

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

A Bishop's Bunkum

ONE need not be surprised that in a modern environment—one that is sufficiently developed to realize that "pure" religion is impossible—humbug and hypocrisy should, to some extent, exist wherever a profession of religion is made. And when a man occupies in a church a position which descends directly from the primitive medicine-man, when his dress, his claims, and the semi-miraculous character of his office have reference, not to the knowledge and needs of to-day, but to the knowledge and assumed needs of a bygone stage of civilization, the humbug becomes apparent even if the hypocrisy is absent. There is, for example, the attacks made on the Russian Revolution on the ground that whatever excesses occurred—and for the present I will grant everything that was said on this head, and also in the case of Germany, where many of the excesses have been kept away from the British people—are examples of what happens when a nation forgets Christianity. But the Russian people and the German people were until yesterday held up to us as among the most religious people in the world. Germany was the home of the Reformation, and many a guinea was earned by newspapermen by writing about the ineradicable "mysticism" of the Russian people.

At any rate there is no denying the fact that for many centuries the religion of the people of Germany and Russia was Christian. The environment of these people was Christian. Their education was Christian. Their rulers were Christians. How then can Christianity escape responsibility for what has happened during the past twenty-five years? What kind of a disposition must the influence of the Christian religion have created that in a moment well over two hundred million people are converted into a mob of howling savages? (I apologize to the "savages" for the simile, but my meaning will be understood). The worse the Churches paint these people, the blacker the case against their own influence. Putting aside the pathological cases, a child that is brought up in a decent home, with decent training, does not at the

age of sixteen or seventeen, on the death of its parents, at once become a hardened criminal. If the stories referred to are true then Christianity must be largely responsible for their truth; if they are not true then the one thing that the Church has created, after some sixteen centuries of almost unquestioned rule, is an army of religious liars.

* * *

The Humbug of Prayer

The Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes, is one who aroused public attention because he publicly (when, as he explained, he found it safe to do so), repudiated a belief in certain biblical stories which anyone—who was not in a pulpit—might well have been ashamed of being credited with. And now in a recent sermon in St. Paul's Cathedral he comes out with the following:—

If the prayers of Christians the world over were sufficiently earnest and strong we might well avert the calamity now universally feared. Out of such prayers a new temper might be created. Our convictions fortified by prayer might become so influential that by a sort of telepathy they might spread even to those now contemptuous of Christian idealism.

This is very familiar pulpit talk, and because it is familiar I think it worth while to analyse its mixture of fallacy and muddleheadedness.

In the first place no one will deny that if all professed Christians, who form an enormous majority of the European populations, were united on any political issue, it would soon be settled. Where such unanimity is forthcoming the issue is decided. The majority of the people of this country are in favour of the maintenance of the blasphemy laws, therefore the blasphemy laws remain. The majority of the people are in favour of Sabbatarian restrictions therefore they remain. And if all Christians were opposed to war—all here, in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere—there could, obviously, be no war. It is the power of the religious "conscience" that makes every political party wary of exciting religious opposition, and is able to impose silence upon so many people who have outgrown all belief in religion. All that this brilliant Bishop is saying is that if no one believed in war there would be no war. Meanwhile, those who (while recognizing that one may not be able to keep out of war) insist all the time that war must be paid for, not in cash—from which a nation ought to be able to recover very quickly—but in human demoralization and the development of the worship of brute force, are vilified as "anti-patriotic."

Now look at the humbug involved in this prayer racket. Why does anyone pray? Not to convince his neighbours. If he wishes to do that he talks to them, writes to them, or lectures to them. If he can speak in the name of a large number of his fellow citizens, his appeal to those he

wishes to convince becomes the more impressive, for although a large number of people may be wrong, yet when there is a large number of an opposite opinion one is likely to more seriously seek an explanation of the difference. That is the simple mechanics of the clash of opinion, or as Holyoake called it, the warfare of opinion, as opposed to the belief that you can prove you are right by punching a man's head or sticking a bayonet in his abdomen.

But prayer? One does not pray to his fellow man. Not even Lord Londonderry, or the Duke of Norfolk, or Sir Thomas Inskip, or that manifestation of God's sense of humour—if there be a God—Captain Ramsay, M.P., would ever dream of offering prayers to Hitler, or Goering or Goebbels. When a man prays for rain he is not addressing the meteorological society, and when he prays for a good harvest he is not offering prayers to a specialist in land culture. In each case he is asking a third party—God—to influence the people or the forces with whom the decision rests.

If the people say they have faith in prayer when they have prayed to God they would let the matter rest there; they would not cloud the issue by adding something like the following:—

Oh Lord, we pray thee so to move the hearts of Hitler and Mussolini that they will disband their armies and engage in peaceful discussions with thy faithful servant Neville Chamberlain, but, O Lord, if thou canst not do this we pray thee to so move the hearts of our own people that they will flock to the colours, increase to a miraculous extent our output of aeroplanes, guns and tanks so that we may blow these our enemies out of existence and so further exalt Thy name—in the opinion of Englishmen.

* * *

More Muddle

Now I call the statement I have quoted from Bishop Barnes muddle-headed because it seems to me that one must choose between calling it that or saying that Bishop Barnes does not believe in prayer at all, but is merely fooling those who follow him. If we mean by prayer merely a kind of telepathy, which is plainly independent of God, for it stands only for the kind of influence that human beings admittedly have on one another, why pretend that it is prayer—in the religious sense—that is responsible for the change? As a bishop, who is paid to teach people to believe in the power of prayer, he should tell the people that mere communication, whether in the form of mass suggestion or individual conversation, is not enough. It is by invoking the help of God that the desired end will be reached. What he does say is, it is not by influencing God, or by asking him to save the world, that we avert war, but if we pray long enough and loud enough we may, by mass suggestion, do what can be done to avert war, if not, then we can induce people to fight like the very devil, when war does come. Will Bishop Barnes be good enough to answer two plain questions? (1) If prayer, which aims at inducing God to move men here and in other countries to preserve peace, is of any avail, why say that if all Christians were agreed their mass influence would be such that war would not come? The influence of any sufficiently large body of men, whether that influence is exerted for good or evil cannot but operate. (2) If the consequence of prayer is to bring agreement, through the action of God, why talk about the mass suggestion of a large number of people bringing about a desired end? We do not suppose for a moment that so fearless a man as Bishop Barnes will venture on a reply.

There is one final point. Bishop Barnes seeks to relieve the Christian Church of responsibility by saying that a cause, if not the cause of the state of Europe, is that:—

We find ourselves in a world in which nationalism runs riot.

A narrow nationalism, which is in fact a mere primitive tribalism, is indeed one of the evil features of the situation. But can the Church escape responsibility for that? The Christian Church was the direct heir of the Roman civilization. It inherited Roman law, Roman ideas of municipal government, and Rome once held sway over nearly every country in Europe that became Christian. But Rome was tolerant in religion, and "civilized" in its law. It had no colour bar, and no race prejudice. One cannot, therefore, consider intolerance, race prejudice, or the decay of municipal life, as due to non-Christian influence. Nor can these things be said to be one of the consequences of the weakness of the Christian Church. For many centuries that Church was the most powerful organization in the whole of Europe. It claimed, and exercised, control over kings; it could make a nation tremble at a threat of interdiction, and isolate an individual in his own community by an excommunication. Yet the centuries that succeeded the Church gaining complete control found the ancient municipal dignity departed, the legalization of intolerance with religious persecution established, the collapse of the science and philosophy of antiquity, and the birth and development of that rabid nationalism from which, Bishop Barnes says the world is now suffering. And now Bishop Barnes tells that if Christians were earnest and strong there would be no fear of war. But for many centuries Christians were both earnest and strong, and even until to-day reforms of every kind, any step towards establishing the natural dignity of man, and the complete humanizations of social life meets with the opposition of organized Christianity. I agree that *if* Christians were strong, and earnest, *if* they had some better standard of value than religious belief, if they could destroy the intolerance and the false standard of value set up by the Christian Church, then the world outlook would be brighter than it is. There is much virtue in that "if."

CHAPMAN COHEN

Havelock Ellis: Freethinker

THERE is a story told of Whistler's comment on some eulogies he listened to, when Leighton was praised, as a handsome man of many accomplishments. As nobody referred to Leighton's work as Artist, Whistler ejaculated: "Ugh! Paints too, eh?"

The death of Dr. Henry Havelock Ellis has elicited many "appreciations" of his varied merits. It might indeed be said of him—as of Oliver Goldsmith—"he touched nothing he did not adorn." But we look in vain in any newspaper for the remotest allusion to Ellis's essentially Secularist outlook, a point of view which was the basis of all he wrote and thought. The fact that he did not believe in Supernaturalism made him the great investigator into all aspects of natural human life.

Ellis was a scientist, a pioneer psychologist, a man of letters comparable to the greatest of our essayists. But first and last he was a great humanist. It is well to find some of the most orthodox of journals accepting the verdict of the scientific world that in Ellis we have lost a valuable personality—or perhaps these pundit editors merely recognize that Havelock Ellis had won a very high reputation in circles which even an editor has to acknowledge.

This Freethinker was the same sort of "naturalist" as Darwin. He studied nature without bias. The fact that any human conduct was called criminal, or un-

natural, or perverse, or "taboo," was no more a reason for ignoring it than the word "disease" could lead a physician to neglect to study a patient's symptoms. Many a valuable medicine would never have been discovered if the word "weed" had led the naturalist to ignore "the meanest flower that blows." But the Theistic hypothesis would surely have stopped investigation into subjects which Ellis refused to ignore.

