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Views and Opinions.

As Others See Us.

THE circulation of the *Freethinker* for February 9, 1930, containing the special article on the Blasphemy Laws brought me a number of appreciative letters from Members of Parliament, and among them a critical note from one well known member of the Labour Party who explains that his vote was not cast for the Bill "solely because I had urgent work in my Department." But "inspired by some of the excellent material in your paper," he offers a number of considerations, "which seem to me fatal to your case." These "consideration" are such as often crop up in discussion, and I therefore reproduce the principal ones, with my own comments on them. He is, he says, interested in the plain question, "What is Atheism Worth?"

Suppose it is true that nature is indifferent, and that "events" including those of mind are mechanical; that there is no evidence of God even in the semi-pantheistic sense of mind-plenum and no guaranteed permanence of values, I ask, What about it?

Morley said we have no right to sacrifice intellectual probity to emotional comfort. I have asked to be told why . . . and I have invariably had an answer that would have put a Welsh parson to shame for its emotional quality. "Truth, wherever it may lead." Why? Am I not entitled to strip pretentious clothes from even Truth herself and expose her essential ugliness? If I bid her begone for an uninspiring hag am I irrational?

Atheistic ethics always seem to me to hang upon a peg that is not there. I can understand the fearless worship of truth for its own sake if you grant the condition of all worship, namely belief in that which is greater than one's self. "Humanity is greater than I"? Is it? If things are purely mechanical the mere multiplication of littleness is not greatness. If the mass is more of a spiritual entity than I am, it can only be because my ego is but a partial expression of that greater entity which, in such a case, must be at least as self-conscious as

I am. And if Humanity, why not all life—indeed all existence? There is no sound materialistic objection to the theory because there is no less discreetness in the particles of the body than in the particles of the universe, yet I am a living unity.

If I decide to be a moral anarchist, what leg have you to stand on if you object? Morals are purely a matter of individual taste, and I claim to be the best judge of my own taste. You say that moral anarchism, by injuring society injures me. It may do, ultimately. But there are degrees of remoteness and I may decide to take the risk. A short life and a merry one is as good a philosophy as another if the whole damn thing is a meaningless dance of atoms.

You ask me to prove my case for continuity and the rest. In the name of all that is rational I hope I have good reasons for my beliefs. It is not easy to state, let alone impart, the most important of those reasons. But, psychical research apart, why should I prove anything? Is it not sufficient that, for me, the thing "works"? Science asks no more. Pray do not preach a sermon about Right, Humanity, Truth and other Atheistic-cum-theological abstractions. There is no humanity but power, no humanity but largely "inhuman" men to whom I owe just nothing, and no truth but the indifferent. What have you to offer me for my illusions?

* * *

Disguised Superstition.

I think the best method of reply is to take the position indicated in the above as a whole, rather than to deal with each paragraph separately. In doing so I agree that many of the exhortations addressed to believers by non-believers are examples of emotional rhetoric, as meaningless as the theology that has been discarded. If you believe in a God, and believe also that you must do as you believe he wishes you to do, under the threat of the "hangman's whip," or in the hope of some heavenly reward, then to talk about doing certain things because you are ordered to do so, is understandable poor though the motive may be. But if you do not believe in a God—not even the ghost of a God—then rules of conduct must justify themselves by the same canons of reason that have been invoked to administer the quietus to deity. Otherwise the Atheist or the "agnostic" is just carrying over into the world of Freethought frames of mind that properly belong to theology.

On the other hand it is none the less clear to me that my critic is expressing in a more respectable and apparently more philosophic language the theology that he fancies he has outgrown. Stripped of all verbal disguise this theology teaches that the only basis for decent conduct is that there is an Almighty Being who will, in the next world if not in this, punish us for disobeying his commands. These are to be obeyed, not because we see any reason in the nature of things, but simply because they have been issued. We are to act as unintelligently as a soldier on duty, and for the same reason. That is the

first form of the theistic postulate. But the later form, which, positively, takes that of belief in an alleged purpose in nature, of some end towards which natural forces are working, or, to use the latest cant of those who have grown enough to be ashamed of theology in its plain, honest form, but have not yet developed to the stage of discarding its thought forms, in a "permanence of values," also represents a carrying over into the world of philosophy and science ideas which have no legitimate place there. They are as much survivals of primitive and generally discarded forms of thought, as a rudimentary tail in man is a survival from his simian ancestry. Superstition has bitten very deeply into the life of the race, and it is only a very small minority who can honestly claim to be free from its influence.

* * *

Self and Society.

I think we have here the feeling expressed that there must be some "spiritual entity" outside humanity if the value of morality is to be maintained. But I do not see that there need be a conviction as to something "greater" than I in order to accept the ideal of duty, not as a mere abstraction, but as a very concrete and serviceable fact. As a mere sociological truth "man" and "men," or the individual and humanity are not two opposed facts, but two sides of the same fact. Separating the two converts both of them into nonsensical abstractions. It is my relation to the race, past and present, that makes me what I am, and it is the interaction of the two factors that gives us man as he is. I do not object to the expression that "Humanity in the mass is more of a spiritual entity than I am," so long as it stands for a useful abstraction, but if it is more than that, if man the entity and Humanity the mass, are taken as more than that, the reply is that my critic has not yet outgrown the theologic stage of thought.

But if we discard this proved useless theologic reasoning and ask, What are the facts, what is it we find? I find that, willy-nilly, I exist with certain established relations to others of my kind. I am conscious of feelings that can only find satisfaction among my fellows. These feelings may vary in intensity, and even to some degree in kind. Whatever be their intensity these feelings crave satisfaction. If I am analytically inclined, I discover that the modes of conduct urged by these feelings are such as make for the perpetuation of group life, and that I derive, on the whole, greater satisfaction in yielding to them than from opposing them. Moral feelings are to the body social exactly what physiological cravings are to the individual organism. Of course, if I have determination enough I can abstain from food and so end life, so far as I am concerned; and given determination enough on the part of a sufficient number of people, Humanity itself could be brought to an end. But the survival value of certain feelings makes it pretty certain that this consummation is not likely to be reached. The statement that the "greater entity"—Humanity—must be at least as self-conscious as I am, is beside the question. It does not follow from the premiss. Why must the moral quality of a part belong to the whole any more than incandescence or digestion? That is where my critic helps to prove that although he has, as he asserts, outgrown the Christian stage he has not yet got the poison of theology out of his system.

* * *

A Problem of Morals.

I am asked "If I decide to be a moral anarchist, what leg have you to stand on if you object?" Again, there is behind the question the ghost of the hang-man-god, and as far as that goes an effective

police force is as good as God, and experience proves better. It is not true, by the way, that morals are purely a matter of individual taste. They never have been that although the devotees of the hang-man god have tried to prove as much. But I do not labour these points because I am quite ready to answer by saying, None at all. If I say to a man, you must act so as to promote the welfare of all around you and he replies, I will not, and declines to admit the cogency of any arguments I may use, I am powerless. If I say, But if you injure society you will ultimately injure yourself and he replies I will chance it, I am again powerless. But if I tell a man that he should do good because God wishes him to, and he replies, I do not believe in God, what power have I? If I say, If you do certain things you will be punished in the next world and he replies, I will risk it, what can I do? The truth is that every moral appeal depends for its force upon the acceptance, avowed or unavowed, of certain principles, and in this respect the Theist and the Atheist are upon exactly the same level. And so far as an appeal to facts go, the failure of the religious appeal as a universal moral coercive force is too obvious to need proof. And if a man comes down to the coarsely low ideal of St. Paul, and says "A short life and a merry one," if there be no resurrection from the dead, we can only regret his choice, feeling it is anything but a wise one, and that if he carries it too far others may have something to say on the matter.

Now I have not preached a sermon about Truth, Right, and other Atheistic-cum-theological abstractions. I detest the Atheist who is still a theologian a little more than I do the theologian in his natural state. I merely take things as they are and try to evolve a working scheme from them, and to understand the course and the conditions of their happening. I do not look for a guarantee of the "permanence of values" because permanence is something met with nowhere in the whole sphere of natural phenomena. I do not read into morality more than it contains, and so I am not surprised when I do not discover more than is there. Neither do I drop into such curious expressions as "There is no right but power," and "no humanity but largely inhuman men to whom I owe just nothing." After all, the conception of "right" is something born of social life; it is true it has the power of the community behind it, but it clearly is of value as a conception governing the relations between men. As to our owing nothing to "Humanity," that is simply not true. It is an exhibition of petulance, but even as a movement of dissatisfaction it establishes the very thing it denies; for an assertion that things might be better than they are is nature's artful way of getting man to take the first step towards improvement. Finally, an attentive reader of the paragraphs cited will not fail to see that their whole validity depends upon its being taken for granted that without a god, or without a "purpose" in nature, life is not worth living. But it is significant that this complaint does not come from those who are without a belief in a god, but from those who have it. It is on all fours with the dipsomaniac lecturing the temperate man on the emptiness of life without whisky. Somehow the Atheist does not find less beauty than others in nature, but more. He does not think less of human relations, but more. He does not go through life lamenting its emptiness, but finds it full of interesting problems, and unexpected charms. He does not say what nature ought to do, but seeks to understand what it does. But, then, he is not haunted by the ghost of a God, and a world without gods is something worth striving for.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Church of Our Fathers."

"Foul superstition, howso'er disguised—
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross."

Byron.

"Tradition is the democracy of the dead.—Ingersoll.

"Reason is a rebel unto faith."—Thomas Browne.

