

The
FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN ■ ■ EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

Vol. L.—No. 11

SUNDAY, MARCH 16, 1930

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Russia and Religion.

I HAVE been waiting to write on Russia and Religion in the hope that some definite information would come to hand. But that seems next to hopeless, and I have had so many letters asking my opinion, that I feel I ought to make some kind of a response. Newspaper news is, in the main, unreliable. It publishes news as it suits the particular purpose to hand, or manufactures it as it is required. The Government, too, appears to be dominated by Party considerations. The Churches, or many of them, have committed themselves to stories of wholesale persecution, the worst in history, is the way the Archbishop of Canterbury described it, and if the Government publishes a report that contradicts the tale, it will offend many of its religious supporters. It will be no excuse on the part of the Government to say that it is telling the truth. The offence will be that it has exposed lies that were being told by God's Anointed to prevent the spread of Atheism. If, on the other hand, the report now received supports the wild stories of irresponsible persons like "Jix," who made himself responsible for the yarn that priests were being stripped naked, and had water poured over them till they stood a block of ice, it will offend the extreme section of its supporters who see in the agitation a desire to injure Socialism in this Country by identifying it with Russian Socialism and all its works. So one is left to find one's way through the way as one may, paying due regard to the character of the stories and the story-tellers.

* * *

Lying for the Glory of God.

That there has been some pretty tall lying, anyone with a modicum of common sense can affirm with safety. The tales are too much like those manufactured by the Northcliffe Press during the war, stories of the Germans boiling down their dead

for the sake of the fat, the wholesale and public raping of women by soldiers as a species of military display, the Belgian children with hands cut off, etc., etc. It was bad enough when we had merely the war-time sadistic imagination to deal with. But now we have the political animus of the *Morning Post*—a paper that caters for a most ignorant section of the population, allied with the Christian capacity for inventing whatever "truth" is required. And there is no subject on which parsons and catchpenny journalists may lie with so much security, or suffer so small a penalty if found out as religious. The war-time story of the Mons Angels is a case in point. The journalist who wrote the legend of the angels thrusting back the Germans, and so saved the British Army, wrote protesting in the strongest way that the story was pure fiction. Clerics like the Bishop of London and Dr. Horton would have none of it. They produced nurses and soldiers who swore that they were eye-witnesses. That journalistic exploiter of the religious world, Harold Begbie, wrote a book to prove it was all true. Yet when the story was finally given up after a very complete exposure, who suffered? No one. No Christian thought any the worse of those who had lied so lustily on behalf of the Miracle of Mons. The religious liar is always safe. If he "puts it over" he wins. If he fails his effort is still counted to him for righteousness.

* * *

Revolutions and Rose Water.

Let us begin with the admitted fact that it is the aim of the Russian Government to eradicate religious belief. It is doing this by permitting a vigorous anti-religious campaign, by eliminating religious instruction of every sort from the schools (in a country in which, under the rule of the Church, the masses of the people received hardly any education whatever). State support has been withdrawn from the Clergy, in addition to making them subject to taxation, and in other ways appear to give whatever support is possible to such organizations as are engaged in an anti-religious campaign. In other words, they are doing in Russia in a very thorough-going manner what was going on all over Europe till very recent times, and what is still going on in this country so far as circumstances permit. On principle, I have a right to question the wisdom of the active interference of the Government in an anti-religious campaign, though none of those who are now shrieking for a crusade have that right. I admit that Russia is not England, and in order to build up the industries of the country, in as short a time as possible it is necessary to do something drastic if the experiment is to have any chance of succeeding. It might also be remembered with profit that Russia is passing through a period of Revolution, and that during that period it has had to fight the opposition

of the adherents of the old regime within its borders, and organized and subsidized opposition from without. And whether the revolution be in England, or France, or Spain, or Italy, or Russia, heads are apt to get broken, and regulations enforced that are not in operation during settled periods. In such time those who stand in the way of the Government *de facto* are not likely to find themselves presented with bouquets. In this respect, and in substance, the Russian revolution is following the main lines of similar movements all over the world.

* * *

Religion and Reform.

It is quite evident, from the mouths of the atrocity-mongers themselves, that the animating motive with them is that for the first time in history a Government has deliberately set itself to educate its people out of religion. As the Archbishop of Canterbury put it, it is not the persecution of one religious body by another religious body, but the persecution of all religion. The first would have been taken as part of the normal, even the proper order of things. The latter is unprecedented and intolerable. On that I shall have something to say later. At present it is as well to bear in mind an aspect of the matter put by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, on the basis of his own experience in Russia. It appears in the *New Leader* for February 21:—

Going about in the villages I soon realized that there was a still more fundamental reason why the Bolsheviks must combat religion in its native forms. It is the chief obstacle to every advance, even in such mundane matters as the adoption of rational methods of cultivation. We talk of the "fatalism" of Russians, as though they were born with this handicap. They get it from the Church.

When a Communist tried to teach the peasants to fight drought by ploughing deep, he was met by the conviction—not a poetic fancy, but a literal belief—that God sends or withholds rain. The way to get it is to pray for it, and, in general, to obey the Church. It sounds incredible, but I came on a case where the priest—the man who could bar the gates of Heaven to a trembling peasant—actually opposed as impious the planting of cabbages in the new manner with adequate space in which to grow. All this seems amusing to us, but it becomes tragic when it means the starvation of the towns. Later, it was always the priest who joined the "Kulak" (for more interested reasons) in resisting the spread of agricultural co-operation, in which lay the one hope of getting an adequate yield from the soil.

Faced with this Church, which is an organized conspiracy to perpetuate all the evils of ignorance and poverty under which men labour here below, the Bolsheviks fought it, openly and legitimately, by propaganda. They organized Atheist lectures. They encouraged the teaching of popular science. They published cheap and readable books on anthropology and the origins of religion, and I found, in visiting the lending library of a cotton mill, that such books are eagerly read, even by the women. They challenged the Church to permit an investigation of some of the modern miracles which it boasts, with the result that one would expect. So far from suppressing discussion, they promoted it, and I attended a crowded debate in a country town between an Atheist lecturer and an Orthodox priest—who had a fair hearing.

Lest Mr. Brailsford should be suspect, I take the following from a writer in the *Manchester Congregational Monthly*, the Rev. K. L. Parry, *via The Christian World* for March 6:—

Dr. Adeney, in his excellent book on *The Greek and Eastern Churches*, writes as follows of the Russian Church: "In thinking of the Church in Russia as it has settled down subsequently to the

establishment of the Holy Synod by Peter the Great, with the virtual absorption of its official life into that of the bureaucracy, we must entirely dismiss from our minds the ideas of the relations of pastor and people seen in England and America, or that of the French curé or Irish priest and his flock. The village pope is miserably poor, and he has to maintain a bare livelihood by taking his dues from the peasants who resent his visits as the calls of a tax-gatherer. They do not look up to him as a religious leader. He is a functionary who has to perform certain rites . . . nobody expects him to be a model of higher living than is customary among his neighbours . . . "I know he gets drunk once in a while," said a peasant of his pope, "but he is a good Christian, and he is never drunk on Saturday night or Sunday morning." Not only is the Church in Russia intellectually inert; it is a hindrance rather than a help to the national development. Its functions are ceremonial, not spiritual . . . With the ignorant peasant, bowing to ikons is the chief religious performance . . . As in Ireland, commercial and educational progress is hindered in Russia by the multitude of saints days. These saints days together with the Sundays rob the Russian of nearly one-third of his time, for they leave him only about 250 days for work.

"It is," adds Mr. Parry, "against this mass of superstition, this sanctification of autocracy, this gigantic system of ecclesiastical police, that the Communists have declared war. It is all very well for the Pope to hold up hands of holy terror, but has he yet renounced the Inquisition? Is it not just a little ludicrous for the Free Church Council to thank his Holiness for exalting the virtues of tolerance? Has the Roman Church ever yet shown tolerance when it had the power to be intolerant?"

Let us not forget, says Mr. Parry, that "the Church in Russia before the Revolution was an essential part of Czardom." But Czardom leant on the Church, it favoured the Church, it did not tax the Church, nor did it tell the people that schools, museums and libraries were better than Churches. And in turn the Church blessed the Czar, even while many thousands of men and women were being sent over the weary road to Siberia for dreaming of a reformed Russia, while Jewish girls were compelled to register as prostitutes before they could study at their own universities, while the people were kept ignorant, brutal and brutally ignorant. The Church could place an Ikon in every hut, instead of a book, it held up a succession of half mad Czars as the representatives of God, enabled a lecherous and lying Rasputin to dominate an ignorant Czar and Czarina to the practical ruin of the country. But it was a very Holy Alliance, and one cannot expect the Churchmen of this country to take the disruption of so sacred a partnership without protest. They were too acquiescent in what preceded it.

Next week I will examine the stories of Russian persecutions of religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Aspiration.

SPRING wakes, summer burns, lush autumn sinks into winter's icy grave. So pass the years in sequent change. The centuries roar into milleniums and aeons. A world is born, decays and dies. A universe of worlds appears and vanishes, carrying its secret into the black silence of space. Man floats a few vain seconds as it were a dewy iridescent mist ere it is drunk up by the fiery sun.

In my mind I poise the universe and I peer upon it seeking to divine its secret; for I seek truth although I escape not death. And still I trust that somewhen the spark of consciousness hid within this speck of sliding dust will be gathered to the source of truth and know itself.