Sir James Frazer's work was familiar to Ellis, who gave it the discriminating praise most acceptable to a scientist. With more courage and with as genuine an exploration into facts, Ellis traced the springs of man's activities. His case-books served as a remarkable nucleus for a series of frank revelations about Sex—the most tabooed of all topics, unless sentiment is ignored in the interest of truth. All interests at presenting a scientific study of Sex are fought with a bigoted fury which only religion can inspire.

Unscientific studies of sex, in certain aspects, are common enough. Sentiment, Emotion, Religion—these can inspire acceptable allusions to well-behaved sexuality in all ages. If "sexual misbehaviour" is denounced, charlatans like the late Henry Varley can attract large crowds of pious ghouls like himself, for "Lectures to Men Only." On the stage, fun and entertainment can be exercised over the vagaries of comic characters running amok in what used to be called "Palais Royal Farces," which in Paris were redeemed by genius and candour, neither of which qualities survived their translation.

But the psychology of sex, considered from the point of view of materialist science never dared express itself on the English stage till Brieux and Ibsen appeared—in circumstances of the gravest difficulty, and were subjected to the most outrageous abuse. Brieux and Ibsen, like Zola and Strindberg, were Freethinkers. Havelock Ellis's first published book (*The New Spirit*) set out to praise Ibsen and his fellow-humanists to a public which even Mr. Bernard Shaw's admirable attempts had as yet failed to reach. Studies of these early scientific readings in sexual science—and frequent conversations with John Addington Symonds—led Ellis to investigate the subject of his first Sex-psychology book. The case of Oscar Wilde gave immediate topicality to this work, but Ellis never meant it to be regarded as an Introduction to the complete Study of Sex which he had already contemplated. He regarded this book, however, as essential to the understanding of the proper approach to the Scientific treatment of the Psychology of Sex. The fact that Sexual Inversion was most repellant to unscientific readers—especially the pious and puritanical—did not weigh with this courageous writer.

Ellis used to say in conversation that the Roman Catholic Confessional OUGHT to have led the Church to a knowledge otherwise practically unattainable. Vows of secrecy and religious prejudice wasted all these confessed experiences which, in a physician's case-book, used as a scientist would use them, might have been of real service to mankind. But waste has always been characteristic of piety. And the prejudices Ellis referred to exist to-day and reign triumphantly wherever religion bars the course of science. Man must rise above the religious ideas of man's physical nature before he can begin to understand social morality and sexual behaviour.

With the whole of this long life's work before our eyes we can see that Ellis was interested in disease because he loved health. He was a pioneer in what he called "The Nationalization of Health," to which he has converted our local and other governments. In his classic book on *The Criminal*, he showed that the severe penalties which Ingersoll called "Crimes Against Criminals" have been an active force against

the scientific amelioration of offenders. Those who believe in God's vindictive judgments continue to pin their faith on flogging and prison tortures. Ellis believed in reforms based on statistical proofs of the inefficiency of theistic "solutions" of these and other problems.

As a pioneer of Birth-Control Ellis must be added to the long list of Freethinkers who have defied the bans of respectable and religious opponents of one of the wisest of aids to decency and happiness. Ellis, by the way, is said to have had no sense of humour. The *Daily Mail*, for instance, (July 11, 1939) says: "He was almost wholly devoid of a sense of humour." Probably the *Mail* merely means that Ellis failed to enjoy the *Mail's* Comic Strip ideals. It is likely enough that the *Mail* saw no fun in Ellis's:—

It is a hard thing, said Johnny Dunn, for a man that has a house full of children to be left to the mercy of Almighty God.—ELLIS: *Little Essays of Love and Virtue*.

Havelock Ellis has often alluded to his own conscious indebtedness to James Hinton, whose *Life in Nature* certainly made a great impression on the young Ellis. Hinton even if guilty of giving us a "sentimental study of causation" was certainly a decided Mechanist, although as Ellis says, "His mechanism was VITAL—with all the glow and warmth and beauty of life." Why should mechanism be dull?

In a recent article on Ellis in the *Inquirer*, the Rev. H. Lismer Short, M.A.—a Unitarian Minister—writes sympathetically about his subject. He frankly admits that Ellis had no religious creed. He quotes Ellis's perfectly frank utterance:—

I was not troubled about the origin of the "soul" or about its destiny. . . . There was not a single clause in my religious creed because I held no creed. I had found that dogmas were . . . the mere empty shadows of intimate personal experience.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Cave-Men Conservatives

It is an absolute crime that you should sanction the instilling into the minds of children statements which are not true, and which the instruction they receive a few years later will infallibly upset.—*Huxley*.

We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions.—*G. W. Foote*.

THE clergy are the real conservatives. Their faith is hoary with the dust of centuries, and its beginning is lost in the twilight of human history. Its roots are embedded in strata of prehistoric barbarism. Yet they talk, and even shout, as if this crumbling old creed embodied the last words in human wisdom. The more ignorant Christians, however, regard their scripture as the actual work of their deity, and as being infallible. By such innocents the book is read literally, and confusion is worse confounded.

This habit of stereotyping their religion is not by any means confined to the half-educated and the ignorant. In the English universities, for over a century, the ecclesiastical authorities kept Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* in use as a text-book. The work was little more than a flashy piece of special pleading, and it was utterly useless for polemical purposes. To use it as a text-book was simply arming Christians with bows and arrows against the machine-guns of science. That sort of thing was the price that had to be paid for a clerical supremacy in education. For the sole object of these priests is to impose a Christian education, and not to impart real knowledge. Their aim was the cultivation of brawn and

piety, and not brains and efficiency.

The clergy themselves set the seal on their pupils. They were in love with their own opinions, so confident that they were right and all others wrong, that they believed the future would develop on the lines of the truths they proclaimed so loudly. They turned generations of university students into prigs of the worst description. Until, as a fact, the Oxford accent became as objectionable as the Oxford trousers. With their opinion was certitude, and the opinion was based on the ignorance of prehistoric times.

Beyond the walls of the various clerically-controlled universities important things were happening. Science was undermining the faith delivered to the saints. Astronomers had charted the heavens, and knew that our earth spun like a top amidst cohorts of planets. Darwin proved our kinship with the animals, and told us of the ascent of man. Spencer evolved a new synthetic philosophy which widened men's minds, and relegated the Christian scheme to the superstitions to which it belongs. And Sigmund Freud revealed the secrets of the human brain, which had eluded man's eager search for so many centuries. Above all, Paine, Voltaire, and their followers, brought the Christian Superstition before the Bar of Humanity, and found it wanting.

The popular attack was, in the last analysis, the most formidable. It aimed at making men and women Freethinkers. Scientists, with all their genius, wrote over the heads of the people. The Darwinians and the Post-Darwinians might argue, but they used an unintelligible scientific language. It was, and still is, the Freethought Movement which translates the technical vocabulary of science into plain language.

Aye, sharpest, shrewdest steel that ever stabbed
Imposture, through the armour-joints to death.

The Freethinker's motto was "Straight to the fact." Is it true that "God" was born of a virgin? Did he leave the earth like a balloon? Is there a real heaven and a real hell? Is it true that people will be burnt everlastingly for not believing the Christian Superstition?

How does the Church of Christ militant meet this challenge? By adopting the policy of the ostrich who is said (without much evidence) to bury its head in the sand, and pretend that the opposition does not exist. Since the world-war there has been one question, and one question only, which has roused these religious Rip-Van-Winkles in the Church of England. It did not concern War and Peace, the recrudescence of Anti-Semitism, Unemployment, or any other big issue. It was a controversy over their Prayer-Book, an attempt to gloss over the barbarities and obscenities in the volume, and to make it less objectionable to modern ears. For months these sons-of-God wrangled over deleting unseemly passages. Then, after the arguments and quarrels, the matter was brought before Parliament, and the divine comedy finished with Romanists, Methodists, Unitarians, Presbyterians, Freethinkers, and others, voicing their opinions and voting on the question of tearing out parts of "God's Word" and deleting unseemly language from the Official Prayer Book of the State Church.

These ecclesiastics, mark you, hold the balance of power in national education. What hope has the youth of this country for intellectual sanity when clerical Medievalists have control? To the demand for sex equality the Church of Christ insists that woman is the weaker vessel, and subordinate to man. To the young Democrat this Church demands that the clergy be treated as a sacred caste apart. To the unemployed this Church points out that the poor must always be with us. To the truthseeker this Church replies that the Oracles have spoken the final word,

and points to the Christian Scripture. To the believer in brotherhood this Church says that all who reject her teaching are destined to eternal punishment.

It is a grievous and a bitter thing that young people should be taught such obsolete ideas in language which lead them to believe (and is craftily calculated to that end), that such teaching is the height of wisdom. It is an affront to the spirit of Democracy. For no one can be a loyal Churchman without renouncing his mental and moral freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of a priest. The clergy claim to be sacred persons, sons-of-god, a caste apart from their fellow-men. Unless a man accept them and their old-world dogmas, without doubt he shall be damned. For it is abundantly clear that the Christian Creed is an outworn superstition, a narrow, ignorant, and obsolete view of human life, and justly regarded as a product of the Dark Ages.