"THE UNIVERSE" is the modest title of a weekly periodical devoted to the services of the Roman Church in this country. The sense of humility is redoubled by the fact that Roman Catholicism is one of the many fancy religions in England, for the State form of Christianity is that of Protestantism, which is antagonistic to Popery. The editor of *The Universe* is an optimist, however, and it is just as well it should be so. His dream is that some day this country may become Papist in the twinkling of an eye. Just as the United States was forced, or flapped, into Prohibition. Whether it would take as many soldiers, sailors, coastguards and policemen to make Englishmen attend mass as it does to compel American citizens to frequent "speak-easies" is left to the imagination. For, unless some very drastic steps are taken, the conversion of the English nation to Popery is just a dream. At the present rate of progress it may take some hundreds of years to complete, and by that time—so many things will be in the melting-pot, including, probably, the Christian Religion.

It was the optimistic editor of *The Universe* who called attention to this slow process of conversion to Roman Catholicism. In a flamboyant leading article he mentioned that some very distinguished folks had been roped into the fold, and a greater number of quite ordinary persons had also been collared. Then he dipped his pen in crimson lake and in a glowing passage, which will be remembered when Shakespeare is forgotten—but not before—he let himself go:—

British people grew up and became a great nation when and while they had their strong faith in the Roman Church.

This is a very handsome testimonial, and if I were the proprietor of a pill to cure backache, I should show it to my advertising manager. Unfortunately it is not quite so accurate as it might be. British people were a long time growing up, and if the Papists claim to represent the church of our fathers, a Druid priest might just as reasonably claim to represent the church of our forefathers. And the old Druid would be as justified in passing round the hat as his more modern rival.

The trouble is that both Druidism and Papism are of the things that perish. Druidism is as defunct as the Pharaohs. Papism, stuttering in a dead language, is dying. And the process will not be delayed because the editor of *The Universe* publishes his weekly list of converts, distinguished, or only distinguished from other people. For the conversion of Britain is not much hastened by the exciting news that the Rev. Verdant Green, curate of Dunghill-on-the-Swizzle, has joined the Romish communion, or that Miss Tottie Twinkletoes, of the Frivolity Theatre, has decided to embrace the faith of her fathers. Nor will England be decorated with flags because Sir Blankety Blank has chosen to sit in a Catholic pew instead of one belonging to the State Religion. As for the rank and file, one has only to watch the congregations attending Romish places of worship to discover if they are truly representative of this country or of the neighbouring great nation of Ireland.

Our civilization has as much to do with Stonehenge as with St. Paul's Cathedral. One might as well con-

tend that our civilization is due to the presence of the bowler-hat, because wherever the "bowler" is there also is civilization. And a hat is a far more useful thing than a plaster image of creatures who never had an existence except in the so-called "Lives of the Saints." Clerical culture is a sham and a make-believe, and is not real culture at all. The men and women in the pews may not be better informed than the priests in the pulpits, but outside in the larger world, the standard of culture has been raised of late years with disastrous effect on all the churches. *Punch* once hit this off in a delightful cartoon which depicted a vicar on his knees before a sceptic, saying: "Pray, pray, don't mention the name of another foreign author, or I shall resign my living."

To a mere outsider, religion should suggest restraint, sobriety, the dignity of reverence, but things are not always what they seem in a saucy world. The plaster images, the alleged relics, and other matters, amply prove the association of the Romish brand of the Christian Religion with other things than civilization. What is disturbing is that these sacred showmen have gauged their public to a nicety. Their audiences are better dressed and possess more pence than those coloured folks who listen spell-bound to the dusky evangelists of Carolina, U.S.A., yet they resemble them in their surrender to barbarity. Both are intellectually on a level. Savages do this sort of thing in one way, and the followers of Papa at Rome another, but the nature of the act, and the results, are much the same.

Of all the Christian churches of this country the Roman Catholic is the most ignorant. It seeks to perpetuate the theology of the twelfth century, and, in order to impress credulous believers, Papa in Rome actually claims infallibility. This Church frowns on intellectual progress, and the Papal *Index Expurgatorius* contains the names of most of the books worth reading, which the unfortunate Catholic is forbidden to read by threats of eternal damnation. This Church and the Salvation Army are the only two important Christian organizations which still teach a literal hell and a personal devil. Neither will damp one solitary spark of a fiery damnation.

The editor of *The Universe* lays enormous stress on his annual total of "conversions." He is, however, a modest man compared to the Salvation Army officials. According to the *War Cry* the whole of the population of Britain, men, women, and children, must have knelt in penitence before the Throne of Grace and the big drum. Which, as old Euclid expresses it, "is absurd." There are, however, some genuine cases of conversion, cast in the generous mould, which pious people prefer to pass in a discreet and dignified silence. Such an one is the case of the Rev. Joseph Blanco White, whose fine sonnet on *Light*, which so delighted Coleridge, graces the pages of most anthologies. White fairly boxed the compass. Educated as a Roman Catholic, he became a priest. He left Rome and took orders in the Protestant Church of England. Becoming dissatisfied with Anglicanism, he embraced Unitarianism, and finally finished his picturesque career as a sceptic. His theological sympathies were as wide and as deep as the big Algerian soldier who was found by his Colonel to have his breast covered with religious medals and emblems. "What the devil does this exhibition mean?" asked the officer. "More religion, much coffee," replied the dusky soldier. It was an understandable rejoinder, and the officer smiled and passed on.

MIMNERMUS.

Of all deceivers who have plagued the world, none are so deeply ruinous to human happiness as those impostors who pretend to lead men by a light above nature.—LOGAN MITCHELL.

Emergent Evolution.

THOSE who make it a duty, or a business, it can scarcely be termed a pleasure, unless indeed, it be a sardonic one; to follow the chameleon like changes of Christian apologetics of late years, will be aware of the large part played by the new theories of, for there are several of them, "Emergent Evolution."

Many modern theological apologists who accept the evolution theory, regard the emergence of Emergent Evolution as a sovereign solution of all their difficulties. To Professor Lloyd Morgan is given the credit—or otherwise—of being the originator of this philosophy, with his book *Emergent Evolution* (1923), but Professor Samuel Alexander, had put forth much the same views in his Gifford Lectures at Glasgow, in 1916, published in 1918, under the title *Space-Time and Deity*. Prof. McDougall, points out that G. H. Lewes had already used the word "emergence," "to describe the production of physical or chemical synthetic properties," and that when J. S. Mill used the term "mental chemistry. That proposal was the true origin of Emergent Evolution."¹ However, it was Lloyd Morgan's version, and not Prof. Alexander's that found most favour among the evolutionary theologians, for a very good reason, as we shall see.

What is there in this magical philosophy of "Emergent Evolution" to reconcile the opposing claims of those two ancient antagonists, religion and science, and silence the batteries of atheistic objections, as its exponents claim? It is not an easy matter to describe this new view of evolution. The main supporters of it differ widely among themselves, and it is exactly in its relations to religion that they most seriously disagree, and, as is not unusual, it is when they are dealing with religion that they are most unintelligible. However, we will endeavour to give a very condensed and shorthand account of the matter.

According to its leading exponents, we commence with matter, or a forerunner of matter, from which arise protons and electrons, from these evolve the elements, such as oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen, carbon, etc. These elements are emergents; they are new, and from their combinations arise other emergents. Thus the combination of oxygen and hydrogen produces water. Now, argues the exponents of emergent evolution; oxygen and hydrogen are gasses, and if you had never seen water you could never have guessed that the combination of two gasses would produce a liquid, fundamentally different in every respect from the gasses from which it emerged. Something entirely new has emerged, therefore this implies an act of creation, and an act of creation implies a creator. Later on, Life emerges, and then Consciousness and Mind, emerging ultimately in the higher forms of intellect and genius. Such is the argument in its bare outlines.

It seems to us, like so many other religious arguments, an argument founded upon our ignorance. The emergers argue: "You cannot explain how, or why, these things emerge; there must be something, or somebody, who makes them emerge, and this unknown quantity is God." It is merely our old friend the Design argument, disguised in a new suit.

We can imagine the scientist replying: "No, we cannot explain why the combination of Oxygen and Hydrogen produces water, and not barley-sugar, or powdered chalk; but neither can you; and your hypothesis of a Creator is merely a blind guess, founded upon our ignorance." Once it used to be asked: "Who

made the world and the stars?" And when the astronomers revealed the fact that they were not made, but evolved out of nebula, then the question was shifted to "Who made man?" The answer to which is, of course, that man was not made, as related in Genesis, but evolved from lower animal forms. Now we are asked. "Who made things evolve, or emerge?" The apologist always plants his banner on the territory of the unknown. Directly science invades it and it becomes the known he moves further on, out of range.

Science is only in its infancy yet. Man, according to the latest computations, has been in existence for upwards of a million years, and it is only within the last three hundred years that modern science has arisen. Astronomers tell us that the world will last us for a few more million years, so we have plenty of time to solve these theological conundrums. Probably in three hundred years time, the question: "Who made things evolve, or emerge," will be looked upon as quite as childish as the question: "Who made the world?" Or "Who made man?" A child can ask more questions in five minutes than a wise man can answer in a lifetime. But, wails the believer: "I can't wait until science finds the answer. What about my immortal soul?" To which the scientist replies: "I know nothing about your soul, and care less." He enters his laboratory and resumes his interrupted researches.

