rome, and this and other futilities, including the correct form of priestly tonsure became the cause of furious fulmination. Still, the real reason for this bitter controversy appears to have been the disinclination of the Welsh and Saxon persuasions to acknowledge the priority of Rome.

Then another Delilah appeared in the form of the Queen of Oswy, the ruler of Northumbria. Probably under Roman tutelage, her majesty undermined her spouse's adherence to the creed of Iona, which he had previously supported. Consequently, the King convened the Synod of Whitby in 644, where he himself decided in favour of Rome as the true representative of Christ. St. Cuthbert bowed to the royal judgment while the less subservient sectaries returned in high indignation to their twilight dwelling in Iona. But as the years rolled away, the whole of Britain accepted the headship of the Papacy.

In 669 Theodore of Tarsus became Archbishop of Canterbury, and his great organizing ability soon united all monastic and episcopal England into one body. This remarkable prelate was a cultured Greek, well acquainted with what classical scholarship still survived in Italy. Assisted by the Saxon, Bishop, Theodore and his associate Hadrian introduced a fair supply of much needed books into England.

The increasing Roman domination also led to the spreading of sacred music from Kent to the rest of the island and music, then as now, served to exercise a potent influence over the minds and emotions of the people. Stately stone structures imitated from Roman models, began to replace churches with timber walls and roofs made from reeds. So, "As the worship of Woden and Thor gradually died out, or was suppressed as devil worship by the intolerant laws, dictated by the victorious clergy, the whole population found its dearest associations in life and in death gathered round the parish church."

Inordinate desire for the possession of real estate soon asserted itself with the conversion and spiritual intimidation of Anglo-Saxon Kings. Alfred and Athelstan were strong rulers little influenced by the priests, but the puerile piety of Edward the Confessor, one of the weakest of English monarchs, is notorious. The fears inspired in many Saxon Kings concerning their souls' salvation or damnation, made them an easy prey to the machinations of the clergy. Rulers in Mercia and Wessex, and subsequently throughout Britain, were induced by their ghostly advisers to endow bishoprics and monasteries with an enormous proportion of the most productive soil. Again, as Trevelyan points out: "It was the clergy who first taught the Kings how to alienate the land and royal jurisdiction by written charters, for the benefit of feudal magnates, both lay and clerical. It was the clergy who taught Anglo-Saxon proprietors how to make written wills, and wills often enriched the Church." Or, as the great historian, Professor Maitland, remarked in his *Domesday and Beyond*: "Richly endowed churches mean a subjected peasantry."

Sedulously fostered by the priesthood, the superstitious terrors of rulers and ruled alike enabled the Church to exercise political influences of a far-reaching character. Powerful Kings abdicated their thrones to end their lives in monasteries, or in order to undertake wearisome pilgrimages to sacred shrines or

cities. The clerks in holy orders took every advantage of the fact that they were the only lettered class. Yet, the ancient heathen virtues never entirely disappeared, as the heroic achievements and intellectual triumphs of succeeding centuries prove. Although the priesthood of the pale Galilean remained so long in power, the Western World was not permanently prostrated by its threats of perdition or promises of paradise.

T. F. PALMER.

Interesting Things in the Bible

IF it had not been for the vagaries that led early Christian exponents to adopt as "true" a mass of old legends and other spurious matter, and led in later times to the establishment of the belief that the Bible was inspired, revealed and infallible, the book would doubtless long ago been recognized as of considerable interest and value. Of course it is so recognized by a small number of scholars and anthropological researchers, owing to the contribution it makes—when regarded critically, like any other book—to the history of civilization, including the history of thought; and this in the case of a community who, however objectionable in other ways, set down the earliest, fairly continuous historical writing we possess. But this aspect of the Bible is obviously quite absent from the minds of the great mass of bibliophiles; and in articles called forth by the great Bible boom we still note the statement, explicit or implicit, that the Bible book is "the Word of God."