Reflections such as these should make Freethinkers pause and reflect that the propaganda of the "Intellectuals" has to make headway, not only against gross ignorance, but against a very heavily endowed and powerful superstition. By their control of education priests are able to inoculate the youth of this country with the virus of their creed. Five millions of children are being exploited in this manner to-day, without counting the many thousands of university students. In fighting this Christian Superstition the Freethinkers are opposing an enemy entrenched behind mountains of money-bags. In money lies the power of the priests, and so long as the gold lasts will they be in a position of power and authority. Based on fables, supported by dead men's money, trading on ignorance, the Christian Church at long last finds the conscience of the race rising above and beyond it. It is high time that a real and concerted attempt is made to counteract this deadly virus. Let the people see to it that the priests are dislodged from their vantage ground of authority; in order that this country may work out its own social salvation without the constant interference of Clericalism. This Oriental superstition persists simply because it is a huge vested interest. Let the Orient sleep in the ashes of her gods. We are modern men, who salute the rising sun of Liberty.

Men and women are now raised to a higher intelligence than formerly, and no longer need the guiding hand of the priest. All our civilization is affected by the emancipation of the masses of men. Every other possible step is backward, reactionary, and a repetition of the past, of which it may be said that all antiquity was cruel, and particularly cruel to ordinary men and women. There is faith in the goodness of human nature, faith in knowledge, faith in evolution, and the survival of the fittest. Let us be true, not to ancient ignorance, but to the highest as we see it. If our age is to be beaten, let us die in the ranks. If it is to be victorious, let us be the first to lead the vanguard.

MIMNERMUS

HOT STUFF

Fert Yuma is probably the hottest place on earth. The thermometer stays at one hundred and twenty in the shade there all the time—except when it varies and goes higher. It is a U.S. military post, and its occupants get so used to the terrific heat that they suffer without it. There is a tradition that a very, very wicked soldier died there, once, and of course went straight to the hottest corner of perdition—and the next day he telegraphed back for his blankets. There is no doubt about the truth of this statement, I have seen the place where the soldier used to board.—Mark Twain.

The Medieval Scene*

WORKS on the Middle Ages are concerned usually with events and developments during the period loosely covered by this term. Particularly with matters of doctrine and prescription as advanced from time to time under the expanding power of the Papacy, and its relations with the rising kingdoms and principalities of Christendom. To this work Dr. Coulton has made notable contributions. Now, as the summation of his studies, he presents a picture of the intimate side of this period, and its every-day happenings, in a survey extending from the Norman Conquest to the opening of the Reformation. While dealing mainly with English phenomena he adduces further illustrations from contemporary life on the Continent. In some 760 closely printed pages, yet written with economy of expression, he gives a comprehensive view of every leading aspect of medieval activity. Here we have peasant, priest, merchant, noble, going about their lawful (or unlawful) occasions, their modes of daily existence, the kind of dwellings they occupied, and their interior furnishing; the sort of township slowly rising amid a mainly agricultural economy, and new corporate institutions it brought into being. Carefully documented at every point from contemporary sources of information and witness, it provides also the material for a measured judgment of the essential values and upshot of this distinctive polity, from the fairness of his own presentation.

To attempt this adequately would involve a treatise. Here we can but indicate a few salient features that dominate the system, or exhibit characteristic modes. His private beliefs regarding its supernatural claims are not emphasized; he welcomes the Reformation movement, and in a eulogistic view of the "Open Bible" treats it as literature and eludes the Revelation issue. He is clear enough on the attitude of the Church Catholic herein. He takes note of changes going forward between 1066 and 1536, particularly in England. But throughout there persists the paramount institution of the Church. Its position was strengthened through the Conquest despite quarrels over the respective jurisdiction of the spiritual and temporal powers:—

By William's time the western branch of this Church, the *Ecclesia Romana*, as it constantly called itself both colloquially and officially, had become one of the completest examples of a Totalitarian State that history records. It claimed to swallow up and standardize all important variations so that there should be only one Party—that of the State. For this end almost all means were justified; almost all were employed; and for many generations at least, they were employed with success.

What made this prototype of the unified State the more formidable was that under its Ecclesiastical Code "Heresy" was identical with treason. From the practice of disposing of heretics by fire any rebel against State authority was liable to this dreadful penalty. As the primary directive factor it shaped the type of "culture" that emerged under its auspices. Let us cite a few related instances.

It came into power during the Interregnum between the collapse of Roman Administration and the appearance of new kingdoms and principalities among the several peoples invading Imperial provinces. With this is connected the "feudal system" of which he gives a succinct exposition:—

Socially, feudalism grew up through the loss of the ordinary man's independence; or, shall we say, of such small measure of independence as he could

enjoy under the imperial bureaucracy. When the barbarian invasion came, there was a more or less sudden dissolution of those laws which, while they restrained him in a hundred little details of life, did nevertheless protect him within the network of those details. Life became so definitely a struggle for survival that the smaller man had no chance, either financially or physically, without the protection of some bigger man. . . . It will be seen how all this consecrated the division of classes; in eleventh-century Christendom it was almost as in Islam; we had a fighting caste supported by a working caste. Liberty was but half-developed, as Lord Acton says, it depended upon property; or as Maitland puts it, *libertas* in legal language meant freedom to oppress others. Even in the towns with their guilds, democracy, as they understood it, was nothing but the democracy of the privileged. The Church did indeed help a little; yet, as we shall see, no orthodox Churchman protested against the principle of serfdom; that was left to the heretic Wyclif. As we shall see again, even the democratic author of *Piers Plowman* felt it perverse that a bondman's son should be made a bishop, rare as such an occurrence might be. Outside the clergy, barriers were far more severe. It was difficult, within our period, for a man to break through these class distinctions even by the greatest services in war. There was then no parallel to that which might happen under the Pagan Empire, when (for instance) the Asiatic peasant, Justin, fought his way up from a common soldier's pay to the imperial throne.

Puritanism is a term of varied connotation, sometimes associated with the ways of certain Protestant sects. Colloquially it implies an austere attitude to love of pleasure, mirth, song and dance. Yet it is amply manifest under medieval canons; Merrie England must be sought in the heart of the Commonalty. With this was linked the pervading superstition of the time. Old nature cults continued in a disguised form under the shadow of New Dogma. Hence belief in witchcraft, sorcery, magic, and conjuration of the Evil power—Satan:—

Thus, in most minds, Satan bulked almost as large as God: in some, even larger. The regions of cold and bad weather were his especially; the Devil lived in the north, as we see from Chaucer's Friar's Tale . . . we may thus almost say that the Devil was the God of Winter and Jehovah God only of Summer and Spring. . . . The village dance also was, as we have seen, a direct inheritance from pre-Christian times. It is absolutely necessary to realize that nobody whatever doubted the actual existence of these old pagan gods. They existed as truly as the great God; but, whereas the pagans had taken them for gods, the Christians knew them to be devils. . . . Hence, since the Church took a very one-sided view of human life in many ways, whatsoever the ecclesiastic in his narrowness or intolerance cast out, that became the natural domain of the Devil. . . .

Not only was scientific observation enormously difficult in those days, but it was not even sufficiently esteemed in itself. In very many cases not only men could not observe patiently, but they did not care [or were not allowed] to do so. . . . We must remember, again, that the Church deliberately inculcated further ignorance of great portions of human life; for instance we shall see that anatomy was forbidden. When nearly every educated man was a cleric, in Minor, if not in Major, Orders, the clergy were strictly forbidden to shed blood with their own hands, even in a beneficent cause; so that a priest attempting to relieve a sufferer and inadvertently causing a breach of the skin or bloodshed was suspended from his sacerdotal functions until he had confessed and been absolved by a bishop or some other high ecclesiastic entitled to deal with "reserved" cases. . . . The Church often suspected nature. We have seen how St. Edmund interpreted the flock of crows. [A flock of devils come for a

* *Medieval Panorama*, G. G. Coulton, 1938.

man's soul]. St. Dominic, again, when his studies were disturbed by a sparrow fluttering about his lamp, recognized at once the Devil, caught the bird, and, plucking it alive, triumphed in its screams and his own victory over the Powers of darkness. . . ."

To epitomize some points relative to this view of nature:—

The child is impure, tainted with original sin—*massa perditionis*. Only Baptism can redeem it from Hell; though some might affirm this would be a separate destination to the real thing. The dance which, with mirth, is an instinctive mode of joyous expression was universally discouraged or prohibited. Of St. Francis and St. Bernard their biographers declare that though they spend their lives in holy joy they seldom or never indulged in laughter. "Christ is crucified, and dost thou laugh?" On the general upshot of sacerdotal celibacy he adduces much negative evidence to which we may refer the reader. Family life was reduced to a lower plane: it was not the choicest offering to God; St. Jerome's words were famous: "Marriage fills the earth, virginity fills heaven." . . .

Under an ascetic code full allowance was made for ordinary weakness and "sin" through its developed casuistry and absolution—due penance being done. "Indulgence" was a factor in the Reformation. The anti-Lollard, Gascoigne, writes:—

Sinners say nowadays, I care not how many evils I do in God's sight; for I can easily and quickly get plenary remission of all guilt and penalty whatsoever by an absolution and indulgence granted to me by the Pope, whose written grant I have bought for 4d. or 6d.