As we have said, the chief exponents of emergent evolution are by no means agreed among themselves; and it is precisely in its bearing upon religion that their views are most discordant. For instance, Prof. Lloyd Morgan holds that emergents are due to the directive activity of Divine Power, which exists from the beginning. But in Prof. Alexander's scheme we begin, not with divine activity, but with Space-Time, out of which emerges matter, and from matter emerges life and mind until divinity itself emerges at last. He says:—

When we think of God as that to which all things owe their existence we are reversing the order of fact and are regarding the universe of Space-Time, which does create all things, in the light of its highest empirical quality, which is not first but last in the order of generation. The notion of a creator God is a hybrid blending on the creative Space-Time with the created deity. It searches for deity by a backward instead of a forward view. (S. Alexander: *Space-Time and Deity*...Vol 2 p. 399.)

And again we are told that God "is in the strictest sense not a creator but a creature . . . It was this generation of deity from lower stages of existence that made intelligible to us the mutual responsiveness of man and God which religion demands." (Vol 2, p. 398.) So that, according to this view, instead of God being the creator of the universe, the universe is the creator of God!

General Smuts' philosophy of *Holism* is another variation of emergent evolution. The "wholes" which nature tends to produce, in Smuts' version, are simply the "emergents" of Lloyd Morgan. But General Smuts does not require a God either at the beginning, or at the end of the process. Like Laplace, he does not require the hypothesis. So that, according to Lloyd Morgan, God was in the beginning and the author of evolution. According to Alexander, God is at the end, and the result of evolution. And according to General Smuts, God had nothing to do with the matter at all; everything evolved by way of natural laws and causes. But, of course, the religious press and pulpit have seized on the Lloyd Morgan version and ignored the others, that is why we hear so much about emergent evolution in connexion with religion.

W. MANN.

¹ McDougall. *Modern Materialism and Emergent Evolution*. pp. 112-119.

A Racial Calamity:—Losing the Sense of the Absurd.

(Continued from page 118.)

THE problem that ever confronted the priesthood was how to keep this sense dormant when reason awoke and began to function. But the priest was not taken aback. Priestcraft was fully ready for the predicament, when during adolescence and adulthood, many a question would arise that would shake their faith. The Creed impressed upon the youthful mind is much like the image limned by sunlight upon the photographers sensitive plate. As long as it is kept in the dark it is permanent. But the moment it is exposed to the light, it is blurred out of existence. The artist, however, has a fixing solution which renders it permanent in the light as well. Priestcraft has likewise its "fixative" in the ritual of religious worship. That is the *raison d'être* Ritual.

Man always resorts to the ceremonial when he wants the unreal to stand forth as real; the empty, as solid; the evanescent, as permanent. That is the meaning of all ceremonial functions. Coronations and installations of all orders are intended as means to impress the spectators that the King, Bishop or Mayor is not an ordinary person. The assumption is as hollow as a soap bubble. But the pageant is staged to give as much glitter and iridescence to the show as possible, in order to delude the eye that the bubble is solid. Such exactly is the meaning of all ritual in connexion with religion. It is the *fixative of creed* in the adolescent. The priest dons his robes of rainbow hues; he performs his genuflections and other mummery movements; he repeats his patter; and intones his prayers in a voice as unnatural as he can make it. The building, in which he performs, is called the House of God, and which is decorated with all the resources of architecture and art. It resounds to the vociferous singing of solemn hymns, and to the accompaniment of the reverberating peals of the organ. All to impress the worshipper with awe. The more gorgeous, elaborate, and spectacular is the entire setting, the more awe it inspires; and the more effective is it to fill the mind with a feeling that there must be some reality in the pretensions of the priest. It was priestcraft's clever device to allay doubt.

Now under the "old dispensation," *i.e.*, before the advent of Modern Science, it was easy for anything which gave pompous dignity to the entire embodiment of a religion to keep its Creed unaltered as the child grew to manhood. During those Dark Ages reason was too handicapped to act as a critical faculty. As the image on the photographic plate remains intact as long as it is kept in darkness, so credal images—tenets, legends, myths, and dogmas—were still accepted without demur, as established truths, as long as the mind was under the black pall of ignorance that universally prevailed till science began to illumine the mental world. It was then no reproach for a person to believe in the most barbaric trash. It is knowledge that makes such a belief a piece of farcical ignominy.

The factors which handicapped reason from functioning as a critical faculty are of several kinds. These we now propose to record and illustrate.

(1) The foremost is general ignorance. Reason can no more function in the absence of knowledge than can a builder erect a house without brick, wood, and mortar. Knowledge is reason's raw material. You cannot show incongruity unless you have the facts to juxtapose for comparison.

Till the advent of science the properties of matter; the uniformities (laws) of Nature; the identity of living and lifeless substance; the origination of the

world; and the evolution of living things were virtually unknown; and so was human history.

The false and often fantastic allusions to these things in God's word awoke no sense of falsity or absurdity; for the readers were as ignorant of the facts as were the writers thereof. Let me give an example or two at random from the host with which God's word is thickly besprinkled. Of all the recorded events in the New Testament, the palm for sheer unmitigated absurdity must be awarded to the *Ascension*. But when the Earth was considered flat and stationary, and heaven a place somewhere above the clouds, its farcical grotesqueness could not possibly be realized. But how a modern parson, having, as he must, at least an elementary knowledge of the Solar System, can have the effrontery to refer to such a piece of fatuous barbarism as history, had better be left unanswered.

Again, only the most abysmal ignorance of stellar space and the nature of the stars could ever make it possible for anyone to put credence in such a childish fairy tale as the star and the Magi. Sirius, the nearest star is 500 billion miles distant from the Earth, and its light takes more than eight and a half years to reach us!

(2) The next screen of absurdity of effective importance was the "standard currency" of beliefs in the Community. If that included the same elements or factors as those you are called upon to exercise in accepting the tenets or dogmas of a creed, cause no shock.

(a) For example: Magic was at all times regarded as a source of energy. Miracles were therefore, normal events and excited no wonder. Nothing was impossible for magic, so no miracle could be absurd or unbelievable. Not even the tallest of all magical stories—*viz.*, that the infinite universe with its Billion Billion stars or suns leapt into existence at the sound of the incantation, "Let there be," put into the mouth of their tribal deity by the priesthood of a small semi-civilized nation. As I have said before, it is only the most absolute ignorance of the infinite vastness of the Universe that made credence in such barbarous imbecility possible.

(b) Again, it was current belief that metaphysical ideas were not subject to the same laws as physical objects. If you have three apples you cannot say you have only one, or *vice versa*. But in metaphysics, three can be only one, and a single one can also be three. The trinity dogma was nothing if not absurd.

(c) Once again, imaginary existence such as angels, devils, and spirits have always been credited with possessing many physical and chemical properties—they can see, hear, talk, move, eat and drink, can burn, sing, play the harp. Such incongruities in Bible or creed do not, therefore, appear at all ridiculous.

The tangle of absurdities in the tenet survival after death are so complex as to require a separate article for detailed exposure.

(d) Finally, Inconsistencies and Contradictions often do not stand out conspicuously enough to arrest attention unless pointed out. Such are the intrinsic contradictions between the recorded events in the gospels and the alleged divinity of Jesus. But it would require a long article to point them out in detail. In the absence of the power and habit of reflexion they are never seen at all.

Despite these many aids to keep the sense of the absurd in a state of permanent stupor, there was nevertheless a danger to be guarded against. Some are born with logical minds and are given to reflection. These check the congruity of the contents of their own minds and see if their beliefs are consis-

tent with the few facts that had unavoidably leaked out.

The results of these reflections were occasionally divulged either orally or in publications. There were rifts in the shutters which the priesthood had elaborately erected, and some light leaked through. The Church got alarmed and the resources of priestcraft were at once drawn upon. The weapon it now resorted to was persecution. The capacity of reflection was declared to be of the devil and the habit of exercising it was *the sin against the Holy Ghost*, and therefore unforgivable.

Propaganda whether by speech or by printed matter was strictly forbidden. New light was execrated and the bearer of it was subjected to every sort of humiliation and ill-treatment up to being burnt alive. His books were confiscated and burnt *en masse*.

Later, priestcraft was, to its ineffable chagrin, deprived of this weapon. So it had to devise new means of keeping out the light that was now becoming a menace to its domination over society. It was not long, however, before a most efficient one was discovered in the famous or rather infamous *Index Expurgatorius*. It was a list of all literature not to be read. Everything that propagated light by the diffusion of knowledge was put on the forbidden Index.

But the weapon was a two-edged sword. The Index without the confessional would not be very effective to keep the light from spreading. The *Confessional* was the priest's mental thumb-screw when he had been forbidden using the physical one. This could be effectively applied to every adherent individually.

Thus the Index in co-operation with the Confessional became a more or less effective means of keeping out the light. With the result that the sense of the absurd in that Communion is virtually defunct.

KERIDON.

(To be concluded.)

"Desmond and Douglas."

In the theological vaudeville performed on February 16, the star turn of "Desmond and Douglas" topped the bill. Their stage was the leader page of the *Sunday Express*, and with what a pretty attunation of inanity did they bleat!

It is not the first time that these two scribbling sons of Erin have hastened to the defence of Our Lord. Many is the column and the guinea He has given them. But when they both appear on the same page of the same paper it tokens that all is not quiet on the celestial front.

Mr. Shaw Desmond thought that we were facing a twentieth century Holy War. He believes that Europe and America are about to fling themselves at Russia, all for the Glory of God. And that unordained Archbishop of Fleet Street, Mr. James Douglas, bleated for a column and a half to the tune of: "Don't shoot the musician! He's doing his best." The musician in this case being God.