T. A. LEHFILDT.

The Primate's Slum Dwelling.

"If I had been a bishop with an income of five to fifteen thousands a year, I should have had an inexhaustible source of rejoicing and merriment in the generosity, if not in the credulity of my countrymen."

John Bright.

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

THE BISHOP OF LONDON is one of the cheeriest of optimists. So much so that he has been dubbed the "Sunny Jim" of the State Church. Occasionally, however, his lordship is in low spirits, and the cause is worth noting. He has a feverish apprehension of what may never happen at all. The fashionable churches still display the very latest and most expensive show of millinery in their pews; coins still rattle in the collection plates; but to watch his lordship's saintly face it would seem as though the Red Flag flew at Westminster, and the end of all things was at hand.

The Bishop gets in the dumps concerning the poverty of the wretched clergy. He quotes statistics to show in how many benefices the income is below "£300 and a house." He loves to tell harrowing tales of Christian resignation; how some of the clergy contemplate resignation or suicide. And there is the awful instance of the rural dean, who said, "I just manage. I see no meal for myself, wife, and children exceeds 6½d.

Is it not "too deep for tears"? What elderly spinster, with a banking account, could hear without emotion of the dreadful distress of that "rural dean," who had to feed five human beings (for deans are always expected to have one servant) on sixpence-halfpenny? It reads like a boastful yarn, told by a cowboy, who could only have been bred in the wild and woolly West, where men's imaginations are as wide and untrammelled as the rivers. Here, in effete old England, the picture seems too highly coloured, for the parson with his big and expensive vicarage is too often a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times in which he lives.

The Bishops are always truthful men, so the story must pass. The mystery remains, however, how that "rural dean" manages to provide food for an entire family, so that no meal exceeds sixpence-halfpenny? Do they, like King Nebuchadnezzar, eat grass? Or do the sacred ravens who fed the prophet Elijah bring them sandwiches? One cannot dine at the Savoy, or even at "The Saveloy," on a beggarly sixpence. Perhaps the Bishop will explain for the benefit of the hundreds of thousands of unemployed, to whom sixpences are a matter of moment. So skilful is he with figures, that he has already proved to admiring congregations that the more money he receives the poorer he becomes. Indeed, if his lordship lives to an extreme age, and his book-keeping is accurate, after drawing £10,000 yearly for decades, he must inevitably finish his career in receipt of Out-Relief, or on the stone seats on the Thames Embankment.

Curiously, the Archbishop of Canterbury harps occasionally on the same sad string. Speaking in the House of Lords, his Grace said:—

I myself have been a slum dweller. I spent the first three years of my ministry in a condemned tenement of two rooms, ten feet by nine feet.

Providence has been good to the Archbishop since then, for he now enjoys a salary of £15,000 annually, with two palaces and a town house. Why is it that the higher ecclesiastics like to plead poverty? Forty archbishops and bishops receive between them no less

than £182,700 yearly, with emoluments in the shape of palaces and palatial residences. Suffragan bishops, too, are plentiful enough. The Bishop of London is a bachelor, with an income of £200 weekly, and this leaves his lordship clearly and unmistakable on the sunny side of the poverty line. Wide as his sympathies are, why should he limit them to the case of the clergy? Organists, choir singers, church cleaners, and teachers in Church schools, are notoriously underpaid. Why does he not plead for them? Are they not human beings, and fellow Christians? Perhaps an innate sense of modesty alone prevents him from depriving wealthy laymen of an opportunity for disbursing charity in such sad and distressing cases. If so, such modesty is misplaced, for the resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, who control the finances of the State Church, reaches the enormous total of one hundred and twenty millions of money, which seems sufficient to prevent any "rural dean's" family from watering their bread with their tears, or a bellringer from contemplating suicide with a rope from his own belfry.

Sometimes cases of clerical poverty are printed in the newspapers. Recently, the wife of the Rev. Douglas Birt, rector of Leconfield, Yorkshire, applied to the local Relieving Officer for help, which was granted. Yet it appeared that the income of the living was £350 and a house, and the cause of all the trouble was that the reverend gentleman emulated Mr. Wilkins Micawber in managing his domestic affairs. This did not prevent the newspaper editors from describing the rector's dreadful fight with poverty, just as if millions of their fellow countrymen would not have rejoiced at such an income.

The plaint of clerical poverty is, after all, just a trick of a sorry trade. The Archbishop of Canterbury (£15,000 yearly) and the Bishop of London (£10,000 yearly) may be only practising the arts of their profession, and probably laugh in their dainty lawn-sleeves at their public performances, and the duplicity of laymen. Perhaps they are merely seeking to excite the generosity of devoted Church people who have balances at the bank. Clerical performances such as these will only last so long as they produce the desired financial result. Some day, and it may not be so far distant, the democracy of this country will turn to the clergy and say, echoing the words of Cromwell: "Be gone and make way for better men."

MIMNERMUS.

After Heine.

(Es war ein Aller König!)

THERE was a grim old ruler,
Weary of all save life:
He took, that he might school her,
A budding rose to wife.

There was a charming fellow
With rubies in his brain:
A lad of love-locks yellow,
Who bore her velvet train.

Mayhap you know the story?—
This Song the centuries gave?—
They died! That monarch hoary
Laughed lightly o'er their grave!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

Let me assure you my sleep is never disturbed about the destiny of the wicked; I feel much more concerned about the future state of the righteous.—Henry James,

The Blasphemy Bill.

(A Speech that should have been delivered before the Standing Committee on the Blasphemy Laws (Amendment) Bill January 25, 1930.)

I RISE to support the motion "that the Committee do not proceed further with the Bill." I am of opinion that the promoters of this measure were ill-advised ever to have introduced it. They could hardly have believed that the British House of Commons would have permitted a Bill of this kind to become law. We are indulgent to new ideas and to strange opinions, largely because the traditions of the House guard against them becoming operative or influential, but we are neither tolerant nor indulgent to any threatened inroad on our religious beliefs. I may remind Members how suspiciously the House has watched every attempt to give liberty to those who do not agree with established religious beliefs, and if in the end that liberty has been granted, it has only been done when common decency forbade it longer refusing. The Noble Lord (Lord Eustace Percy) well pointed out that once the House permits any tampering with religion, it threatens the basis of its authority to pass laws or impose regulations. I go further, and say that not only does this House derive its authority from the deity in which we believe, but in the religious affirmation, often heard in the lobbies, that God only knows why certain members are here, or God only knows their use once they are here, we have the solemn affirmation that the actual constitution of the House from time to time is bound up with the mystery of Divine Wisdom.

The introducer of the Bill argued that religious opinions should not be singled out for special treatment, but should have no other safeguards than protect opinions on other subjects. Such a contention will not hold water. History points to the fact that so soon as the unrestricted criticism of religion is permitted decay sets in. There is no question that if the old Roman Government had created a Blasphemy Law and so compelled the early Christian preachers to attack the pagan religions only in such terms as Pagan believers found not displeasing, the religion on which this House prides itself would never have been established. The unity of Western Christendom was established under the Roman Catholic Church by denying that for which this Bill asks. And that unity was destroyed only when the criticism of established doctrines became common. Since then we have witnessed the slow disintegration of religious beliefs in proportion as the idea has gained ground that religious opinions should be treated as other opinions are treated, to be proved or disproved by the same methods as are other beliefs. No one to whom religion is sacred will ever agree that it may be treated as are other opinions. Common sense and common experience are against it. Even in clubs and social gatherings where discussions range over a great variety of subjects, and differences are discussed with the utmost freedom and good humour, the subject of religion is generally barred. It is felt that where differences of opinion on religion are permitted to find expression, the bonds of fellowship, of courtesy, of mental hospitality give way, and social confusion is the result.

Members have also said that if indecency or obscenity occurs in any discussion on religion, proceedings should be taken under the ordinary law. Those who use such arguments know perfectly well that such proceedings are impossible. The language of which I and my friends complain would not be con-

sidered indecent or obscene in relation to any subject other than religion. Even the writings of Thomas Paine on religion, which my hon. friend, Mr. Lovat-Fraser, described as being of a "particularly offensive and foul-mouthed type," would not be so considered in relation to non-religious subjects. The language of which complaint is made, and which forms the subject matter of blasphemy prosecutions is offensive and foul-mouthed only because it is used in relation to religion.

It is true that under the present reading of the Blasphemy Law the elements of scoffing and irreverence must accompany the offence. But it must not be forgotten that the mere fact that scoffing, ridiculing, irreverence become offences places religion in a special category. In the language of the Government amendment, it is the "religious convictions" of those complaining that are affronted, and which constitute the essence of the offensive. Other convictions are on a different level. I am within my legal rights in scoffing at marriage, at the home, at opinions on science, on politics, or on other subjects. On such matters we trust to common sense, good taste, and the process of education to supply the necessary corrective. We can even trust such agencies in the matter of criticisms directed against the religion of the Jew or the Mohammedan, or the Parsee. But *our* religion stands on a different ground. My opinions are those of an Englishman and a Christian, and I cannot have them attacked in a way that is displeasing to me. It is my feelings as a Christian that are protected by law. As a Christian I may be trusted to treat the opinions of other people with no greater irreverence than they deserve.