AUSTEN VERNEY

(To be concluded)

The Irreducible Minimum

ONE remembers a small volume issued about fifty years ago containing articles by prominent divines upon the subject of the Bible and the Child. It dealt with the difficulty experienced in "putting over" to the bright adolescent such stories as Jonah and the Whale, and the Cursing of the Fig Tree by Jesus. It recommended a wary eclecticism. Cover the crudities of the old stories wherever it can be done, the religious teacher was told, with a layer of mysticism, allegory, symbolism. When this cannot be done, admit the errancy of the Divine Book and throw the objectionable passages overboard. In this way "the fangs of the unbeliever would be drawn," and their children would grow up and call them kinder names.

Drawing the fangs of the unbeliever that way, is (to the patient) quite an agreeable operation to be subjected to. We admit the criticism, it signifies, and, in this way, the criticism is met. We will kill all our horses and then accuse you of flogging their corpses. Ordinarily profane controversy does not proceed on those lines; theological controversy is still a thing apart. Only on the theological plane can a person give up his main thesis, after defending it vehemently by any old method, and then charge his vanquisher with some kind of mental obliquity because that person doesn't straightway change his method of attack.

Now why doesn't that person change his attack on the minute? Because, in the first place, the "advanced" cleric is far from being strong enough in the church to make his presence sufficiently felt. Take for an example the last chapter of St. Mark. In this chapter we are told that certain signs will follow those who believe. They include the ability to suffer with impunity a dose of poison, or snake-bite. This

chapter has no business in the book of *Mark*, says the modernist. Indeed! We have no intention of going into questions of authenticity for the moment. All we wish to say is, if the last chapter of Mark is an interpolation: Why are these important "last words" still allowed to appear in both Authorized and Revised Versions? Freethinkers will be well advised to continue attacking the Bible "as it is printed" until the "modernists" in the Church prove themselves alive enough to consign the old "Dead Horse" to the knacker's yard. If they haven't enough power to do that, it proves the old dead horse to be not only alive but to be kicking most objectionably. Similarly, we shall have a little more respect for the plea when, as another instance, the Creed of St. Athanasius is removed from the Prayer Book and the Church Service. The dead horse is alive enough to keep its disgusting hoof firmly fixed upon that revealed infamy. The cleric who believes he has received some absolute truth as a result of a divine intrusion some two thousand years ago still pays the piper and is strong enough to call the tune.

We have had the fortune recently to hear two debates in which the clerical participants have exhibited an almost indecent anxiety to shed the historic creed of almost all of its old beliefs. Complete nudity appears to-day to be the only respectable theological pose. In this way only can the unbeliever be discomfited. All the unbelievers we have met are prepared to undergo discomfiture this way.

For, what does it all amount to save that as the mind of man grows broader with the process of the suns, demented dogmas are thrown one by one on the dust-heap? Call this Progressive Revelation if you will! It is not the words that matter; it is the process that the words profess to describe that has any importance. Man pronounces judgment on the Oracles of God, and it is that judgment, as the cleric admits, that counts nowadays. Man looks upon the *Vision of Hell* as seen by Father Furness and not only gives it no credence, but is even sufficiently developed to have some sympathy with the poor deluded priest whose moral and mental stature had been stunted by having been born and educated in that dreadful atmosphere.

But Giving up Hell is itself part of God's Progressive Revelation, we are told. If so, what has *Christianity* got to do with a progressive revelation. How has it helped it on? Does Part Two of the Divine Revelation give the hideous dogma its death-blow? Did Jesus, the be-all and end-all of Christianity, as the Modernists claim, give this mind-polluting infamy its knock-out blow? Or, had mankind to evolve further, and past Jesus, to a point where it could speak scornfully and contemptuously of this useful help to the propagation of the Divine Religion. The truth is that whenever we are told we have the Absolute, and accept the statement, human progress ceases. Religion deals in absolutes. And so, we suspect, does Modernism?

If we have received a Progressive Revelation, did the Revelation end with Christianity? Or, may it be part of its progressiveness to criticize and amend the words of Jesus himself? We are entitled to ask those who throw over in a wholesale fashion the Christian theology, and who have nothing but harsh words for the records of the Christian Church, by what channels of information have they unprogressively taken their stand upon the words of the Sermon on the Mount as the precious and unique legacy of Christianity to the world. Already their temerity has led them into paths which would have brought them the stake in olden days at the hands of those who knew or felt that they knew the importance of conflicting divine truths. Have our modernists the courage to mount several of

the steps to the Temple of Truth and then (oh, ignominious conclusion!) are they going to sit down stubbornly and say, "So Far and No Farther"? Progressive Revelation is all very well as a term, but it is not going to be allowable to regard the Words of Our Lord as criticisable. That would be Progressive Revelation going too far. That would be Licence not Liberty. The last step brings us indubitably, and in reverential mien, to the Words of Jesus.

We put it plainly that this is Nonsense. The Sense that the Pulpit preaches to-day, even from the modernist standpoint, may be the Nonsense of tomorrow. This is the only meaning that Progressive Revelation can have. On analysis it can only signify that man must continue to train his mind and, if need be, throw over *any* doctrine that the fullest knowledge does not warrant. This sounds like Freethought. There are, however, several reasons why this clerical message will not be decked out in the garments of Freethought, and why old words and phrases will have to be retained, even if they mislead. One need not be completely a cynic to realize that a wealthy institution fast in the clutch of the dead hand and well aligned with the other tyrannies of the past will never say "We have sinned" but will continue to support the system whence their honours flow.

T. H. ELSTON

Acid Drops

Guy's Hospital owes the Southwark Borough Council £4,000 for rates. But every Church and Chapel in the kingdom is relieved by law from the payment of rates. Apparently, we still, in theory, rank the Churches as being of more consequence than hospitals. Think of the mere site values of places of worship in this country, and one may realize the many millions of public money that are given to religion in this country by the State. And yet the clergy say the Church receives not a penny of public money. It is one of the most impudent lies in circulation.

The Earl of Hardwicke writes to the *Daily Telegraph* protesting against the exhibition of the anti-Nazi film "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" as a piece of propaganda. He says he was not concerned with the historical accuracy of the film, but is concerned with the suggestion that "a nation of 80,000,000 is exclusively composed of either criminals or knaves." There is only one appropriate word for this, and that is to say quite plainly that it is a deliberate lie. No one who has seen the film could truthfully write that sentence. There are protests from decent-minded Germans in the film, and everyone knows—except such men as the Earl of Hardwicke—that there are vast numbers of Germans in Germany who are disgusted with the brutality and scoundrelism of the Nazi regime. The film is one that all should see, and if they are fair-minded, and know anything of what is going on they will realize that the strength of the film lies, not in its extravagance, but in its restraint. And now that the Government is creating a department of propaganda it might well encourage the exhibition of "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" in every cinema house in the country.

It is worth nothing that Lord Hardwicke raises no protest against the intense propaganda that comes from Germany to this country. There is no mention of the large sums of money sent by Germany here, of the immense amount of literature imported, or of the fact that it is the very brutality and almost acknowledged bestiality of the German rule that has reconciled the British people to Conscription. And apart from the quite false statement quoted, there is no disowning of the method adopted by Germany to close the mouths of refugees here by threatening punishment and torture to those of their relatives who are still in the clutches of the gangsters.

The only concern appears to be that the feelings of Hitler and Goebbels and Goering must not be hurt. Well, we have surely done enough in that direction by the tremendous help given by the Munich surrender, and also keeping out of the Government men against whom Hitler impudently expressed his displeasure. We think Hitlerism is being served well enough in this country in other ways without suppressing the "Confessions of a Nazi Spy." It is curious to note how concerned certain people are in this country lest Hitler's feelings should be outraged.

Last week we referred to the notice on board a British battleship ordering any sailor who received Communist literature to at once report the matter to his superior. We noticed this because it was not an order affecting propagandist literature in general—that would have been bad enough—but applies to Communist, and we presume Socialist, literature only. Since we wrote that paragraph a question has been asked in the House of Commons, whether such notices would be issued regarding Fascist literature? To this came the usual dishonest official reply, that "steps would be taken to deal with subversive literature emanating from another source should the need arise." A House of Commons that can submit to such obvious dishonesty and tomfoolery brings itself into contempt. Everyone is aware of the tons of Fascist literature that are being distributed, and without any interference whatever. Besides the question was why *all* propagandist literature was not included in the order. Presumably the reason for this is the reason why Mr. Churchill is not in the Cabinet, Hitler would not like it. And after the public notice given—unprecedented in English history—the policy of appeasement might receive a shock.

On July 15 a decree by the German Government, taking over all the war property of the Czechoslovakian Army, was published. This includes 1,582 aeroplanes, 501 anti-aircraft guns, 2,175 light and heavy guns, 785 mine-throwers, 469 tanks, 43,876 machine guns, 114,000 automatic pistols, 1,000,000 rifles, 3,000,000 shells and more than 1,000,000,000 rounds of infantry ammunition. To this haul must be added the splendid geographical and technical position acquired by Germany, the hold on the smaller States, and the immense cost to ourselves, with the *moral* cost of the semi-militarization of the British. And in return for this our Prime Minister brought home a bit of paper, the stupidity of which has been becoming more obvious with every week that passes. In such circumstances the "I was deceived" lament is ridiculous. In such circumstances no man of even ordinary common-sense ought to have been deceived.