Yes, God is having what we call a "good Press" nowadays. Anything that puffs "Mr. G." gets its space. God is "good copy."

The days when the roll of thunder was regarded as God's voice, when the dark heavens split by the jagged lightning was thought a portent of His anger, are over. No longer is He spoken of with bated breath and a scared glance over the shoulder.

As a journalist, I should not be the least surprised if the News Editor assigned me one morning to go and interview God. From our own correspondent with God! What a scoop!

Already we write of Him as glibly as we do of any Carnera, Clara Bow or Clarence Hatry who has aroused the public interest. In fact, with God we are safer. A

misstatement about Mr. Carnera is always liable to correction from that gentleman. God never does that sort of thing. And now Mr. Douglas, of all people, has been indulging in some rank heresy, seeing God as rather like an old gentleman who has failed in life and is growing tired of things. I am profoundly moved by his concluding paragraph:—

"The wonder and awe of the riddle should humble us. It should make us sorry for God. It should make us pity God. Let us set the divine compassion of man for God beside the divine compassion of God for man."

A trifle vague, but most moving. In the previous paragraph Mr. Douglas informs us that "God is a Power far beyond human ken." Despite this, the venerable James is able to write a column and a half upon a Power he knows nothing about. Perhaps, though, Mr. Douglas has a super-human ken. It rather surpasses my poor human ken, however, to know how I am going to sit down and be divinely compassionate for a God "far beyond human ken."

Nevertheless, I am quite prepared to be sorry for this God Mr. Douglas tells us about. A God who has failed is rather a sorry and pitiful spectacle. He is nearly as pitiful as Mr. Douglas.

The heresy of which Mr. Douglas is guilty is in scorning the idea that God was ever omnipotent. Being on fairly intimate terms with this Power "far beyond our human ken," he is able to tell us that God's omnipotence was nought but a "theological fantasy which does not correspond to reality."

A theological fantasy which does not correspond to reality! Most assuredly, Mr. Douglas, I find myself in the embarrassing position of agreeing with you. But why not apply a little more reality to your sentimental meanderings and decide that the whole business of theology is a fantasy? I venture to suggest that God Himself is only a theological fantasy, not corresponding to reality.

But, no. Mr. Douglas will have his God, although he goes so far to admit that God has adversaries, and that these adversaries are often stronger than God. (These adversaries, by the way, resemble God in as much that they also are "Powers far beyond our human ken." But Mr. Douglas knows all about them.)

"If we are to believe in God," he writes, "we must also believe in His enemies. We must even believe in the defeats of God. We know that in our own life He is often repulsed and vanquished. The Great War was a great defeat of God."

That last sentence is the gem of the collection. "The Great War was a great defeat of God." Wisely, perhaps, he does not enlarge upon it. Are we to gather from this that Mr. Douglas regards the defeat of the Kaiser as a defeat of God? The Kaiser spoke of "My ally—God." Both the ex-Kaiser and Mr. Douglas say that they are Christians. How else can the sentence be interpreted?

And as our dear Douglas regards the last war as an unholy affair, our dear Desmond must suggest that we now have a Holy War.

Mr. Shaw Desmond has, it seems, lost faith in his spirits. No longer does he find spiritual salvation in "Margery" or Rudi Schneider. They are unable to provide any appreciable assistance in the religious vendetta against the Bolsheviks of Russia. The spirits of all the alleged victims of the religious persecution in Russia have kept mum. Mr. Desmond places his trust in the Pope:—

"His Holiness, man of peace though he be, has only to lift that soft white hand of his, with the keys of St. Peter crossed upon his signet ring instead of the crossed sickle and hammer, to bring hundreds of thousands of eager young crusaders leaping from workshop and desk from every country in Europe, as from the United States, to the new crusade."

Personally I have no objection at all to the religious fanatics of the world flinging themselves against the bayonets of the Russian Army. The kind of mental delirium which produces the religious fanatic—and fanaticism is the life-blood of religion—has no place in a decent, soberly administered community. The world would be all the healthier, brighter and saner for the non-existence of the religious fanatic.

I wonder whether our dear Desmond and our equally dear Douglas will leap from their desks when the Pope lifts "that soft white hand of his," ready to spill their blood for the Glory of God as freely as they spill their ink?

Never mind, they get their guineas.

"GRUB STREET."

Acid Drops.

The most hopeless of all liars is the religious liar. We have said this many times, but we expect we shall have to say the same thing many times yet. We may only add that of all specimens the Christian one is the most striking. Here, for instance, is a remark from Lord Denbigh, made at a meeting of the Catholic Association, and reported in the *Times* for February 19:—

The private Bill now before Parliament to repeal the Blasphemy Laws was, he believed, being brought forward as part of that insidious propaganda which came from Russia, for the purpose of bringing about the same state of irreligion which they were trying to establish in that country.

There is no secret about the origin of the Bill now before Parliament, and the man who can state publicly that the agitation for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has its origin in Russia is either very ignorant or a tremendous liar. Possibly in this case both terms would apply. We were working for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws while Russia was still a very Christian country, with one of the most brutal and most brutalizing governments in the world. And long before we were working with this object the National Secular Society was conducting a vigorous agitation to that end. Lord Denbigh is the President of the Catholic Association. A worthy man for such a post.

The Student Christian Movement is preparing a universal day of prayer as a preface to an appeal for funds. A pious weekly says it is good to recall the watchword of the early days of the Movement—"Evangelization of the world in this Generation." Our friends say that this watchword "went through the land like a fresh breeze, and brought everywhere the revival of hope." Apparently, the fresh breeze was a little too stale. The majority of the people—and students in colleges—took one sniff and hastened away from it. This generation obstinately refuses to be evangelized. It has noted the awful effect of evangelization on its fore-runners!

Where Freethinkers are found to be decent-living and kindly citizens, the parson's explanation is that they had Christian training in youth. The Rev. T. H. Jefferies has a new version of this old tale. It runs thus:—

There are good homes where the parents are not connected with the Church, but almost invariably such parents are children of others, who in their day shared the Christian Fellowship. A good home draws its inspiration from the Christian Church, and generally declines rapidly when severed from this communion.

Also, "almost invariably" the Christian egotism of the parson impels him to invent one silly explanation after another. How lucky it is for the children of Freethinkers that their grandpas and grandmas were Christian! But woe betide *their* children—the magic influences will have worked itself out by then.

A Sunday school journal, the *New Chronicle*, says that despite the efforts of the great religious leaders of the past, mankind has not made this world an ideal place to live in. But the world has, nevertheless, progressed, though slowly, during the last two thousand years. And the *New Chronicle* asks: "How is it that the Christian Church has not made a greater impression on the world? May it not be because it so lamentably neglected the children?" The first question seems to be well answered by our contemporary itself, thus:—

Most of the world's troubles can be traced to a false sense of values, and to an ill-balanced outlook on life; and these characteristics are the result of faulty education in the formative years of childhood.

As regards question two, the Christian Church, far from neglecting the child, has dominated it for two thousand years. Therefore, "most of the world's troubles . . ." It is no mere coincidence that the less the Christian religion dominates, the faster the progress to be recorded.

Many people who desire to do the right thing, says a Cabinet Minister, unconsciously do the wrong thing. Still, there's one consolation. The number of such people is diminishing. Priests and parsons have less opportunity to inculcate a wrong sense of values, since people took to staying away from churches.

In *Radio Times* a writer says that no feature of the B.B.C. programmes has improved more than the discussions. We suggest that the B.B.C. has got to make the most important improvement of all. This is, the unfettered discussion of every kind of subject. The point of view of the B.B.C. is that the Christian religion is too anæmic to stand broadcast analysis and criticism of it by a Freethinker.

It is not the soldiers who make war, says the Earl of Harewood. True; it is the tenth-century mentality of rulers, diplomats, politicians, and pressmen which is responsible for war. Peter Pans who never grow up are charming to the fancy. But the twentieth century has no use for the kind of Peter Pan who wants to play a war game.

On the occasion of the opening of the Tweed salmon net fishing season the Vicar of Norham blessed the waters. The report up to date from all parts of the Tweed catches have been very disappointing. Perhaps the Lord was listening in to something else at the time the Vicar offered up his prayers, or it might be that this particular vicar had offended the Lord in some way or other. But it really doesn't matter. Christians have never yet learned to stand up to the deity, and whether he help or hinders they thank him just the same. Sense and courage are two qualities that are at a discount where genuine Christianity is in evidence.

A reader supplies us with a fine example of Christian blackguardism, which even Mr. Lovat Fraser, M.P. for Lichfield, would find it very hard to beat. The *Ipswich Evening Star* runs a cross-word competition, and in its issue for February 4, one of the words for which an equivalent had to be found was "Freethinker." When the solution was given, by the paper, the word was announced as "Libertine." Considering that the word covers such persons as Shelley, Swinburne, Spencer, Huxley, George Eliot, etc., the impertinent blackguardism of the Christian editor is only possible because it is so usual.

The Lord Chamberlain has just banned a play "Saint Mary Ellen," by a Yorkshire author, and which was to have been performed in Leeds. The play was refused on the grounds that it "might be construed into an attack on religious belief." This kind of thing ought to do something to put an end to the elaborate humbug of men like Mr. Clynes, that the only reason for maintaining the Blasphemy Laws is to prevent the use of bad language in relation to religion. There is no question of the language here, it is the opinion entirely that is in question. If it was a play puffing up the fantastic figure of the gospel Jesus, or some other accepted religious doctrine, there would be no question of refusing a licence. It is the religion that must be protected.