I am quite sure that there is no great volume of opinion in the country behind this Bill, and I think that the majority who listen to me will agree that no considerations of justice or reason should be permitted to affect our decisions if in the constituencies there is no solid and effective voting power demanding this reform. We are not here to lead, but to represent. The Home Secretary said, in the course of his speech on the second reading of this Bill, that the "leading denominations" would not agree with the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, that they must have safeguards against "irreligious attacks," against irreligious attacks, mark, not merely against scurrility or irreverence. I think in this matter he was taking a sound Parliamentary view. We know how powerful these denominations are in our constituencies, and how ready they are to put the interests of their own denominations before all other considerations. I think, therefore, the Home Secretary was justified, when this Bill was before the House, in going to the "leading denominations," and in asking them whether they wished to leave their religious opinions with no other protection than is given to other religions and to other opinions. After all, it is in their interests that these laws exist, and I think it is a sound principle whenever a Bill is placed before the House which threatens an interest to go to its representatives and to ask them, "Do you agree with it?" and if they do not, to reject the Bill or so to amend it that the threatened interest does not suffer in any degree. Moreover, the Home Secretary himself belongs to one of these leading denominations, and so was doing to himself as he would have others do unto him.

I cordially agree with the hon. Member for Cambridge University (Sir Charles Oman) that we require a Blasphemy Law to protect the country against "a flood of indecent stuff," and I was interested in learning that he has brought with him a supply of these obscene prints and pamphlets which he has collected

from the Continent, and which he had to show Members of the Committee. I have no doubt that those who are with me in this opposition to the Bill will gladly avail themselves of the opportunity offered. Meanwhile, I think we are all greatly indebted to the hon. Member for the time he has given to hunting out this type of literature, and of the many hours he must have spent in the low haunts in which such literature is common, and which I and others have not encountered because, I blush to confess it, we were more interested—selfishly interested perhaps—in more material or more æsthetic pleasures. I can assure Sir Charles that on my next visit to France I shall regard it as a Christian duty to spend more of my time hunting for that kind of production.

But England is not France, and we have no wish to see the purity of our press degraded to the sensual level of the French newspapers, nor our hoardings disgraced by the obscene posters that appear in France. Our population has been brought up in a Christian atmosphere, our children have been educated in schools in which the Bible has held a prominent and an honoured place, our moral sense has been so sharpened that it will detect indecency where the conscience of the Continent fails to discover it, and I shudder to think of the ease with which the members of the Churches and Chapels would fall victims to indecency and obscenity if the unrestricted criticism of religion was permitted. Nothing but a highly developed Christian sense of duty could have induced Sir Charles Oman to have spent so much of his time while away from this country in seeking out the indecencies and obscenities of which he has amassed so interesting a collection. That other people have not been so profoundly impressed by these obscenities and indecencies, may be taken as evidence, that in spite of all the efforts of the Churches the Christianity of many of our people is not nearly so vigorous as it might be.

I put a final consideration before the members of this Committee. It has been pointed out by Mr. Lovat-Fraser, that when even decent-minded men attack religion they become "offensive and foul-mouthed." Do you wish to develop that kind of thing? It is also true that the only way to keep religious truth inviolate is either to prevent criticism altogether, or if criticism must be permitted, then it shall be under conditions that impress the onlooker or the listener with a sense of the extreme value of religion. I may add to this, that to permit ridicule of religion is of all things the least advisable. There are some things that can withstand ridicule. Science can withstand ridicule, a book, a picture, a piece of music, may withstand ridicule, but there has never been a religion, never a religious belief, ancient or modern, that has been able to stand up against it. Religion was not intended to create laughter, and it is powerless against it. The great Atheists of the world, those who have done the greatest harm to religion, have been great laughers, and with rare exception the great men who have made our religion what it is, have been men on whose faces a smile seldom sat, and whose laughs were rarely heard. Religion must be solemnly stated if it is to be seriously believed. I believe this motion to drop a Bill which aims at placing Christian and non-Christian opinions on the same level will be carried. It would be a disastrous day for Christianity if it were lost.

C.C.

We do not get to any heaven by renouncing the mother we spring from; and when there is an eternal secret for us, it is best to believe that Earth knows, to keep near her, even in our utmost aspirations.—George Meredith.

Bishop Welldon on The Bible.

BISHOPS and priests and parsons of various denominations have lately betaken themselves to the office of professional journalists, and have undertaken, on terms not stated, to supply certain weekly papers with their views on religion and other subjects. A few weeks ago the Rev. Desmond Morse Boycott wrote an article for the *Sunday Graphic*, in which he said that he did not believe in all that he found in the Old Testament, but he believed in Christ; he thought, however, that the time had come for a candid statement about the Bible from the Churches, and the Right Rev. Bishop Welldon, Dean of Durham, responded to this appeal by writing an article in the *Sunday Graphic* of the 2nd February, entitled "Can We Believe the Bible? This, I take it, means can intelligent Christians believe in the stories of the Bible—those contained in the Old Testament, as well as the New?"

The Bishop, who has the reputation of being a very learned man, begins his article by having a tilt against his "brother in the Lord," the Bishop of Birmingham. He says that Dr. Barnes "is fond of harping upon Evolution as though the clergy had never heard of it, and did not know what to make of it." "But," he continues, "there is no mystery about Evolution or about its relation to Christianity." That, however, is where the learned Bishop is entirely wrong. What Dr. Barnes says is that people who understand the doctrine of Evolution aright could not possibly believe in the alleged Story of the Fall of Man as narrated in Genesis, for he claims that Evolution demonstrates that man has come up from the lower animals, by gradual stages, until he has reached the civilized condition in which we find him to-day in various countries of the world; in other words, that man is not a fallen creature but a rising one, and the Bible story, therefore, is not true, but merely an old legend, believed in by the early Jewish writers. But Dr. Barnes, unfortunately like many other Christians who have given up the old story of the Fall, is not logical enough to see that if there was no Fall, there would be no need for any atonement by the blood of Jesus, and that the whole foundation of the Christian creed is consequently undermined and must ultimately fall. Ordinary Christians do not realize that. Bishop Welldon, however, goes on to state that "the Church has long ago given up the idea that it is her office to determine the right or the wrong of scientific theories." How long? Only so long as it was forced into that position by the demonstrable facts of modern science. "Whatever scientific truth is established by evidence," says the Bishop, "must be, and will be, accepted by all Christian thinkers." That may be so in time, but they take precious good care to conceal the fact, especially from their credulous followers. "But," continues the learned Bishop, "it does not follow that the Church must stake her faith upon every hypothesis which may be put forward in the name of Science." Of course not, but if Bishop Welldon still regards the doctrine of Evolution as merely in the hypothetical stage he has the whole weight of scientific opinion against him.

"Evolution," says the Bishop, "throws no light upon the origin of creation or of the variations which are essential by evolutionary progress." Men of science do not trouble themselves about "the origin of creation," indeed, such a sentence would have no meaning to most of them, but they would almost unanimously declare that science does explain the variations that are essential "to evolutionary progress."

The Bishop then says, "There can be no lower origin of man than that which is described to him in the Book of Genesis, the dust of the ground." But if the learned Bishop means that he can conceive of a God who could pick up enough dust, and by the use of some liquid, weld it together so that he could produce out of it a full grown man, he has a more lively imagination than most of us would be inclined to believe. "But," he continues, "the vital question is not what man was, but what he is!" "If he is a spiritual being now, then at whatever stage he became spiritual, his spirit no less than his body, or his mind deserves full recognition to-day?" The learned Bishop, however, does not define what he means by "spirit." Is it something that exists apart from body and mind? Or is it something that theologians alone believe to exist, without a tittle of evidence?

And then the Bishop proceeds to make a most important admission. "The Bible," says he, "and especially the Old Testament is no official authority upon modern science." That is an admission he would not have made twenty or thirty years ago; so that we are making some progress even among Bishops of the Church of England. "The Old Testament indeed is not a Christian but a Jewish Book," he says; "and Jews rather than Christians must accept the responsibility for it." There! That looks as though he were considering the advisability of repudiating it altogether. But not so. A little farther on, although he gives up the idea of verbal inspiration, he says, "he is far from thinking that the Book of Genesis itself is not a repository of Divine Truth!" What then does he believe in "The Old Testament"? Listen to this: The learned Bishop says: "The Story of the Fall, however, it may be understood is accredited by human nature itself." Think of that, after he has claimed to understand the doctrine of Evolution! and he goes on, "the Story of the Flood, as indeed recent history tends to show, by its practically world-wide diffusion." Does the learned Bishop mean merely local floods, or the great deluge, related in Genesis? If the latter, does he believe that the Flood covered the mountain of Ararat, 17,000 feet above the level of the sea, and if so, where does he think all the water came from?

"There is in the Old Testament," says Bishop Welldon, "one feature of supreme interest. It is the Messianic hope, as running through the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi." Well, suppose there is, although that is only a matter of opinion, it is quite clear that the Jews never accepted the Jesus of the Gospels as the Messiah they were expecting. They never expected a man who was alleged to be born of a virgin, and who claimed to be "the Son of God." Despite his supposed miracles, which, if he had really performed them, would have convinced most of those who witnessed them, he was only able to get a few disciples and a very few followers.

