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

Views and Opinions.

(Continued from page 162.)

The Church in Russia.

CONSIDERABLE light is thrown upon the question of Russia and Religion by the publication of a Government White Paper containing a translation of the Decree which defines the status of the Church in Russia. This Decree was issued about a year ago, and was therefore accessible to all who have been filling the ears of the public with tales of massacres on account of their religious beliefs. The picture presented was a Russia in which religious worship was forbidden, in which Churches were closed, and objects of religious worship dragged degradingly through the streets. These stories were identical with those which were circulated in the early days of the revolution, and when the old Russian Church was backing up such unscrupulous adventurers as Koltchak and Dennikin, and inciting the peasantry to stand out against the revolutionary government. The reason for their resurrection to-day is clear. Quite apart from the political motive, here was a large nation which was deliberately aiming at developing its life in the absence of religious belief. The Decree, moreover made it quite plain what was to be at least the immediate future of the Church in Russia. Something had to be done; the old and historic method was adopted, and to people who could father or swallow the stories of the Russian Government decreeing a community in women, the way was clear.

I will deal with the machinery of these stories later. For the moment it is well to summarize the Decree, or what is now the law of Russia with regard to religion. The Church is definitely disestablished and disendowed. The Churches have become State property, but may be leased by religious congregations of twenty, *free of charge*, and with the free use of all the objects and books necessary to the carrying out of religious services. Every Church must conform to

the sanitary regulations to be leased, and some have had to be closed on this account. Should there be no application for the use of a Church or religious property, the Town Soviet is ordered to fix a notice to that effect on the Church, and if after seven days there is still no application the building may be put to other uses. The Church is forbidden to take any part in commercial enterprises, religion is not to be taught in any public or State building, in any school, but only in special colleges licensed for the purpose. Those forming religious organizations must be eighteen years of age. The Church may not exert any juridical functions, and may not coerce anyone by way of obtaining subscriptions or funds. No central fund is to be permitted, all monies collected must be restricted to the particular Church for which it is raised. Many of the arrangements are what we should call stringent, but to call them persecution—in the sense in which that phrase has been used—is nonsense. And to say that worship in Russia is forbidden is simply a lie. There is, as a matter of fact, a greater measure of all-round religious freedom to-day in Russia than there was in Czarist days. On this head I may cite Mr. John Vidor, a very strong opponent of the Soviet. In his *Spying in Russia* (p. 199) he says:—

The Soviet is far more tolerant of other beliefs than the Czarist Government. There are millions of Mohammedans in the U.S.S.R., and their liberty is untouched. Buddhist, Hindoos, Chinese all are catered for, the Jews especially enjoying privileges unknown to them since the beginning of Russian history.

And Mr. Wicksteed, who was sent out to Russia by the Society of Friends, says in his *Life Under the Soviet* (p. 141):—

All the stories that one hears about closing Churches and converting them into cinemas are pure nonsense.

Dr. E. J. Dillon, a man who knows Russia as few Englishmen do, wrote in 1928, that:—

In Sovietdom the citizens are free to belong to any creed they may select, and also to retain their Churches if they can pay for them, but no member of any religious denomination may be received into the bosom of the Communist Party.

Mr. Arnold Bennett, who visited Russia in 1929 did not observe any "persecutions," nor did he find Churches closed compulsorily. What he did find in Moscow, he told readers of the *Daily Express*, was hundreds of Churches in the City, all conducting their services in the usual manner. And Mr. Maurice Hindus, in his just issued book, *Humanity Uprooted*—a discerning but not sympathetic study of Bolshevism—makes no note of persecution. He notes the enormous success of the anti-religious propaganda, and says that the youth of Russia are growing up with a complete disbelief in religion. He says:—

The Bolsheviks do not fine or tax people for attending religious services, yet even in villages the orthodox Churches are not half so well attended as in the old. Hundreds of them have actually had to close because of lack of support. Witness specially the desolation that has come over Kiev—not enough pilgrims now to provide sustenance for a mere handful of monks, whereas in the old days several thousands of them could thrive on the fees and contributions of visiting worshippers.

No wonder the sympathy of the Pope and the wild Bishops of England has gone out to the Russian Church! And one should also remember that in the first year of the war the Czar's Government allotted from the revenues of the country no less than fifty million roubles for the upkeep of the Church. Would any Churchman in the world regard the taking away of that sum as anything but robbery and persecution?

* * *

The "Morning Post" Propaganda.

The spear-head and organizer of the atrocity-mongers is the *Morning Post* and its deliberate falsification is worthy of the Northcliffe Press at its best. Thus the prohibition of religious teaching in any State building, or in any educational establishments—public or private—save at "special theological courses organized by citizens of the U.S.S.R." is converted into the prohibition of "any form or religious teaching in public, private, or in the schools." (March 9). A more deliberate falsification was never penned. It states also that "The cult must lease buildings from the Regional Executive Committee," and by omitting that the buildings are given free of charge, leaves its readers to assume that a charge is made, while omitting altogether the information that so long as any religious organization applies for the use of a Church it will not be diverted from its original purpose. Paragraph 22 is cited as forbidding the church to collect "any voluntary or enforced gifts," which leaves the impression that the Church is left without funds of any kind. Reference to the Decree shows that what is forbidden is the establishment of "any kind of central fund," the obvious purpose of which is to bar the formation of an organization that may compete with the State, and also the growth of a Church with the wealth of the older one derived from the poverty and ignorance of the people. Those who wish to attain proficiency in deliberate falsification have still much to learn from these religious Crusaders.

I do not question the stringency of some of these regulations, but it is idle to measure Russia by the standards which apply to this country. One has to remember the ignorance, the almost unbelievable superstition of vast masses in Russia, and the way in which this ignorance was exploited by the old Government. Ignorance and religion were the twin props that supported Czardom, and its strongest agent was the Church. Says Mr. F. A. Mackenzie in his *Russia Before the Dawn* :—

The Russian Church was, even up to 1917, an instrument of the Government. Every village Pope was in effect a policeman of the Czar. The State paid for services received; it supported the Church bountifully. . . . Many of the village clergy were as ignorant and as sottish as their parishioners. The innumerable monasteries were the homes of armies of idlers who adopted the religious life because it was the easiest they knew, and who often enough had not the decency to conceal their licentious lives.

So Mr. Maurice Hindus, from whose valuable study I have already quoted, says :—

The orthodox Church never even sought to wean him (the peasant) from his pagan superstitions. It was tolerant of witches, scorcerers, magicians, in-

cantations—charmers that infested the villages and preyed on the muzhik (peasant). It saw him wallowing in alcoholism, in thievery, in cruelty, in other vices, and hardly made an effort to regenerate him.

Any reform Government would have had to take the Church in hand. The present Government has done more than that, it makes no secret of its avowed purpose to conduct its educational campaign so as finally to eliminate religion. It has done this by permitting all sorts of propaganda—Russia has no blasphemy laws—and by exposing the trickery of the established religion. It exhibited to the people the machinery of superstition. It took the coffins supposed to contain the bodies of certain "saints" and exhibited some as being filled with rubbish. It opened museums of religion, and exhibited objects of Christian worship side by side with objects of savage worship, so that anyone could draw the obvious inference. The *Universe* recently gave vent to a howl of indignation because a Russian official said that the time was coming when the Vatican would be used as a Museum, and an effigy of the Pope would be placed alongside that of one of the Siberian Shaman, a conclusion that there is not a Freethinker in Europe would say is not logical and proper. Propagandists have been sent over the country lecturing the people on the evils of religious belief, and this, together with the opening of schools all over Russia, has naturally led to a diminution in the number of worshippers, and inevitably to a number of Churches going out of use, particularly as there is no scope in Russia to-day for men of the Rasputin type, and no chance for ignorant religious sloth to enjoy distinction, power, and wealth.

* * *

Here and There.

