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

Views and Opinions

With the Godly

There is a very ridiculous body of people called the Lord's Day Observance Society, of which Sir Thomas Inskip, a member of the present Government was the President, until he exchanged the stupidities of Sabbatarianism for the duplicities of politics. The aim of this organization might well be expressed in the slogan "Let's all be unhappy on Sunday," for that appears to be the main aim of the society. Its members never seem happy unless they are robbing other people of the opportunity of enjoying themselves during at least one-seventh of their lives, and if they did that to the extent that the old Sunday was re-introduced for everybody, and everybody illustrated it in practice, there would be a new source of trouble. For if everybody were to keep Sunday as these survivals of primitive times would have them keep it, if, so to speak, everybody on Sunday found happiness in being miserable, then the religious value of being miserable would be destroyed, and something else would have to be devised for making people religiously miserable again. Psychologically it is a curious situation, closely akin to the sad position of the pessimist who is only happy when he is miserable, and is then so annoyed at finding himself enjoying being miserable that he can no longer rest content with the condition which he believes to be the only desirable one.

We have often written on this subject, and shall without doubt write on it many times yet. For it is a question that is always with us, and is of much greater importance and of much wider significance than most people believe. In the history of the British people, there is no more deplorable chapter than that connected with Sabbatarianism. It is responsible for more bad habits, for more hypocrisy, and for more intolerance than any other single thing in our history. If one could only transport a generation of young people, say, those under eighteen years of age, to the conditions that prevailed a century ago, they would realize how much they owe to

Freethought. For the anti-sabbatarian movement was almost wholly Freethinking in its origin, and remained mainly Freethinking until yesterday. No greater boon was ever given to the people than the creation of a more civilized Sunday.

* * *

How it Works

My attention was again called to this question by an excellent article in a recent issue of the *Sunday Pictorial*. Every member of the House of Commons has received a circular letter from the I.D.O.S. "humbly" protesting against the present profanation of Sunday. It appears that:—

The Lord's Day Observance Society Council are concerned at the growing habit among parliamentary and municipal departments and semi-military organizations of selecting Sunday for reviews, displays, parades, outings, etc.

That looks like a vote of censure on Sir Thomas Inskip, for we have never heard that he has either raised any protest against these Sunday movements, and he certainly has not resigned office on that account. To some extent he must be a party to this desecration of the "Sawbath." It will be remembered that Sir Thomas was one of those who protested against the insult to God in the International Congress being held in London. Perhaps, as nothing was then done by the heavenly authorities, and as the protests of Sir Thomas met with no response from heaven, he has now decided that he will leave God to attend to his sabbath by himself.

But the Society itself continues active. From the *Sunday Pictorial* I learn that the Society enjoys an income of about £10,000, which it can spend in keeping its claims—for gifts, legacies and other things—before the general public. Most of this goes on paying certain people to agitate against any extension of a Pagan Sunday. What lucky devils these Pagans were! They lived without ever realizing they were miserable sinners, they not only had no one to save them, but they were actually unaware that—in the Christian sense—they stood in need of being saved. The thought of so many generations dying without ever sensing they had anything like the Christian hell waiting for them is enough to drive one to tears.

The principal work of the propagandists employed by the Society is to guard the Sunday from profanation wherever possible. Wherever licentiousness has grown to such extent as to make it possible that cinemas may compete with parsons in supplying nonsense, or where the demoralization of children is carried to the extent of permitting them to play on swings, or paddle in pools on the Lord's Day, the vigilant emissaries of the Lord's Day Observance Society get to work. Families who were living six in a room were warned of the disruption of the happy English home that would follow the weakening of the British Sunday, the perils of swimming pools—on

Sunday, the dangers of country walks—on Sunday, the soul-destroying attractions of the bicycle and motor-car—on Sunday, and the vice which existed in countries where Sunday was not so carefully guarded as it is in this happy Christian land, all these warnings form the material of the Sabbatarian musketeers. Last year this Society boasted that it prevented twenty-eight towns opening their cinemas on Sunday, in other towns, dances, plays and games were prevented. The Lord did keep at least some of the people properly miserable on His day. One expects that when the agents of the Lord's Day Observance Society get to heaven, the first question they will ask is whether the playing of harps and the blowing of trumpets, or flying races between angels will be banned on Sunday?

Guide to the Perplexed

The L.D.O.S. also issues a guide as to how people ought to spend Sunday. Here it is:—

The morning should be spent in worship. The afternoon in Christian service, such as Bible Class, the distribution of tracts, preaching, visiting the sick and needy. The evening should be spent at divine service, followed perhaps by meditation, or uplifting reading.

Ye gods! What a life! No wonder that a man who spends his time in this way can say death has no terrors for him. I can easily credit him with looking fearlessly in the face of death—he would even be anxious for it. Seriously if anyone will picture a generation or two brought up in this fashion, beginning the day with worship, proceeding to a Bible Class where they would get all the crudities and blunders of semi-civilized people served up as indisputable truths, then another dose of Church listening to some miseducated parson talking on a badly understood subject, to a stupidly brought up congregation, and then finishing the day with a meditation on the crudities and incredibilities they had heard; picture a whole generation brought up in this fashion, what would be the mental and moral consequences? Something that would be little short of general, mental and moral degeneracy. It is the good fortune of the British people that *all* were not brought up in this way, and even those who spent Sunday in this way had the rest of the week during which they lived in a healthier atmosphere.

The L.D.O.S. is quite certain that "Unless England reserves Sunday as a day of rest and abstinence from worldly things, a complete physical and nervous collapse will follow." The complete answer to this is, first, that the mental and moral strength of the British has developed far more rapidly in recent years—imperfect as it still is—than it was over a century ago when the British Christian Sunday was in full power. Secondly, that it is among the non-Sabbatarian section of the population that the demand for a higher level of life has come, and by the religious section that the strongest opposition was shown.

Here is another statement on which a word or two may well be said:—

Going to Church is one of the things our fathers did. That should be good enough for us.

As stated that is a calumny on "our fathers," and they have enough stupid things for which to answer without saddling them with offences for which they are not guilty. There is no period in the history of England for at least four hundred years when *all* our fathers went to Church, neither is there a period when the clergy were not lamenting the number of people who stayed away from Church, in spite of the many inducements resorted to, to encourage Church attend-

ance. Church-going was always encouraged, at some period it was commoner than at others, but at no time do the facts justify the statement that our "fathers" in any really inclusive sense indulged in this form of mind poisoning. Our fathers have been guilty of many blunders, many brutalities, many imbecilities, but we really ought not to assume that they were all so far gone as to have completely lost their mental balance. Of course, if all is meant by the statement that our fathers went to Church means no more than that the immediate ancestors of the upholders of the Lord's Day Observance Society went to Church, we have no more to say. It is the most plausible explanation of their mental make-up that can be offered.

The Lord's Day Observance supporters may well praise the very worst rule of life one can adopt—that what our fathers did is good enough for us. That is the one rule that every wise parent will shun, and every sensible child will correct as soon as possible. There is no parent who is fit to be one, who does not wish his children to do better than he did, and to see farther than he sees. Progress depends upon the child being better and wiser than its parent, not upon an unintelligent imitation. But it is a purely religious attitude, and a specifically Christian one, to assume that the child must imitate the parent. We have it in the religious desire to bring up children to believe as their parents believed, and in the semi-religious political aim of seeing children as a simple duplication of their parents. Largely the troubles of the world to-day are due to the fact that the average man and woman are unable to take an informed and intelligent interest in the affairs around them. The man whose children cannot see further than he did, and so behave better, should never have begotten children at all.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Fraud and the Faith

It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
Their saints, their — all they fear or hope
Are lies and lies.—*Browning*

DELIBERATE fraud plays a large part in religion. This is perfectly plain in the present-day exhibitions of the bogus "Holy Fire" at Jerusalem, and at the alleged liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius at Naples, both of which are annual events, and for which the Greek Church and the Roman Catholic priests are responsible respectively. These two tricks of pious hocus-pocus are not, by any means, the only ones, but they are the best known. Europe is full of bogus relics of saints. Protestant Christians admit all this, and attribute it to the smart machinations of the Greek and Romish priests, to whom such trickery is a regular source of revenue.

What Protestants ignore is that the Christian Religion itself grew up in a similar hotbed of trickery and chicanery. Even the "Gospels" are not above suspicion of being faked, and a hint of this is to be found in the admittedly spurious "Apocryphal Gospels," and the flagrant forging of Christian evidence in "Josephus," and other writers. Indeed, the Apocryphal Gospels are tabooed, for the reason that they might let the cat out of the bag, and the vast majority of Christians have never even heard of them. Even so famous a writer as H. G. Wells writes as if he had no acquaintance with these spurious gospels. Yet it is by means of these neglected manuscripts that one can find out the devious methods of Priestcraft. They are, as it were, the artist's rough sketches for the completed works. The numerous Gospels were not written in Jerusalem, but mainly in

Rome, at a time when that city was the depository of the legends and lore of the world. They were not written in Aramaic, but in scholarly Greek, thus proving that they were not the work of the persons to whom they were ascribed. It was a hundred years after the alleged occurrences that these little biographies were complete. And it was nearly two hundred before they were definitive, afterwards to be sorted into canonical and spurious.