The Bishop, however, *will have it* that Jesus was a Divine Being; that he had come down from heaven, and assumed the form of man when he was really and truly the Son of God. Once again, listen to what he says: "If Jesus Christ was not a Divine Being, but only a man, although the highest and holiest of men, then His religion as it has been interpreted for eighteen centuries by the Church, comes to an end; then there is no Incarnation, in the sense that a Divine Being voluntarily assumed human nature, no revelation, no voluntary self-sacrifice upon the cross, and no atonement for human sin." To the whole of this paragraph most Freethinkers would cordially subscribe, but when the learned Bishop goes on to make a lot of assertions for which he has not an atom of evidence, they have no option but to ask for proof,

which, of course, is never forthcoming.

Finally, look at the astounding statements the Bishop asks intelligent readers of the *Sunday Graphic* to accept in the year 1930, and ask yourselves if they are in the slightest degree credible to-day? Listen: These are the words of the Right Rev. Bishop Welldon, Dean of Durham: "But if Jesus Christ was a Divine Being, then his incarnation is the greatest of all miracles, and it implies at least the possibility of other miracles in his life or in his death. It is idle to dispute about his feeding the hungry, or of healing the sick, or even of raising the dead to life, or of his own resurrection, if he came down from heaven to earth, if he is one with the Heavenly Father, and if he will come again as the Judge of the living and the dead . . . The story of the Divine life may be believed, or denied, but it cannot, in my opinion, be re-written. To-day, as of old, the question is: What think ye of Christ? and the answer of all Christians is the only one which solves the supreme problem of his divinely human personality: 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" There is much virtue in the word "if," but in these cases, the *if* is a pure assumption. There is no reasonable probability that any of these assumptions are true, no evidence that any rational being can regard as of any value in the light of science or common sense, and they can be dismissed at once as being alike incredible and absurd, and unworthy of the belief of all rational human beings.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Acid Drops.

In view of recent events we have been interested, and not a little amused over the difficulties the government got into over the Day of Intercession on behalf of Russia. When the Pope of Rome told God Almighty, through the medium of the press, that a deputation would wait on him on March 16, to call attention to his neglect of his followers in Russia, and when the Other Churches decided to be represented on the deputation, an order was issued that such prayers must not be offered up in connexion with the services held by the Army, Navy, and Air-Force. Then the *Morning Post* spluttered and the Bishops foamed at this intolerable tyranny. The Government then explained that all it meant was that these prayers were not to be read at the compulsory services, but if anyone liked to hold a voluntary service, and men attended out of their own desire to be present, no objection could or would be raised.

That ought to have settled the matter, but it did not. In the first place, what these parsons wanted was an official prayer against the Anti-Godites. Next, they knew that if the service was a voluntary one, very few soldiers or sailors would be present. The vast majority of men in the services go to Church only because they are driven there. Anyone who knows the appearance of a voluntary service knows this to be the case. So the Government was bombarded with questions in the House of Lords and in the Commons frightful interference with religious liberty. In other connexions liberty means doing what you like; in connexion with religion it means not being permitted to order the other fellow to do what *you* like. The Duke of Atholl, who must be a man with an excruciatingly unconscious humour, asked the Government, "on what grounds they justify the abrogation of religious freedom to British subjects?"—by not compelling soldiers and sailors to attend Church service. The Duke of Atholl ingenuously remarked that he could not imagine the chaplain in his service making propaganda against Russia. Of course not. All that would be done would be to call God's attention to the horrible atrocities now being committed in Russia. That was not casting any reflection at all on Russia. We were not surprised to find the Archbishop

of Canterbury complaining that the Duke's speech had not made his own position easier.

As a side issue, what we should like some of the Bishops to tell us is whether God has broken off relations with Soviet Russia? If he has not, and he can still associate with them, why cannot we? Are our Bishops so much holier than God? If, on the other hand, he is following the example of the Bishops, or setting them an example, by breaking off relations with them, how does he get into touch with them again? What happens when the usual relations between God and a nation are broken? If anything, what is it? if nothing, what does it matter?

It is, however, an ill-wind that blows nobody good, and we were glad to see that in the House of Commons Mr. Matters asked the Prime Minister how his desire to give full spiritual liberty to officers and men would be fulfilled if men are compelled to attend religious services? Mr. Brown and Mr. Thurtle also asked questions in the same vein, and so raised the whole question of compulsory attendance at Church services. The direct nature of the questions did not give Mr. Macdonald much chance for "hedging," so he replied that he did not wish to raise the whole question, which would be the case if the present question was not satisfactorily settled. Mr. Thurtle, who has plenty of courage, said he would raise the whole question at an early opportunity.

Perhaps by the time this is done the Prime Minister may have shaken off some of his fear of the Churches and chapels, and may agree that there is no substantial difference between ordering a man to attend prayers on March 16, and driving him to Church on any other date. Why may not soldiers and sailors have the same freedom that is given to civilians? Does he become less of a man, or less responsible the moment he joins the army or the navy, so that he must not merely be told the time he must go to bed and the time he must rise, the way he must have his hair cut or polish his buttons, but also how often he must go to Church or Chapel, the only choice allowed him in that direction being the choice between competing absurdities? Everyone knows that the vast majority of soldiers do not want Church parades, and that when a voluntary one is ordered very few attend. If there were any genuine demand for these things, the parsons would not be so keen on them being compulsory. We shall look forward with interest to Mr. Thurtle raising the question. But we warn Mr. Thurtle that he is not going the right way to get a Cabinet appointment.

According to a pious weekly, West Bromwich was recently the scene of a "remarkable representative and unanimous convention" on the Sunday question, organized by the Alliance for the Defence of Sunday. Parsons and delegates were present representing all denominations and pious associations in the district. We gather that what these noble people were unanimous about was—that persons who desire to enjoy Sunday as they may think fit should not be permitted to do so, and every means—legitimate and illegitimate—should be employed to interfere with or prevent such enjoyment. According to rumour, the motto of the convention was: "Do unto others as you would be done by."

Canon Charles Raven, of Liverpool, seems none too pleased with Sunday school teachers. He told a meeting of these that the teaching of religion to-day in Sunday schools is so badly done, so ignorantly done, and so often done in complete violation of the principles of sound teaching, that people who care for education are not yet convinced of the need for the Christian religion. On the authority of Canon Raven, then, one may say that the Lord, for some unscrutable reason, "calls" to the job of Sunday school teachers the most ignorant and stupid of Christian believers! We are quite willing to believe that is so. All the available evidence seems to favour that conclusion. And as for the cause—well, the

Churches have to take what they can get in these unbelieving days. What is curious is that the kind of instruction given in Sunday schools to-day, though it was effective enough with a past generation, shouldn't be effective now. Can it be that the day schools have raised the standard of knowledge and intelligence, and therefore the Sunday schools have difficulty in getting religious knowledge accepted? If so, we think the Canon is rather unfair in putting all the blame on Sunday school teachers. Perhaps they are doing their best in very difficult circumstances.

The B.B.C. has announced its first week of alternative programmes. We notice that there is still no alternative to the silence imposed by the Churches during their hours of business, nor to the wireless service. We wonder how long the majority of licence-holders who do not want the silence, nor desire the religious dope, will put up with this unfair treatment.

This is a curious country. J. W. Jones, of Pennygroos, South Wales, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment because he had permitted his children to become chargeable to the Parish. Jones, being a Christian who is, apparently, in the same stage of mental development, religiously, as a majority of the members of the House of Commons, said the interference of the Guardians was unnecessary, since he had "faith that God would provide." But the Chairman of the Bench, Colonel W. N. Jones sentenced the other Jones to a month's imprisonment for being silly enough to practise what Jones the Magistrate merely believed. Said Jones the sentencer to Jones the sentenced, "You cannot expect bread to fall from heaven." But why not? If a baby could fall from heaven a couple of thousand years ago, why not a quartern loaf to-day? Besides Bread did fall from Heaven in the desert; so why not in South Wales? We hope the suggestion will not hurt the feelings of that truly Christian gentleman, Mr. Lovat-Fraser, or even Mr. Clynes. If it does it is a clear case of Blasphemy.

Anything will do! The Vicar of Mansfield informed his congregation that a new scientific proof had been discovered of the truth of the Bible. The mummy of one of the Pharaohs had been discovered, which showed evidences that when alive this Pharaoh had suffered from a hardening of the walls of the heart. So says the Vicar, if this was the Pharaoh who lived in the time of Moses, and if Moses lived under this Pharaoh, then we had a new illustration of the scientific accuracy of the Bible when it spoke of God hardening Pharaoh's heart. This is quite convincing; but if the texture of the walls of the heart is a clear proof of the qualities of the head, we venture on the prophecy, that if a post mortem is carried out when the Vicar of Mansfield dies, his heart will prove to be decidedly thick.

The Rev. Eric S. Waterhouse is a professor of theology. This accounts for the brilliancy of the following gem, hurled through the ether:—

It remains that God is to everyone who believes in him the greatest of all realities. That follows from the very definition of God. If anything were greater than God, that thing would be God.

Fairies, ghosts, hobgoblins, evil spirits, and malignant "curses" are also realities to those who believe in them. That follows from the very definition of them! So, too, the belief that priests and parsons are wiser than ordinary folk, and are meant to lead mankind. But all the "realities" of primitive thinking, including Prof. Waterhouse's special one, have been or are being dissolved into unrealities, as man's ignorance lessens, and he learns to apply to Fancy the rein of Reason.