In *Everybody's Weekly*, a Mr. F. Harrison Mays endeavours to make the reader's blood curdle with tales about Soviet Russia and the Church. To point the moral the following is appended:—

While there is such widespread and deep concern over all this, an attempt is being made in our own country to hustle through Parliament a law that will make it possible for anyone here to blaspheme and to hold religion up to ridicule. This law would undermine Christianity. On Sunday hundreds of sermons were preached in the churches against this Blasphemy Bill, which should never pass into law.

Of course, any law that permits religion to be laughed at is helping to undermine faith. The only way for a ridiculous thing to maintain its supremacy is to treat it solemnly. That is the bottom reason why it is an offence to laugh at religion.

Each dawn, says Prof. T. M. Thomson, sees fifty thousand more persons on this planet. This must mean that fifty thousand new "conduct" sheets have to be filed each day in the celestial headquarters. The bureaucracy of heaven is kept very busy. Angels have to record, every second, a good or bad deed for the millions of people on this planet. There has to be, also, an angel attached to each person to prod his conscience at the right moment. Altogether, heaven seems the ideal place for boring jobs. Freethinkers should be glad they are not going to heaven. It is only fit for Christians.

Lord Lytton, the Viceroy of India says, according to a Missionary Society advertisement, that:—

When I have visited mission colleges, schools, hospitals, and other institutions, I have realized how completely different is their orientation of life from that of corresponding Government establishments. The red carpet that is spread for me would be more fittingly laid under the feet of missionaries.

Things that are different are not necessarily better than others. It doesn't follow that the missionary establishments are educationally, morally, or professionally superior to Government establishments. Lord Lytton is merely testifying to the fact that, as he has a pious set to his mind, he prefers things in which religion is well in evidence. And we daresay the missionaries, in showing him round their institutions, played up to his pious predilection in order to elicit a useful testimonial.

Miss Rathbone, M.P., says that two million children are growing up to-day in English slums. This regrettable state of affairs may, we presume, be best accounted for by the fact that man is rather stupid in regard to his sociological thinking. This puts the onus where the parsons want it—on man. Why God the Father created men stupid, knowing quite well that stunted mentality, poverty, misery, and crime would result from their stupidity, is a problem we leave the parsons to explain. The most convincing solution is grounded on the assumption that God the Father is benevolent.

A listener writes to the B.B.C., apropos of the daily service:—

May I remark that Amen should only be sung after a sung hymn or prayer, and that it is therefore incongruous to sing Amen after the concluding prayer when the latter is read and not sung.

We Freethinkers must be charitable. Let us conclude that the type of intelligence which could write as above may not have been created by the Christian Church—the Church merely attracts it on the principle of affinity. "What would you put in the place of religion?" A wag might well raise the question after reading that letter! We ask you: "What *could* one put?" That kind of intelligence was ordained to be Christian, by the grace of God.

The question of peace and war is a burning one, says a religious weekly. And "in so far as the Church fails to give a lead, it will fail to hold the respect of the masses of the people." Our contemporary also advises each individual to think out the issue for himself. For only thus will "the Church as a whole be able to give that definite lead for which the world is still waiting." Well, the world is waiting for the Church to "lead" it in this matter of peace or war. But it is only a conceited fancy after all. The Christian Church never has "led" any great reform except from the rear. The Church has a genius for choosing the winning side when the battle is over, and for claiming to have led it to victory.

The annual report issued by Dr. Ching-Jun Lin, President of Fukien Christian University, says that Government regulations have set a higher scale of requirements as regards the organization and efficiency of Christian

colleges during 1930. He appears to attribute these requirements to anti-Christian agitation. Not necessarily so. The Chinese Government may merely desire that Chinese students in the Christian colleges shall receive adequate education. One may be pardoned for thinking that they have not been getting such, for the President says:—

The time has come for Christian education to think in terms of making an effective Christian contribution to education in China, instead of denominational jealousies or institutional pride.

The Rev. Ernest Tomlinson, a missionary, says that thirty years of experience of Indian philosophy in contact with the Christian Gospel convinces him that none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. And he is going back to India because he is convinced that in Jesus, the Christian missionary has just the message and comfort that India needs. Well, as the cobbler says, there's nothing like leather. And butchers are convinced that vegetarian diet does no one any good. So we do not expect Mr. Tomlinson to say anything other than what he has said. The difference between him and men of other trades is that they don't profess to be altruistic in regard to *their* convictions.

In the notice of a book *About Myself*, by Ben Turner, it is stated that the author delighted in the oratory of Charles Bradlaugh. We wonder how many Labour Members, on taking their seats in the House of Commons, also took advantage of the right to affirm!

A clergyman, Dr. Dearmer, has written a book entitled *The Legend of Hell*. It would appear that this is one method of apologizing for the barbarism of Christianity. The reviewer, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, starts off very well: "In an age when kindness is the dominant note of religion, the idea of hell has an incredibly remote sound." The reviewer, like the pianist in the cow-boy concert is doing his best. From him, we learn that Dr. Dearmer's method in the book is simple; it consists in crossing out all the harsher sayings of Christ as accretions discredited by modern scholarship. We should call it tempering the wind to the shorn sheep. Another description might be "trimming," or hell cast overboard for 7s. 6d., the price of the book.

We are indebted to the *Daily News* for the information that Marcel Dessonter and his brother made a fortune after the war, out of artificial legs. This is useful knowledge to those who think that Utopia will arrive with the milk in the morning.

There is a Home Office report on Workmens' Compensation for 1928. It shows that out of 7,433,660 workers 2,684 were killed and 444,570 disabled. There is no truth in the statement that the *Morning Post* together with Archbishops, etc., are convening a meeting at Albert Hall about it, as the deaths and accidents happened in England and the figures can be verified. Besides, *cui bono*?

The Rev. Professor W. F. Lothouse told a Nottingham audience the other day that "There was sweeping over the world at present, a great wave of Atheism." There must be some mistake here, for we have the word of quite a number of Bishops and "sich" that there is a great revival of religion going on. It looks like both statements cannot be true.

It takes one of our up-to-date newspapers, in this case the *Daily Express*, to provide in its children's section a brief biography of Voltaire, in which one discovers he was only a dramatist, although it is pointed out that "the letters of his schooldays were those of a youthful sceptic." Presumably he soon outgrew this childish phase, and approximated nearer the dominating intellect of James Douglas. And that is all the *Daily Express* has in the way of instruction concerning one of the greatest reformers of the eighteenth century. Verily there are all sorts of liars. Graded in order of proficiency, there are, liars, constitutional liars, damned liars, and religious liars.

The Blasphemy Bill.

I HAVE just returned from listening to the discussion of the Standing Committee on the Blasphemy Law (Amendment Bill). The result may be stated in a sentence—the Bill is dead, which is what I anticipated would be the case. The Government (the Labour Government) be it remembered had made up its mind that it should not pass, even though so large a body of its own supporters backed it and voted for it. The Standing Committee was, of course, well manned with members of the other parties, which is, I believe, usual in such cases. But I am quite sure the Bill would never have passed the present House of Commons. What we have gained or lost—I may say at once that I do not believe we have lost anything—I will deal with next week. But to-day is press day and I have time for only this brief note.

I will only say one other thing, I have achieved more than sixty years of existence without listening to a House of Commons discussion. And now I am congratulating myself on the time I have not wasted. Listening to the criticisms of the Bill, I do not think I ever heard anything of such deplorable imbecility. No other word fits the situation. The discussion never arose above the level of a coffee-shop squabble, where the disputants are nearly half-witted. I left feeling that the Christian faith had fallen into the right hands. The intellectual quality of the creed matched the mentality of its defenders. I would like to broadcast the speeches of the defenders to the whole world. It would serve this creed of cowards right.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TESTIMONIAL TO MR. CHAPMAN COHEN.—Received since closing of list: J.P.C. (Second Don.), 2s. 6d.; Jas. Anderson (Edina), 10s.

C. L. NORLEY.—We do not know of any recent dictionary that defines "Freethinker" as "Libertine," as did the *Ipswich Evening Star*. It is a trick to mislead the crossworders, or it may have been taken from some sermon of about a century ago, when Christian blackguardism was less restrained than it is to-day.

"LOVER OF THE TRUTH."—The question of whether Jesus Christ was a good man or said some good things, is not material to Christianity as a religion, which is based on the belief in Jesus as an incarnation of the deity.

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

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London E.C.4.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Chapman Cohen will not be lecturing this weekend; business in London will keep him fully occupied. Next Sunday (March 9), he will lecture in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, afternoon and evening.

The large Picton Hall, Liverpool, was quite full on Sunday evening to listen to Mr. Cohen's lecture on "The Savage in Our Midst," and from the platform the hall with its tier after tier of listeners presented an encouraging sight. Mr. Egerton Stafford, the President of the Branch occupied the chair, and made a strong appeal for continued and wider support of the Branch in its work. We fancy that some results were evident so soon as the meeting had closed. For once in a while there were very few questions, but the lecture was followed with the keenest appreciation, and laughter and applause were frequent.

The Liverpool Branch has had a very successful time with its weekly meetings, and it is on the look-out for larger premises for next season. These have almost been secured, but a deal will depend upon increased support being secured. There should be no difficulty in getting the required moral and financial backing in so large a centre as Liverpool, and we hope it will be forthcoming. The address of the Secretary is Mr. S. A. Ready—and it is suggested that a guarantee fund should be raised. We cordially commend this to all who are interested.