In all this there is little more in principle than was the case all over Christendom until recent times, and in some features, not more than is being aimed at by large groups of religionists in this country. In this country no State schools would be permitted to teach Atheism; Russia reverses the principle, it will allow no school to teach religion. In England special facilities are given by the Government to preachers of religion, they are placed prominently in all public ceremonies, and semi-governmental bodies such as the B.B.C. announce it as one of its objects to prevent the decay of Christianity. In Russia facilities are offered to Atheism and to anti-religious propaganda. In England public officials constantly avow it to be their object to further the well-being of the Churches, in Russia they avow it as their object to further the growth of Atheism. In Russia there are certain restrictions placed upon the propaganda of religion, in England we have just declined to repeal the Blasphemy Laws and place all opinions upon the same level, and we force soldiers and sailors to attend religious services whether they believe in them or not. In Russia they encourage everyone to treat Sunday and religious holidays as identical with other days, and so divest them of their "sacred" character. In England we still have Sunday laws, and closed playing grounds and public institutions in deference to the behests of fanatical Christians. In Russia they abolish forced payments to the Churches and draw no distinction between Religious and other buildings. In England we still enforce the payment of tithes, and tax the rest of the community by releasing all religious buildings from the payment of rates and taxes.

It is possible for anyone to argue that both Russia and England are wrong in interfering in matters of religion, but it is not open to anyone who approves

of the favoured position given to religion in this country, to condemn the favoured position given to anti-religion in Russia, save those who approve a principle when it is exercised in their favour, and condemn when it operates against them. And, after all, there is a point at which every country in Europe has been compelled to step in and restrict the activities of the Church in order to save Society from disaster. That the Church, had to be deprived of its power in Russia, that some of its sources of income had to be stopped, was quite plain to anyone who understood the situation. It was also certain that the moment a general system of education was set up, apart from the Church, the most strenuous opposition would be encountered, as was encountered in this country and in other countries when ever such steps were taken. To the Church that is always persecution. We had a recent illustration of this in Mexico, and we look like having another instance in Spain if a Republican form of government is set up, for the Church there has definitely ordered its people to support the monarchy. A Church that has always lived on privilege and exploitation naturally comes to look upon their withdrawal as persecution.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

The Tabooed Scriptures

"The vain crowds wandering blindly, led by lies."
Lucretius.

"The only true conquests, those which awaken no regret, are those obtained over ignorance."—Napoleon.

"Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind."—Emerson.

Few more instructive books could be placed in the hands of anyone interested in the Christian religion than the tabooed scriptures known as the "Apocryphal Gospels," of which few Christians have any knowledge. Indeed, Christians are mostly ignorant of the culture of the religion they profess so loudly and so insistently. Even the Old Testament "Apocrypha" has been pushed into the background by astute ecclesiastics for very many years. When Queen Victoria placed a quotation from that volume upon the very expensive tomb of the Prince Consort she fluttered the doves of Orthodoxy. Yet down to the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Old Testament "Apocrypha" was an integral portion of "God's Word," and was bound up with the rest of the Christian scriptures.

The far more interesting "Apocryphal Gospels" were not easy to obtain. An edition was issued by Hone and sold for many years, but it was a cumbersome volume of the old style of publishing. A more scholarly version, edited by a Mr. Cowper, published afterwards, was too expensive for ordinary readers. But a new edition has been issued, and if every Christian read it, it should prove a most illuminating piece of Christian Evidence. It supplies the needful atmosphere, for in these ingenuous accounts of the alleged founder of the Christian Religion one finds the gospel legend in the making. They form, as it were, the rough studies for the completed painting of "The Old Old Story." And the fact of these spurious scriptures being taboo to the religious world is all the more reason why it should once more appear in an easily accessible form.

Much of the matter in these "Apocryphal Gospels" covers unfamiliar ground, and makes most fascinating reading. For instance, these "Gospels" profess to fill the blanks in the narratives attributed

to "Matthew," "Mark," "Luke," and "John." In the authorized versions very little is said concerning the childhood of Jesus Christ. Here two gospels are devoted to that subject. Listen to this passage from the "Second Gospel of the Infancy," which, in true ecclesiastical tradition, is attributed to "Saint Thomas." :—

1. When the child Jesus was five years of age, and there had been a shower of rain which was now over, Jesus was playing with other Hebrew boys by a running stream; and the water running over the banks stood in little lakes.
2. But the water instantly became clear and useful again; He having smote them only by His Word, they readily obeyed him.
3. Then he took from the bank of the stream some soft clay, and formed out of it twelve sparrows; and there were other boys playing with him.
4. But a certain Jew, seeing the things which he was doing, namely, his forming clay into the figures of sparrows on the Sabbath day, went away and told his father, Joseph, and said:—
5. Behold thy boy is playing by the river-side, and has taken clay and formed it into twelve sparrows, and profaned the Sabbath.
6. Then Joseph came to the place where He was, and where he saw Him, and said, why does't that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?
7. Then Jesus, clapping together the palms of his hands, called to the sparrows, and said to them: Go fly away, and while ye live remember me.
8. So the sparrows fled away, making a great noise.
9. The Jews, seeing this, were astonished, and went away, and told their chief persons what a strange miracle they had seen wrought by Jesus.

This specious story is even elaborated in the "First Gospel of the Infancy," where it is stated that this truly extraordinary boy performed a similar miracle in his seventh year, astonishing his playmates by making clay figures of donkeys, oxen and birds, walk, fly, eat and drink, as he commanded them; and the account concludes:—

When at length the boys went away and related these things to their parents, their fathers said to them: "Take heed, children, for the future, of his company, for he is a sorcerer; shun and avoid him, and from henceforth never play with him."

Such child-like credulity strikes the reader more when reading the "Apocryphal Gospels" than when perusing the Old and New Testaments, because the stories being unfamiliar have all the force of novelty. A similar credulity, however, runs through the entire Ages of Faith, manifesting itself in a thousand ways from the weird stories associated with witchcraft to the lying legends which form an integral portion of the "Lives of the Saints," and other works of devotion penned by theologians.

The carefully cultivated credulity of pious people blinds their eyes to facts. The Bible legends are poured into their ears from earliest childhood, and the "Old Old Story" has a very familiar ring even when half believed. The unblushing mendacity, however, of the "Apocryphal Gospels," being in an unfamiliar setting, should make the most bigoted believer rub his eyes.

One thing must be evident to every honest reader. The Christian Religion is based upon similar untruthful nonsense, for Christianity is based upon miracles. It is on the truth or falsehood of miracles that the very personality of Christ must stand or fall. It was not a creed of "love" and "brotherhood" which fascinated ignorant millions through so many dark centuries. It was threats of eternal damnation and hopes of heaven that fascinated the poor believers

and caused them to fill the priests' coffers with gold.

The claim was made that "Christ" was "God Almighty," the chief of the many gods of many mythologies. The alleged proofs were that he restored the dead to life, and did many other marvellous things. The Romish Church, the most important Christian body, recognizes this and still points to its present-day miracles. Romish priests assert that the questionable liquefaction of the blood of "Saint Januarius," at Naples is as genuine as the Bible miracles. Greek Church priests adopt the same attitude. They pretend that the theatrical revelation of the "Holy Fire" at Jerusalem is simply the latest link in a great chain that extends back to Biblical times. Thus, it is seen that the two greatest churches of Christendom leave Humanity chained within the prison of Superstition. It is the purpose of the Freethought Movement to break those fetters and set men free, and not all the machinations of hundreds of thousands of priests in Christendom will deflect us from that purpose.

MIMNERMUS.

The Pilgrim's Progress.

THE two earliest books I can remember reading are those two famous allegories, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, this is because they made the most lasting impression on my mind.

Both of them provide an exciting story for the young, but for older people they contain another, a hidden meaning, or moral. Swift, looking out of his Deanery windows, saw, like Bishop Heber, in his famous missionary hymn, that "only man is vile." But books descriptive of the vileness of humanity are not popular, there is no demand for them. So the Dean sat down and poured forth his hatred and contempt for humanity in the form of a story that would be read for its own sake, the jam that ensure the consumption of the bitterness and gall he wished to express.