However, apart from the more general anthropological aspect, there are a few passages of special interest to the student. The first of these is the story of the putting back of the sun *ten degrees*. In view of the hopelessly unintellectual character of the devotees of Jahweh, as contrasted with the interest in learning which was general among the early civilizations of the Orient, it is somewhat surprising to find the words here italicized. The passage concerned, as given in my Bible, is a model of clumsiness. "Behold I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down" (Isaiah xxxviii. 8). The passage suggests that at least one Hebrew writer had heard something of the science of the Babylonians. It will be remembered that this people divided the hour and minute into sixty parts and the circle into six parts, and these into sub-divisions, so as to make 360 degrees in all. The only other passage I can find which has any relation to science is the use of the word (which at the time would probably signify natural knowledge in general) in the following passage in Paul's writings: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and opposition of science falsely so called." More than one preacher I "sat under" during adolescence, put much emphasis on the last few words; and as I was then learning elementary science in school, the idea of conflict between religion and science was an uncomfortable puzzle to me for some years.

Another point of interest is the meeting of Paul with philosophers of the Stoic and Epicurean schools. We are told that they derided him, which is not surprising in view of the doctrines he preached. We do not hear anything of the doctrines the philosophers held. And Paul, with confidence worthy of a better cause, proceeded to tell them they were too superstitious (!) and then to "declare" unto them the unknown God they so ignorantly worshipped. Paul's

speech was, of course, theological; and the only point we can appreciate (when stripped of theology) is that all the nations of men are of one blood.

One wonders whether Paul knew that the Stoic philosophy, with its ethical basis, "sought the sphere and sanction of morality in a universal law of nature with equal rights and duties for all mankind . . . the Inhabited world, as the natural fatherland of the man who lived according to nature. Citizens of this state would meet on equal terms, whether rich or poor, bond or free" (F. S. Marvin, *The Living Past*).

The charge of St. Paul to Titus, the first Bishop of Crete—the site of one of the three earliest civilizations of the West and Near East—is not without interest. Here we note the word "heretick," apparently one who remains an unbeliever after the "first and second admonition." Paul's opinion of the Cretans is very outspoken—among them are many vain talkers, deceivers, false teachers; and it is added, "One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts and slow bellies."

The striking epithet, "slow bellies," may refer to the part of the body which the Hebrews thought was the seat of mentality, or at least of emotion and passion. This was the reins, the kidneys and the adjacent area, which were believed to be located in the lower part of the body—though, perhaps later, the heart was thought to be involved. Hence we find such passages as the following: "My reins shall rejoice," "My reins instruct me in the night," "God trieth the heart and reins," "My heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins."

J. REEVES.

The Human Fear of Death

In the extract from Professor Elis Essen-Moller's lecture, published in the *Freethinker* of June 5, he suggests that the fear of death may be due to bad education. This may be true insofar as it relates to an education in which religion has been included, for one of the many admonitions contained in its teachings is this: "It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God." I have occasionally discussed the subject of death with various Christians, and on asking them if they were afraid to die, have met with the response: "No! I don't want to die—I'm not ready yet!" This seemed a strange remark to make, and upon thinking it over I concluded that either (a) they were not living up to the tenets of their religion (which is very evident from the Christians one meets), or (b) it was an excuse to hide their real reason for not wishing to die. I have often wondered at the reluctance of Christians to meet their god and enjoy the eternal felicity promised them with such assurance by the black army, for when I was very young and very Catholic, it seemed an eternity to wait until I grew up and was old enough to die and enter into the joys of the Beatific Vision. I was even un-Christian enough to wish for a fatal illness which might transport me speedily to the pearly gates. In those far-off days, death seemed only to be associated with old age—it did not then occur to me that comparatively young people could be stricken with disease and fade away in the full flesh of their manhood or womanhood. But the passing years have left me sadder and wiser.

Even the highest paid among the present-day witch-doctors are not immune from this fear, for a certain Bishop, when told by his medical adviser that the end was not far off, shouted to that pained individual: "Then for Christ's sake get me a specialist!"