Naturally, as will be seen by a paragraph in the "Acid Drop," column dealing with Lord Denbigh, the Russian business is being used to excite antagonism against the Blasphemy Bill. We intend dealing with this subject as soon as we get Mr. Henderson's promised official communication on the matter. But the lying has been so gross about the persecution of religion in Russia, that papers such as the *Manchester Guardian* have been compelled to protest against it. When parsons and politicians of the "Jix" type try to set to work, there is no limit to what they will say, and end in believing. The whole subject will keep for a week or two, but it is a pity the Government does not show more courage in the matter. Perhaps, in the words of Mr. Clynes, the denominations would not like it. And even Mr. MacDonald appears to have discovered some sort of a religion for himself.

Concerning the alleged persecution of Christians in Russia, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., says, she and Mr. Henderson are both extremely worried at the way the Free Churches have been swallowing this stuff wholesale without waiting for facts. But why worry because Christians respond to their Christian training? The Christian Churches have in the past been adepts both at persecuting other people, and in manufacturing martyrs for their own chronicles. How much truth there is in the present agitation remains to be seen. That there is some very vigorous lying going on we haven't the slightest doubt.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti had a successful visit to Chester-le-Street, the evening meeting being a very good one. The lectures were well received, and a number of questions dealt with at both sessions. Messrs Brighton and Brown carried out the duties of chairman with ease and efficiency.

The successful Annual Dinner of this year has prompted the Executive to provide a further opportunity for social intercourse between Freethinkers and their friends. The splendid Council Chamber in the Caxton Hall, Westminster, has been booked for a Social on Saturday evening March 29. Dancing and musical

items will be arranged, with brief intervals for conversation. Tickets 2s. 6d. each, will not cover actual expenses, but, the evening will held to have been successful if Freethinkers will attend in sufficient numbers, and bring their friends. Tickets may be had from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4; Mr. LeMaine, Conway Hall Sunday evening lectures, or from the Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. An early application for tickets is desirable. Remittance should accompany application.

Arrangements for the formation of a Finsbury Park Branch of the N.S.S. are proceeding, and Mr. C. B. Rush, of 18 Mount View Road, Crouch Hill, London, N.4, will be pleased to hear from local Freethinkers willing to assist.

To-day, March 2, the Leicester Secular Society celebrates the Forty-ninth Anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall at Leicester. There will be addresses from Mr. R. H. Roseetti, and also some musical items. We regret that Mr. Gimson is at present unwell, but we hope he will be in his usual good health by the date of the anniversary, a function from which he would be loth to be absent.

The South London Branch is moving to new premises. Its future meetings will be held in the Clapham Public Hall, in Clapham Road, Clapham North Station. We wish the Branch every prosperity in its new home.

The *Manchester City News* has the following notice of G. W. Foote's *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays* :—

This tasteful little volume of reprinted articles is welcome. No matter what we may think of the late Mr. Foote's Freethought views, he was a man of culture, a sound critic, a lover of books, and a writer of force and charm. His Shakespeare articles are refreshing for their common sense as well as for their real expository character. Mr. Foote knew the poet's works and had the power of interpretation; he "sensed" the poet also, and in these shrewd articles he demonstrated how self-revealing he was, how he displayed his personality, how he proved his true humanity as well as his surpassing genius. It is all well done, and Mr. Foote is admirable alike in his constructive and destructive action. When he undertakes destruction it is as the earnest reformer who would abolish injurious cant and nonsense and substitute sound truth and doctrine for it. He effectually smashes some of the falsities of fanatics, but he gives us a clearer and more exalted aspect of Shakespeare in consequence.

"Pygmalion" Re-stated.

(*D'you mind, Mr. Shaw?*)

WHILE I can see a lightning rod
Poised neatly on a steeple,
To stay the fiery hand of God,
I'll credit aught of people.

Doubtless, if I spoke of it
To a curate, young and sprightly,
He'd say—"Discard our rod?
And trust in God?"

WHAT ME!—Not bloody likely!"

E. HUGH COOPER.

The God of the Christians for an apple punished all the human race and killed his own son. This only proves that God is a father who makes a great deal to do about apples and cares very little for his children.

Diderot.

The Cult of Ancestral Divinities.

THE feasts and festivals of the dead still observed in Catholic communities date from the distant days when ancestor worship was the leading religion of the people. Surviving from prehistoric times, the cult of the dead prevailed widely in Pagan antiquity, and has in some measure retained its influence over the contemporary peasantry of Europe.

The Japanese cherish the primitive faith in the surviving activities of the dead, and one of their chief festivals commemorates their affectionate regard for those who have entered into the spirit realm. At the *Bon Matsuri*, in the month of July, the sepulchres of the departed are illuminated, while lanterns are lighted in the entrances to the abodes of the living, to lead and welcome the returning spirits to the household. And, when certain butterflies flutter into the home sweetmeats are spread for their refreshment, for these are regarded as the souls of dead kindred. For, in Japan, as in India and China, the belief in the reincarnation of human souls in the bodies of animals retains its hold in popular religion.

Animals were long adored in Egypt, Babylonia, and many other lands, and despite the fact that the later sceptical and cultured Hellenes scorned the doctrine of reincarnation, the helots of old Greece, as Jane Harrison has shown, venerated and worshipped the high, the mighty, and the noble dead in the form of sacred snakes. "In snake form the hero dwelt in his tomb, and to indicate the fact, not uncommonly on vase paintings, we have a snake depicted on the very grave mound itself." In subsequent centuries this notion became more subtle and refined until it almost faded away, but its earlier potency was still displayed by the sculptured snakes that decorated the sacrificial cup erected upon the altars of the dead.

The Chinese Confucius paid his devotions to the departed and encouraged his disciples to do so. An equivalent of All Soul's Day still exists in China, which is dedicated to the memory of kinless spirits. Again, the Romans in the month of August, October, and November celebrated rites to temporarily release the dead from their spiritual confinement into the invigorating open air. And at the *Parentalia* festival in February, the last month of the old Roman year, the souls of the dead came forth from the nether world unaided by ritual, and were regaled with rich repasts, floral, and other gifts, while diminutive lights were laid on their graves. Again, at the Feast of Lemuria in the sweet season of May, when the perturbed spirits, whose earthly career had met with an untimely ending were imagined as unusually mischievous, the head of the Roman household scattered black beans at midnight to scare the *Lemures* into flight. These superstitions were so firmly seated in the Pagan mind that they participated in the triumph of the pale Galilean's creed in the Roman world. The Church was constrained to compromise with the earlier faith, and the names of Pagan spirits were associated with Christian legends. So, that even to this day the famous cemetery of Père Lachaise, in Paris, on the anniversary of All Souls is crowded with the credulous who, decked with crape, adorn the last resting-places of the dead with floral offerings, and pay other tributes to the spirits.

It has been said that ancestor worship is still the religion of one half the human race. It flourishes in diverse forms in many parts of the savage realm. Among the Bantu there are two modes of adoration and appeasement of the shades. The ghosts of the dead ancestors of the ruling house are addressed with prayer and praise on all great tribal occasions such as thanksgivings for a bountiful harvest, a copious

supply of fertilizing rain, victory in battle, or a successful fishing or hunting season. These public ceremonies are conducted by the secular ruler of the community, who officiates as the priestly guardian of his defunct predecessors. Special periods of the year are dedicated to the rites of the sowing season, and the ingathering of the harvest. But the dynastic spirits are seldom supplicated for mercy save in times of trouble, when spiritual safeguarding is most urgently required.

Family worship assumes a simpler form, and the petitioners appeal to their domestic ancestors only. Customs differ in the various tribes, and some are less punctilious in their observances than others. In some tribes trifling presents are made to the ancestral gods as a mere matter of custom. Others invariably "throw a little food to the spirits before commencing a meal, and at a beer-drinking always pour a little beer on the ground to propitiate the spirits." Kindred customs are recorded in many regions of savage Africa. Everywhere respect in some shape or other is shown towards the spirits. Like our own grace before and after meals, these savage observances invoke the blessing of the unseen essences, or are practiced as a protection against their malevolence. And the people become more than usually religious during hard times. As the Baila saying has it: "The god that speaks up is the one that gets the meat."

When a babe is born the good offices of the family ghosts are requested. The spirits are thanked for the mother's safe delivery. Presents are offered to those felonious shades who strive to snatch the child away. An ox is slaughtered, and its blood placed in a vessel where the envious gods may satisfy their thirst. The infant's health and prosperity are assured by thanking the ghosts for their gift, while the female family-spirits are invoked for their blessing on the child. Beer is poured upon the threshold to regale the ghosts, and some six months after the child's birth the Ndau father makes offerings of beer to the spirits, and submits the child for their approval.

The old witchcraft test of sinking or swimming as certain evidence of innocence or guilt is utilized in Uganda, to ascertain the legitimacy of the infant. Several methods are adopted for this purpose, but the commonest appears to take the form of placing a piece of the navel-string in a jar of water. If the cord floats, the child is well-begotten, but proves a bastard when it sinks. At this ceremony, we are informed, "The women sat in a row with their feet extended, and the head of the clan jumped over the legs of each, the mother telling the child that he was its father. The child's paternal grandmother then slowly recited the names of the deceased ancestors . . . and the one whose name was being mentioned when the child smiled was regarded as the guardian spirit." (Willoughby: *The Soul of the Bantu*, p. 185, 1928.)