We have a little curiosity about "Scrutator," who writes the religious article in the *Liverpool Weekly Post*; from the nature of his communications he must either be a parson or a very ignorant office-boy, who is not over scrupulous about the truth. In his article for March 1, he says he "cannot understand" why anyone

should attack Christianity. For completeness of statement he might well have stopped with the two "cannot understand." It is a scientific and adequate description of his state of mind. He *cannot* understand, if he could, he would not write as he does. If he did the editor would not employ him to write in the *Post*, for the editor does not want anyone to write who does understand, and does not wish his readers to understand either. If he did we could soon find methods of enlightening them.

Still ignorance need not be lying; one might still keep on at least a nodding acquaintance with the truth. Here is a sample of the *character* of this chartered scribbler:—

I have known a number of Agnostics and Freethinkers, and almost without exception they sent their children to Sunday school. From the fact I suspect that the present demand for free trade in blasphemy is not normal, but has a political motive, and that its source of inspiration is Russia.

It is useless asking "Scrutator" to give proof for his statements. Where religion is concerned such professional liars are sheltered by the editor, who will not permit any adequate exposure in his columns. As we say elsewhere, lying in defence of Christianity is one of the safest and most honourable of Christian occupations.

That go-ahead Catholic country of Poland has had the censorship of the Press removed which has been in existence since 1927.

The Rev. John McNeill delivers a staccato sermon in the *Daily News*, on "Students and Unbelief." It is a joy to read and almost resembles the noise made by one of these new-fangled drills for tearing up the roads. Of the young men attending University College, London, he writes:—

I repeat, take them by and large, "students" are fine stuff to preach to; and so also by the way, are "working men."

And so, also, we might add, are any fish in the net that at present can be caught.

An association of war comrades has been formed and called the "Fellowship of the Services." A photo in a newspaper shows the comrades "swearing allegiance" on a Bible with two bayonets crossed on it. The combination is quite in order, historically. Every student has noted the loving affinity of Bible and sword in the history of Christianity. The founders of the Fellowship must have been divinely inspired when they thought of swearing allegiance on the two sources of Christian "greatness."

The Evangelical Revival, asserts a Baptist pastor, meant a re-birth for England. This is a slight exaggeration. More accurately, the Revival would be termed a miscarriage. And England to-day is only just recovering from the shocking effects.

The prisons at Maidstone, Pentonville, and Plymouth are for sale. Of course it is a mere coincidence that four-fifths of the nation have little or nothing to do with the Churches or the Christian religion. For everyone knows that when people finish with religion they degenerate into criminals and blackguards. Hundreds of Christian writers and speakers have declared it, under the inspiration of God and Christian truth.

The Fellowship Movement, declares the Rev. Dr. Dunning, is doing much to foster among young Baptists the spirit of loyalty to their own church and to their own denomination. Baptist Fellowship is evidently a very useful thing. Young Baptists have to be schooled out of the kind of broad-mindedness that might make them go to any church and spend their money. And Fellowship loyalty teaches them to support the "home industry." The pastors are to be congratulated on their astuteness. There is much truth in the saying that God helps those who help themselves.

The Rev. F. J. Hadfield, a Primitive Methodist of Chester, has been found dead with his throat cut. As he was a Christian, and a preacher too, there is no moral to be drawn. But a pious coroner would no doubt have found one, had the dead man been an avowed Atheist.

According to a newspaper report there was some "langwidge" used in a difference of opinion between a doctor and members of the Salvation Army. The summons failed, but it is evident that the noises made in the streets by the Salvation Army are not exactly as welcome as the flowers in May. Perhaps the Army's God suffers from excessive deafness.

Dr. R. A. Millikan is a famous American physicist. At least, the *Daily Express* says so, and the Doctor, (see above), is writing in his book, *Science and the New Civilization*, about the birth-squeaks of helium, oxygen, silicon and iron, and this, with other opinions, forces Dr. Millikan to the conclusion that there is something much greater than mechanism behind the universe, which, to us, seems like saying that a thing is lying on the corner of a round table. And then, as a grand finale to the article the reviewer concludes:—

Dr. Millikan believes that science will strengthen faith in an unseen power, and not lead the world to a religious collapse.

This is very feeble, and not very complimentary to scientists worthy of the name. It is the fear of facing uncomfortable scientific truths that makes human beings bury their heads in the sand of religion, and this is encouraged by any scientist who connects the unexplained with a religious cause.

Some good news from the church front. The Rev. H. G. Wilks, vicar of Uppertong, Yorkshire, has written and produced a pantomime "Dick Whittington." The Vicar and his wife have been the recipients of friendly demonstrations and presents, and all the pantomime players were present at the church on Sunday night, February 23. And so, in this way, the homes fires are kept burning, and the secret about the origin of pantomime is doing a little malicious dancing between pulpit and stage.

It is comforting news to pedestrians to know that there are arrangements for first aid to aeroplanes. Up to going to press, it is denied that the *Morning Post* has given orders to the office-boy to sweep England's doorstep before gobbling unproved statements.

A correspondent writing to the *Morning Post* heard over the wireless a harangue from Moscow. The speakers were urging the necessity of being prepared for war, as Europe was preparing a great blow against them. It is possible that some listener-in in Russia, or some reader of foreign affairs, has heard or noticed some of the recent speeches about Russian persecutions. The avowal that there is nothing political in the agitation makes the matter suspect; the uncertainty of the data is not the least item to warn those who, may be anxious to take sides.

Lord Grey of Falloden thinks that the conscience of the community has developed greatly during his lifetime. He also says:—

There is a community conscience now which feels a responsibility for poverty, weakness and misfortune, and does not take it as much a matter of course as our predecessors did; which makes real efforts to remedy it. The conscience of the community of civilized nations is more alert, more sympathetic, more merciful than ever. That is evidence of progress.

It is not Christian progress. This much is certain. For it is manifesting itself when the influence of the Christian religion and the Churches is the weakest it has ever been. To the dismal prophets of the pulpit the fact may be disconcerting. Still, they may perhaps find consolation in the thought that only the foolish belief in their prognostications would prove this.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Miss V. Murray, £1 5s.

W. H. HASSELL.—Pleased to learn that your Anniversary meeting was so great a success, also that you have so much enjoyed reading *Shakespeare and Other Literary Essays*. We think that every Freethinker should have a copy as a memento of a great champion of intellectual freedom.

S. MARTIN.—Bishop Barnes' theory that man is endowed with a "soul," which differentiates him from the rest of the animal world is just unscientific piffle. It shows inability to understand the nature of morality. That a man with so elementary a notion of the essential character of moral can enjoy being a distinguished *Christian thinker* helps one to realize the poverty of current Christianity.

F. BOTT.—There is nothing either surprising or novel in finding men quite humane in other directions, and yet become brutal and untruthful when religion is allowed to influence them.

L. MARTIN.—It is both cowardly and contemptible for parsons to make statements in the pulpit which they are not prepared to defend on the platform or in articles in newspapers where they find shelter behind an editor who will not admit a straightforward reply. It is no wonder that such men feel they require a Blasphemy Law to protect them. But even that cannot protect them from the contempt of fair-minded men.

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.

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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.

On Sunday next (March 23) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Birmingham. His subject will be "The Savage in our Midst," and he will take occasion to deal with several topical incidents, which are of importance to both Freethinkers and Christians. We hope that all Birmingham will do their best to widely advertise the meeting. The hall is a very large one, but with effective advertising it should be filled.

Mr. Cohen had two capital meetings at the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester, on Sunday last. The hall was full both afternoon and evening, in the latter case every inch of standing room was occupied. Mr. Monks, whom we were glad to see had recovered from his recent indisposition, occupied the chair at both meetings. There was an unusual number of questions at the end of each lecture, and also a good sale of literature as the audience was coming in and going out—which is as it should be.

There is every promise that the Social to be held in the Council Chamber of the Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Saturday evening, March 29, will provide a very enjoyable evening. There will be dancing and musical items, with brief intervals for conversation, and, of course, a few words from the President, Mr. Chapman Cohen. Tickets 2s. 6d. each, including light refreshments, may be obtained from the Pioneer Press, or the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. It will help the arrangements if an early application is made. Caxton Hall is about one minute's walk from St. James's Park Station (Underground), or a bus from almost any part of London will set the visitor down outside the doors.

In the *Nineteenth Century* for March, there is an article on the Blasphemy Laws, by Mr. G. D. Nokes. Mr. Nokes gives an interesting sketch of the history and state of the law, strictly from the lawyer's point of view, but it lacks the intimacy which cannot exist apart from a first hand acquaintance with militant Freethought. No man can understand Freethought by a study of the "respectable" sketches of the subject, since the important work was really done by men whose names are scarcely mentioned. And this leads Mr. Nokes to make suggestions which prove conclusively that he simply cannot see the genuinely Freethought position on the subject. If he and others will get hold of the simple fact that what Freethinkers require is that religious opinions shall have no greater protection or privilege than other opinions, and that we object altogether to there being religious offences at law, as such, he will be better able to understand the situation. So soon as Mr. Cohen has finished with the question of Religion in Russia he will deal with Mr. Nokes' article.