However, it seems to me that the fear of death is, in the great majority of cases, due to another cause, and I

suggest this to be the fear of losing someone we love as relating to the death of another person, or the fear of leaving behind a loved one, as relating to our own death. For this reason, I submit that the average person refuses to contemplate death because it is synonymous with pain. If it is our own death we reflect upon, there is the sense of aloneness which accompanies such reflection, for we have to die *alone*, no matter how many loved ones surround our bed, and this feeling of loneliness is in itself terrifying enough to most people, for so few are accustomed to being alone—*really* alone. If, on the other hand, it is death in relation to a loved one which terrifies us, such contemplation should not be indulged in too often, for it tends to cast a shadow over a present happiness, and makes the loss when it comes, no easier to bear. One needs to be a very, very great philosopher to accept the death of a loved one calmly, as the end of life, and it seems to me advisable to try and realize that this death we dread so much, must happen one day; the noblest attitude is to hope that Death will visit the loved one first, so that he will be spared the anguish of grieving for us.

In my opinion, apart from the Stoics, the only human beings who are unafraid to die are those for whom life no longer has any appeal. The man or woman whose life partner has departed to the Elysian Fields, taking with them the meaning of Life. The one who is left, struggles on until the end, existing rather than living, and counting each day as one nearer the end, one who is "chained to Time and cannot yet depart." Others, more courageous, seek the Great Liberator by their own hand. For such as these, Death has no terrors.

In conclusion, then, the most desirable form of death is death from old age, for then the senses become dulled, interest wanes, we grow more and more tired until:—

"As a fond mother when the day is o'er,
Leads by the hand her little child to bed
Half-willing, half-reluctant to be led
And leave his broken playthings on the floor,
Still gazing at them through the open door,
Not wholly reassured or comforted
By promise of others in their stead
Which, though more splendid, may not please him more—
So nature deals with us and takes away
Our playthings one by one, and by the hand
Leads us to rest so gently, that we go
Scarce knowing if we wished to go or stay,
Being too full of sleep to understand
How far the unknown transcends the what we know."

PENSADORA.

To Captain Ramsay, M.P.

We thank you, Ramsay, for a little laugh
To brighten a dull hour;
If from the Well of Truth you do not quaff,
Your words have magic power
To stir the faculty called risible;
And that is wholly welcome and permissible.

You move that aliens be not allowed
To blaspheme England's God;
That Englishmen, alone among the crowd,
Should have the right to moderate religious institutions in our land:
Against the godless foreigner will fearless Ramsay stand.

But, surely, Ramsay, have you not forgotten
Your God was born abroad?
That Jesus was in Palestine begotten,
And came to bring the sword
With which Augustine smote our ancient native faith,
Till Thor became a memory and Wotan but a wraith?

BAYARD SIMMONS.

"Won't You buy My Pretty Flowers?"

"BETWEEN two and three thousand of the clergy—men with family responsibilities, and exposed to every vicissitude of life—are in receipt of incomes which the Church is almost ashamed to mention." So runs part of that annual impertinence: the Christmas appeal of the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation. "Almost ashamed," is distinctly "nice" and modest. Before long, however, congregations, if not clergy, will be *wholly ashamed* of the despicable hypocrisy of clerical practice as opposed to precept. Christianity is claimed as a shield against the "vicissitudes of life," as many a penurious parishioner has been told by his parson or priest. But "what's sauce for the *goose*" is merely milk-and-water for the plucker in that instance. Beggars in actual and dire want are "rogues and vagabonds," who incur strong censure of magistrates, and usually suffer imprisonment. Members of a powerful and extremely wealthy organization, on the other hand, are allowed to make whining and cadging pleas—especially at seasons of public rejoicing, or whenever the money is flowing freely—to the degradation of the State which approves them, and "patrons" who appoint them. And foolish victims of the *real* "vicissitudes of life," men and women with *real* "family responsibilities," people who scarcely know what an "income" is, dip into their poor resources to provide for these expounders of the text: "God will provide." *Their* (the donors') homes may be denuded of all comfort, *their* families don't require public-school and university courses, *they* may live in any hovel their means can rent, but the chosen of the prophet who "had nowhere to lay his head" *must* be well-housed, well-fed, and well-placed for the higher education of children born or to come to them!