Bunyan, on the other hand, wanted to show what the life of a real Christian should be. He also adopted the form of an interesting story, and arrayed his hero in armour, provided giants, castles, enchantments and demons galore. Both succeeded beyond all expectation; which proves that you can make almost anything interesting if you know the way to go about it.

However, our concern is with the *Pilgrim's Progress*. A great deal of nonsense has been written about this book, to listen to some of the leading lights of Nonconformity, one would gain the impression that it was the greatest book in the world, next only to the Bible.

It may be admitted that Bunyan's style possesses the virtues of clearness and simplicity. Any child can understand it. But it would be absurd to put him in the same class with Milton, his contemporary, or with Shakespeare, who died twelve years before his birth. It may be said that I am prejudiced by anti-religious views. This is not true, because I can enjoy Milton's *Paradise Lost*, although the religious ideas it sets forth are as unreasonable as those in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, and in fact, form its foundation. Moreover, that stalwart opponent of Atheism, Mr. Alfred Noyes, is of the same opinion, he has been re-reading the *Pilgrim's Progress*, which, he says, he approached with real affection and a desire to recapture his old feelings about it. The very name, he says, of the *Pilgrim's Progress*: "is like a bell ringing in the mellow distance of one's own childhood. It summons up vaguely delightful visions of certain woodcuts—the

fight with Apollyon, the shepherd boy and the Delectable Mountains. It renews a thousand old associations, and recalls a thousand memories." ¹ It is this trick of memory that is responsible for the indiscriminate torrent of rant and gush over the *Pilgrim's Progress* that we hear to-day.

Our edition was a large volume, with many full-page illustrations, in which we see the hero, Christian tearing himself away from his wife and family and setting out on the road to heaven. Later, we see the young ladies in the house Beautiful buckling his armour on, to fight the good fight. Then there was the thrilling fight with Apollyon, a hideous monster, scaled, and with wings like a dragon, breathing fire. Later we see him chained to a pillar in the dungeon of Doubting Castle, the prisoner of Giant Despair. Another illustration was that of the Pope, represented as a hideous old man crowned with the triple tiara and clad in Papal robes, sitting in a cave, biting his nails; the ground being littered with the skulls and cross-bones of his victims. Then we see him in Vanity Fair, with three beautiful, but scantily clad, young women, tempting him, unsuccessfully, with glasses of champagne, he looks as if he could do with a drop too, for he has the appearance of being seasick. In the background, among other things, we see gamblers playing cards, and under the table lies the body of a man with a dagger sticking in him, apparently he had been having an argument with one of the players. Next, we see Christian and Faithful bound to the stake, and men with evil faces—lord, how evil the artist did make those faces! They haunted me in my dreams—and they shook their fists at Christian, and others applied torches to the bonfire. It was the pictures that impressed me. Probably I should never have read the story but for them. How different from *Gulliver's Travels*, or *Robinson Crusoe*, they require no illustrations to make them readable. But to return to the criticism of Mr. Alfred Noyes, who goes on to observe:—

Study the fate of poor Mr. Ignorance who, both in his conversation with these vain and boastful pilgrims, Christian and Hopeful, and in his unassuming approach (without trumpets) to the Celestial City, strikes one as a far better Christian and a far more honest man. With great glee Christian sees him bound hand and foot at the gates of heaven and thrown to the fiends through the Deity's private entrance to hell. The *Pilgrim's Progress* gleefully asserts that one of the pleasures of the Celestial City, in addition to its gorgeous robes and trumpets, and glittering jewels and golden pavements, is the joy of helping to judge and condemn to hell those with whom you have not agreed upon earth. It is in fact one of those piously repulsive books which, in former generations, were used by well-meaning but foolish adults to fill the minds of little children with hideous ideas of a treacherous, trap-laying, revengeful old Deity whom any decent man would take by the scruff of the neck, and thrust head-first through that smoky hole in the Celestial regions which Bunyan so charmingly depicts as the Deity's own side entrance to the place of torment.²

There was, says Mr. Noyes, a very unpleasant side to some of Cromwell's canting psalm-singers, and "One cannot help wishing that a good honest Atheist had organized a jolly company of Stick-His-Head-under-the-Pump Pantagruels, who would have dealt faithfully with everyone who quoted the Old Testament through his nose."

In the eighteenth century, which had a great deal of common sense, observes Mr. Noyes: "the very name of Bunyan evoked so much ridicule that Cow-

¹ Alfred Noyes: *The Opalescent Parrot*. p. 75.

² *The Opalescent Parrot*. pp. 80-81.

per (who admired him) was afraid to mention his name. Cowper, it will be remembered, went mad on the very subject which was nearest to Bunyan's heart—hell-fire. But the gentle Cowper applied it to himself and thought he was damned." And further:—

The dominating motive of the *Pilgrim's Progress* is fear. Not that fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom, but the fear of fire and brimstone. There is something despicable about the way in which Christian bolts from the doomed City, leaving his wife and children behind him, and putting his fingers in his ears. No excuse is possible. Quite apart from the moral aspect, it is the blunder of a bad artist. *For Christian is depicted as having tried to persuade his family to fly with him at an earlier stage, when he did not know whither to fly. He then goes out for a walk and meets Evangelist, who imparts the secret of the way to him. Without even mentioning this to his wife and children, or trying to save them also, he immediately flies, with the secret in his pocket, while they call vainly after him.* Read it again and see for yourself, if you don't believe me . . . At every turn of every way on the journey it is fear, fear, fear. He never performs a single good act without being told that a rock is going to fall on his head or a dragon is going to bite him: He can't even stick to the perfectly straight road until he has been terrified out of his wits by giants. The only reason that he doesn't give it up and go back is (as he says again and again) that it would be more dangerous than to go on. (pp. 82-84).

He only faces Apollyon because his armour does not meet at the back, so that it would be more dangerous to run away. "If it were not for the illustrations," says Mr. Noyes, "even the nursery would turn up its nose at it, especially at Bunyan's remark that during the actual contest between Christian and his appalling foe he didn't once see 'a pleasant look' on Christian's face. 'I didn't once see a pleasant look!' Was there ever a phrase more suggestive of an old gossip at the annual bun-fight of a Dorcas Society?"

Nevertheless Bunyan's view, that Christianity was founded on fear, is a correct one. The trouble is that when people cease to fear its punishments, they cease to take any interest in it, and, finally cease to believe in it.

W.MANN.

A Critic of Materialism.

In the *Literary Guide* for December and January, Mr. Robert Arch offered a friendly criticism of my *Materialism Re-stated*, and I promised to deal with his comments at the earliest opportunity. But other and more pressing things turned up, and as I did not wish to spread myself all over the paper, I had to defer my reply. Even now my space is so mortgaged for some weeks, that I have decided to pen a hurried reply to what I should—had the conditions been different—have dealt with at greater length.

Mr. Arch thinks my claim that Materialism has always stood for a scientific and universal Determinism "historically untenable." I am afraid that Mr. Arch has here been led astray by fixing his mind on the *form* taken by Materialism, instead of following my example of looking at the plain question of what actually Materialism has stood for, and what has been the essential aim of its advocates. If this is done I confess I am unable to see how it can be questioned that "Materialism" arose in the course of the attempt to explain the whole of the phenomena of the universe in terms of determinate forces. I think this is what Lange had in mind when he spoke of Materialism being as old as philosophy, but

not older. Whether the fundamental "stuff" of the universe was thought of as air, or water, or number, or "matter" or as something unknown and unknowable, does not affect this issue in the slightest. The attempt was to "explain the world without the aid of the Gods." The Materialism of Democritus was following a particular line of development, and it was little more than one of time's accidents that he seized on the atom as the seed of all phenomena. Questions as to the nature of "matter" arose later, but these have never affected the validity of Materialism—to those who really understood it.