It is generally good to know just what people think about us. It tones down one's conceit, and it helps to encourage modesty. Now it seems that at Nuneaton there lives a Christian named H. Good—how else should a Christian be named. But some benighted individual has sent this good Christian a copy of the *Freethinker*, whereas Mr. Good bursts forth in the columns of the *Rugby Advertiser* as follows:—

One of the results of my letter appearing in the *Rugby Advertiser* has been that some poor, simple one has been foolish enough to send me a copy of that Godless paper called the *Freethinker*. As if I could accept any counsel from anyone so depraved in their mind as to have sunk so low as to put God, or attempted to put God, out of their thoughts. Surely they make an exhibition of their own ignorance to suppose that one could be satisfied with such husks that are served up by them, when there is the finest of the wheat to be had from the Lord's table. Such food that the devil serves up through his servants may satisfy them that have an appetite for it. But the believer in Jesus knows their Shepherd's voice, and a stranger they will not follow nor partake of his dainties. So it is quite useless sending me such rubbish as is contained in the *Freethinker*, which is only fit for the fire, and where it soon finds its way when it arrives at my dwelling place. And I would lovingly advise the writers, and the readers, of the *Freethinker* to turn their thoughts God-ward, and turn into the Scriptures and pray that God would instruct them and teach them His ways. "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy (God's) Word."

That makes us feel very small indeed, for in the counsels of H. Good we stand for—just nothing. And nothing that we can say will be able to convert Good to our views. God—if there be a God—intended Good to be a Christian. His brains—if he has brains—cannot be affected by anything we can say. When Good was designed the good God said, Lo! I will give my servant Good such brains as will be proof against all the carnal reasoning of the wicked world. Whatever may be the success which meets us in our work we shall always feel that the complete victory is not for us. Good, of Nuneaton, will remain untouched by anything we can say. God built him for a Christian? and the *Freethinker* is powerless against the work of God, for it is Good!

Next Sunday (March 23) Mr. R. H. Rosetti will deliver two lectures in the Town Hall, Gateshead-on-Tyne, at 3 and 7. There will be a musical programme before each lecture, and tea will be provided for visitors at a cost of 9d. per head. In connexion with the latter item, it is requested that those who wish to stay for tea should make their intention known to Mr. J. Bartram, 107 Morley Street, Heaton, Newcastle-on-Tyne. On the last occasion many came without notice and could not be accommodated. Gateshead is the centre of a very populous district, and we hope to hear of record meetings.

Mr. Rosetti gave two very much appreciated lectures at Plymouth, on Sunday last. In the evening a deluge of rain interfered somewhat with the meeting, but the lecture was closely followed, and many questions were asked. Mr. McKenzie took the chair in the afternoon, and Mr. Smith in the evening.

We are glad to learn that Mr. LeMaine had a full hall for his first lecture in the Secular Hall, Leicester. Some questions were asked at the close of the lecture, and answered to the apparent satisfaction of the questioners.

On March 6, a statue of Mrs. Pankhurst was unveiled at Westminster, in recognition of her work as the leader of the Militant Suffragettes. Mr. Baldwin delivered a speech, presumably as leader of the party that opposed her so bitterly during her life. But we wonder how many who were there remembered, or knew that Mrs. Pankhurst and her husband were both very ardent Freethinkers, and members of the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society.

Some present might have reflected that the bitter opposition to giving women the vote drew its chief strength from the influence of the Christian religion, with its degrading conception of woman's nature, and the persistent belittling of women in Christian theology. It is also worthy of note that eventually the one thing that decided the Christians of this country to give women the franchise was that she had shown herself ready to help the Christians to go to war. Women were no better and no worse after the war than they were before it. But, said these peace-loving Christians, she has shown us that she can make munitions, she can nurse in wartime, she can sell war certificates, and enrol recruits, she is even able to join in the fighting if necessary. Lo, she is as good as the rest of us, therefore she may have the vote. If she had gone dead against war she would still have been without the vote, and Mrs. Pankhurst would have had no monument in this Christian country.

It may also be pointed out that President Masaryk, President of Czecho-Slovakia, about whom very eulogistic notices have been appearing in the press, was a Freethinker. None of the papers appear to have noticed this.

SCHOOLBOYS AND THE BIBLE.

What connexion exists between the Old and the New Testaments? The man who wrote the last book of the Old cut off somebody's ear in the New.

Who was sorry when the Prodigal Son returned? The fatted calf.

Who were the Sons of Thunder? Bo and Erges.

In what order do the Gospels come? One after the other.

All brutes are imperfect animals. Man alone is a perfect beast.

Why was Elisha sorry when the Shulamite's son died? Because he did not like being left with a widow.

(from "Fresh Howlers.")

Normal and Abnormal Fauna in Pacific Isles.

DR. JOHN R. BAKER's splendid volume on island life (*Man and Animals in the New Hebrides*, Routledge, 1929) departs widely from the beaten track. Prof. Julian S. Huxley suggested a voyage of discovery to Dr. Baker, and with the hearty co-operation and goodwill of Prof. E. S. Goodrich, F.R.S., a visit rich in results was made to the Western Pacific.

The native inhabitants are of Melanesian stock. They are dark-skinned and facially unprepossessing from the European standpoint, but gracefully built, as many primitive peoples are. Lower animal life is similar to that of oceanic islands in general, save in one instance. Apart from man, the only mammals are five species of fruit bats, two insectivorous bats, and a single species of rat. Wild pigs roam the islands, but these are the feral descendants of domesticated swine, which appear to have accompanied the natives when they originally journeyed to their sea-girt dwelling. The New Hebrides have from time to time been visited by explorers during recent generations, and are now well known to Europeans. The Torres and Banks Islands are not always grouped with the Hebrides, but Baker includes them in his survey as "they are one with the main group of islands, geologically, botanically, ethnologically, zoologically, and economically . . . and it seems to me far best to have one name to include all the islands; and the significance of the name 'New Hebrides' should be extended to cover them all."

Although Dr. Baker acknowledges the occasional services rendered by the missionaries—mainly in combating the white man's diseases—he appears to entertain a poor opinion of missionary endeavour as a whole. Upwards of one thousand whites reside near the coasts, and these are chiefly missionaries, traders and planters. The representatives of the English Establishment and the Presbyterians confine their proselytising activities to separate areas, and thus prevent rivalry and overlapping. Opinion varies regarding the consumption of stimulating beverages. The Seventh Day Adventists prohibit the use of those temperance drinks, tea and coffee, to their converts. Yet, a Roman Catholic missionary, doubtless with pleasant remembrances of the flavour of Benedictine and Chartreuse, informed Baker in a manner hilarious "how a fellow priest had instructed him in the art of making artificial absinthe by mixing a paregoric medicine with rum."

Dr. Baker naturally wonders whether the inculcation of Hebrew mythology as recorded in the Old Testament, is of much ethical value to the natives. And a Melanesian convert somewhat astonished the European scientist by selecting as an edifying reading in pidgin-English the tale of Rahab the strumpet.

Baker's most painstaking researches were conducted in Espiritu Santo, but his conclusions apply generally to the entire island group. Theft is almost unknown among those heathen natives who still remain largely untouched by foreign influences. They prove very unreliable, however, and can seldom be depended upon to keep the most serious appointments. Moreover, their innate aptitude for lying is equal and perhaps superior to that of the average mendacious European. In Baker's view the untutored savage is a nobler specimen than the Christian convert who usually displays signs of degeneration.

The native languages vary enormously. One small

island twelve miles only in diameter, possesses two distinct tongues, and all communication requires the services of an interpreter. As the islands are under the dual protection of France and England, the French settlers are subject to the French Code, while the English conform to British law. This has led to a certain amount of confusion. Fortunately for the French and English, who do not understand one another's language, a "veritable Esperanto" in the form of pidgin-English is in use. This, although unlike that employed in China, serves the same purpose. "It is spoken on plantations throughout the group, and natives who have worked in plantations can thus communicate with one another even though they come from different islands. . . . Some of the words are, to put it mildly, forcible English expletives, and it is thus amusing to hear Frenchwomen using them utterly innocent of their meaning. Even in the heathen parts of the islands one may sometimes come across a man who has at one time worked on a plantation, and thus be able to converse with him."

When a chief departs this life his wives commit suicide, presumably for the purpose of ministering to his desires in the spirit land. The position of woman is markedly depressed, and sexual segregation most pronounced. The men and boys form one group, and the women and girls another. Human flesh is occasionally eaten, but apparently those only who have died from accident or natural causes furnish joints for native repasts.

One's social importance depends upon one's possession of pigs. In order to rise in the social scale a native must slaughter a given number of male pigs, and a specified number of the very remarkable intersexual pigs which are so numerous in the New Hebrides. The native's methods of pig-keeping are distinctly strange. They make no serious effort to increase their stock. As a matter of fact, most female pigs are destroyed soon after the sow has cast her litter. Naturally, the magicians of the tribe employ their supposed spiritual powers to secure as many pigs as possible. The unconverted savages dread the baleful influences of the medicine-men, and the Christian faith of the converted is too skin-deep to permit them to escape their wiles. So sacred is the pig that even bitter antagonisms among rival chiefs may be set at rest by a mutual interchange of pigs.