Marriage ceremonies furnish further occasions for the appeasement of the spirits. Among the Kaffirs an offering is made to the manes of the bridegroom's forebears and this secures their assent to the wedding. To ensure the favour of the spirits in Basutoland an ox is sacrificed at the marriage. In Mashonaland the bride-price is tendered to the ancestral gods, lest misfortune overtake the offspring of the union. In the Zambesi region an extempore prayer to the ghostly divinities is essential to a properly constituted bridal. Indeed, as investigation goes deeper it is made manifest that the spirits are everywhere in Africa consulted as to their wishes concerning the marital arrangements.

At periods of public perturbation the gods are angry

and resentful. During an epidemic, days of tribal humiliation and prayer are ordained. Family illnesses require the immediate intervention of the divinities. The famous Zulu monarch Cetewayo, in evidence furnished to a State Commission, stated that in times of serious domestic ailment the native offers, and then slaughters an animal for the use of the spirits to induce them to restore the patient—their our near kinsman—to health. Callaway noted that the sacrificed beast's gall is poured over the afflicted, and the ancestral shades (*amatongo*) are supposed to visit the sick man, lick his body, and make him whole.

The Baila, it is said, disregard their divine ancestors in times of prosperity, but when evil befalls them they soon remember that a domestic divinity deems himself neglected. The father of the family placates the affronted spirit with prayers and oblations, and the patient usually regains his health.

One other of the multitudinous manifestations of the ancestral cult may be mentioned. Images consecrated to the convenience and comfort of the dead occur in many lands. Some authorities suggest that the custom of placing on the burial-place carved representations of dead members of the family, tribe, or clan, is one of several sources from which the idol, and finally, the sculptured statue have been developed. Crooke contends "that the use of such images in India seems to be largely based on the principle of providing a refuge for the ghost during the period which elapses between death and the completion of the funeral rites."

Sir Harry Johnston, in his work on Uganda, mentions the case of the Lundi, a forest dwelling people, who place memorial dolls in the abandoned hut in which the dead are consigned to the grave and, in her informative *Travels*, Miss Kingsley records an instance in which, when a twin child died, a rough image of the departed was carried about by a relative. This image served as a dwelling place for the dead infant's soul, and thus the spirit was prevented from wandering abroad. T. F. PALMER.

The Resurrection Resurrected.

(Concluded from page 123.)

Do you suppose Mary would mistake her lover for the gardener if he had not been *dressed* like a gardener? Is it not more than probable that he had been given a gardener's costume by the young men "dressed in white" (Mark xvi. 5), who in reality were members of the Essene Brotherhood, and who, in and about Jerusalem, were *gardeners*, except during their morning devotions, when they wore white? What could be more natural, especially when you realize that the Essenes were the one group never criticized by Jesus, for the simple reason that their teachings corresponded closely with his own? (Josephus: *Jewish War*, Book II, Chap. viii.) Moreover, the Essenes were known as Therapeutæ or doctors who used various natural means in addition to fasting and prayer for the restoration of the body. If Jesus was not an Essene, he certainly was not on unfriendly relations with this group. What more natural than these should have been called in consultation after Joseph and Nicodemus had secured the body? (Luke xxiv. 16.) Was it because he was *disguised* as a gardener on the "road to Emmaus" that two disciples failed to recognize him? This was on the *afternoon* of the same day; and Emmanuel was "sixty furlongs" outside Jerusalem. He apparently lost no time in getting away. Why did he not show himself at the Temple?—one wonders.

If Jesus rose on Saturday night he got off about two days from the prophecies. If he rose on Sunday morning, he was in this clean, fresh, cool place for thirty-six hours. Not quite what one would expect when so much has been implied by the theologians. (John xix. 41, 42.) Think what a great relief from the hot sun! Then, instead of having a fairly good delegation present to witness the momentous event, he is *accidentally* met by a woman of tarnished fame, who is instructed to tell the disciples to hasten away as soon as possible into safe territory. There he would meet them in due season. What more natural? What more psychological? What less theological? Could a Christian, who was not a fool, tell such a story unless he was actually narrating facts?

And the disciples refused to believe her and accused her of bringing "idle tales!" (Luke xxiv. 11, 37.) If their minds had been fully prepared, as recorded in earlier portions of the gospel narratives, to expect any kind of a resurrection to take place, would they have acted as they did, and have been "sore afraid"? (Mark xvi. 8.) But then you must remember that, two nights before, at his arrest, "they all forsook him and fled."

Think of it! The glorious resurrection of a God-Man, once for all, for the salvation of the entire world, and to "bring immortality to light!" And when finally consummated—three to six hours on the cross—thirty-six hours or less in a nice, cool place—with no authentic witnesses at the time of restoration to life—met by accident—in disguise (?)—and the news of this most stupendous event in sacred history entrusted to a woman out of whom had been cast seven devils! Surely lack of this record must be fact. No known writer of Christian theology could or would have chosen to record such compromising evidence.

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. xv., that Jesus was seen many times after this, and names several people who saw him, including Cephas, James and all the apostles, and over five hundred at once, "of whom the greater part remain unto this present." Well, what of it? It is claimed that Paul may have written this as early as ten or twelve years after the events took place. Why not? He doubtless had talked with many who had seen Jesus after his crucifixion; a fact which explains to me, more naturally than any other, the conversion of Paul, his strange personality, his remarkable dominance over the early church, his marvellous feats of propaganda, and in general, the rise of the Christian religion.

We know that Paul was totally ignorant of the life and teachings of Jesus *on earth*, that he never quoted him, and that his whole system was built upon the theory of a supernatural resurrection of a Son of Jehovah. But Paul would never have told the story as found in the gospels. I am sure. This story, as I have pointed out, suggests elements of a real happening, and it is all so natural and so obvious and so unchristian, I can see no reason why a good Rationalist shouldn't believe in the resurrection of Jesus. To me there is more to be gained by a frank admission than by denial. And if one wishes further confirmation, all he has to do is to read on.

It was, of course, the most sensible thing in the world for Jesus to direct his disciples over into Galilee—out of the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin of the Jews. It is very doubtful if the Roman Government under Pilate would have chased him over the border.

Anyhow, if he had been a spirit, what difference would it have made? Paul tells us that we are raised a spiritual body—that we are changed as in the twinkling of an eye, etc. (1 Cor. xv. 44-53.) It appears that the disciples insisted on thinking Jesus

a spirit, as we find recorded these words of the Master: "Feel me, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as I have." (Luke xxiv: 39, 41.) Flesh and bones, mind you. Paul says, "Flesh and blood shall not enter the kingdom of heaven." He says nothing about bones. But what is more evident than that Jesus was trying to get this spirit nonsense out of their heads. Then he asks in the most matter-of-fact way, "Have you anything to eat?" And he sat down and ate fish with them.

Is it not mighty suggestive, in this setting, that he should say to his disciples, "It is expedient that I go away"? Note the word that has come through all the translations—*expedient*.

That was just it. He couldn't go back and teach as he had done, he couldn't continue in public life, he was unwilling to face another arrest or saw no good to be served by it; and he had learned the utter futility of battling (as he had done the previous week) against the evils of his day by methods of force and violence. Mark ii. 15; Luke xxii. 36.) So he instructed his disciples (or tried to) how they should go into the world and teach the things he had taught them. And he promised that if he went away he would come again and teach them other things which they couldn't comprehend at that time ("ye can't hear them now"), "and I will prepare a place (a rendezvous) that where I am there you may be also."

I suspect he did all this—possibly making his home among the Essene shepherds or gardeners, as suggested in George Moore's novel, *The Brook Kerith*. "In my Father's house are many mansions" (many who will take me as a welcome guest) he assures them. Finally, when the task of educating the dull, mundane minds of his disciples began to appear rather hopeless, he retired permanently, and the last time they saw him he passed up the side of a mountain and was lost in the mist. "A cloud received him out of their sight."

Paul came later and told them what to preach. I wonder what Jesus would have thought of Paul's theories. But the disciples took to them like ducks to water. We recall that when Jesus told Peter to put up his sword, "they all forsook him and fled." Paul gave back the sword (figuratively at least) and saved them their self-respect. This also pleased the religious bigots of the early church—as it delights their natural followers of to-day, who uncomprehendingly use Jesus as a figurehead—an image on a stick—a fetish around which they build strange doctrines.

But the wise ones, even now, find it hard to preach about a body of "flesh and bones" levitated into the frigid ether of space; and to get around the difficulty they are talking of the appearances of Jesus after the crucifixion as "apparitions." Dr. Cadman, I suspect, would speak of apparitions as does, for instance, Dr. Edward Increase Bosworth, New Testament Professor at Oberlin, in his recent *Life and Teaching of Jesus*.

But why, in the face of the actual record, do we need to talk of *apparitions*? Is it likely that an apparition appeared to five hundred at once, and that this apparition argued and ate with the disciples to prove to them that he was no apparition at all, but a lively corpse indeed, with warm human flesh and blood and bones? He himself may have believed that he had been restored by a divine Providence. Who can say?

And why spoil a perfectly plausible story by ringing in a myth theory? Personally the myth theory appears as untenable as any to explain all the facts. The writer may be the only Rationalist who is will-

ing to profess a reasonable degree of faith in the theory of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, but anyhow—he professes to get it all from the Scriptures. Theologians to the fore!

WILLIAM W. HARVEY, M.D.