That fine compound of ignorance and Roman Catholic bigotry, Captain Ramsay, M.P. (Sir Samuel Hoare's "Dear Ramsay") is getting quite ferocious. We are indebted to the *Daily Worker* for the report of a speech at a meeting of the Nordic League (a synonym for a Fascist organization in imitation of Goebbels' activities) at which that fire-eating individual declared we must abolish Jewish control in this country, and "if we don't do it constitutionally we will do it with steel." We are quite certain that if the torture of old men and children is on foot, the Nordic League will do its part. The *Daily Worker* suggests that a close enquiry into Captain Ramsay's activities is seriously needed. Such an enquiry is being made in Paris, with respect to these "Nordics." In England their activities are already known to the Government, but they are not Bolsheviks, so there the matter ends.

The following is being circulated by ardent German Fascists as a contribution to the Polish crisis:—

Smite, O God, the Poles with iron.
Cripple them with lameness and make them deaf and blind.
Smite every woman and child and punish them.
Let them be sold into slavery.
Let our feet destroy their fields and green corn.
Give us, O God, the great strength to kill them.
Let our sabres be immersed into their bodies.

Let the whole Polish people be turned into ashes.
Let war reign between us and them.

Change Poland into a wilderness.

The "prayer" was composed by the "Vereinigung zum Schutz Oberschlesien"—the Association to Defend Upper Silesia.

We have not printed the above to harrow the feelings of people. Those who are not already disgusted by the German Government's treatment of its own subjects are not likely to be affected by this new "Hymn of Hate." We print it merely to remind all that it is a very faithful copy of part of the Bible, and also appears in the Church of England Prayer Book. Religious feeling, and particularly strong Christian feeling, is apt to express itself in this fashion.

One religious body has not been long in finding another excuse for an appeal for funds in the measure of Conscription that is now being enforced. The Church Army is appealing for funds to keep Church Army evangelists in military camps. We can now be ready for other religious bodies making the same appeal, for the sects will fight for the patronage of men inside military camps as they will outside. Meanwhile we suggest that all Freethinkers who are in these camps should take care to have their copies of the *Freethinker* handy. We are prepared to send copies of the paper free to any soldier who writes for a copy. We sent many thousands out to France during the last war, and received the thanks of the soldiers, and the compliment that it was about the only sane paper they received.

According to the *Guardian*, the Chairman of the Cheshire Education Committee must be a peculiarly uninformed kind of an individual. He says that he has no knowledge of any Atheists in Cheshire. We could, if the said Atheists are quite agreeable, introduce him to some, but if we did so the chairman (we do not know his name) would probably say that they were not Atheists, only thought they were. When a religious liar sets out to say something, the last thing he dreams of is getting his lie corrected. We think many of those who live in Cheshire might protest against this attack on the intelligence of the county.

But quite seriously we take this as an illustration of the evil of the policy of too many Freethinkers keeping their opinions to themselves or adopting some non-committal name that disguises the fact that they are Atheists. We have said scores of times that part of the strength of the Churches in this country for ill, is dependent upon the reticence of Freethinkers in publicly avowing their opinions. After all opinion is something for public use, not something that is to be kept at home, looked at in secret, or whisperingly disclosed to others as though one were plotting a murder or intended planting a bomb in a railway station. And every Freethinker who fails to make his opinions known, is really placing a heavier burden upon the shoulders upon those who do, and so making the operations of the religious bigot easier.

We referred last week to the methods adopted by some of our patriotic nobility in order to evade taxation. The following from *Commonweal* for July 5, will make the position clear:—

The Duke of Devonshire and his son and heir, the Marquis of Hartington, are directors of a private company, Hartington Properties, just registered with a nominal capital of £1,000,000 in £1 shares.

The object of the company is, as stated in its Memorandum, to acquire and hold lands, buildings and hereditaments.

The real object behind that statement is to enable the company to evade death duties, for a company does not die. Also, by voting good salaries with generous expense allowances, the company saves on income-tax, which saving falls to be made good by the general body of taxpayers.

The Devonshires are interested as directors in the following companies:—

Chatsworth Estates, Ltd. £2,300,000

Directors: Duke of Devonshire, Earl of Yarborough	
Roseberry Estates, Ltd.	326,500
Directors: Marquis of Hartington, Earl of Roseberry	
Holker Estates, Ltd.	90,000
Directors: Lord R. F. Cavendish, Marquess of Hartington	
Hartington Properties, Ltd.	1,000,000
Directors: Duke of Devonshire, Marquess of Hartington	
	<hr/> £3,716,000

Thoroughly to appreciate the above, one must bear in mind the scathing language directed towards those who adopt other methods of "dodging" taxes.

The French Government has started an enquiry into the German subsidized propaganda in France, and some startling disclosures are promised. It is said that several proprietors of newspapers are involved, which is likely owing to the fact that there are many more "journals of opinion" in France than in this country. We suggest that our own Government might institute a similar enquiry in this country regarding newspapers. This, not because the proprietors would be involved, most of them are too wealthy to be bribed, but to give an eye to some newspaper contributors. It is with the men whose pens are to be bought that the danger lies in Britain. The work of the proprietors is in doping public opinion by the methods of exclusion and partial suppression.

When one points out the manner in which the Roman Catholic Church piles up wealth in the course of its "spiritual" campaign, denials come from religious sources, as was the case with the British defenders of the German and Italian War against Spain. But consider this. The German gangsters in the course of their campaign of robbery have just "persuaded" the monks of Klosterneberg to hand over their estates situated on the banks of the Danube. On these estates there are 9,000 tenants, and we presume there are other possessions. The monks are accused of levying very high rents, although these have been reduced by 50 per cent on the order of the Government.

It is worth bearing in mind that the monks, as individuals, cannot possess property. It belongs to the Church. Therefore the monks cannot give away or sell Church property. It was this that caused the Church to be almost the last to free slaves, and to need a revolution, in more than one place, to release its grip on the land. The financial hold of the Church on Spain, was one of the factors that led to the hostility to the Church. That grip, however, will now, thanks to the help given the Italian, German, and the British Governments, be at last partly restored.

By sitting for 13 hours—on the pavement—with his hat in his hand the Rev. R. W. Williams collected £334 towards the £600 required for his Church debt. If he had stood on his head for a quarter of the time he might have achieved the whole sum. Of course, the performance was known beforehand, otherwise fifty pounds would have been a big haul.

Fifty Years Ago

THE orthodox plan has been to commence with persecution of the critics of Scripture then to pass on through successive stages of insult, denunciation, deprecation, and silence; finally, to resort to laboured and disingenuous apologies, with the pretence that the world is really indebted to Christians for its knowledge of the "apparent" defects and deficiencies of Holy Writ.

The Freethinker, July 21, 1889

There is a New Reader round the corner—Get Him!

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. MONKS.—We concur with all you say about our friend Black. We are jogging along. To take a "good holiday" is advice we should be pleased to carry out, but conditions are not favourable just now.

W. CLEAVY.—The similitude of the two substances may only mean that the constituents have each some of the same element. But it seems most probable that life did make its first appearance in water. Pleased to note your estimation of *Pamphlets for the People*. They are said to be doing everywhere the work for which they were intended. More of them should have been out, but Mr. Cohen's work in other directions seems to increase rather than to diminish.

E. TRASK.—Many thanks for cuttings, but you should give with each cutting the name and date of the paper from which they are taken. Lack of these often prevents their use.

MR. B. WOODROFFE, in ordering his copy of *Possession*, writes "the next best thing to a book by C.C. is one that is recommended by him." We appreciate the compliment, but hope that Mr. Woodroffe will not forget that the best of us may trip at times. Still, with a life-time of reading behind us we may flatter ourself without undue conceit that we know a good book when we see one.

To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—T. H. Martins, ros.

A. J. VANSTONE.—We cannot at this distance place our hand on the exact authority for the press circulated story of the band playing "Nearer my God to Thee," while the "Titanic" was sinking, but we are certain of the exposure. Perhaps some of our readers may recall the authority.

B. FOSTER.—Pleased to hear from a new subscriber. We may use part of your letter on account of its general interest. Please make yourself known if you are ever at one of Mr. Cohen's lectures.

MR. A. HANSON writes that our "Views and Opinions" on Dr. Oesterreich's book cost him over 5s. Quite a number of readers appear to have paid the same price, but we feel sure that they will find the expenditure was well done.

L. CORINA.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

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

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

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

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Human progress consists in a continual increase in the number of those, who, ceasing to live by the animal life alone and to feel the pleasures of sense only, come to participate in the intellectual life also, and to find enjoyment in the things of the mind.—Matthew Arnold.

Sugar Plums

The Executive of the National Secular Society is desirous of extending its open-air campaign to towns where it does not exist at the moment. The Executive has specially in view towns in Essex, Norfolk, and Sussex, but North and South of London are also worthy of attention. The great thing is to get hold of Freethinkers in the places indicated who are ready to lend a hand. There are few towns to-day where a regular campaign could not be conducted, if local "saints" are willing to lend a hand. Those willing to help should write the General Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, giving all relevant particulars, and the matter will at once receive attention.

For the benefit of overseas readers we wish to announce that we have reserved a certain number of copies of the book *Possession* advertised in this issue, in anticipation of their orders. It so often happens that by the time orders are received from abroad all copies are sold. As we said last week *Possession* is a book with which all who are interested in the scientific side of Freethought should become acquainted.