The fowl and the dog comprise their other domesticated animals. The pig stands pre-eminent in native life—the intersexual pig above all. These monstrosities cannot breed, but they are deemed essential to certain ceremonies. The price of a wife may be as many as twenty pigs. These animals form the currency in Sakau, and the value of the pig varies with the condition of its tusks. Yet the finest tusks lose their value so soon as their porcine owner is dead. It appears that in Sakau the natives attach more importance to their pigs than anything else. One careful observer saw a native woman suckling a pig at her breast.

That the population of these islands has seriously declined in recent generations is demonstrable. The extraordinary preponderance of men over women in some of the islands is amazing. A census taken in Sakau discloses a ratio of 159 males to 100 females. The comparative scarcity of women may partly explain a low birth rate. Many sites of formerly cultivated gardens are rapidly reverting to a state of Nature. The names of various extinct villages are still remembered by the native carriers. In a few instances, migration accounts for forsaken settlements, but almost invariably the earlier inhabitants have perished. Many reasons for this anomaly have

been assigned, but the most potent factor appears to have been the introduction of the white man's diseases among a population non-immune. Dr. Baker concludes that tuberculosis, dysentery, measles, and influenza constitute the most mortal maladies. Another causative agent in depopulation is the widespread practice of abortion among all sections of the native community.

Dr. Baker devotes a most informative chapter to the study of the intersexual swine. In this he reminds us that worms, snails, and other lowly creatures are bisexual. That is to say, that there are no distinct male or female forms of snails or worms, but each animal possesses the sexual organs of both sexes. Some fishes are also hermaphrodite, but among vertebrate organisms generally bisexuality is very rare. Most stock breeders have seen or heard of the "free martin," a heifer manifesting sexual abnormality. "In European breeds of pigs and goats," writes Dr. Baker, "intersexes also occur from time to time. Farmers call pigs of this type 'wilgils' or 'wildews.' Their anatomy has been studied in detail by Dr. Crew and myself among others. The gonads are usually degenerate testes without sperms, but sometimes there is a little patch of ovarian tissue on one or both of the testes, or one of the two gonads may be an ovary. The external organs usually approximate to the female type, though the clitoris (which in the normal female is a very small representative of the penis of the male, not showing externally) is usually enlarged so as to distort the vulva (the external opening of the female system) to some extent. As regards the external organs other than gonads, there is usually a more or less well developed male system, as well as a more or less well developed female system."

Despite the fact that Dr. Codrington, in 1891, and Dr. Rivers, in 1914, made reference to the intersexes in the New Hebrides in their writings on Melanesia, they failed to awaken the interest of the biological world. In this respect these phenomena resemble the long neglected researches of Mendel.

This, however, is ancient history. For, after some hesitation, the natives were persuaded to exchange a few much-prized pigs for the white scientist's silver and several were used by Baker for dissection. No trace of oviduct, womb, or vagina was found in these intersexes. The internal male organs were sometimes well, and at other times poorly developed. But all, without exception, appear incapable of reproduction. Baker's diagrams and descriptive matter form a solid contribution to the study of sexual pathology.

Two living intersexes were brought to England in company with the normal brother and sister of one of the intersexual pigs. The normal animals are to be utilized for breeding, while the abnormal couple are under the capable observation of Dr. Crew.

Dr. Baker is of opinion that "every embryo is a potential intersex, with the ability to grow up with all the organs of both sexes." It is the activity of hormones which prevents this. Again, the absence or presence of an X-chromosome will decide whether the fertilized egg grows into a male or female form.

T. F. PALMER.

REALISM.

A certain parson while cycling in a busy street was run down by a bus, and as he lay unconscious in the hospital a fire broke out on the opposite side of the street. As the flames were leaping sky high, the doctor was heard to say to the nurse, "I think you had better draw the blind in case the patient comes round and thinks that the accident was fatal."—(from "Cycling.")

Chain-Store Religion.

(Concluded from page 157.)

II.

"SHOPS, everywhere, are filled with it." No need for Mr. Thomas Craven to tell me that. Even here in Sydney, we have our shrieking imitations of the Rue de la Paix—our giant department stores, where impossibly-shapeless bronze and brass females look like performing frogs, as they stand in their insolent crudity behind the plate-glass windows. America, Russia, France—here are three vast aggregations of international Religious Chain-Stores, the last selling Sex, and the others hawking comfort, cant and pseudo-Communist cowardice, for wares. Between them, these three great Chain-Stores of world-imbecility are giving God the spiel of His—or is it "Her?"—life. Catching up with this "fashionable crowd" of Russian, French and Yankee innovators are certain Hindoo-Theosophical hokum-squirts—"sly architects, missionaries from the various guilds, jobless composers, the ladies who sponsor" any lie that is put over without qualms and sufficient effrontery—all threatening to inflict, next year, an Asiatic Messiah named Krishnamurti upon Australia.

As if we had not had enough of the original rejected Jewish Messiah, to say nothing at all of the ridiculous Roman Catholic dough-Messiah imported for the Sydney Eucharistic Congress last year, without yearning for the arrival of another one! Communism, betrayed and "dropped" by the glitteringly pretentious, machine-slick Russians, will have to be taken up yet in sheer, sober earnest by the Australians and others, I predict, and revitalized, as a defence against this "arty" pestilence.

What else are we to do? Throw up another little "breastwork of lies" against Yankeeism, Gallicism, Sovietism, Hindooism? No. Australia is a gigantic vacuum, I assert—a continent nearly 3,000,000 square miles in area, with an entirely homogeneous white population of less than 7,000,000—and that vacuum will be compelled in the end, in sheer self-defence, to suck in the original, unwatered-down Lenin gospel, and use it relentlessly as a weapon against the foreign pseudo-Religious Chain-Store.

For you are a falsehood organized upon a cubical business basis, you Americans, as you very well know. Like the contemporary Russian Communists themselves, you have completely run away from and deserted every cultural idea that you once called holy; so much so that the "tea-drinking painters of the neo-modernist" "arty" religious school must give Dreiser nine good reasons for suicide, every time he examines "arty" New York.

To Mr. Doctor Henry Goddard Leach, the most noble and the most Episcopalian "arty" editor of the *American Forum*, whose "daring" religious articles and discussions are praised so diligently at Washington by Jim Vance, through the *Fellowship Forum*, I present my sincere Australian compliments. There is nothing like getting away with it whilst the getting is good. But, when a presumed gentleman says, "I am not yet convinced that religion is no longer needed in the world," and then proceeds to prove, on almost every consecutive page of his magazine, that "the modern phenomenon of the machine is reforming the spirit of the world"—i.e., is utterly destroying and rooting out whatever there is of value in the contemporary surviving fragments of the Christian religion—then such a one must excuse me if, here and now, I write him down a paste-board Leonardo da Vinci and a posturing charlatan.

"Machines," says Mr. Thomas Craven, "cause to

shine, before our eyes, discs, spheres, and cylinders of polished steel, reviving in us race-memories of the discs and spheres of the gods of Egypt and the Congo."

Eureka!

Here we have it. Those are the first honest words that any considerable American writer, this side of Theodore Dreiser, has written for twenty years. It is the psychological conquest of America by Africa that is going on. Africa, the despised and the rejected, has become the corner-stone of the new American cultural building? Oh, what a savage, screaming, star-bursting satire! For what else does Mr. Thomas Craven mean, I ask, when he speaks of "dormant religio-artistic tastes being awakened and marshalled, to rescue sleeping—(American)—beauty from the beast of stark utility"? Shades of Booker Washington! That Africa—the source of the slave-labour of a bygone century—should now be called upon to pull cubist America out of the "arty" mud, and back, via the solid earth of Africa, to sanity—this idea *will* be popular with Mr. James S. Vance of the *Washington Fellowship Forum*, and with his bitterly anti-negroid million readers per week in the Iowa-Kansas Bible-belt!

Excuse me if I laugh. There are some who say—and I am one of them—that the credit for this over-long survival of the great American-Culture Fake is due to the religious advertising men—the Dr. S. Parkes Cadmans, the late Frank Cranes, Bryans and others: who, when they saw that the stock of real, 100 per cent thinkers and writers had run out, were "the first business group to appreciate the attractive force (and hence the cash value)" of their own services as pseudo-vertical supporting pillars of the grand Temple of American Hokum. And so they rushed in, valiantly, on strictly cash terms, and sold themselves industriously, in the shape of millions of little cubes of press-vamped, puffed-up pulpit-wisdom. "Shooting craps," in short, like regular niggers, with the pure ivory Sermon on the Mount cut up into nice little dice!

By writing down the current *blah* of American editors, educationalists, psychologists, etc., by about 50 per cent, one begins to condense these artificial giants into sober pigmies—the decrease in the swelling of whose heads enables one to see a little of the truth. This current world-boom in a superficially ingenious inhumanly rigid Yankee God—a super-joss with His feet in Chicago and His nose poking everywhere, looking for Trade—when critically examined, what does it boil down to? Why, it reveals a conglomerate and miscellaneous heterogeneous collection—not a nation—of cubist barbarians: people who are dependent now upon the culture of Black Africa, as the one sure pathway out of the soup. Silas Lapham has risen so far, in short, that he has carried all Boston up like a rocket—but where, alas, is the Puritan stick about to fall? Into the heart of the African jungle. What an anti-climax, dear Dr. Henry Goddard Leach, is it not?