Mr. Arch raises a passing demur to my term "composition of forces," and says that this belongs to the science of mechanics, and would, apparently, restrict the word to mechanics. I agree that the conception of force was earliest worked out in connexion with mechanics, and that it is in connexion with mechanics that we still find its most calculable expression, but it is one of the current scientific fallacies to argue that because a scientific conception began with a particular branch of experience, therefore we must restrict it to that branch. If we admit this we may as well hand over the philosophic case to Professors Eddington and Whitehead and their school, and go in for some form of disguised theism. I will merely say now that I apply the term "force" to whatever does something, and whether this is atomic motion, or a passion, or an idea, does not matter in the least. The term is equally valid. If Mr. Arch, or anyone else, insists that because "force" began with mechanics it must be kept to mechanics, I may point out that as a matter of fact it originated quite apart from mechanics before it was applied in that connexion.

Mr. Arch's chief difficulty is with my conception of causation. Causation, he insists, is always a matter of succession. I, on the contrary, insist that it is a question of factors and their resultant. Mr. Arch's difficulty arises, I think, from the fact that he has not cleared his mind of the primitive conception of a cause passing over something to the effect. Its familiar and least scientific form is that of asserting there can be nothing in the effect which is not in the cause. It was partly to destroy this conception of causation that Hume examined the question and decided that causation was no more than invariable succession. That, however, was only substituting a fallacy for a superstition, although it is a fallacy that has been very generally adopted. Had the function of categories in science, and the conceptual nature of scientific generalizations, been properly considered, the confusion might have been ended long since.

Mr. Arch is puzzled by my saying that the difference between cause and effect is the difference between synthesis and analysis, between a fact and its factors. To me it seems the simplest and clearest of propositions, once its terms are clearly realized. In a loose way we speak of sulphur, charcoal, and nitre as the cause of gunpowder. In a much looser way we may speak of each of them as one of the causes of gunpowder. But, consider. By itself sulphur is evidently not a cause of gunpowder, neither is charcoal, neither is nitre. Their capacity for figuring as a cause of gunpowder depends entirely upon their being brought together in a definite way; and when they are brought together in this way, they are no longer a cause of gunpowder, they *are* gunpowder. Contemplating them separately they are three distinct things, having not the slightest relationship to each other. Combine them and we have a distinct substance, with distinct properties. But there is no point at which we can say that the cause—the combination of the factors—existed prior to the effect, so

that we could get absolute succession. The effect, gunpowder, is the name given to the combination of the factors, and the factors are the cause of the effect solely in the fact of combination. Were it otherwise we might have a cause in the absence of an effect, which, to quote a very ancient authority, is absurd.

The same thing holds good if we take O. & H. as the "cause" of water. They can only be called the cause of water when they are combined in a required way. But when combined in that way they are not the cause of water, they *are* water. There is no more a succession than there is a succession between twelve and a dozen. Twelve units are the factors of a dozen. They are not twelve causes that make up the effect of a dozen. Mr. Arch says that "cause" and "effect" were "framed to express an irreversible relation, not a reversible one." Historically that is not correct. The words were framed to express the passing of something from one thing to another, later the task of science became that of determining what they *ought* to mean. But I did not say that Cause and Effect were reversible, only that cause and effect marked the difference between analysing an effect into its factors, and synthesising the factors into their product. I did say, in the case of one ball moving another by impact, that while we may say the motion of the one was the *effect* of the motion of the other, the arrested motion of the other is the *effect* of its impact on the one that is set in motion, and therefore in the example given by Hume, whether we called one ball or the other cause or effect depended entirely upon the side from which we started.

Mr. Arch's criticism of my analysis of Hume's classic fallacy quite misses the point. I said that the motion of one ball nearing another is not the cause of the motion of the second ball *save at the moment of impact*, and then the cause is the sum of the conditions existing, which appears as the effect. Let me ask Mr. Arch to be good enough to work it out. A ball travels twenty feet and strikes another, setting the latter in motion. But, clearly, save for a relation in space, the ball at nineteen feet had no more relation than at twenty, no more at nine than at nineteen, no more at any fraction of the distance than it had at the start. At any point it might stop dead, its energy exhausted. Does Mr. Arch mean that in that case we might have a cause that has no relation to an effect? That would be something quite new in science. If he does not mean that, then I am evidently correct in saying that it is the assemblage of all the necessary conditions for the "emergence" of a phenomenon that constitutes an effect, and in that case, what becomes of the "succession"? It is "a figment of the imagination," and a refuge for all kinds of pseudo-scientific notions and attenuated ghosts.

It is probably Mr. Arch's belief that cause and effect possess similarity—all Theists will welcome that conclusion—that leads him to conclude that "mental life cannot be rooted in the non-mental." "Rooted in," I take it, means no more than that non-mental conditions provide the field for the appearance of characteristics known as mental. And that is a fact of experience if anything is. Of course things classed as mental are not identical with those classed as physical, but as I do not believe that when things are different they are the same, I do not look for similarity in cause and effect, but only for the conditions of successive phenomena. Scientific generalizations whether "physical," "biological," or "psychological," are framed to cover aspects of experience. It is therefore useless expecting that the "laws" of one particular category will cover others. A category of experience is ultimate so far as it extends.

That is why it is useless attempting to describe life in terms of physics, and equally useless to attempt to describe physics in terms of life. If Professor Julian Huxley had borne this in mind—surely the A.B.C. of correct scientific thinking—he would not have written what he did about finding in all matter, "something of the same general description as mind." Rubbish remains rubbish, whether written by a fool or a philosopher.

Those who wish for a fuller treatment of these topics must consult my *Materialism Re-stated*. That a man of the attainments of Mr. Arch should be in some confusion on these points is evidence that some such exposition of Materialism was sadly needed. I think the word "Re-stated" was a happy one, for what was required was just the determination to clear away the mental lumber that had accumulated round the subject, and examine it anew in the light of an unbiassed understanding of science.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Cause and Effect.

A ROMAN poet once said, "*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas*"—"Fortunate the man who can discover causes." We, as secularists, know that causes are only discoverable by applying cold reason to well-authenticated facts.

The application of science to industry gives us countless illustrations of this truth to-day. The inventor is the man who argues his way, step by step, to a mechanical application that may prove a revolutionary invention and (perhaps) make a fortune for somebody. And so many inventions are so ridiculously simple that we are constantly halting in our tracks to say, "Now why didn't I think of that?"

The clearest case of logical thinking of recent years has the effect of the discovery of a panacea that should cure our political and social ills. And it is so absurdly simple that any fool might have thought of it within the last 2,000 years. The author of this brilliant piece of logical sequence is "Peterborough" of the *London Daily Telegraph*. Let him henceforth be called "Cause-and-Effect Peterborough."

Some years ago, according to this exceptionally well-informed and original thinker, a Dr. Talbot, vicar of a Durham mining parish, happened to wander into a Labour meeting during a strike. The "sullen" miners agreed to hear him and the reverend gentleman ascended the platform and, raising his hand, said, "Let us join together in saying the Lord's Prayer."

Let "Peterborough" continue the story in his own words. "In one minute," he writes, "every man in the hall was on his knees, and in three days the strike was over."

Isn't it easy?

We take pleasure in announcing the epoch-making discovery. The Lord takes the credit. And "Cause-and-Effect Peterborough" takes the cake.

D. JAY.

Faith.

SEEN from above,
Abode of Love

Or Terror's Keep?—

My nest of Sleep:

Six long, three wide, ten deep!

But this I know:

Viewed from below,

After life's scars—

Bright galaxies of stars,

And all the glories Night unbars!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nigeria.

Aoid Drops.

An exhibition of current superstitions has been opened in the Southwark Public Library. It includes a variety of charms, lucky tokens, cures, etc., collected by a member of the Folk-Lore Society. We detect in this a distinctly Bolshevistic move, and it is surprising that the *Morning Post* has not raised its voice against it. For it is exactly what was done in Russia as part of the education of the people. In the interests of the religion of the English people the exhibition should be closed, and we are quite sure that if Mr. Clynes will again consult the same "leading denominations" that induced him to oppose the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, they will order him to exert his authority, and stop it.