The Leicester Secular Society has paid Mr. Cohen the compliment of electing him an honorary member of their Society. The compliment is fully appreciated. Mr. Cohen's relations with the Leicester Society have always been very cordial, and there is no likelihood of that reciprocal feeling ever being disturbed. The Society itself has a lengthy and honourable history, and under its present management its reputation is in safe hands.

The following letter from a Grimsby reader will, we think, interest our readers:—

I am a comparatively new reader, having taken in your paper regularly for about six months. I had heard of it previously, but was introduced to it by my news-agent, who is a Freethinker. He passed a copy to me, remarking that he knew I liked "serious reading." I just glanced at it casually and put it into my pocket. That evening I settled down casually to read it, and it certainly made me "sit up," and I eagerly read every word. I had never read anything like it before—never come across any articles on such matters. It left me with a strange feeling—not one of pious horror or of "righteous indignation," but the feeling of one who sees an idea he has always almost unconsciously cherished suddenly blazoned forth as an established truth. Here was a release from the long instilled and deeply rooted religious teachings that are found in most of us, and which most of us try to ignore, but dare not definitely drop. I had felt for a long time that Christianity left me cold . . . but all the same, I dare say, had I been asked, I should not have definitely disavowed it. . . . Thanks for enabling me to now see more clearly.

We do not believe that multitudes of people are waiting to read the *Freethinker*, its contents appeal too much to intelligence for that, but we are sure that there are many thousands who would welcome the introduction to this journal. We invite our friends to test, and keep on testing our statement.

The following, which appears in the *Times*, is reprinted from the issue of that paper for July 11, 1839:—

The presentation of Robert Owen at court by Lord Melbourne is one of the most humiliating events which have recently occurred. It might have, indeed, been hoped that we should at least be spared the sin and shame of such a national degradation. All parties who have any sense of propriety, even those who are decidedly favourable to Government, unite in reprobating and deploring this strange and unlooked-for insult to common decency. That a man whose "beastly principles," as even the *Patriot* denominates them, would, if carried out, dissolve all virtuous and honourable society, should be brought at all into the presence of our virgin Queen, for

the purpose of proposing his plans for the "improvement" of society, is in itself offensive enough; but that he should be introduced by the Prime Minister of England is so astounding that it could not have been credited except on unquestionable authority. The *Patriot* offers for Lord Melbourne the apology that he could not be acquainted with Mr. Owen's principles; our remark is, that he ought to have been before he took such a step.—*Watchman*.

[The *Watchman* was perhaps unaware that Queen Victoria's father, the Duke of Kent, had been a steadfast friend of Robert Owen, and that other royal and distinguished persons had taken a deep interest in his work for social reform, education, and co-operation. Owen, who lived to nearly 90 years, was at this time 68.]

It may be noted that Robert Owen lost the favour of most of the titled people named when he made an open confession that he did not believe in Christianity. And when he made the public declaration that "all the religions of the world were so many forms of geographical insanity," not only did the support of the fashionables go, but there set in the fashion of ignoring Owen's existence and work in "respectable" histories. Of late years there has been something of a revival in favour of Robert Owen, but if these interested will enquire as to the amount and kind of attention paid to the work of Owen, and the kind and amount of notice taken of him in orthodox histories or in public schools, they will find that Christian hatred is long-lived and very watchful.

When we were younger we had some ambition of producing a series of biographies of Freethinkers whose work is unknown even to those who consider themselves advanced thinkers. Two pamphlets, advertised in this issue of the *Freethinker*, enable all interested to get a birds'-eye view of what men such as Annet and Hetherington did, but it is a very small instalment of what we hope will one day appear, and so give the credit due to those almost unknown men and women, who made it possible for others to speak a little more boldly than they ever would have dared to do had these pioneers not fought and suffered. Even now, in most cases, the outspokenness of advanced writers seldom errs on the side of complete frankness. The cancer of Christianity has bitten very deeply.

A debate has been arranged between Mr. E. E. Phillips and Mr. Paul Goldman (Member of the Bethnal Green Branch N.S.S.) on "Has Man a Soul?" The debate will take place in the Stratford Spiritual Church, Idmiston Road, Forest Lane, Stratford, E., on Monday, July 24. Admission will be free. Chair will be taken at 7.45. We hear excellent accounts of Mr. Goldman, the other speaker is unknown to us. We have no doubt that the discussion will prove interesting and instructive.

The Executive of the N.S.S. when arranging Mr. Whitehead's summer campaign allocated two weeks to Swansea. Meetings are held on the sands, and many visitors are included in the audiences. This year the fortnight begins on Saturday, July 22, and meetings will be held each evening at 7.30. The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate at all the meetings.

We are asked to announce that a debate has been arranged between Mr. Joseph McCabe and the Rev. Father McNab, which is to take place on October 3, at Kenfig Hill, near Bridgend. The Subject is "That Roman Catholicism is a False Religion." The title is rather curious; we should have been inclined to assert that Roman Catholicism is very much nearer being a true religion than any other which exists in countries that have the reputation of being civilized. But we have no doubt that everything will be made quite clear in the course of the discussion. We have no other particulars of the debate, but they may come along later.

Superstition is the child of ignorance and the mother of Misery.—*Ingersoll*.

Providence

Virtue in a chafe should change her linen quick,
Lest pleurisy get start of Providence.—*Browning*.

PROVIDENCE is said to be the foresight and care of God over all his creatures.

When a bricksetter's labourer's fall from a tall building was broken by a dog, the man recovered from his fall, the dog it was that died. The dog, Mark Twain tells us, had been placed and held in position by the hand of a benign Man-loving Providence to thus save the man's life. Left to the tender mercies of nature the result had been otherwise. That "man—her last work, that seemed so fair, such splendid purpose in his eyes"—could so selfishly think the Creator in his infinite wisdom justified in doing this thing to a dog seems almost incredible.

The sensible man lets determined things to destiny hold unbewailed their way. The religious—superstitious—man calls unchangeable things the "Will o' God"—trials to test his faith.

When pleurisy, or any other disease, gets the start of providence the "Will o' God" steps in—the inevitable happens. "Without man, God is impossible," says Swedenborg. Yet man, when his efforts fail, becomes religious in supposing that God may, if he thinks fit, interpose and make the sun stand still on his behalf. So men, when every helper fails and comforts flee, cheer each other up with empty phrases like "God help you!" And when man and God fail to help and the inevitable takes place man solaces himself by muttering "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Faith, in their darkest hour, supports the pious. They believe miracles yet possible, though their absurdity should render credibility impossible. A very little thought expended on this could not fail to convince the dullest. For instance—"Christ walks upon the water, overcoming gravity to that extent, why not have flown," asks Ruskin, "and overcome it altogether? He feeds the multitudes by breaking existent loaves; why not have commanded the stones into bread? Or instead of feeding either an assembly or a nation, why not enable them, like himself, miraculously to fast for the needed time? . . . St. Paul raises Eutychus from death, and his garments effect miraculous cures; yet he leaves Trophimus sick at Miletum, recognizes only the mercy of God in the recovery of Epaphroditus, and, like any uninspired physician, recommends Timothy wine for his infirmities."

Paul's ways were a copy of God's ways, evidently, as expressed by Browning's *Caliban*.

"As it likes me each time, I do: so He." To the the Apostle—"His ways are past finding out." To the Psalmist—"His ways are always grievous." But his thoughts and ways are man's thoughts and ways, though he tells man they are not and directs man's attention, in proof, to the heavens.

"The first worship was nature worship," says John Denham Parsons. "The first Gods were naturally the sun, moon, and stars, the dawn, and the vault of heaven, and other marvels or aspects of nature. The first prophets were prophets of astronomical events." Christianity is mixed up with this early worship. The early fathers admitted it. For instance: Eusebius, (about 264-340, Bishop of Cæsarea, a distinguished early writer; wrote a *History of the World* to A.D. 328; his *Ecclesiastical History* is the first record of the Christian Church up to 324; etc.) tells us in his *Hist. Eccl.* II. 5—"What is called the Christian Religion is neither new nor strange, but—if it be lawful to testify as to the truth—was known to the ancients."

The undevout astronomer, the devout tell us, is

mad. The Christian believes that his God made the Universe for his benefit and pleasure solely. The ancients were not great astronomers. They had, however, like the early Christians, and those of to-day, sufficient knowledge to correct such an absurd belief. Five planets—Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—besides Moon, Stars, and Comets, were known to the ancients. For any person ancient, or modern to think that a God, capable of creating the aforementioned, would condescend to create them for no other reason than for the benefit and pleasure of such an insignificant parasite as man is inconceivable. Yet people possessed of "robust souls" have assured us of its possibility—Whitman, for instance:—

All forces have been steadily employ'd to complete and
delight me,
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul.

(*Song of Myself*)

And what may be said for the modern Christian? Science has enlarged his astronomical knowledge. To note those already mentioned. Some planets are comparatively small while some are giants. The diameter of the earth is 7,918 miles, that of Mars 4,200 miles, while that of Jupiter is 85,000 miles, and so on; the Sun is 92,000,000 miles away, and its bulk is more than one million times that of the earth. Even one of its "spots" may be 140,000 miles long."

Bertrand Russell asks, "Is there not something a trifle absurd in the spectacle of human beings holding a mirror before themselves, and thinking what they behold is so excellent as to prove that a Cosmic Purpose must have been aiming at it all along?" Further, he says: "If I were granted Omnipotence and Millions of Years to experiment in, I should not think Man much to boast of as the final result of all my efforts.