That these works were written by priests, and not by the alleged authors, is proved by the scholarly language used, by the use of theological terminology, and by literal quotation from earlier existing sources. The carefully cultivated credulity of believers blinds their eyes to facts. The four accepted canonical gospels are poured into their eyes from childhood, and the far-fetched story has a very familiar ring even when half believed. But all is different with the Apocryphal Gospels. Being in a novel and unfamiliar setting, the unblushing mendacity of the authors is the more striking. It should make a hard-shell believer rub his eyes to read the further adventures of the hero of the Gospels, such as those narrated in *The First Gospel of the Infancy*, in which is told the story of the boy Jesus astonishing his playmates by making clay figures of donkeys, cattle, and birds, walk, fly, eat and drink, as he commanded them. In another evangel, *The Second Gospel of the Infancy*, with unblushing effrontery attributed to "Saint Thomas," a story is told of Jesus, as a boy, playing on the Sabbath by the river, and making sparrows from the clay. When his father, Joseph, came to reprove him, it is said that Jesus clapped his hands, and the sparrows at once assumed life and flew away. Other equally marvellous happenings are narrated of the earlier life of Jesus, all proving that the atmosphere of the sacred writings is that of the famous *Arabian Nights*, and not that of sober history. It is the wild, riotous imagination of the Oriental tale-teller bent on raising the interest and curiosity of his audience, and adding zest to his narrative.

There is more art and more trickery in the canonical than in the Apocryphal Gospels. Take, for example, the two contradictory genealogical trees tracing the descent from King David. Is that the testimony of a disciple, however devout? The College of Heralds could do no more. At that far-off period the average man's mind was as naked as his body. Could a "disciple" work out a line of descent with the meticulous care of a scholar? Take another point. A man meets the prophet when that prophet is thirty years of age. Of what value is that man's testimony as to what happened to the prophet's mother over thirty years earlier?

The priestly scribes were too reckless. They ascribed their novelettes indifferently to any of the twelve disciples that suited their purpose. One was ascribed to Judas. There was a Gospel to the Hebrews, a Gospel to the Egyptians. There were evangelists of Childhood, of Perfection, and of Mary. These little manuscripts are admittedly spurious. In their efforts to fill in the backgrounds of their imaginary portraits, the priestly artists ransacked the Old Testament, the Talmud, and Buddhist Sacred Books. The maxims and aphorisms were lifted bodily from their original context and strung together in the Gospels.

The indebtedness to Buddhism was enormous. In the Buddhist Sacred Books the mother of Gotama was immaculate. The infant Jesus was visited by magi; the infant Buddha was visited by Kings. Both Jesus and Buddha fasted in a wilderness. Both were tempted by a devil. Both were transfigured; both died in the open air. At the death of each there was an earthquake. Both healed the sick. Both preached charity, chastity, poverty, humility, self-

denial. There is nothing far-fetched in the suggestion that Christian legend was lifted from the earlier Buddhism. Pliny says that, centuries before his day, Buddhists were established on the Dead Sea. And, from a passage in "Josephus" it is highly probable that the Essenes were really Buddhists.

These are not merely academic questions. The Christian Superstition is based upon fraud. Miracles do not happen. It is upon the truth or falsehood of miracles that the very personality of Christ must stand or fall. According to the Gospels, it was by miracles that he proclaimed himself the son of a god, and without credulous belief in miracles, Christianity would have long since died out. Historic Christianity has nothing to do with philanthropy. It is not a creed of love and brotherhood which fascinated and frightened so many ignorant millions through so many centuries, and caused them to fill the priests' coffers with untold gold and treasure.

In the legends, Christ claimed that he was a god, and his proofs were said to be that he multiplied loaves and fishes, turned water into wine, healed the sick, restored the dead to life. The whole question is reduced to one of facts. If we can believe that Christ was actually born of a virgin, that his life was a succession of wonders, that he died and afterwards left the earth like a balloon, then we need not hesitate to accept the priestly pretensions for Christianity. If, on the other hand, we believe that miracles do not happen, and that the manuscripts are simply sacred novelettes, then we reject the whole thing as Priestcraft.

The two most important Christian bodies—the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Church—recognize this, and affirm that their own fraudulent miracles are a continuation of those said to have been wrought by Christ, the twelve disciples, and the saints. They pretend that the so-called cures at Lourdes, and elsewhere, the questionable liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius at Naples, and the fake of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem, are precisely the same as those mentioned in the Gospels, and that the apparition of the Virgin at La Salette is as genuine as the miracles in Judæa. The Protestant Churches, mere mushrooms of yesterday, will not listen to this. They contend that the miraculous happenings all began and finished in Judæa many centuries ago. The Protestants accept the sacred book, and reject the historic churches. The Freethinkers say that it all originated in a maelstrom of make-believe. Time will prove the Freethinkers to be right.

MIMNERMUS

To do good, not so much to the whole world or the world of humanity, as to certain definite people; to relieve actual misery, to lighten someone's burden—such things cannot deceive. We know what we are doing; we know that the aim will be worth our efforts—not in the sense that the result obtained will be of considerable importance in the mighty stream of things, but in the sense that there certainly will be a result, and a good result; that our action will not be lost in the infinite, like a small cloud in the monotonous blue of the sky. To do away with some suffering, that is in itself a sufficient aim for a human being. By so doing we change an infinitesimal part of the total sum of pain in the universe. Pity remains—inherent in the heart of man, vibrating in his deepest instincts—even when purely rational justice and universalized charity sometimes seem to lose their foundations. Even while doubting, one may love; even in the intellectual night, which prevents our pursuing any far-reaching aim, we may stretch out a helping hand to those around us who suffer.—Guyau.

Nature Notes of a Freethinker

READING again *Pierre Nozière*, by Anatole France, an illuminating sentence underlined much of my own thinking. Moths and bees caught in cob-webs, the swoop of a sparrow hawk on to a young bird whose chief offence in the world is to sit near a spray of yellow loosestrife and chirp for its mother, an old cow unwell, isolating herself from the herd, a butterfly snipped into two parts by a pursuing robin—these and many more phenomena I have observed, and the following extract from the French writer substantiated my own conclusions:—

“And so it was all over with my early confidence in the benevolence of Nature; I had lost it, and no one will be surprised to learn that I have never regained it since.” What then have we lost? We have lost a fallacy, and a loss of that kind enriches you, and leaves you free to deal with verities.

The Elephant never forgets. Who wants to be an elephant? You remember the story of the elephant at the circus. With his trunk, he lifted a man from the sixpenny seats to the five shilling ones; the man, years ago, had done the elephant a kindness in the forest—years before the animal had become a captive. And the elephant had remembered it. There are schools to teach remembering, and similar schools should exist to teach the art of forgetting. Anatole France has a note on this, which I feel sure you will like to read. He says: “I think there is nothing in the world to compare with the alacrity with which woman is able to forget what was once all in all to her. By the astounding power to forget, no less than by her faculty for loving, woman is one of the real forces in nature.” How, then, to forget? Do you, in your acute moments of thinking, allow the external world to furnish your mind with any inconsequential rubbish? Or do you, as it were, place a guard at the portal of thought, to turn away unwanted thoughts? Or do you, with mastery, invite them in by one door and toe them out through another? The latter process repeatedly used, is effective in the art of forgetting.

For many years, I carried about in my pocket, a thin, small book which contained aphorisms of Patanjali. Dry uninteresting stuff many would say of it, but of course, it all depended on what you were looking for in the world. Did you want to understand everything outside you? Or did you want to understand yourself? Or did you want to understand both? These aphorisms made it easy for me to get hold of the idea in *The Ego and His Own*, by Stirner. And then, I began to re-read the old reliables. This idea of making an ownership of myself, without being anti-social, made a fascinating and fruitful study. Here, for the interested, are a few authorities of the idea being known. Cicero writes, “Nobody can give you wiser advice than yourself; you will never err if you listen to your own suggestions.” Here is a secular Shepherd, speaking to those who have mentally grown up—the matter must be read in this light. Sir Thomas Browne: “No man can justly censure or condemn another, because indeed no man truly knows another.” This is a lot in a little, but easy to comprehend; fraternal deference, by those who have got on speaking terms with their real selves, will make it clear. Traherne:—

“You never enjoy the world aright till you see how a sand exhibiteth the wisdom and power of God . . . till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are

clothed with the Heavens and crowned with the Stars; and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world, and more than so, because men are in it who are everyone sole heirs as well as you. . . .” Forgiving the old divine his high poetical language in the first part of this extract, one can look with profit and help on the second part. Turning to William Blake, friend of Thomas Paine, I take from Gilchrist the following: “Jesus Christ is the only God, and so am I and so are you.” This is startling to orthodox theology, but it is perfectly clear to the student of himself. Taking a glance at Emerson, there is matter in the following—good mental subsistence if you are in real earnest—it is from the late Augustine Birrell’s own copy of Hawthorne: “He (Emerson), talked about the beauty and dignity of life. . . . The doctrine of the supremacy of the individual to himself, of his originality and, as regards his own character, *unique* quality, must have had great charm for people living in a society in which introspection, thanks to want of other entertainment, played almost the part of a social resource.” Burrows in his *Life of Whitman*, writes:

“Another of the ideas that master Whitman and rule him is the idea of identity—that you are you and I am I, and that we are henceforth secure whatever comes or goes.” And now hear Whitman himself:—

“Ethereal, pervading all, (for without me what were all? what were God?)”