In any case the exhibition is incomplete. It should include the following things, which are in daily use all over the country. (1) Specimens of the bread and wine which are turned into flesh and blood by priests. (2) Portrait model of the Bishop of London bringing rain by incantation. (3) Christian Science group filling the hospitals by thinking people are ill, or causing sickness among domestic poodles by thinking "mangy thoughts." (4) Rosaries blessed by the Pope which brings good fortunes to those who wear them. (5) Landscape of Purgatory from which men are released on payment of money to the Church. (6) Bottle of Lourdes water which cures a man of blindness. (7) Picture of the Chaplain of the House of Commons intensifying the wisdom of members by prayer—with printed specimens of the result. (8) Life size model of the Christian deity demanding the protection of the police force from ridicule and irreverence. We have no doubt that these additions to the exhibition would be denounced as very blasphemous, but we quite fail to see in what respect they differ from articles already placed on exhibition.

A parson here and there has substituted gramophone music in his church for the choir and organist. An organist, seeing his spare-time salary threatened, suggests that the sermon and service should be presented by gramophone, to dispense with the parson. The suggestion is an eminently practical one, in these days of a shortage of candidates for holy orders. Most of the parson's work could be done by gramophone, and the cost of parsonic service be greatly reduced. Unskilled labourers with appropriate records could open bazaars, marry, bury, console the sick, bless war-banners, preach patriotic sermons, cadge for missions, and even lie to the glory of God.

Mr. E. Roffe Thompson has been criticizing and condemning Christian hymns. He objects to the theological notions enshrined therein. But the fact is that the hymns express what leading Christian thinkers have believed the Christian religion to mean during the past nineteen hundred years. To condemn the hymns is to fall foul of the divine inspiration which prompted the leading Christian thinkers of the past to interpret Christianity in the way they did. Of course, it is up to Mr. Thompson to retort that, seeing how divine inspiration lead astray the wise men of the Churches, it must now be regarded as an unreliable guide.

On the authority of the soulful Rev. Dr. R. J. Campbell:—

Life is like an unfinished symphony. It is full of magnificent and glorious things, and also of painful discords. If it has any meaning at all, there must be a higher life to resolve the discords and complete the harmony.

In other words, Heaven is a place of compensation. This is quite orthodox and ancient Christian teaching. So long as it is being disseminated, social reformers need not be puzzled concerning the apathy of the masses in regard to social reforms or improvements.

Mr. Campbell also asserts that "after death life goes on—and up. We carry forward what we are and build on that, a finer and more enduring fabric for the vast

spaces of eternity." What an uninviting prospect! The toils and struggles, the pains and temptations, of this world will be continued in the next, *everlastingly*, to enable us to "build up" more character. That is what the rev. gentleman is asserting. This is hardly cheering news for the wretched and poor, who are anticipating merely a Heaven of compensation. The curious thing is that clergymen should be indignant when the impious call religion "dope."

What a religious weekly calls "an unusual incident" happened at the adjourned licensing sessions of the West Castle Ward Division, held at the Moot Hall, Newcastle. During the hearing of an application for the granting of a licence for Sunday evening performances, the Chairman asked all who were in favour of the application to stand up, but there was no support. When a vote against the application was invited, many people in the well of the court, and almost all in the crowded public gallery, rose together to their feet. The Chairman then announced that the application would be refused. Who was it said parsons hadn't any brains? The whole affair was exquisitely stage-managed from start to finish; and so convincing, you know. The parsons pulled the strings, and all the puppets responded just like intelligent human beings.

Our Christian brother, the editor of *Methodist Times*, is in a fine state of elation, he says:—

Every year our punitive system becomes less vindictive and more remedial. Here is another evidence of the benefits of Christian civilization, for nothing indicates more clearly the moral health of a community than its treatment of those who have "gone wrong."

How true that last remark is! During the past nineteen centuries the treatment of wrong-doers in prisons was extremely vindictive and degradingly brutal. This period was one when the Christian religion was most widely accepted and practised. Bearing this in mind, our Methodist brother is invited to reflect how poor must have been the moral health of the community while Christian dominance was at its greatest! That is another evidence of the benefits of Christian civilization: To-day, only a comparatively small portion of the community are influenced by Christian ideas—and the prisons are not vindictive in their treatment, but humane. This is odd, but Christian logic is equal to explaining how the improvement is due to the influence of Christianity. Methodist intelligence no doubt finds it convincing.

A terrible catastrophe happened to a radio listener the other Sunday afternoon. He tells the story in *Radio Times*. While tuning in to hear a beautiful cantata, he inadvertently moved his indicator too far and was scandalized to hear dance music from a foreign station. Boiling over with moral indignation he asks: "Could not the reception of profane music on the Sabbath be rendered more difficult by our British Stations causing 'interference' on all foreign wavelengths?" That is a truly Christian suggestion. The suggestor is aware that many non-pious British listeners enjoy hearing profane music on Sunday from abroad. And he thinks it a Christian duty to try to prevent their doing so. The suggestion will no doubt have sympathetic consideration from the pious B.B.C.

Editors of various radio journals have been invited by *Radio Times* to express their opinion as regards the B.B.C.'s activities. Mr. Norman Edwards of the *Popular Wireless* group of papers says:—

I don't like the B.B.C.'s insistence on its importance as an educational medium; I don't like the Sunday programme policy, the talks "syllabus" policy, and the rather grandmotherly "uplift policy."

This is distinctively encouraging. But it transpires that what Mr. Edwards really would like to see is: "all these aspects of policy could be manifested in the B.B.C., programme—but with more subtlety, more craftsmanship." In other words, the Victorian ideals of the B.B.C. are all right, but the B.B.C. ought to camouflage them as much as possible!

There is nothing like going the whole hog while one is about it. Hitherto the "Atrocity Brigade" have been content with "martyred" priests in Russia, as an example of what Atheism will do when it has the chance. In a letter sent to his parishioners the Vicar of Stalybridge calls attention to the activities of the devil, and remarks, "His chariots of war are already thick with the gore of slaughtered millions." The Vicar of Stalybridge excites our admiration. He ought to apply for the job of leader writer on the *Morning Post*, or Secretary to "Jix." We take the above information from the *Ashton-under-Lyne Observer* for March 8.

The way in which the agitation against Russia is being worked in the interests of religious propaganda in this country may be seen from the following, which we take from the *Church Times* for March 14:—

The modern world must face the facts. Two conceptions of human history are to-day contending for mastery. According to the principles so fanatically embraced by the Soviet Republic, man is purely a creature of this earth, and any belief or practice which conflicts with the supposed interests of the race as an earth-bound generation is anathema. According to religion, man is a mixed being, the meeting-place of two worlds . . . The issue is practical, not merely academic; it touches life at every point.

Why associate this first conception with Russia? It is the dominant conception in the scientific world, and it has been the leading idea with thousands of reformers, with Bentham, Mill, Spencer, George Eliot, Darwin, and Huxley, and numerous others, to say nothing of the whole school of scientific sociologists. Of course the only reason for so identifying the purely scientific conception of man and the nature of human society, is that of trading on the antagonism that is excited in relation to a political theory which is being worked out in Russia. Hence, too, the manufacture of "atrocities" as part of this quite dishonest policy.

Apropos of Russian "persecution" and the intercession prayers, the *New Chronicle* of Christian education says:—

But a dispassionate review of the examples of religious intolerance in our own land and generation does not justify us including the Pharisee's prayer in our intercession services. We must not thank God we are not as other men are . . .

Then what about a little prayer on these lines? "O God, we who have been intolerant in the past and have persecuted savagely, beseech Thee to persuade all anti-Godites from imitating our bygone inhumanities and stupidities. Amen."