I forbear to carry this unpleasant subject any further. Chain-store religions are apt to end suddenly—with a discharge of racial chain-lightning. When the Bimpelweisers of Pachaug wake up to the double game that the *New York Forum* is playing—baiting Roman Catholicism upon the one hand, and boosting Black Africa as the coming Saviour of inert, pariah-base America upon the other—the Tower of Babel situate in the Middle West will burst. For the Middle West is not so muddled but that it still entirely understands the business end of a shot-gun. And what says the lovely Africanizing *Forum*? :—

"In one corner of Mr. Walker's room, set within the walls, stood a case of shot-guns. These familiar

weapons, with their barrels of blue steel and their hardwood stocks polished and cross-hatched like Congolese fetishes"—with their "perfect union of form and function"—are "dynamic symbols of the forces of modern life."

Very fine. I am no Roman Catholic. I loathe and hate and detest the poisonous-spirited Roman Catholic Church. But to teach the Bimpelweisers of Pachaug and similar points that the Roman Catholic American is no better than a nigger; and *then* to teach the sons and daughters of Pa Bimpelweiser, who read the New York *Forum*, that the Nigger, anyhow, is the only genuine Messiah who can really save America—this, dear Doctor Henry Goddard Leach, is to invite a charge of shot in the editorial stern from an enraged Iowa full of Bimpelweisers.

JOHN MCCRASIAN.

Sydney, Australia.

Laugh, Clown, Laugh!

In the days before the blight of Christianity descended upon Greece there lived in Athens a comic poet. His name was Philemon. He has his niche in history, not so much for his way of writing poetry or his way of living as for his way of dying. He died of a violent burst of laughter. What he was laughing at is not recorded. Perhaps he was irresistibly tickled by his own witticisms.

There have been other Philemons since that tragically merry bard of Athens. There was the Philemon of the New Testament, a prosperous fellow and a slave-owner, and like most slave-owners of history, a good Christian. It was to this thriving follower of Christ that Paul addressed an Epistle, naming him in the manner of a present-day Communist agitator, "fellow worker."

I presume it is the holier Philemon from whom a pious penman in a pious weekly, the *Radio Times*, a journal of a pious Corporation, takes his nom de plume. For this latter-day "Philemon" writes upon "Religion and the B.B.C."

He reels with the mental blear of the religiously drunk from reverential zayat to zayat as the alcoholically drunk reel from public-house to public-house.

He would have us disabuse our minds of the idea that the attendance at places of worship is an index to the religious pulse of the country. Although not a Sabbath passeth without some servant of the Lord bewailing empty pews, also under the delusion that a sparse attendance at the House of God indicates a corresponding indifference to Him, "Philemon" will have none of it. With typical religious logic he declares that "the very contrary may be the truth." And, he thunders, "the sooner we realize it the better."

"So that, if the churches are half empty, if people abandon the habit of prayer, if sects are at sixes and sevens, if theology hardly knows where it is, there is no need to worry about the 'failure of Religion.'"

So that when every church in England is totally empty except for the clergyman and the yawning verger, anxious to get back to his *News of the World*, "Philemon" should, according to his own argument, be mighty pleased. It will show that the religious "quality" of the people is Grade A.

For you must know that Religion nowadays, according to "Philemon," is like butter and silk-stockings, a thing of varying "quality."

"Church attendance, and the number of ear-phones that go on at eight o'clock on Sunday nights"—(Or do not go on, I would suggest, my dear "Philemon")—"are some sort of rough test of popular interest in a religious institution, but they prove nothing as to the religious quality of the people."

If there are "qualities" of religion there must be "qualities" of irreligion. The Best Quality religionists will have the celestial equivalent of the stalls, the third grade will have the gallery. As to the "qualities" of irreligion, the contributors and readers of the *Freethinker* will be right in the thick of Hell, while Bishop

Barnes will atone for his mild scepticism in a temperature not too uncomfortably hot.

"Philemon" then proceeds to administer a gentle reproof to another gentleman of high-class religious "quality," Dr. Waterhouse. Quality or no quality, there have never been two Christians yet who were in agreement upon their religion. Religionists as a body seem to lack the striking uniformity of opinion upon their beliefs that characterizes Atheists. For Atheism has a greater right to be called a philosophy of belief than any religion. Atheism demands a belief in the things of this life, an acute mental consciousness of the present, a brain undimmed by the fumes of religious narcotics. Religion is non-belief.

"Religion," says Dr. Waterhouse, "is the link between this world and the invisible world. Religion is the avenue of approach into the supersensible world. But music, art, and philosophy are avenues also. The difference being that these lesser avenues are only 'one way' streets to God while Religion is an 'up and down' road with traffic going both ways." (Most of the intelligent traffic, I should imagine, is coming down.)

"Philemon," however, "with all deference to the head of a theological seminary," writes that Dr. Waterhouse isn't telling the truth. In "Philemon's" opinion music, art, philosophy and poetry are all as much 'both way' streets to the Invisible as Religion.

Music, art, philosophy, poetry may all be 'up and down' roads, but they do not lead to any supersensible world or nonsensical world, to the Invisible or the Impossible, call it what you will. They lead to a greater and keener appreciation of the beauties and joys and responsibilities of this world, to a contempt for the meaningless blather of the ecclesiastical charlatans. The noblest and the greatest of the travellers along these 'up and down' roads of art, philosophy, poetry and music have been strikingly irreligious.

"Can you not name a poem," cries "Philemon," "which, under the circumstances when you first read it, came as a theophany to you?"

A theophany is a manifestation of God to man by an actual appearance. "Philemon" wants to know whether I have read a poem which, in the circumstances of my first reading it, made the Invisible visible. No, my dear "Philemon," I have not. Neither have you.

Shelley, who has been called "the poets' poet" was expelled from Oxford for his Atheism. For the same reason the Lord Chancellor of the day, Lord Eldon, declared him to be unfit for the custody of his children. Byron, Keats, Landor, Swinburne, Fitzgerald—they are legion—they were all Freethinkers.

The late Edmund Gosse, in his autobiography, *Father and Son*, writes of a large religious meeting in London, at which Shakespeare was denounced as a lost soul suffering in Hell for his sins.

For my own part, I would sooner go to Hell with Shakespeare than be Eternally Blessed with Philemon, the fellow worker of Paul, or "Philemon," the fellow worker of Sir John Reith.

"Philemon," continues his wail: "Is not Art a revealer of Truth and Beauty?" he asks. Art, undoubtedly is. But what in the name of Sanity has Religion to do with Truth and Beauty? The nearer we get to Truth, the more we appreciate Beauty, the further we get from Religion and the Invisible Visible or the Unknowable Known, use whatever tom-fool appellation you wish. Artists from Perugino and da Vinci to Collier and Walter Sickert have been Freethinkers and Atheists.

"Philemon" thinks that a Beethoven Symphony is as potent in bringing him nearer the Invisible as a church anthem. Yet Hadyn described Beethoven as an Atheist. Handel was a Pagan. In music, as in literature and philosophy, it is the same story from Thomas Mace to Richard Strauss.

Any more of this "Philemon" and I am afraid I shall suffer the fate of his early Grecian namesake.

"GRUB STREET."

Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. It is a thread-ball thrown at a mark, but the other end remains in the thrower's bag.—Emerson.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE RESURRECTION RESURRECTED.

SIR,—The account of the resurrection as stated by W. W. Harvey seems quite plausible up to a certain point, then, to my mind the account breaks down, and a liberal supply of salt is required.

I have undergone several surgical operations, so I know what pain is, and I cannot understand how a man who has had nails driven through his hands and feet and his weight resting thereon for three to six hours, also a sword thrust into his side, is in a fit condition to walk even after a rest of thirty-six hours. His feet would be too sore to walk without crutches, his hands too sore to hold crutches, and his side too sore to permit the use of crutches, also the road on which he would have to travel would no doubt be rough and stoney.

I do not think he would want to walk sixty yards, never mind sixty furlongs, unaided.

C. BENTLEY.

Society News.

To a well-filled hall, Mr. Saphin expounded his views on the "Past, Present and Future." He reminded his hearers of the dismal history of Europe under the domination of religious beliefs in days gone by, showed how our present comparative freedom was due to the progress made by science in the face of the hostile opposition of the churches, and gave examples of the sacrifices in the course of truth made by the Freethinkers of the past century.

The future he believed would be better and brighter for humanity, as the mass of the people awakened to the fact that the grand object of life was happiness and well-being "here and now." That death when it came in its natural course came as a rest after toil with nothing to fear beyond it.

The discussion which followed was practically unanimously in sympathy with views of the speaker, and the vote of thanks which followed met with a hearty response from the audience. Mr. J. Hart ably occupied the chair.—C.E.W.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit—"Whither Mankind?"

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Lecture—"Some Anti-Socialist Delusions."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road, close to Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Life in the Valley."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Impossibility of a 'League' War."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, William Kent—"Was Dickens a Bad Man?"

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, entrance Theobald's Road): 7.30, Dr. Marie Stopes—"Racial Ideals and Some Religions."

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. Freethought 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.

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

BURNLEY (St. James' Hall): 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton, N.S.S.—A Lecture.

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

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Ogilvie will speak on "Religious and Political Cant."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Lieut.-Col. C. Malone, M.P.—"Religion and Russia."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. Henry Ellis, M.A. (Manchester) for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection—"Vivisection and World Standards."

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Bakers Hall, Forbes Place): 6.30, Mr. McEwan (Glasgow)—"Christ: An Enigma."

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