Still bearing on the same subject, I shall take a note from Anatole France: “In instinct dwells the sole truth, the only certitude, that man may ever call his own in this life of illusion, where three-fourths of the ills we suffer *proceed from our own thoughts.*” My italics. To conclude this note without exhausting the subject or the reader, I give, the opening two sentences of our Editor’s essay on “Man’s Greatest Enemy” now included in the fifth series of *Essays in Freethinking*:—

“Who is the greatest enemy of man? The answer may be given in a single word—Himself.” And then look again at the last paragraph in his essay—a genuine and inspired appeal to man to jettison the bogeys he has himself called into being, to such an extent, that the phantasmal is regarded as the real.

If you will have fires you must have the chimney sweep. Spring cleaning was the cause of a moth being shaken from a duster through the open window as the sweep went by. Noticing this, he became confidential. “We’ve got a Daddy-Longlegs at home—had him for six years. He hangs in the corner, and at night, when me and my missus draw up to the fire he comes down and sits between us. Shall I kill him I says to her? No, she says, live and let live.” And that was W. H. Hudson’s attitude to all life.

“There’s the Blackcap singing,” said a little boy to Hudson. “How do you know its the Blackcap?” “Oh! the Blackcap always sings like that.” I was reminded of this when reading *South Wind*, in the Penguin Series, by Norman Douglas, who writes like a combination of Voltaire, Swift and Balzac. Just as a sample of the style of Douglas, just lay your eyes on this as they say in Ireland:—

“His eye roved round the undulating garden, full of sunlight and flowers and buzzing insects. From a verberna hard by came the liquid song of the blackcap. It gave him pleasure; he encouraged the blackcaps, delighting in their music, and because they destroyed the spiders whose troublesome webs were apt to come in contact with his spectacles. . . . It was one of the minor griefs of his life that, being so short-

sighted, he could never discover a bird's nest; no, not even as a child. Memories of boyhood began to flit through his mind. . . ." There is other matter in this book to make you laugh. The author knows all the arts of a writer—don't read the book in bed—get in a secure, capacious and comfortable seat where you can't fall out. Hardened though you may be, you will laugh vigorously with good reason, for Douglas has the faculty, mentioned in *The Shadowless Man*, by Chamisso, of being able to write seriously of trifles, and triflingly of serious matters, and he has broadsides for the heavy clouds of mental scarecrows that, hatched only in the minds of men, will only disappear when you begin to get on friendly terms with yourself—when you are able, as Patanjali states, to put your foot on the neck of your imagination.

NICHOLAS MERE

Cerebral Mush

WHAT we call "rationalization" to-day is much the same thing as the "elaborate attempts to justify our instincts," as described by Thomas Huxley half a century ago. It is still the rare man who tries to disassociate himself from his likes and dislikes in choosing a belief. Some years ago a popular novelist wrote a book giving the salient points of all the religions so that you could pick a religion to your taste in the same way as you chose a hat. For instance, we are told, if you like pork, Judaism is not the religion for you. If you like ready-mades in Religion, you will be pleased, perhaps, with the Romanist brand of religion; if you like a little bit of fashioning on your own, the Quakers or the Congregationalists may suit you.

This was a Book with a Purpose indeed, so much so that the conclusion was come to that it was the upshot of a sardonic and unchristian humour, and it was accorded, what the Americans would term, "the frozen mitt." All the same the book had a laudable *motif*, and deserved a better fate. If there had been thousands of people in search of a religion it would have found a place in all their libraries as a volume of reference. But the religiously disposed are not, as a rule, disposed towards searching for anything. Searching implies discomfort; lazy people don't search. They prefer to loll back in conventional mental deck-chairs; to shut their eyes and see what God sends them. The religion that offers these advantages is generally the religion they imbibed at mother's knee. Some of the more troublesome parts (such as a too frequent attendance at the Means of Grace) they are willing to give up. Is not a little modernity the *vogue* nowadays? But they are certainly not going to inflict upon themselves the pain of a new idea. That is taking a few paces towards *fanaticism*; to believe things enthusiastically is quite definitely bad form. And they are certainly not going to believe in anything that is unpleasant, or bad for business, for that would be plain folly.

The religious mush that most of our religious profess to-day is indefinable, but it possesses some of the following characteristics. We believe we are made in the Image of God. [*Good, very good!*] We believe we have immortal souls to differentiate us from the dog, the dragon fly, the lion, the giant panda. [*This gratifies us.*] We believe that we are never going to die. [*Dying would be most unpleasant.*] We are going to be happy for ever and ever. For others there may be unpleasantness; that is their affair. We believe that we must have a religion, for, in the absence of one, our employés may put their fingers into our

tills. We believe in a Gentleman God who will be business-like enough and considerate enough to understand that gentlemen must live. Such a God must know that, in order to live, the morality which prevents the fingers of the *hoi polloi* being placed in our gentlemanly tills, has to undergo some modifications in the case of Christian Gentlemen. We believe that God is a patriot; he believes in Our Country Right or Wrong; that God raises up Gallant Christian Gentlemen to fight for the Faith plus a few perquisites; that rarely, if ever, do we find our God on the side of the unfashionably dressed or those who eat slovenly. This is what we believe and, if we Christian Gentlemen don't get together and say the same thing, without doubt we shall perish everlastingly.

Consciously or sub-consciously are some such beliefs held, and tradition allows it to be considered a highly proper state of mind. Those who would disturb such a highly respectable salmagundi cannot be actuated by good motives, consequently we are justified in treating them as "dirty dogs" and, should they resist our pleasure, in sending forth Gallant Christian Gentlemen armed with Howitzers and Hallelujahs, Machine-Guns and Masses, to enforce upon them the undoubted Will of God. They are sorry, they always say, for those who have to be sent to Glory, but no gentleman can doubt that a world full of uncreased trousers, dirty bed-clothes, cheap ale, and dropped aspirates, would be a world unfit for Christian gentlemen. Consequently we must fight courageously and persuade the honest working-man to fight for us on behalf of Christian Principles, Haute Sauterne, Clean Linen, a little Latin and Greek, the Amateur Status, together with a dash of Jesus at week-ends.

For such a miserable Mush sacrifices must be made, but only when such sacrifices are imperative. We must sacrifice, perhaps, the Man of Sorrows and substitute the Man of Glee. We must reduce the temperature of Hell thirty or forty degrees and even run excursions from Hell to Heaven now and again (say on Bank Holidays) to prove that we are not devoid of human sympathy. We must say the Holy Bible is not altogether true, but *contains* the truth. We must pun upon the expressions in the Creeds. We must meet the unbeliever occasionally face to face, and give the impression that it is he who is shockingly behind the times. We are scholarly, humane, and, above all, gentlemanly. And we must "spill a bibful" of Morality, Loving Kindness, Truthfulness and the Sermon on the Mount. It might do the multitude good and it doesn't hurt us, for our morality is our own affair. We are business men and know where morality begins and ends; we make our own moral codes for who knows better what business exigencies demand.

Every now and again some Christian *ingenu* jumps up from his deck chair and thinks he sees where Christianity has gone astray. A wholesome desire to have truth on his side, to assist man's efforts to evolve a better state of society, to make religion a human, a useful, a scrupulous thing, may result in his trying his hand at making a contribution towards the improvement of Religion. But to do so he finds he has to browse on pastures other than those recommended by Holy Churches, Holy Traditions, Holy Books. If he be very honest, and if he be able to divest himself from all those things which early training has illegitimately implanted in him, he will find the pastures at first bitter and unpalatable—but in time quite satisfying. If, on the other hand, his egoism is so pronounced that he cannot bear to undergo self-discipline, then he will find himself looking for reasons for remaining as he is, for maintaining the status quo; and he will spend all his energy in "sticking up" for the horrible stew he has found himself in possession of. Then he will probably adopt a church which tries

either to live by accommodation or by "brazening it out." Special pleading will become his life's portion, and the one useful avenue open to every man, that of doing his own reading, his own thinking, and submitting his conclusions cheerfully to the informed criticism of his fellow-men, will have been closed by his own volition.