A nephew of an ex-Premier of Italy, Francesco Nitti, has published a book, *Escape* (G. P. Putnam & Sons, 10s. 6d.), and in the preface, the following unsolicited testimonial is written by Signor Nitti, his uncle:—

Fascism has introduced a terrible system into Italy, which reminds one of the darkest methods of the Middle Ages. When an effort against Fascism is made abroad or in Italy, the Dictatorship tries not only to punish those responsible, but their families as well.

Any country with Catholicism in the ascendancy is the finest example of the darkest methods of the Middle Ages, and, on principle only, no Roman Catholic Cathedral should be supplied with electric light. We understand the Italian method was not brought before the Lord in the Intercessory prayers of Sunday last.

A water main belonging to the Tees Valley Water Board burst and did three hundred pounds worth of damage to a grocer's shop. The grocer can get no compensation from the Board because it is held to be an act of God. We suggest the grocer should make application to the Bishop of Durham, who is God's representative in that district. It is monstrous for God to go about breaking water-mains in this fashion. And yet there are people who ask what does God do? We suggest they should apply to the Tees Valley Water Board for information.

According to Mr. Gilbert Frankau, the novelist, fox-hunting is our finest national sport. If chasing and pulling to bits one small, defenceless, frightened animal, by means of a large pack of dogs, is the "finest" national sport, all other sports must be pretty ignoble. But perhaps we are forgetting—Mr. Frankau specializes in fiction.

Dean Inge has at last overtaken Lucretius. Writing in the *Evening Standard* the Dean states: "The Christian heaven and hell, like all other speculations about the future life, are picture-book theology." The impregnable rock of holy scripture is now found to be a floating island, but one wonders, what is to be said of the fanatical predecessors of the Dean, to whom heaven and hell were their bread and butter, to say nothing of the hell of a time those had who disagreed.

Providence, avers the Rev. J. Parton Mulum, never created lions and tigers, snakes and disease germs. Indeed? Presumably they just slipped into Creation while God was preoccupied with the problem of how to arrange the Fall of Man and its ingenious sequel, the Incarnation and Atonement. Still, assuming that Providence was not responsible for the aforesaid enemies of man, could not Our Loving Father have annihilated them to make his children's lives here on earth a trifle happier?

The British and Foreign Bible Society is issuing the Gospel of Mark in Worrora, the language of aboriginal natives of a costal region in North-West Australia. Quite right, too. What suits aboriginal intellects in Britain would be sure to appeal to a similar type in Australia.

An idea that has been current for at least ten years, has at last reached the *Daily News*. Commenting on the political noise made by Lord Rothermere and Lord Beaverbrook it describes their efforts as an attempt at "government by newspaper." It may be, with the *Daily News*, a case of sour grapes, but press propaganda, particularly with respect to Russian affairs, has seldom risen above the level of a kitchenmaid's discussion. The *Daily Mail*, it is said, was written for people who could not think, and the *Daily Mirror* was published for those who could not read; ownership of either papers is not an asset for the responsibilities of State.

With the object of giving religion a "lift," appeals are being sent out to heads of businesses, and to trade unionists to support an "Industrial Sunday" in the Churches on April 27. This is the greatest and only contribution the brains of the Churches can make towards solving industrial problems. Employers and employees should therefore manifest their heartfelt gratitude by patronizing the Churches' houses of business on the day appointed. Reciprocity is a noble principle, and in this instance would ensure "uplift" to the parson's treasuries.

A Free-Church weekly has a heading, "Dope!" This concerns traffic in opium. But on reading an article by the Rev. F. C. Spurr, on "Fear," we suspect the heading was more appropriate for Mr. Spurr's consoling thoughts.

The training of the Twelve Apostles, says a pious weekly, was comparatively short. After a preliminary period of less than two years "they were sent out with authority to preach the Gospel, heal the sick, and cast out devils." This suggests there must be something seriously wrong in modern theological seminaries. For after several years training therein, none of the students can heal the sick nor cast out devils. Neither can the Archbishop of Canterbury nor Professors of theology, with all their godly experience. Of course, it is up to a latest brand of Modernist to assert that the Gospel talk of healing the sick and casting out devils is mere figurative language, or allegory, or something. In the sweet by-and-by some bright theological thinker will declare that all the New Testament account of Jesus is not historic fact but allegory. More "progressive revelation"?

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

B.C. (Edinburgh).—The incident occurred in Manchester about thirty years ago, but it is too lengthy a story to repeat here. It could, however, be repeated anywhere if anyone was bold enough to risk the reading. In the United States a Freethinker has been prosecuted for sending Bible texts through the post on a post-card. We are pleased to have so appreciative a reader.

W. H. HUNT.—Of course the Russian business is being worked for all it is worth to discredit Freethought in this country, and few Christians will hesitate at lying where the interests of their creed are concerned. There is no reason why any person should have a difficulty in getting the *Freethinker*. It can be ordered through any wholesaler by the newsagent. If you could supply us with the name of the wholesaler who supplies your newsagent, we would enquire into the matter.

W. FOWLER.—Sorry we cannot tell you where you could procure a copy of Heywood's (not Bennett's) *Cupid's Yoke*. We have never come across the work.

J. H. HAMPTON.—We have not the space here to deal with the scientific conception of matter. You will find it fully discussed in our *Materialism Re-stated*.

J. LEBOLD-CAREY.—We hope your letter to the Archbishop will do him good, but we doubt it.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection 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.

To-day (March 23) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Town Hall, Birmingham. His subject will be "The Savage in Our Midst," and he will take occasion to deal with a number of topics of immediate practical interest.

This copy of the *Freethinker* will probably be in the hands of most of its London readers in time to call attention to the discussion on Secular Education, which is to take place between Mr. D. Capper of the Teachers' Labour League and the Rev. Prebendary Osbourne, in the Essex Hall, Strand, on Friday evening, at 7.30. The price of admission is 6d. Mr. Cohen will take the chair. There will also be questions and discussion from the audience.

We are looking forward to a good gathering at the N.S.S. Social, which is to be held at the Caxton Hall, on Saturday evening, the 29th. There will be the usual dance and musical programme, and that is never wanting in quality. The function commences at 7 o'clock.

Tickets are 2s. 6d. each, which includes refreshments. Tickets can be purchased at the offices of the N.S.S. and the *Freethinker*. We have only to ask those who intend being there to get their tickets not later than the 25th. This will help those who have the catering arrangements in hand.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak twice to-day (Sunday, 23rd) in the Co-operative Hall, Whitehall Road, Gateshead, at 3 and 7 o'clock. Subjects: "Where are the Gods," and "Is Christianity in Harmony with Science?" There will be a musical programme for half an hour before each lecture. In error, last week's paper announced the lecture as in the Town Hall, Gateshead. It is, as stated above, in the Co-operative Hall.

The Anglo-Russian Parliamentary Committee has just issued a very useful pamphlet on *Religion in Tzarist and Soviet Russia*. The pamphlet is well documented, and we cordially commend its reading to those who wish to get a view of the situation which, outside a paper or two such as the *Manchester Guardian*, is carefully excluded from the papers that boast of their huge circulation, and are under the control of those who aim at stunts and huge circulations. The author is Mr. W. P. Coates, and the price sixpence. They may be bought through the Pioneer Press. By post sevenpence.

The Walthamstow Council has decided by a large majority to arrange for Sunday games in the open spaces under its control. There was the usual strong opposition from the local clergy, who naturally want to stop all competition with their particular business. The local paper, the *Walthamstow and Chingford Guardian*, makes the discovery that the Churches were advocating what experience has sanctioned through the ages long before the Christian era. We advise the *Guardian* to stick to reports of local police court cases, marriages, and similar functions. Sunday was essentially a day of rejoicing and games, until Christianity came along with its doctrine of the sinfulness of being happy, and the spiritual comfort of long faces. Five minutes with a good encyclopedia would not be wasted on the part of the *Guardian's* leader writer.