A Letter to a "Liberal Christian" Friend

DEAR JOHN,

You write that it is a grief to you to know that your friend is "without god and without hope in the world." If I can show you that I have as much "God" as you, and probably quite as optimistic an outlook on the Universe, you will, doubtless, be relieved. When you are questioned as to what you mean by "God," you fall back on some vague term, such as "The Great Power making for Righteousness," "The Impulse towards the Highest," "The Underlying Reality," etc., etc. You refer to the anthropomorphic conceptions of God as gropings after Reality by undeveloped men, and a proof of something "divine" in human nature. And this summarizes your outlook on the Old Testament, a good deal of the New, and the "fundamental" religionists of our day.

But you are very gentle with the New Testament. Passing over as of little importance the miraculous elements you yet profess to see in the person of Jesus a revelation, if not of God, yet from God—a "high-water standard for humanity." You still adhere to the formula that we may be "saved" by faith in Christ, whatever that may mean—for you have long ago renounced the doctrine of eternal damnation, as a thought dishonouring to your God.

You do not concern yourself with the very different sets of Christianity to be found in the New Testament, that of the synoptics, those of St. John's gospel, Paul, and James, to mention four opposing (and there are others). You take certain sayings or "texts" which appeal to you and give these an authority which you claim to be divine, simply—or so it appears to me—because of this appeal.

Some of these quotations are statements of universal truth with which any Freethinker would be in full accord. In reality you have built up a system of ethics of your own, founded upon your nature, which I know to be kindly, generous and just. You have made a God in your own image, personifying these ethics, and linking thereto the ideas of Beauty, Truth and Omnipotence. I think that you have a little difficulty in incorporating the latter attribute—the fact of evil and cruelty will crop up—and the exercise of what you call "faith" is required.

Just as early man invested sun, mountain, river and tree with "spirit" or personality, so you have invested goodness, truth and beauty, and just as you would claim to possess as much of his "god" as the savage, so I claim that my inability to think of these conceptions as endowed with personality does not deprive me of them. I may have as much of your "god" as you.

As to "hope in the world," I see, not as you, the mass of mankind cut off from the highest revelation, but the whole of the race slowly evolving towards a time when, his thoughts no longer deflected by the service of the gods, the service of man will be the universal religion. Use your imagination—try to think what a world this might be, even now, if all the enthusiastic service, time and money now devoted to a God, who, being All Sufficient does not need them, were devoted to the uplift of men, who do.

I do not think that I can obtain greater happiness than by co-operating with those who share my faith in Humanity.

As to the final sleep that will come some day, I am too busy to think much of that, but I'm not afraid. Children do not like to be sent to bed before bed-time, and I would like to live until I get tired, that is, until old age. Then I'd like to lie down and rest. A dreamless sleep has for me no terrors, but, now and here, I feel that when it comes, I would like to

"join the choir invisible

Of those immortal dead who live again

In minds made better by their presence; live

In pulses stirred to generosity,

In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn

Of miserable aims that end in self,

In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars

And with their mild persistence urge man's search

To taster issues: so to live is heaven;

To make undying music in the world."—(George Eliot.)

My contribution to the music of the "Choir Invisible" is bound to be small indeed, because for the greater part of my life I have paid homage to the conventional gods. That being the case I have to keep busy, but can and do keep smiling, and certainly am not "without hope in the world."

Very best wishes.

A.H.M.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

The bridge at Etaples meant much to the Allies. In consequence, the enemy made incessant attacks upon it from the air. Near it, in the sunlight of a spring day, I saw half a company of men blown to pieces by bombs. Some of the bombs fell into the adjoining cemetery. Coffins and dead men were blown from their graves. Into these graves limbs of living men and fragments of shattered dead were flung.

Our N.C.O. shouted: "Quick, girls, quick! The dug-outs." In the shelter and comparative safety of one of them, I found myself laughing hysterically, and crying: "The quick and the dead: the quick and the dead." I remember that I was very sick. I said my prayers, and thought of mother. I wished I were home.

A few days later I had a letter from our curate. In it he talked about war as noble discipline. He said it purged men of selfishness, and by its pity and terror brought men nearer God. I felt sick for a second time. He put with his letter a printed Prayer for Victory, and told me to say it every night. I remembered that my prayer in the dug-out had been just this, said over and over again: "O God, stop this war; stop it, and let me go home." At home the curate had been rather a hero of mine. He wasn't my hero any more.

"The Story of a W.A.A.C." (in "Everyman.")

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER." CONVERTED FREETHINKERS.

SIR,—I gathered from Mr. H. Cutner's article of February 16, that he considered Prof. Romanes a leading example of a converted Freethinker. In the light of the facts revealed by Mrs. Romanes in her *Life and Letters of Romanes*, it would seem there is little similarity between the converts quoted by Mr. Cutner and that of the famous scientist. It is certain that while Romanes retained his health, the brilliant intellect that produced the valuable contributions to the study of mental phenomena, remained free from conversion to former beliefs. Even at the period immediately preceding his death he was engaged in writing *Darwin and after Darwin*, a work of manifest Rationalism. The conversion story commenced at a time when even Romanes described himself a physical wreck (*Life of Romanes*, p. 314). Furthermore, when it is realized the nature and effect of his sad affliction (hemiplegia) there arises considerations likely to add little glory to Christian influence.

The editorial note of Dr. Gore in Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*, fails to make any reference to the wrecked condition of the author.

I have at hand a copy of the *Freethinker*, dated November 8, 1908, wherein appears an article by "Veritas," on the "Conversion of Romanes," and the writer carefully reveals the delicate fabric upon which is based the conversion story. I would suggest that a re-perusal of this article would assist in effectively checking the careless enthusiasm of supporters of Christian Evidence.

W. ELEM.

SOME PERSECUTION.

SIR,—On February 19, the *Daily Herald* said that in the presence of its Moscow Correspondent, and of thirteen foreign newspapermen, the Metropolitan Sergius reiterated his denial of religious persecution by the Soviet Government, adding :—

We regard the Pope as the enemy of the Greek Church. How can it be otherwise when the Catholic Church, whose head is the Pope, in Poland alone and during 1929 forcibly deprived Orthodox church-goers of approximately 500 churches, converting them into Catholic houses of worship. . . We have not been informed that any Bishops in England or America or elsewhere protested against these violent acts of Catholicism.

In view of the whole record of the Popish crew, and of this their latest exploit, it would be difficult to find anything in history worthy to compare in the matter of impudence with the Pope's hypocritical protest against the suppression of the Greek Church in Russia. Truly, wherever the Gospel of Freehought is preached, that masterpiece should be mentioned as a memorial of him.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Society News.

THERE was a good gathering of members and friends of the N.S.S. and R.P.A., to hear Mr. J. P. Gilmour on his "Year of Jubilee."

The lecturer has refreshed the memories of the old, and has enlightened the young Freethinkers of the work done by the Pioneers of Freehought during the last half century.

His pleasant style captivated all those present, and there was a great deal of discussion as to why there are some Freethinkers who leave the movement, and sometimes develop Spiritualism.

A vote of thanks was accorded to the speaker, the meeting concluded at 9.30.—B.A.LeM.

Obituary

MR. WILLIAM POLLARD.

THE remains of William Pollard were interred in Croydon Cemetery, Mitcham Road, on Friday, February 21.

General poorness of health was followed by a stroke about three months ago, from which he never recovered; death came at the early age of forty-three.

A feature in his character was his staunch Freehought opinions. A regular reader of the *Freethinker*, he never missed an opportunity for introducing his favourite topic of Freehought, and in a quiet modest way did some effective work for the Cause.

To his wife and family we offer sincere sympathy in the loss. A number of friends and relatives were at the graveside where a Secular service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

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"Umckaloabo acts as regards Tuberculosis as a real specific."

(Dr. Secheyay in the "Swiss Medical Review.")

"It appears to me to have a specific destructive influence on the Tubercle Bacilli in the same way that Quinine has upon Malaria."

(Dr. Grun in the King's Bench Division.)

If you are suffering from any disease of the chest or lungs—spasmodic or cardiac asthma excluded—ask your doctor about Umckaloabo, or send a post card for particulars of it to Chas. H. Stevens, 204-206, Worple Road, Wimbledon, London, S.W.20, who post same to you Free of Charge.

Readers, especially T.Bs., will see in the above few lines more wonderful news than is to be found in many volumes on the same subject.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1) : Monday, March 17, Social and Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road, 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road, close to Clapham North Station) : 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"The Crucified Lamb."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, John A. Hobson, M.A.—"New Attitudes Towards Property."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1) : 7.30, Debate—"Are Mr. Ratcliffe's 'Reflections' Incorrect?" *Affir.*: Rev. Fr. Vincent McNab; *Neg.*: Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, entrance Theobald's Road) : 7.30, Mrs. M. L. Seaton-Tiedeman—"The Church and Divorce."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.) : 7.0, Mr. Katy—"The Decay of Shavianism."

OUTDOOR.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.30, Messrs. Charles Tuson and James Hart; 3.15, Messrs. E. Betts and C. E. Wood. Freehought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. Hart; every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* may be obtained during our meetings outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—A Lecture.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Still's Restaurant, Bristol Street) : 7.0, Members Meeting.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street) : 3.0, Members Meeting—Lecture arrangements.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Dr. Madeline Archibald will lecture on "Some Sociological Aspects of Venereal Disease."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : Forty-Ninth Anniversary of the Opening of the Secular Hall.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street) : 7.30, Mr. E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle), President, Liverpool (Merseyside) Branch N.S.S.—"Atheism and Sociology."

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