T. H. ELSTON

Holy Hosea

HOSEA, the so-called prophet, was the son of Beery (in pre-Hollywood days, but after Noah—and before Wallace of that name).

According to the Cambridge Bible Dictionary, Hosea was noted as a pioneer of LOVE. He is said to have had "a tremendous influence on the world." The inference seems to be that had Hosea never existed, the world would never have known love, and would have known, if possible, less about peace than it does to-day.

Hosea so closely resembles his fellow "prophets" (Amos in particular) that it is difficult to believe that—contrary to popular belief—there was only ONE Obadiah, but two others so indistinguishable as Amos and Hosea. Hosea's name had as many spellings as Shakespeare's, including Hoshea, Osee and even O'SHEA. It is not at all strange that some Bible students think he was also called Amos, Ezekiel and Jeremiah. If "to be intelligible is to be found out," Hosea best hides himself. Sometimes even Jeremiah suggests some possible meaning.

A recent pamphlet* quotes from a Mr. Ewald, that "Hosea is the most pensive and at the same time the most creative of the prophets." If lunatics are pensive, Hosea's random ravings may indicate thought. After all, people are judged by WHAT they think, and the world is suffering from some very mad thoughts to-day. As to Hosea's "creativity" we prefer Jonah, whose famous Tale of a Whale leaves Hosea far behind.

This Didsbury pamphlet praises Hosea very lamely, even admitting that this goatherd prophet "had a less extensive outlook" than his rivals. But at least Hosea and God (as reported by the former) got on very well together in their frequent friendly conversational interviews. God actually begged Hosea "Call me ISH" (Chap. ii. 6). What God called Hosea is not mentioned.

Most of God's prophets, major and minor alike, dearly loved to talk about "Whores and Whoredoms" (Hosea more than most). These two words and many other Bible phrases are never used by respectable ministers of God in general conversation, but the same ministers are compelled to read them in the public services of their churches. Even the highly valued *Encyclopedia Biblica* omits these words from their many thousand pages. It seems a little mealy-mouthed to boggle at words like these, when we find Hosea's Holy Book detailing the most abominable deeds of vindictive wickedness as what one might naturally expect from the God he worshipped.

Jehovah deserves the name of "King of Terrors," which is a Bible phrase (Job xviii. 14), but there is a special line in Hosea's description of his God's terrors—vile beyond belief. There is a despicable piece of cant in Hosea's assumption that God's terrors of "punishing" will result in the subsequent good behaviour—if not of His dead victims, by their survivors. There is too much of the illogical suggestion that

* *Hosea: A Short Introduction.* Anonymous. Published at Didsbury College, Manchester.

The Lord hath torn, and He will heal.
He hath smitten and He will bind up.

(Chap vi. 1)

as if the tiger is also a Hospital-nurse.

Hosea's fine words about God's "desiring mercy and not sacrifice" are sheer verbiage. They occur in a passage describing God's threats of torture and tragedy. And the "wickednesses" thus threatened often amount only to a slight difference of opinion (called heresy) and to such "crimes" as worshipping in the hills or in the valleys, and even taking an occasional drink of "wine and new wine."

Several of Hosea's wise-cracks include the oft-quoted "Ephraim is joined to his idols," "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind," etc. Other sayings of his are striking enough, but are rarely if ever quoted amongst the "literary gems" for which the Bible is so often and so ignorantly flattered. Hosea states (Chap i.) that God commanded him to "Go, take a wife of whoredoms," and—to show there was no mistake about it, Hosea continues, "So he went and took Gomer," who apparently answered to God's conditions. And his wife and children were cursed by this same God, who assured Hosea:—

I will not have mercy upon her children for they be the children of whoredoms.

Seemingly it is very difficult to please some people—and gods.

In Chapter Three, God again commands Hosea to "love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adultress"—whom Hosea, ever obedient, "bought for fifteen pieces of silver"—quite a lot of money in the circumstances.

There is no evidence that Hosea called himself a prophet—even a minor one. Any Colonel Blimp might claim the prophet's mantle if a man qualifies for it simply by saying: "By Gad sir the country's going to the dogs." Also any wise man—not half a prophet—might well warn bad boys that misconduct will lead to trouble. Yet Hosea is credited—on the authority of the writer of St. Matthew's gospel—with a Messianic prediction. Poor Hosea only remarked (Chap. ii. 1) "When Israel was a child, then I (Jahveh) loved him and called my son out of Egypt," obviously alluding to the past history of Israel, and not to the excursions of a person unborn.

The author of the *Introduction* already mentioned, enigmatically declares rather dogmatically:—

It is probable that such passages as x. 12, and xii. 6, are later additions and do not come from Hosea.

We wonder how this anonymous critic distinguishes these interpolations from the "genuine" text? We can only guess that it arises from the comparative intelligibility of the "interpolations."

This *Introduction* praises Hosea as having been the prophet "who first discerned the vital truths of Evangelical religion." Didsbury College is about the only seat of "learning" where these "vital truths" are "discerned." "Evangelical religion" is what the world calls Fundamentalism, which is neither "vital" nor true.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

WISDOM AND JUSTICE

In a Christian law court the figure of Justice is pictured with a sword. The Greeks pictured the Goddess of wisdom with the same weapon, and they were wiser in their judgment, for wisdom determines justice. And they further understood that unless we were wise enough and determined enough to defend justice from assault, human liberty and dignity might easily be overthrown.

We've Got a Long Way to Go!

SMITH: "A writer in a recent issue of the *Free-thinker* asks, 'Are we civilized?' his doubt having been aroused by reading in the *Daily Mail* an account of five female 'mediums' pretending to search for the unknown murderer of a little child. One of these women said that her guide, a Kaffir who died 600 years ago, had pointed out to her the way to go. Another beat with clenched fists on a padlocked wooden gate, and another made her way into a yard, scanned the ground, and after poking about among piles of masonry, fell prostrate with a piercing cry of "The child was laid here."

Robinson: "I am not surprised at the writer's scepticism. A similar doubt assailed me when, in the *News-Chronicle* I saw an announcement that a woman and her husband intended shortly to fast for thirty days, the scene of their folly being a spot in or near Blackpool. They are to be imprisoned in a glass cage, where the public will have an opportunity of gazing upon them by paying a fee of twopence per head. I have no doubt scores of thousands of so-called civilized beings will witness the show."

S.: "A pitiable sight, but not more so than the recent antics indulged in by Norfolk villagers, when they prayed to end certain curses. Did you see in the *News-Chronicle* an account of their performances?"

R.: "No. What did it say?"

S.: "It said, 'Led by their vicars, the villagers of Stanford and Sturston, in Norfolk, walked through the fields praying that God would remove two ancient curses from the land. It is said that a man who farmed at Hangman's Round, in Sturston, hanged himself on an oak, and thereby set a curse on the land. The oak still stands in the middle of the field, and crops all around have been failures. The second curse was uttered in Elizabethan times by an old woman as she lay dying. She declared that not one stone of the church and hall should remain upon another. The hall has completely disappeared, and only a wall marks the site of the church.'"

R.: "Pitiable seems an appropriate term to apply to such mummery. If the leaders of the Church of England sincerely believe that this kind of showmanship is likely to produce satisfactory results, why do they not employ it to get their straying sheep back to the fold? Processions through the numerous relevant towns and villages led by priests arrayed in their choicest vestments and carrying crosses and banners and praying to God that the decline in church membership be arrested, even if they did nothing else, would afford considerable mental excitement to a large number of credulous people, and thus act as a profitable advertisement for the Church."

S.: "Not a bad suggestion, for if successful it would enable the Church to save a lot of trouble by dispensing with the importunate stage-plays and cinema-shows now used in its efforts to stop the rot. Why not commend the idea to the Archbishop of Canterbury? By the way, have you seen the advertisement which appears from time to time in the press from the Panacea Society, Bedford, maintaining that crime and banditry, distress and perplexity will increase in England until the Bishops open Joanna Southcott's box? I cannot understand a reputable newspaper accepting such an advertisement. It must know that by doing so it is aiding in the diffusion of superstition and thereby retarding progress."

R.: "I have often seen the advertisement and consider the claim of the Panacea Society falls little short of the limit of human absurdity. Our many and diverse vagaries show the giant strides we have still to make before we can, with honesty, claim to be truly civilized."

PRO REASON

Acid Drops

We had not to wait long for confirmation of what we said in last week's "Views and Opinions," that the bitterest opposition to birth-control still comes from official religion. The Roman Catholic paper, *The Universe*, in its last issue, shrieks for the resignation of Mr. Mullins, the magistrate who commented so well and with such justice on the plight of a woman, living in dilapidated lodgings with seven children. Mr. Mullins said that religious and social opinion was mainly responsible for the state of things of which the poor woman was a sample. But that is nothing to the Roman Church. Slums and ill-living never yet injured the Roman Catholic Religion. Good healthy minds and bodies are a far greater danger. One would have thought sheer decency would have closed the lips of the editor of the *Universe*, in this country, at least. But the interests of the Church comes first. Decency and human well-being are secondary considerations.