We were pleased to see two letters in favour of the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws appear in the *Liverpool Weekly Post*. One was from Mr. S. R. Ready, the Secretary of the local Branch, the other was from A. Christian, Mr. Glyn Roberts. Both took "Scrutator" sharply to task for his foolish and bigoted comments on the Blasphemy Bill. It is good to let writers like "Scrutator" know that there are even Christians who are ashamed of the bigotry he displays.

The Annual Meeting of the Manchester Branch on Saturday, March 22, at 3 p.m., in the Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester. Part of the business will be the election of Officers and presentation of the Balance Sheet, items which should ensure the attendance of every member.

We have received the Balance Sheet of the Branch, and it is quite a healthy document, despite a deficit of four guineas. With the number of Freethinkers in Manchester the income of the Branch ought to be very much larger than it is, and so, of course, the expenditure. That would mean a larger and wider propaganda. However, we congratulate the Manchester Branch on its record of a year's good work.

A correspondent points out that we are in error in stating that Sir Charles Oman represents Cambridge University. He sits for Oxford University. We apologise to Cambridge, and offer our sincere sympathy to Oxford. Over three hundred years ago Bruno called Oxford the widow of sound learning. What he would have said of Sir Charles we shudder to think. But we feel certain that had Sir Charles been alive in the year 1600, he would have quite approved of Bruno being burned for his shocking Blasphemy.

Non-Knowledge.

IN a recent broadcast lecture on "Tendencies of Recent Investigations in Physics," Sir J. J. Thomson illustrated the foolishness of the proposition: "What I know not, can never be knowledge," in the following way.

He mentioned that some chemists at the end of the last century had suggested abolishing the Atomic Theory, on the grounds that the atom had never been measured. Soon afterwards certain improvements in the technique of experiment resulted in the actual measurement of the hitherto elusive atom. "The immeasurables of to-day," said the speaker, "may be the measurable of to-morrow."

We need not suppose that there was any idea of bolstering up the credulity of the religious, but there is small doubt that many listeners would be led by this illustration to infer that the Theistic Theory has similar warrant for not being discarded. The underlying fallacy of such an inference is not easy to detect for those who are unfamiliar with the tricks of language.

"What I know not, can never be knowledge," sounds presumptive on the face of it. But it is so only if the words are translated as meaning: "What I do not know can never be knowledge—for anyone else." But it is doubtful whether the most conceited person on earth could have been quite so foolish as to have given vent to a sentiment so easily refutable. If, however, we translate the sentence as follows: "What I do not know can never be knowledge—for me," we see at once that the sentence, far from being presumptuous or foolish, is on the contrary the expression of a most laudable attitude towards knowledge.

Having noted the way in which one sentence, variously analysed, may lead to different interpretations, let us return to Sir J. J. Thomson's illustration. Wrongly interpreted, as it doubtless was by many, it would compel us to admit the possible truth of any theory whatsoever; or, conversely, to be regarded as presumptuous if we discarded a theory which, in spite of evidence against it, some people continued to believe in.

We are inclined to think that even Sir J. J. Thomson would not agree to this attitude towards theories. For we feel sure that the "phlogiston" theory of heat is as dead as mutton for him. And we are equally certain that, even though some persons still maintain the Flat Earth Theory, he would not on that account credit it with any possible truth.

For the "man in the street" the obvious refutation of these last two theories is that they have been disproved. Alternatively he says that "everyone who is anyone" has ceased to believe in them. But alas for the subtleties of language! For who can say that a theory has been "proved" false as long as one person remains who believes in its truth? And who can define "everyone who is anyone" as long as scientists are known to disagree amongst themselves? Even if genuine scientists could be defined, and it were found that a majority of ten was in favour of a certain theory, this would not necessarily prove the truth of it.

How, then, are we to arrive at any kind of firm bedrock in regard to the truth or falsity or possible truth of theories?

The first thing to realize is that no discussion can be held, no theory formulated and no logical conclusion arrived at without the use of language. Even the simplest mathematical formula would be meaningless without language to explain the symbols it

employs. The next thing to realize is that language itself is nothing more than a system of symbols. It is *not* thought. It is not even in all cases a means of expressing thought; though it generally is intended to serve such purpose. Its main purpose is for *reference*.

For example, when I use the words "my dog" in conversation with Mr. Jones, the words serve as a symbol of reference to an animal I am thinking of. If Mr. Jones knows my dog, the symbol is adequate, and it will refer him to the same animal as I am referring to. If he has never seen my dog, the symbol is likely to prove inadequate. My dog is a terrier, but it is possible that without this added qualification (or definition) Mr. Jones may be referring mentally to a dog like his own, a spaniel. The adequacy of words as symbols, therefore, depends upon whether they refer to the same thing for those using them. And the only way to ascertain whether this is so, is for the parties using the symbols to define them, until it is agreed that no further definition is necessary for the particular discussion in hand. All other methods of discussion will inevitably result in failure to arrive at any conclusion.

In the matter of theories the essential point to determine is—what does the word "theory" refer to. It is simple enough to wander round its possible "truth" or "falsity." But unless we define the term clearly at the outset, our discussion may amount to nothing more profitable than a recitation of the "Jabberwock" poem.

Since I am unable to determine what my various readers understand by the word "theory," there is only one method I can adopt to prevent misunderstanding, and that is to define the word clearly for myself. As long as I am consistent with my own definition, my argument holds good. By "theory," then, I mean a supposition, or set of suppositions, which is provisionally adopted to explain certain phenomena and thereby to help in their further investigation.

Now there are two important points to note in connexion with this definition. One is that a theory is a supposition, and the other is that it is provisionally adopted. It follows from this that *no theory can be classed as definite knowledge*. It also follows that any part of a theory, which is subsequently verified by experience, ceases to be theory and becomes embodied in that class of knowledge called fact.

The Atomic theory included, amongst others, two suppositions, both of them inferences based upon knowledge. The first was that the atom was a ponderable unit; the second, that it was indivisible. The first has been verified by subsequent experiment; the second has, in the same way, been proved false. The theory as a whole, therefore, was neither true nor false.

It is clear from this that any given theory may, in the light of subsequent experience, prove to have been absolutely true, or absolutely false, or partly true and partly false. But error or falsehood that is known to be such, is as much definite knowledge as truth. So theories can under no circumstances be regarded as definite knowledge. They are neither true nor falsehood, neither perfect sense nor nonsense, neither knowledge nor ignorance. For this reason, and to avoid confusion with the word "nonsense," it would perhaps be in the interests of clear thinking and verbal precision to class as "non-knowledge" all such things as theories, inferences, suppositions, hypotheses, deductions, immeasurables and the like.

Let us now turn to "God." Does this word, and all that it implies, come into the category of "non-

knowledge," or does it not? Would Sir J. J. Thomson say that God was an immeasurable of to-day? We think he would, but we do not know. But we do know that, outside the lunatic asylums, there is no one who claims to know about God all that there is to be known. And from the statements of all those whose profession is to teach us about God, it would appear that they all agree in calling God an "immeasurable of to-day."

As such, are we presumptuous in discarding the whole Theistic theory as false? Is the immeasurable God likely to become measurable at any time? This depends upon the terms of the theory in which the use of the word "God" is involved. If there is any part of it remaining which is not contradicted by experience, we should reserve judgment. If there is any aspect of experience in which the supposition of God explains otherwise inexplicable phenomena, we would be rash to discard it. *If there is*—then God may be a "measurable of to-morrow."

But is there? In spite of centuries during which God has been held as a theory, it has not merely failed in helping towards further investigation of the phenomena it purported to explain, but has been a positive hindrance. In addition to this the theory as a whole has crumbled bit by bit in the face of advancing knowledge. *Not one single part of it has been proved.* Most of it—I, and many others, say all—has been disproved. The fact that many people still believe in it is no more proof of its truth than it is of the truth of the Flat Earth theory.