"Man, as a curious accident in a backwater is intelligible: his mixture of virtues and vices is such as might be expected to result from a fortuitous origin. But only abysmal self-complacency can see in Man a reason which Omniscience would consider adequate as a motive for the Creator. The Copernican revolution will not have done its work until it has taught men more modesty than is to be found among those who think Man sufficient evidence of a Cosmic Purpose." (*Science and Religion*).

Mrs. Twain, in replying to a neighbour who had charged her son, Mark, with untruth said: "He is the wellspring of truth, but you can't bring up the whole well with one bucket."

As I made use of a portion only of one of Mark's "buckets" at the beginning of this article, I will now end it by making use of a full "bucket"—

"A very creditable creation indeed, taking all things into account; since man, quite unassisted, did it all out of his own head. I jump to this conclusion because I think that if Providence had been minded to help him, it would have occurred to Providence to do this some hundred thousand centuries earlier. We are accustomed to seeing the hand of Providence in everything. Accustomed, because if we missed it, or thought we missed it, we had discretion enough not to let on. We are a tactful race. We have been prompt to give Providence the credit of this fine and showy new civilization and we have been quite intemperate in our praises of this great benefaction: We have not been able to keep still over this splendid five minute attention; we can only keep still about the ages of neglect which preceded it, and which it makes so conspicuous. When Providence washes one of his worms into the sea in a tempest, then starves and freezes him on a plank for thirty-four days, and finally wrecks him again on an uninhabited island, where he lives on

shrimps and grasshoppers and other shell-fish for three months, and is at last rescued by some old whiskey-soaked, profane, and blasphemous infidel of a tramp captain, and carried home gratis to his friends, the worm forgets that it was Providence that washed him overboard, and only remembers that Providence rescued him. He finds no fault, he has no sarcasms for Providence's crude and slow and laboured ingenuities of invention in the matter of life-saving, he sees nothing in these delays and ineffectiveness but food for admiration; to him they seem a marvel, a miracle; and the longer they take and the more ineffective they are, the greater the miracle; meanwhile he never allows himself to break out in any good hearty unhandicapped thanks for the tough old shipmaster who really saved him! he damns him with faint praise as 'the instrument,' his rescuer 'under Providence.'"

(*Autobiography*. Vol. I. pp. 209-10).

GEORGE WALLACE

Religion in Education

OBVIOUSLY Rationalism is now largely overwhelmed by a flood of religious propaganda, associated with obscurantism. It appears that among ordinary journals the *Times* easily leads the way, and the *Times Educational Supplement* duly follows. My attention was forcibly drawn to this feature some time ago by a lengthy review of an important American book, written by a number of experts, and each of whom dealt with a section of educational activity. Though seemingly incredible it is the fact that after a few lines of general matter the review was practically confined to the section on religious instruction.

As, however, the *Supplement* contains reports of many educational meetings and discussions, it cannot very well suppress some facts and expressed opinions that are on the whole more palatable to Rationalists than to Religionists, though the latter kind naturally predominate. Of the abundant matter on religious instruction in the last two issues (May 6 and 13) the following may be cited:—

A par. from Edinburgh, which states that there is little cause for concern and much for gratitude, but that in the higher departments of education the overloaded curriculum and other influences "have squeezed out subjects of less secular import."

A par. from Bangor dealing with the efforts to get University College students to take courses in religious instruction as part of the work for the arts degree. (It is stated that Bangor and Durham are the only institutions of university rank that include the subject.) Here, we are told, "This session none of the students entering the College have wished to take the courses," and that the Principal has appealed to the schools for co-operation.

Following this is half a column on the Revised Cambridge Syllabus of ("agreed") religious instruction. But as there is in the same issue a long leading article on the subject this may be conveniently dealt with below. The remainder of the column is on "The Claims of Religion," a report on the Annual Meeting of the National Education Association, a body which is working for an effective, progressive, free, non-sectarian and publicly controlled system of national system of education. So far as reported the Chairman's speech consisted of depreciation of the Education Act of 1936, under which the Established and Roman Catholic Churches are "helping themselves freely at the expense of the Exchequer." But a Professor (of what or where is not mentioned), speaking on the Spens Report, seems to have had nothing to

say about real educational subjects, but took occasion to advocate the teaching of Scripture on the ground that the pupils should be brought into contact with world movements, and religion is one of them. This, if properly hit upon (to use a pleasing Baconian phrase) is not altogether unsatisfactory. But as "Scripture" is in general a mass of one-sided propaganda—to say nothing of other objectionable features—the teacher and the pupil should base whatever contact they make with religious movements on accounts given in good world history books. We also meet again with the curious statement that the aim of Scripture teaching is "to bring out what the authors of the various books of the Bible meant by their writings."

The leading article begins with the idea of an educationist of wide experience that "nothing but Christian education will save the world from an abyss of which no man can see the bottom, and that the main battle before us would be fought in the ordinary schools of the country." (Is this one of the clerical school managers who are so keen about getting religious tests imposed on all teachers of council as well as of church schools?)

We are informed that the Syllabus is much fuller than the previous one; that it contains much more about worship in schools, emphasizes the correlation of Bible reading with hymns and prayers, gives suggestions for the conduct of school services and the use of the school service book, and lays much stress on "the Church." But there is no mention of any attempt to get the teachers to take the pupils to churches in school time—as in the notorious Blackpool case—which was brought to nought by the vigorous action of the National Union of Teachers.

As, among other things, the teachers are advised to make themselves familiar with the whole of the Epistles of St. Paul, it would be interesting to know what the intelligent and fairly informed teacher thinks of certain passages that bear some relation to much of the matter (world knowledge and the resulting wisdom) he imparts or leads his pupils to acquire for themselves. There is the advice to Timothy to avoid not only profane and vain babblings but "the oppositions of science falsely so called." Then we get in Corinthians' more comprehensive deprecation of natural knowledge and "wisdom": "And if any man thinketh he knoweth anything he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know"; "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent"; "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God."

The Pauline exposition thus marks the first decisive step toward the neglect and contempt of real, natural knowledge, thought, and "wisdom," which resulted in the fall of education. And the failure of a well nigh all-powerful church to revive it during succeeding centuries of course brought about the general intellectual abyss of the Middle Ages.

Finally, the educational journal referred to states (June 10) that the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland has for some years refused to reopen the question of the amendment of the Scottish Education Act of 1918—which empowered religious sects to build schools and to compel the education authorities to take them over, and of course to defray all expense of running them though they remain sectarian schools. If it is true that the Assembly "refused" to reopen the question, it is also true that about two years ago a resolution of protest against the Act, and the practical endowment of the papal organization (owing to many teachers being under vows of poverty, and therefore compelled to hand over their publicly paid salaries to their sacerdotal employers) appeared in the agenda of the meeting of the General Assembly. But

as there was no mention of that in the report the resolution must have been withdrawn or ruled out.

Since then a number of quarrels have arisen. In a case at Bonnybridge (Stirling), an appeal was taken as far as the House of Lords. But the decision was in favour of the Roman Catholics. So it has been concluded that the only remedy is an amendment of the Act; and the Assembly has adopted unanimously a proposal to instruct its education committee to deal with the question and report. The argument runs, says the Educational Supplement, that "On democratic principles . . . it is high time to escape from the domination of the majority by the Minority."

Note. Since the above was written a long review of the Cambridge Syllabus has appeared in the *Schoolmaster*. And we may note with interest the following passage: "When, therefore, the announcement was made that a Committee had been appointed to revise the Syllabus, fears were expressed as to the alterations which would result. These fears were not decreased when it was noted that ordained clergymen, including three canons of the Church of England, formed a majority of the Committee. The justification for these fears can now be measured by an examination of the Report, which is a volume of 150 pages . . . It is more definite and dogmatic in character."

J. REEVES

Dolet: The Freethought Martyr*

I.

RELIGION has had its martyrs, and so has Freethought. The path of progress has been drenched with blood and tears, and a world darkened by theology has been lightened by the fires of the stake. From Socrates drinking the poison cup to the latest object of orthodox hate, history bears a long record of noble men and women who have died or suffered for humanity and truth.

Nothing, says Lecky, should impair the reverence with which we bow before the martyr's tomb. But there are martyrs and martyrs. The early Christians courted death at the hands of power; their eagerness to be immolated outstripped the cruelty of their persecutors. They were ready to perish miserably here in order to wear an imperishable crown of glory hereafter. They wished to make an infinitely profitable exchange, giving a few moments' pain for eternal bliss. They died not to save others but to save themselves, not for unfriended Truth but for a Deity with power to bestow matchless rewards. There is no martyrdom in that. But when a man who has no assurance of another life, and perhaps no belief in it, risks reputation, fortune, friendship, and life itself, in the pursuit and propagation of Truth; and rather than belie his conscience or stultify his manhood, dies a bitter death, and lays his *all* on the altar of man's highest hopes; then indeed there is a martyrdom at once pathetic and sublime.

Etienne Dolet, one of the martyrs of Freethought during the Renaissance, was hanged and burnt at Lyons in the year 1546, on his thirty-seventh birthday (August 3). The Church gave him the martyr's crown as a birthday present, and that was the only noble gift it could confer.