The *Universe* calls on some members of Parliament to ask questions in the House. Well there is always that figure of fun, Captain Ramsay, who is quite prepared for the kind of work the *Universe* wishes done.

Mr. Chamberlain has promised to call Parliament together during the recess, if there is any change in Government policy. We are writing this on Tuesday, so cannot say what may be finally decided. But if Members of Parliament are led away by that kind of promise they will prove themselves to be easily gulled. "Any change in the Government policy!" Munich was a part of that policy, and if Mr. Chamberlain tries another Munich, he will be able to say that this was all part of the Government policy, and therefore there was no need to call Parliament together. Candidly we are very much alarmed at the steady undermining of Parliamentary prestige. At present its greatest enemies are to be found among the Members of the House of Commons itself.

Poland has now made it an offence to conduct Nazi propaganda against the State, the offenders to be tried by court martial. America has already some such plan, and other States either have taken, or contemplate taking steps to the same end. France has already such a measure in force. The move is timely. If things go on at this rate England will be the only country in which Goebbels and Co., will be able to carry on their propaganda unmolested. We have, of course, certain recent acts which limit the freedom of the public where propaganda is concerned, but these restrictions apply to British subjects, and against these Hitler has raised no word of protest.

That "gallant Christian gentleman," General Franco, whose amiability was guaranteed by some of the Members of the House of Commons and of the Lords, and on whose word our Cabinet placed such reliance, is continuing his work of vengeance, with the sanction of the Pope. According to the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, for July 27:—

All who took a voluntary part on the Republican side, whether with the armed forces or in the civil service, all who were active members of one of the syndicates or of the Collectivization centres, all who were members of the Catalan Separatists or even of the Home Rule movements are liable to one of the three sentences that are passed—imprisonment for fifteen years, imprisonment for thirty years, or death. The courts are military tribunals, and the only counsel for the defence permitted are officers in Franco's army.

In one week in May 305 were shot. The prisons are full of men awaiting trial. Meanwhile Germany continues to strengthen its position in Spain, and is steadily gaining commercial control over the country and military control when required—unless there is another revolution. So much for the result of our Government's policy

of "non-intervention," which meant never doing anything that would hamper the movement of the most Christian General.

Save us from our friends! Here is the *Christian World* advising us that we can "recognize a Christian by his face." That appears to have been the opinion of many writers and cartoonists—Dickens and Low, for example. But it is rough on Christians for a religious paper to start throwing stones in this way.

Mr. Francis Wrigley, a well-known "Free" Church leader summarizes—in the *Christian World*—the recent discussions concerning the "reunion" of all "Christian" i.e., Protestant Trinitarian Churches—free and established. The Archbishop of York says that nobody is a Christian at all unless he has been baptized, and nobody can be a minister unless a Bishop lays hands on him ("There must be a universal acceptance of the Historic Episcopate"—the capital initials are the Archbishop's). Lord Hugh Cecil says, "The Nicene Creed is essential to the Christian Faith." Dr. Selbie, for the Free Churches, says, "These Creeds are venerable monuments of antiquity" (Museum pieces in fact), and "they represent a mental outlook and a world view which are not those of this age. They represent the husk rather than the kernel of Christianity." Mr. Wrigley's conclusion is worth filing for future reference:—

It still seems, therefore, in spite of all our discussions, that we shall never really agree on what constitutes essential Christianity.

We are used to idiotic definitions, such as "God is Love." The *Christian World* has given another "definition" when it tells us that

Worry is an Atheism

It is as silly as saying that Mathematics is Methodism or that Euclid was John the Baptist. As the same journal goes on to say:—

Many of us see life far too much as a problem, are hypnotized by the seamy side of it, live day by day in that homely kind of Atheism called worry, and starve ourselves of that natural joy in life which should be ours,

we imagine the editor regards religion as a means of ignoring the "seamy side" and pretending it doesn't exist.

A correspondent in the *Catholic Herald* writes complaining that the proportion of women is often only one man to every seven women worshippers. He adds:—

I have no doubt a number of amateur statisticians will be writing to assure me that, in the whole population, the sexes are divided in the proportion of seven women to every one man, but, of course, that is a complete superstition. Actually they are so nearly equal in numbers that if a church congregation were divided in similar proportion, there would seem to be practically as many men in church as there were women.

We have no desire to suggest that women are less wise than men—the world would indeed be in a bad way if the only wisdom we possessed was the specimen of it we get where men alone rule. Some of our women readers may feel inspired to explain why religion appears to attract so large a ratio of their sex.

We raise our hats to those inmates of Parkhurst Prison who are said to have filled in their spare time by forging one pound notes. Such resourceful behaviour deserves recognition. We suggest they be liberated on parole and be made members of the Cabinet. That would at least give us a dash of intelligent courage in the House of Commons that is sadly needed at present. The situation at Parkhurst appears to be largely one of courage in misbehaviour.

It is suggested in one of the Catholic papers that as fifty thousand Catholics marched through the streets as a protest against the International Freethought Conference, 200,000 might march to Hyde Park to ask God to better the international situation. Well, if it is as effective as the last march God might get into a temper at being made so ridiculous by the most stupid of his followers.

The Right Rev. Monsignor Payne, as a good Roman Catholic, objects to the children being cleared out of the evacuation areas unless the Government will guarantee that they will receive education in Roman Catholic belief, and be able to attend Roman Catholic Schools. The Roman Catholic Church is nothing if it is not thorough, and it would sooner see children bombed out of existence than grow up as either Freethinkers or Protestants.

The Zuni Indians have been suffering from a drought. So the Zunis organized a rain prayer. Afterwards it was announced that the prayers for rain had remained unanswered. Now if these Zunis had been Christians—British Christians—they would have waited until meteorologists had announced that a change was at hand. Anyhow, if the Zunis had been more patient, rain would have followed the prayers. The gods object to being hurried.

The *Church Times* says that the failure of many churches to attract congregations is due to "shallow slipshod sermons without form and without thought. . . . The man in the pew . . . is first disappointed, then bored, and then antagonized when he has to listen to a series of *clichés*, repeated without much preparation." We agree with all that is said here with two reservations. First, no ordinary man could preach for thirty minutes and avoid saying anything sensible, without having carefully eliminated everything sensible from his sermon. Second, if men and women go to church merely to listen to intelligent, thought-provoking lectures, they overlook the fact that the Church is a place for worship, not for intellectual stimulation. The *Church Times* ought to know better.

It is reported that the present Greek Dictatorship forbids its political prisoners to read the New Testament. If this is true things seemed to have greatly altered. It was always the Old Testament that revolutionists used—as witness the use of the Old Testament by the Puritans when opposing the crown in England and elsewhere. They found it more "bluggy." Authority, on the other hand, found its help in the New Testament with its counsel of non-resistance, its command to slaves to obey their masters and the promise that reward in the next world would be proportionate to sufferings in this one. We have not heard of many revolutionists being bred on New Testament teaching. St. Paul's advice that the powers that be are of God, and that all who resist them will be damned is not exactly an encouragement to revolution.

Fifty Years Ago

SCHOPENHAUER in his old age read Dickens, and rejoiced in the discomforture of Stiggins in the *Pickwick Papers*. He writes on the passage where Stiggins is kicked out and put in the horse-pond, "The author shows here allegorically how the English nation ought to treat that set of hypocrites, impostors and money-graspers, the clergy of the established humbug, that devours annually £3,500,000." The English Church in the eyes of the German philosopher, was a standing proof of the stupidity and hypocrisy of our nation.

The Freethinker, August 4, 1889

To get a New Subscriber is to make a New Friend

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FOR Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—D. Henry, 58.

H. HILTON.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

H. Y. ROGERS, P. C. HOLDEN, G. GIDEON.—Thanks for your efforts to get new readers; paper sent for four weeks.

F. C. PORTER, P. C. HOLDEN AND R. K. NOYES.—Cuttings received. Thanks.

E. A. CAVE.—Will appear next week.

S. LEWIS.—Pleased to have your appreciation of *Possession*. It deals with a subject with which everyone who wishes to have a scientific understanding of religion should become fully acquainted. We took over the whole of the remaining stock, but that looks like being soon exhausted.

D. DALE.—A short article of, say a column in length would be acceptable. Readers would then be able better to follow the points raised.

A. CATTERALL.—Pleased to hear from an old and interested reader. As we have before explained, the copy was sent you by some friend who was not aware that you were a regular reader. Pass it on.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

By a vote of 2,474 to 1,121 Godalming has decided on the Sunday opening of cinemas, and against the strong opposition of the clergy. Of course, there is nothing in this vote that will compel the clergy or their followers to go to the Cinema. All the vote does is to prevent these religious prohibiting Christians interfering with the harmless pleasures of other people. Now the clergy are trying to get the cinema not to open till after church hours. Why not agitate that they open from 1 to 6 a.m.?