If the exploitation of the religiously-inclined, and those who have vested interests to guard did not constitute a serious hindrance to *general* economic welfare, the next sentence in the appeal would be met with shrieks of merriment. "In (poor clergy) homes where literally every shilling counts (reader, please be good enough to ignore the millions of homes where every *farthing* counts) the perpetual struggle on *which depends so much of inestimable value to the nation and to all nations goes on.*" The parentheses and italics are ours, but really there is no type or any type of language that can do justice to a statement so unique! "Value," forsooth—in a host of indigent, work-shy mumblers of platitudes and absurdities! "Value!"—in an institution which has done nothing since its inception but raise enormous capital; allocating untold millions to "reserve," over-paying its managers and under-paying many of their assistants, obtaining thousands of pounds of free publicity annually from the press, listing millions of "shareholders," and, for all this, merely *promising* a "dividend" to members when they, with the institution itself, are all defunct. Legal authority frowns on watered stocks, share-pushers, bogus flotations and the like, while it turns a blind eye to the biggest ramp of all time.

Now it appears that leading Anglican laymen have addressed to the Archbishops a "memorial" to restrain the marriage of young clergymen. Recruits to "holy orders" are coming from a poorer section of the community (a "different social class," the "memorial" characteristically terms it), and it is suggested that this type of parson may well live in cottages like the villagers and not occupy the glebe house. This is hardly likely to suit the poorer aspirants to the *social distinctions* of a clergyman—as most of the newcomers are. (Incidentally, how many glebe houses and farms—*THE GIFTS OF THE PEOPLE*—have been sold, not to *silence*, but to *swell* the cry of the "poor parson?") We wonder what is influencing the well-off University class of young fellow from entering "holy orders" these days; is it wider education and knowledge, a more refined modern conscience, or the clear sense of impending doom to the churches and all they stand for? And what *that* is—God alone knows! Oh, Alice England, will you *never* come back from Wonderland?

D.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

- BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Miss E. Millard.
 KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury.
 NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, T. J. Darby. 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. A. Ridley. Rushcroft Road, Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. L. Ebury. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.
 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, Mrs. N. Buxton. Friday, 7.30, Mr. G. Barnes.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

- BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. J. V. Shortt.
 BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) Branch N.S.S. Outing to Thursaston Hill, on Bank Holiday Monday. Hikers: meet Arrowe Park Gates, 11.30. Others: meet bus stop Thursaston Hill, opposite Cottage Loaf Cafe, at 1.15. All members, their friends and children invited. Liverpool colleagues specially welcomed.
 COLNE: 7.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.
 ECCLES (Market): 8.0, Friday—A Lecture.
 EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (The Mound): 7.0, Mr. Frank Smithies—"Christian Super Superstition."
 HAPTON: 7.45, Monday, Mr. J. Clayton.
 GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road): 8.0, Tuesday, Grey Place, Greenock, 8.0, Wednesday. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday. Albion Street, 8.0, Friday, M. I. Whitefield will speak at these meetings. Albion Street, 8.0, Sunday, Jas. McKenna and others.
 GREENOCK BRANCH N.S.S. (Grey Place): Sunday and the following week, Mr. J. T. Brighton will speak.
 LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (High Park Street and Park Road): 8.0, Thursday, Messrs. Robinson and Parry. Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths, Sunday, Messrs. Parry and Thompson. By-pass Road, Garston Terminus, 8.0, Wednesday, Messrs. Parry and Robinson.
 MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, W. A. Atkinson. Bury Market, 7.30, Saturday, W. A. Atkinson. Stevenson Square, Sunday, 3.0 and 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt.
 ROCHEDALE (Cattle Market): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.
 SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Sunday to Friday, Mr. G. Whitehead.

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