Several works have been written on Dolet in French, but nothing has appeared in English until Mr. Christie published this monumental Biography, which

* Etienne Dolet, the Martyr of the Renaissance: A Biography. By R. C. Christie. Macmillan & Co. A review reprinted from the *Freethinker* of 1881.

shows. like Mr. Pollock's *Spinoza*, that we, as well as the Germans, can produce the finest fruits of profound and careful scholarship. Mr. Christie has devoted the leisure of eight years to his work, and as he can never expect any other payment for it, he should at least receive our heartiest gratitude. He has conferred an inestimable boon on all earnest students of literature, as well as on those who treasure the memories of the heroes and martyrs of progress. While highly impartial, he has performed his task as a labour of love, and done justice to one whom M. Boulmier has called "the Christ of Freethought."

Mr. Christie's research has been wide and patient, and he has collected a vast quantity of interesting matter from obscure sources. Yet we are surprised to find that he makes no reference to the bibliophile Jacob's lengthy introduction to the works of Bonaventure Des Periers, in which there are several passages referring to Dolet, and many curious notes on the literary struggles of his time. Has it escaped Mr. Christie's notice, or does he think it useless? We can hardly conceive the latter, for Jacob (Paul Lacroix) is certainly an authority on the history of French literature, if on nothing else.

Although he is Chancellor of the Diocese of Manchester, Mr. Christie praises Rabelais and Voltaire and the French Revolution with charming frankness. He writes of Voltaire as "the father of the Revolution in at least one, and that not the least beneficial of its aspects." And of the arch-heretic and the jolly Curé of Meudon he writes: "Intense love of the human race, intense desire for its social and intellectual progress, intense hatred of hypocrisy, bigotry, superstition and ignorance, is to be found in both." Further on, in a footnote, he says:—

Great as was the genius, many as were the virtues of Bossuet, I prefer the Christianity (or non-Christianity) of Voltaire to that of the Eagle of Meaux, nor can I forget that his beak and claws displayed themselves not only in the flights of his pulpit oratory or in his admirable denunciations of the variations of the Protestant Churches, but in the active persecution of Fénelon, and in the warm approval which he gave to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the dragonnades of Languedoc.

And he describes Rabelais as "that great man, from whom a word of praise is itself sufficient to confer an immortality." It is very pleasant to find a serious and sober scholar, like Mr. Christie, confessing himself a "disciple of the divine Pantagruel." He is worthy to be a member of the Rabelais Club, and to consort with the choice spirits who compose it. He sees the splendid wisdom and humanity beneath the Master's buffoonery, and understands the meaning of Victor Hugo's great word about "irony incarnate for the salvation of mankind."

With regard to the Renaissance, Mr. Christie notices the sneer that it gave birth to nothing, and refutes it:—

Surely this is not so. The Renaissance gave birth to mental freedom. It taught the true mode of looking at things and opinions. It revived the classical as opposed to the medieval method of thought. It examined things as they are, and opinions according to their absolute truth or falsehood, and not according as they are in accord or discord with authority and orthodoxy. It appealed *ab auctoritate ad rem*; and a system which was the parent of Erasmus and Rabelais, and a more remote ancestor of Molière and Voltaire, cannot be called unfruitful or unworthy of attention, whatever be the value at which we appraise its fruits.

Mr. Christie then notices the hostility of the chief spirits of the Renaissance to Christianity, and says the fault was not theirs:—

To each of them Religion, Christianity, the Catholic Church represented, as it could not but represent, all that was odious, all that was opposed to freedom of thought, to freedom of action, all that in one aspect (the religious) was cruel and brutal, in another (the mundane) all that was degrading and immoral.

Even Bossuet, says Mr. Christie, "had no word of sympathy, apparently no thought, for the wretched and oppressed millions; in fact, as Vinet has remarked, 'during all that triumphal era the people escape our search.' For them, at least, the Church had no message."

Such is the spirit in which Mr. Christie writes. Having recognized it, and given him thanks and praise for the result of his labours, we shall proceed to draw from it, for our readers, a brief narrative of Dolet's career, his struggles, his successes, his misfortunes, and his death.

G. W. FOOTE

Correspondence

INTERNATIONAL PEACE

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—On the subject discussed in these columns of Conscription and National Service in Britain, which I do not altogether oppose, I should like to say briefly that I hope the day is not far away (pity 'tis that it is not already here in 1939 A.D.), when youth will be mobilized or enlisted only in national or international police forces to keep the peace—national and international—while huge national armies, navies and air forces will be the anachronisms they ought to be now.

Did not Mr. Chamberlain himself say in the House of Commons on March 24, 1938: "... when the world establishes an international police force which will inspire us all with full confidence in its capacity to keep the peace, then there will be no need for us to trouble our heads about our defence: it will be done for us?" Let us work for and hasten that day! Of course the International Police Force will not come of itself, as Mr. Chamberlain would almost seem to suggest.

D. V. WALLACE

Obituary

ARTHUR BONNER

ANOTHER link with the Bradlaugh days disappears with the death of Arthur Bonner at the age of 82. Coming from a very religious family, his father was baptist minister, he was attracted to Freethought before he was out of his teens, joined the National Secular Society in 1881, took charge of the printing of Bradlaugh's *National Reformer* and other publications, and married Bradlaugh's youngest daughter Hypatia. Of a retiring disposition, he was an attendant at Freethought meetings of importance, and took a part in the work involved in the International Conference in London in 1887. Our own acquaintance with him was limited to the opportunities afforded, but one could not help noting the obvious kindly disposition of the man, and one was not surprised to learn of his keen interest in archeological and antiquarian studies, which developed into more than a mere spare-time occupation. There are some men that, when it is too late, one regrets never having known better.—A.C.

MR. HENRY BLACK

WE regret to have to record the death at the Manchester Victoria Jewish Hospital, of Mr. Henry Black, of 83 Heaton Street, Prestwich, Manchester. Mr. Black, who was 62 years of age, had been for many years actively associated with the Freethought Movement in Manchester, and was particularly interested in Secular Educa-

tion. He was one of the founders of the New Manchester Branch in 1917, and acted as Secretary for some years after its inception.

He was taken ill some three weeks ago, but for a time seemed to be making progress towards recovery. His condition, however, was not maintained, and he lapsed into unconsciousness and died on July 8. Mr. Monks who was also a member of the Branch and a close personal friend, conducted a Secular Service at the Manchester Crematorium, and paid a high tribute to Mr. Black's worth and service.

We extend our deep sympathy to the widow and children in their bereavement.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JULY 13, 1939

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Hornibrook, Elstob, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Bedborough, Griffiths, Shortt, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Kingston, West London Branches and the Parent Society.

Mrs. Venton's resignation as joint representative on the Executive of N.W. Area, through ill-health, was accepted with regret, and with the hope that a speedy recovery would enable her to resume her active interest in the movement at an early date.

Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool) was present in accordance with the Rule concerning Branch strength. Mr. G. Thompson (Liverpool) was elected to the vacancy in the N.W. Area, and becomes its joint representative on the Executive. Mr. W. Griffiths (Kingston) was co-opted as an additional member of the Executive. Correspondence was dealt with from Liverpool, Blackburn, Edinburgh, West Ham, etc., and the National Peace Council. Lecture reports were noted from Messrs. Whitehead, Brighton, Clayton, Shortt, Atkinson, and Mrs. Whitefield. The Sub-Committee appointed on Motion 9 of the Annual Conference formally reported its first meeting. The account representing the Society's responsibility in publishing the speeches of the International Congress in London, 1938, was ordered to be paid.

The Chairman announced the death of Mr. A. Bonner, and the Secretary was instructed to convey the Executive's sincere sympathy to Mr. C. B. Bonner.

The next meeting was fixed for Thursday, September 7, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

The Church of Rome has survived many mischances, and will survive many more. Its history is illuminated by the lives of noble men and women whose devotion to their faith has enriched an impoverished world and filled empty hearts with hope. But it may be said with warrant that those men and women were good in themselves and not good because they were Roman Catholics, a contention that can, of course, be maintained about members of other sects; and it may with equal warrant be said that a *rag and bone religion* cannot continue to hold the mind and spirit of a world which is, all too slowly, rising out of its intellectual mire. I doubt the spiritual value of a faith founded largely on relics and half-hearted traditions. It does not appear to me good in a spiritual sense that a Church should be cluttered with *thigh bones* and knuckles and scraps of cloth which are *alleged* to have sanctity because they once, so it is said, were part of a holy man or woman's body or were worn by a saint.

"A Journey to Jerusalem," St. John Ervine.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

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

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 7.30, Sunday, A Lecture. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. L. Ebury. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 8.0, Wednesday, Mrs. Buxton and Mr. Carpenter. 8.0, Thursday, Mr. Saphin. 8.0, Friday, Mr. Barnes. 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Collins. 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson, Wood and Mrs. Buxton.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. D. Robinson. Well Lane Corner, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. D. Robinson.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mr. Frank Smithlies—"Boos for Taboos."

FENCEHOUSES (Schools): 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

FOULBRIDGE: 7.45, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road): Tuesday, 8.0, Thursday, 8.0, Minard Road. Friday, 8.0, Rose Street, Sauchiehall Street. Muriel Whitefield will speak at these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, Bury, 8.0, Saturday. Blackburn, 7.0, Sunday. Chorley Market, 8.0, Tuesday. Mr. A. Atkinson will address these meetings.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Ashton Market): 8.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

NELSON (Chapel Street): 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

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

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

STOCKTON (The Cross): 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TATFIELD (The Bridge): 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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