We see that some jackass has been mutilating Epstein's figure of Adam. If the figure had been that of an "ideal" man, that is, one that would have taken the fancy of a sentimental flapper, the effigy might have been acclaimed a great work of art. But Epstein had no wish to depict a man. Had he done so he might have taken a champion boxer, or an athlete, or a strong man of a country fair, even a man with an umbrella, for surely all these are types of men, and their attractiveness is a matter of fancy. But Epstein is more than a painter or

a sculptor. He is a *thinker*, and those who cannot think should let the work of such men alone. Epstein was not depicting man, but humanity, strong, powerful, unconquerable, a being of sheer strength, who by his indomitable ambition and incalculable strength had become one of nature's insurgent sons, and in terms of his own knowledge forcing nature to his bidding. We wonder whether these people who can see nothing more in art than something pretty, and to whom a photograph equals a painting, will realize the truth of one of Santayana's sayings, "The noblest art will be one, whether plastic, literary or dialectical, which creates figments most truly representative of what is momentous in human life." We don't aim at being either a critic of or a guide to art, but we do at least feel that anyone who is daring enough to pass judgment on a work of art should ask himself three questions—What is the aim of the artist? how far does his output express his aim? and is the aim worthy of expression? And that, we take it is a rule, applies to art whether it be plastic, pictorial or literary.

Mr. J. T. Brighton is spending a holiday in Scotland and is combining business with pleasure. Perhaps we ought to say he is indulging in different kinds of pleasure, for we are sure that Mr. Brighton does find keen pleasure in his Freethought lecturing. Anyway he will be speaking in Edinburgh on August 6 and 7, and in Glasgow on August 8. We advise Freethinkers to be present at these meetings and bring a Christian friend along also.

THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD

Every reason that can be in favour of things being different in the next world is an implied condemnation of the "moral government" of the world in which we are now living.

It is an admission that the criticism of the unbeliever is sound, and that his position is impregnable. Let the next world be what it will, it cannot undo the misery and injustice experienced in this one. It is not the punishment of the wrongdoer that the Freethinker desires, but the prevention of wrong-doing. He does not ask for compensation for unmerited suffering, but that undeserved suffering should not transpire. It would not occur if wise and good men ruled. Why should it occur if God exists?

The final condemnation of Christian influence on mankind is that it is in Christian countries it is being proclaimed, in loud and almost exultant tones, that it is armed force alone that can secure even a questionable peace between nations cannot be attained unless conversations are carried under the protection of huge armies and hideously destructive weapons.

SNOWDON

Such is the latter state of this old Welsh mountain, of which it used to be said that "whoever slept upon Snowdon would wake inspired." The inspiration which to-day awaits those who wake upon Y Wyddfa is the sight of a rubbish-heap surmounted by a pot-house, with the usual appurtenances of civilization—post-office, railway-station, refreshment-rooms, cigar-ends, urinals, hordes of trippers, to whom the mountain means no more than the pier at Margate or the terrace at Windsor—almost everything that is civilized except a police-station, and who knows but even that may come? If there is still any "beauty born of murmuring sound" among the dwellers on Snowdon, it must be born of the slow-panting locomotive or the gurgling of whiskies in the hotel. And the view? In clear weather, we are told, it embraces the coast of Ireland. I have seen it embrace a line of "washing" hung out to dry on the edge of Glaslyn precipice. This is what the Welsh "Nonconformist conscience" has made of its holy hill.

(The late) H. S. Salt, "Cambrian and Cumbrian Hills.

Letters to a Christian Friend

(12) "BUT DON'T TAKE IT LITERALLY!"

MY DEAR CHARLES,

Coming back to Matthew v. 38 in our examination of the teachings of Jesus, we have the following from the "Sermon on the Mount":—

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth (Ex. xxi. 24). But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil (or, the evil doer); but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also (Matt. v. 38-39—see Lamentations iii. 30, "Let him give the cheek to him that smiteth him," R.V.; Isaiah, l. 6. "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. I hid not my face from shame and spitting").

And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also (Matt. v. 40—see 1 Cor. vi. 7, "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?")

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away (Matt. v. 41-42—see Deut. xv. 7-8, "Thou shalt not harden thine heart nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need"; Psalms xxxvii. 21, "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again; but the righteous sheweth mercy and giveth").

Here, following traditional Jewish teachings, Jesus sets some pretty problems in social conduct for the Christian! Should the Christian resist not evil, resist not the evil-doer; and allow the evil-doers to flourish? Should he turn the other cheek, a meek and complacent victim, to those who smite and oppress him? Should he pay more than legal awards against him? Should he be willing to go twice as far, do twice as much, not as he is asked to do, but as he is compelled to do? In actual fact, do Christians do these things? And would it do the community any good if, by some miracle, they did? Or would it not do a darn sight more social harm?

Is it always good to give to those who ask, and lend to those who would borrow—and apparently from Luke's account, to lend to those least likely to repay you!

Luke's account runs:—

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other. And him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners to receive as much again.

But love ye your enemies, and do good, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. (But the kind and merciful Highest will not forgive the unforgiving, as Jesus tells us in Matt. vi. 15 and elsewhere.)

Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again (Luke vi. 27-38; see also Mark iv. 24).

I let Luke run on in order to take in the whole section and avoid too much dodging about, and now go back to Matthew to gather up his version:—

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour (Lev. xix. 18), and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. [But will not forgive the unforgiving! The words, "bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," and "despitefully use you" are omitted by some authorities.]

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans (tax gatherers) the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans [for, the heathen, R.V. & D.V.] so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 43-48).

This is followed by the section with which I have already dealt, advising good deeds, alms, prayers, and fasting to be done in secret, and promising that God who sees in secret will reward the doers openly. Later Jesus continues:—

Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye. [And no one, apparently, thought of saying to Jesus, "Thou hypocrite, why tell us to love our enemies when you yourself threaten your own enemies and those of your Father with the eternal hatred and punishment of hell-fire?"]

Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither east ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets (Matt. vii. 1-12—see Lev. xix. 18, "... Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"; and Tobias iv. 16, "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another," D.V.).

Here, then, we have a string of teachings that may be accepted by the religious believer in a religious sense, but which are certainly not true in a social sense; and which in most cases are not of much use

for social application, even if deprived of their primary motive of "spiritual greed."

"Spiritually," in the relations between God and you, you can believe, if you like, that you will not be judged if you refrain from judging, or condemned if you refrain from condemning, that you will be given if you yourself give, and forgiven if you yourself forgive—but in the social relations between you and your fellow men, it just isn't true generally.

"Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged"—the emphasis here is not on judging temperately, and trying to understand other people's mistakes, but on not judging at all; not on one's personal worthiness or unworthiness to judge, but on not giving anyone a big stick they can beat you with if their turn should come.

Having just "superseded" the law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" (Matt. v. 38-42), Jesus almost immediately afterwards says we are subject to it, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

"Do unto others . . ." would be more useful socially if deprived of its inevitable reward motive, its smug atmosphere of gross spiritual covetousness. As it stands it fixes men's eyes upon the spiritual reward to be obtained rather than upon the value of a good deed in itself, and tends to encourage using others as objects simply for one's own spiritual ends.

As regards non-resistance to evil and the evil-doer, turning the other cheek to the oppressor, and this group of teachings generally, they are quite understandable—and only understandable—in their literal form, from a religious angle of mortification and humility in this world to gain rewards in the next; and obviously they would be not only useless but dangerous if applied to the social field in present circumstances.

The Christians' own difficulty is well illustrated by their suggestions that these teachings are not to be taken literally because Christ himself did not live up to them! For instance, that well-known Christian propagandist, Lieut.-Col. W. H. Turton, D.S.O., in his *Truth of Christianity* (12th edn., 1934): "He (Christ) urges men not to resist evil, and if smitten on the right cheek to turn the other, but this can scarcely be taken literally, since Christ Himself did not take it literally, and when someone struck Him, He protested as to its injustice (John xviii. 23)." And—in case you think that is just a Protestant subterfuge—here is the conclusion of the annotation on the passage in the Roman Catholic Douay Bible: ". . . but what is further added does not strictly oblige according to the letter, for neither did Christ nor St. Paul turn the other cheek (St. John, ch. 18; Acts, ch. 23)." I think we'll leave it there!

No, there's one other point. I have suggested that Jesus was wrong in saying the Jews had been taught specifically to hate their enemies, and that much Jewish teaching was to the contrary. Moreover, neither did Jesus himself show any signs of loving his enemies and opponents and those who would not accept the faith—he cursed, reviled and threatened them. So, on the parallel of "turning the other cheek," we must assume that the precept "Love thine enemies" is also not to be taken literally, nor the precept "Love your neighbour" if the neighbour is not one of the faith, because Jesus himself did not take them literally! But we needn't worry; amid centuries of plaudits for such "noble sentiments," Christians have never been in much danger of carrying them out in their literal form.

Love to all at home. Affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDFAST

Dolet: The Freethought Martyr*

(Continued from page 494)

III.

DOLET's intention on leaving Padua was to return to France, but he was persuaded to accompany Jean de Langeac, Bishop of Limoges, who was then on his way to Venice as Ambassador from France. At the early age of twenty-one Dolet became his secretary. Jean de Langeac had been ambassador to Poland, Portugal, Hungary, Switzerland, Scotland, England, and Rome, and few men of his time had seen more of the world; he was also a patron of men of letters, and himself a man of learning and culture; and his selection of Dolet as his secretary speaks highly for the young Frenchman's character and attainments.

As the duties of his office were not heavy, Dolet found ample leisure for study. He attended the lectures of Egnazio, and continued the preparation of materials for his great work, *The Commentaries on the Latin Tongue*. He also found time in this "fairy city of the heart," as Byron calls it, to fall in love. But his mistress was soon taken by death, as his dearest friend had been before. His epitaph on the fair Elma is described as "stilted and pretentious," and we may conclude that his heart was not severely wounded. At his age, and in that magical city, he was bound to fall in love with some fair one, and his passion was probably no more than a flash of youthful spirits.

Dolet's stay in Venice was but brief. Early in 1532, at the instance of De Langeac, who charged himself with his *protégé's* maintenance while his studies were being completed, he entered as a law student the University of Toulouse. Under the Romans, and still more under the Visigoths, Toulouse had been the most polished city of Gaul; but at this time it was given over to orthodoxy and ignorance. It had been, centuries earlier, the head-quarters of the simple Albigenses, who had for their many virtues and lack of faith been exterminated by what Mr. Christie well describes as "one of the most horrible and brutal persecutions which the history of the world records," before which "the persecutions of the Christians by the Pagan Emperors of Rome fade into insignificance." Thousands of men, women and children were slain by sword and fire, and a still greater number were tortured, wounded, imprisoned and robbed. The most smiling and prosperous part of France was changed into a desert. But heresy was crushed, and the most heretical became the most orthodox city in France. At Toulouse, St. Dominic founded his celebrated order, and there shortly after his death the Inquisition was established. Not only the governors of Languedoc, but even the Kings of France themselves, could not enter Toulouse until they had taken an oath before the Inquisition to maintain the faith and the Holy Office. In the Place de Salins more eminent heretics were "roasted for the love of God" than in any other city except Paris. Toulouse, even in 1562, anticipated the St. Bartholomew massacre by a wholesale slaughter of the Huguenots within its walls; and "an annual fête in memory of the happy event was instituted in the city, and subsequently confirmed by a Bull of Pope Pious IV., who granted special indulgences to those who took part in it." After the St. Bartholomew massacre at Paris, three hundred Huguenots were led out of prison one by one and butchered by eight students of the University, and the receipts for their payment are said to be still in existence. In the year 1611, Pierre Girardie, the Inquisitor-General, tried and condemned to death a

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

boy of nine years of age, and the poor child was duly burned alive. Centuries have elapsed since, but one's flesh creeps in recording the infamy.

This citadel of orthodoxy is associated in history with three notable heretics, Bruno, Vanini, and Voltaire. Mr. Christie does not seem to be aware that Giordano Bruno reached Toulouse in the middle of the year 1577, after his flight from Geneva and the tender mercies of Calvin's disciples, and was there elected Public Lecturer to the University, an office which he filled with great success until 1579, when he sought a wider sphere in Paris. During these two years there must have been a lull of intolerance, or Bruno's scepticism in such a city would have certainly cost him his life.

Vanini was burnt alive at Toulouse, on the Place St. Etienne, February 19, 1619. Mr. Christie assigns a different date, 1618, and a different spot, the Place de Salins. And he does not allude to one atrocious circumstance of Vanini's martyrdom. Before being burnt alive, the sentence of the Court was that his tongue should be cut out, and as he was obstinate at the stake his tongue had to be plucked out with pincers!

At Toulouse, in 1762, Jean Calas was condemned to be broken on the wheel. It was this ecclesiastical murder which proved the grand humanity of Voltaire, and gave him an opportunity of standing forth before the whole civilized world as the dauntless champion of justice. Voltaire's vindication of Calas was one of the finest achievements in modern history. It taxed all his wonderful powers, his generosity, his logic, his persuasiveness, his wit, his matchless finesse, and his preternatural energy.

The populace of Toulouse in Dolet's age were "what their spiritual pastors had made them." The Reformation was ridiculed in the most sacred part of the cathedral, where a carved figure of a pig was placed, with the inscription, "*Calvin porc prechant*,"—pig Calvin preaching. "If," says Mr. Christie, "rain was desired, the statues of the saints were removed from their places and carried in procession through the city. If a flood was threatened, prayers were addressed to the river itself, and a cross was placed beneath its waves." The church bells never ceased ringing, the people were surrounded with crucifixes, holy pictures, and relics, and, as an orthodox modern historian says, "the whole life of an inhabitant of Toulouse was a perpetual confession of the Catholic faith."

Soon after his arrival, Dolet witnessed his first auto-da-fé. He saw Jean de Cartuce burnt at the stake in June, 1532. The greater Rabelais was composing the first book of his Pantagruel at this time, and he gives the martyr a niche in his immortal pages. He also satirizes the pious city wherein the deed was wrought: "From thence Pantagruel came to Toulouse, where he learned to dance very well and to play with the two-handed sword, as the fashion of the scholars of the said university is. But he stayed not long there when he saw that that they stuck not to burn their regents alive like red herrings, saying, Now God forbid that I should die this death, for I am by nature dry enough already without being heated any further."

Dolet viewed the state of Toulouse with great indignation, which he lost no time in expressing. On the 9th of October, 1533, he was unanimously chosen "imperator" by the French students. His first oration is said to "possess little that is worthy of our attention." But his second oration was more important. He alluded to Jean de Cartuce and branded his execution as a murder; he declared that the city was "given over to superstitions worthy only of the Turks"; and he boldly questioned its right to "impose its notions of Christianity on all men." His enemies used these

passages against him, and early in January, 1534, he found himself in prison. His imprisonment was not of long duration, but it was the beginning of all his misfortunes. During the remaining thirteen years of his life he was five times imprisoned, and nearly half his days were spent in confinement. Well does M. Boulmier remark that Dolet's harangue laid the first faggot of the terrible pile on which, thirteen years later, he was to be consumed. G. W. FORT

(To be continued)

The Papacy

(A History of the Popes by JOSEPH McCABE. Watts & Co., 1935.)

THE famous utterance of Hobbes that "The Papacy is no other than the ghost of the deceased Roman Empire sitting crowned upon the grave thereof," paid the Papacy a greater compliment than it deserved. Accurate as the description was the accuracy extended only to the claim to exercise universal power over the territories of the Pagan Empire. But so far as Rome stood for a measure of good government, the existence of a developed municipal government, regard for education, respect for learning, and the existence of possibilities of improvement and the reign of law, the Roman Church, so soon as it appears well established in history, stands for the denial or the decay of these things. In all that made for the dignity of mankind the Roman Church is the direct negation of whatever measure of civilization Greece and Rome had given the world. And whatever may be said in defence of the Church, its dishonesty of dealing, its corruption is so patent that no historian of repute has even seriously put in a defence. Granted that here and there a Pope showed some regard for the more human side of life, their very rarity only serves to strengthen the general indictment of the Church. It was the first Church in European history that laid claim to universal power, the first that claimed supremacy over the secular power, and it was the first to legalize and moralize persecution. Lord Acton considered this legalization of persecution one of the most serious offences committed by the Church. He said roundly that was the one thing it could claim as its own. The Inquisition, he wrote, "is the principal thing with which the Papacy is identified, and by which it must be judged. Its principle is murderous, and a man's opinions of the Papacy is regulated and determined by his opinion about religious assassination."

As a counterblast to the intensified propaganda going on in this country on behalf of the Roman Catholic Church, which is being pursued by all sorts of underhand methods, Mr. McCabe's *History of the Popes*, written by a Freethinker, is welcome. It is a comprehensive survey of the Papacy from its origins, about which there has been so much romantic lying by Church historians, down to our own time. There is a vast field to traverse, and there is small wonder that, in spite of the five hundred pages of close print there is evidence of compression that tends to run to a bare recital of facts. One has a feeling too that Mr. McCabe is over generous to the first generation of Christians. But the fact that so soon as the Papacy is firmly established we find it displaying all the faults and even vices for which the medieval church was notorious, is made sun-clear. The chapter on the debasement of Europe, although only a short one, is worthy of special notice. It is a terrible story, and it would take a volume as large as the one before us thoroughly to deal with what the world is suffering to-day from the long reign of the oldest and the most powerful of the Christian Churches. We cordially wish the book the success it deserves.

Subjects of General Interest

I.—MONEY

THREE themes are all that a novelist has to choose from: Love, War and Money. Of these, money is an easy winner. Love interests us for a few months or years; we soon get sick of fighting; but money like the love of food lasts from birth to death. It is in fact the same thing. One of the earliest forms of money was the cow. Another was the salt with which we eat it or preserve its flesh and the butter we get from it. But cows cannot be cut into small pieces and passed from hand to hand or pocket as easily as salt can be divided.

The Romans chose a pound of copper for their unit of money, which they called an As, and, when they wanted to say what wealth a man possessed, they said he had so many thousand as-es. These coins, if they can be so called, grew smaller and smaller as time went on, and finally contained only half an ounce of metal. It is curious to note the steady fall of the value of the unit in ancient and in modern times. Now, in these days of paper money, it is of little use to reduce the size of the note; so to get the same effect Governments increase their number or the number of the units which is printed on them. This is very easy and, since Governments are always in debt and all debtors benefit by a fall in the value of money, one might almost say fatally easy. We are having a frequent lesson of this in a neighbouring country where they call it, openly, devaluation of the franc. We are not quite so open about it, but there are many other ways of attaining the same end, one of which is the extension of credit facilities which may be bad or good as it produces more or less useful commodities.

In the reigns of more than one of our sovereigns the object has been gained by what is called debasing the coinage, putting copper with silver, etc., as was done in Queen Mary's time and also in our own day. But, it has sometimes happened that Governments have done exactly the opposite, mostly I think when they have been under the control of the moneyed classes. After the Napoleonic wars, from a currency of paper money which had lasted throughout them and longer, our rulers went back to a gold standard. This produced widespread ruin and misery because there was not enough gold in the country to replace the paper pounds. Those who had rent to pay found that their corn, their sheep, their cattle, their pigs, their horses, would bring them only half the number of gold pounds that they used to get in paper pounds, yet their rents were the same; neither could they reduce the wages of their labourers below starvation point. So when farmers had lost their all, even landowners felt the pinch and sold their estates to the rich bankers and others who received their dues, and double their dues, in the gold which Government had given them.

This was an example of the strong hand, the cunning hand, of modern times which has replaced the robber chief, the marauder, the conquering hero of ancient days. Read the whole story as I am reading it again now in Cobbett's *Rural Rides*, and see the living picture rise before your eyes painted by a master hand; of ruined manor-houses, depopulated parishes, absent parsons still drawing their tithe, haggard farmers and starving labourers—all this in contrast with full rick-yards and thousands of well-fed animals—as now our storehouses are full of goods with a million and a half of unemployed. Then add to it the moral deterioration of the modern German nation mainly brought about by reckless printing of

paper money and the consequent non payment of debts; and say if a stable currency is not an international necessity. Say if governments can be allowed so to monkey with our lives, can we prevent them? We must try. It seems quite impossible to restore a metal currency. Gold is held under the protection of all the most powerful nations in the world, and it is gold which has been the symbol of wealth for ages past. But the only real value is in living things. Perhaps I should say the only source of value, for living beings can use those which are not living.

I need not go into the reasons which have led to the supremacy of gold as a symbol of wealth. It is enough to say that it is out of use as a means of exchange, and that its scarcity warns us off it. For exchange purposes we require some medium which can be produced in quantities enough to exchange all other commodities. Mind, I do not say that it shall be produced in quantities equal in value to all other commodities. That would be absurd. All that is wanted is the possibility, so that none can monopolise it. One policeman in a civil crowd is worth an army—see the traffic controllers! One reason for this is that he can call on an army to back him. So we only want a currency of which unlimited quantities can be produced if wanted. The knowledge is sufficient without the fact.

Secondly (I think this might have been put first), that it must be something almost everyone finds useful.

Thirdly, it should be possible to produce it in many parts of the world so that none can monopolize it.

Fourthly, it should be possible to store quantities of it sufficient for currency.

Fifthly, there should be no inducement to hoard or keep out of use more than the quantity needed for currency.

Sixthly, it must be possible to divide it.

There is only one commodity in the world which satisfies all these conditions and that is wheat. It can be produced in unlimited quantities. Every nation prefers wheat to any other food and therefore to any other article. It can be produced in Russia and Hindostan, in Canada and the Argentine. Two or three years consumption for the wheat consuming nations is always in store now, and more could be, if required.

Seventhly, a charge should be made for storage which would act as *minus* interest to prevent hoarding wheat notes. This is most important. Currency should circulate, roads and bridges should stand still.

Eighthly, wheat can be had in any quantity small or large, and can be represented by coins or paper.

Now for practical means to carry out this proposal. I see no reason why every government should not have a store of wheat, and issue notes promising to deliver to bearer on demand some certain quality and quantity. Something of the kind must exist now, or no market quotations would be possible. It might be better to have an international bank with branches where required. Best of all would be a League of Nations depôt and home, at Gibraltar, with a guarantee deposit of wheat by all nations. But these are details and can be settled later.

If anyone should be interested enough to write a criticism, I hope the editor will insert it, but I do not propose to reply, as I think an article should contain within itself an answer to all criticism, and if anyone can suggest a simpler solution to our admitted defects I shall be glad to welcome it.

W. W. KENSETT

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.—Emerson.

A Bishop and a Freethinker

THE Bishop of Kingston came South to Portsmouth on Sunday to address the men's Conference on "The Human Needs of Labour."

He opened his talk by mentioning that the leaders of "Godless Russia" had persecuted the Christian religion because of the concentration on a future life instead of an earthly.

After reading from a pre-war *Daily Mail Year Book*, a report clearly proving that there was no such thing as freedom of speech or press, etc., I asked the Rt. Rev. Bishop if he agreed that the Godless country was in a better position to-day! to which he replied we had no reports, but could I furnish any information?

Later this highly-paid follower of God spoke of injustices, one was the low rate of pay to the lowest grade of workers. I mentioned struggling families on £2 per week; and added that the Church had set us no example with its £67,000,000 balance-sheet, for there are some poorly paid parsons.

Agreeing that there were injustices in the Church, the Bishop nervously fingered the golden cross suspended from his neck, and with an angry tone said that England belonged to him, as much as it did to me. Thereupon I rose saying that my remarks were straightforward and "not unkind."

The Christians should unite, just think what two and a half million communicants (his Easter figures) could do. My suggestion that a "National Pool of Wealth" would provide for us all; and that Christianity had divided us the State Church with their rival Catholics and dozens of other sects was therefore the cause of the existing apathy.

I feel that it is only fair to mention the Bishop was a curate here at St. Mary's in 1910, others who have had the sacred privilege are the present Bishops of Winchester and Ripon.

For our "Diamond Jubilee" we are expecting another old vicar of ours, Cosmo Lang, who left us some forty years ago, and with God's abundant blessing he now enjoys £15,000 as the Archbishop (Cantab). He will find that his old place of worship is £450 in debt, and that it needs an annual appeal for £500 also to keep the £936 per annum. Canon H. Robins' Church is still going.

A. W. SCOTT

A WORKER IN THE LORD'S VINEYARD

She was one of that class of human beings whose one single engrossing thought is their own welfare—in the next world, it is true, but still their own personal welfare. The Roman Church recognizes this class, and provides every form of specific to meet their spiritual condition. But in so far as Protestantism has thrown out works as a means of insuring future safety, these unfortunates are as badly off as nervous patients who have no drops, pills, lotions, no doctors' rules to follow. Only tell a poor creature what to *do*, and he or she will do it, and he made easy, were it a pilgrimage of a thousand miles, with shoes full of split peas instead of boiled ones; but if once assured that *doing* does no good, the drooping Littlefaiths are left at leisure to worry about their souls, as the other class of weaklings worry about their bodies. The effect on character does not seem to be very different in the two cases.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Atmospheric Disturbance

Be not deceived, God is not mocked,
He cannot be, He is not there;
He is not grieved, He is not shocked,
My mocking words are only air—
As empty as a bishop's prayer.

B.S.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. G. W. Fraser

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hamp Fields, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, A Lecture. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. F. A. Ridley. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday, Mrs. N. B. Buxton.

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 (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. D. Robinson. Well Lane Corner, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. W. Parry. Outing to Thurston, Sunday, August 13. Merseyside Freethinkers cordially invited. Final arrangements will be inserted in next issue.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps): 7.30, Sunday, August 6 till Friday, August 11, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening.

BURNLEY MARKET: 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURY MARKET: 7.30, Saturday, August 12, Mr. G. Whitehead.

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

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Sunday and Monday. Mr. J. T. Brighton (Chester-le-Street).

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

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albert Road), 8.0, Tuesday. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday, Muriel Whitefield will address these meetings. Rose Street, 8.0, Friday, Mr. J. T. Brighton. Special meeting.

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