If any of those who still champion the "God" theory believe that there is any part of it which has not been disproved, let them come forward and state their case. I, and those who think as I do, would welcome it for discussion and further investigation. We are not out to prove them wrong, but to prove the truth or falsehood of their "non-knowledge."

In the meantime for anyone to preach and teach this theory as though it were definite knowledge or fact, is not merely an act of presumption, but is one which condemns those who do so as persons ignorant of their own language and incapable of distinguishing between falsehood and truth.

AJAX.

Luther's Legacy.

THE Lutheran reformation has been the curse of Europe for four hundred years. Without it, the Christian superstition would have been long extinct. Theology was fading away or making but the feeblest resistance before the on-coming tide of the renaissance. Monasticism had long been an offence to all men who had any sense of decency. Scholars, from Lorenzo Valla to Erasmus, had never ceased to pour out their scorn upon the whole Christian theory and practice. Against their battery of historical facts and common sense, the church had no reply and was slowly but surely beating an ignominious retreat. Under such popes as Nicholas V, Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X, the papacy was more and more assuming the character of a political State—one of the community of States that made up Europe. Referring to the failure of the Lollard movement and of Henry V's attempt to revive the old ecclesiastical feeling, our English historian Gardiner says, "neither the church nor the opponents of the church had any longer a sway over men's hearts . . . the religion of the middle ages was as dead as its chivalry." But the theological counterblast of Luther awoke the Church to new life. The sudden and dramatic appearance of a new enemy, or, rather, of a rebel, acted as a powerful tonic, and the decrepit old body began

to sit up and take notice. A rival school of theology was a thing that could and should be resisted.

Stimulants, however, sometimes intoxicate. The church, with unprecedented arrogance, assumed a dictatorship over the whole range of human intelligence, and the great civilizing renaissance-movement was diverted from its natural course. It is true that humanistic studies had got too great a start, and had spread too widely and deeply to be entirely arrested, but further progress in what Symonds calls "humanistic freedom of thought" was effectually stayed. Art was subordinated to hagiography, and, though the attempt to prohibit the printing-press failed, its output was placed under a most vigorous censorship culminating in the Index of Pius IV. The veto on science was more drastic still. The renaissance of science in Western Europe was only just beginning. From the Pope downwards, pre-reformation ecclesiastics had, on the whole, not lagged behind laymen in encouraging it. Toscanelli's great gnomon was set up on the cathedral of Florence. Copernicus lectured on astronomy at Rome, and, both then and later, Catholic churchmen received his demonstrations "with much favour." But the new religious enthusiasts, of whatever denomination, saw that their creeds were in greater danger of being subverted by science than by humanism. Luther cursed Copernicus, and Calvin sent Servetus to the stake with as much venom as the officers of the Inquisition burnt Bruno, and science suffered a more severe set-back than did either humanism or art. The eighteenth century was well advanced before more than a few sporadic attempts had been made to recover the lost ground, and it is only since the middle of the nineteenth century that science can boast an army of workers comparable with the army of fifteenth-century humanists. Had Vesalius, Servetus, Bruno, Galileo, Vanini been given the hearing accorded to Chrysoloras, Argyropoulos, Leonardo Bruni, Poggio, Valla, Filelfo, science would be at least two or three centuries in advance of its present state, and, with Christianity as extinct as witchcraft, civilization would have reached a stage which our descendants in the year 2200 will still be looking forward to.

That the cause of this halt was the Protestant reformation, and nothing else, is abundantly clear. It is not as though Luther had touched a spring which released pent-up forces. The forces which operated were of his own manufacture. He was by no means a successor or disciple of Wyclif or Huss. His biography bears witness to this. Nor was he a follower of Savonarola, who was a political rather than a religious heretic. Luther was not for setting up a new Christian State, but for introducing a new-fangled theology opposed to all theologies that ever were and it was equally fallacious. He possessed genius, but it was misdirected originality, and it ran wild. His real prototype is Mahomet. His first followers were fanatics stirred by his courage and incited by his particular kind of eloquence. Calvin, Zwingli, and others were rather his rivals than his followers, for "what one fool can do another can." They may have been infected by his enthusiasm, but they followed him only in protesting against the orthodox theology. We may, in passing, remark that the later Romish contention that "Erasmus laid the egg of the reformation and Luther hatched it" is an absurd fallacy entirely contradicted by the facts.

The curious circumstance that the reformation can be called "the Teutonic schism" is due to the fact that the Teutonic temperament is favourable to schism, not that there was any pre-existent schismatic movement amongst the Teutonic peoples, although in Germany, as in England there was, no doubt, some old-established objection to the temporal

jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome. The only old-established religious opposition to the Church of Rome was that of the Greek Church which had a good claim to priority of foundation. From it the Protestants derived nothing. Had Protestantism been an intelligent opposition to Romanism it could hardly have been confined to the Teutonic nations. It just happened that the schismatic seed was sown in a congenial soil, and, had Luther not sown it, there is nothing in history to suggest that it would have been sown at all. Such scholars as Poliziano, Bembo, Sadoletto, Linaere, and Erasmus occupied themselves, not in teaching religious dogmas either old or new, but in spreading a knowledge of the humanities, and in trying to derive from that knowledge a rule of life. The uselessness of the Church was being admitted on all hands. Men of intelligence were everywhere abandoning its dogmas. No one was seeking to put new life into it. Even John Colet, whose official mantle has descended to Dean Inge, denounced his brother clergy so strongly, that he was charged with heresy, and he took care to place the school he founded under lay managership instead of entrusting it, as other founders had always done, to the care of the Church. Moreover, little attention was paid to Luther at first. Even when he crossed swords with Tetzel, the excitement hardly extended beyond the walls of Wittenberg, and when the report of it reached Rome, Leo X lightly dismissed the matter as a mere "quarrel among the friars." If Luther had not been lucky enough, or clever enough, to escape capture at first, and if it had not suited the political purposes of the elector Frederick to rescue him after the diet of Worms, we should never have heard of him nor of his reformation.

Had there been no Protestant reformation, it is not only conceivable but highly probable that a very considerable, if not the larger, part of the property and wealth of the Church would soon have been diverted to the endowment of education and learning and science. At all events a start had been made in this direction before the time of Luther's outburst. In England, Warham had recommended the dissolving of several monasteries, and Wolsey had dissolved some of them and had applied their funds to founding a college at Oxford. Leo X had founded a Greek college in Rome. Henry VIII's complete dissolution of the English monasteries shows how easy it was for the State to confiscate the property of the Church and apply it to secular purposes. Had it not been for the fanatical activities of Protestants on one hand and Jesuits on the other, Governments would soon have ceased to take any interest in religion, and the whole ecclesiastical establishment would have followed the monasteries to the scrap-heap. This, apart from endowments, would have been an inestimable benefit to science and culture. As it was, however, every pioneer of civilization, from Galileo to Darwin, from Spinoza to Spencer, has been damned by Christians of all sorts and resisted by them to the last ditch. And then, *mirabile dictu*, whenever the last ditch has to be surrendered, the true Christian comes up smiling like the Cheshire cat, and, with barefaced effrontery and characteristic mendacity, claims that his religion has all along been in agreement with science, and that, in fact, the real discoveries of science are adumbrated in his inspired fetish-book.

Perhaps, however, the most evil effect of the Protestant reformation has been its reassertion of that pernicious view of morals which was held throughout the middle ages, and which still persists among all people who profess Christianity, and among many who do not. This is the fallacy that the only basis of morality is religious belief, or, in other words, that

if a man abandons religion he has no longer any disposition to act uprightly, or any criterion for distinguishing right for wrong. The private lives of some of the humanists may have been open to grave censure, although this cannot be said of such men as Vittorino, Guarino, or Leo X, and it must be borne in mind that the sin of sexual indulgence is a Christian invention, while the condemnation of wealth is too frequently associated with the advice to hand it over to the Church. But most humanists were definitely trying to find a reasonable basis of morality. Probably their failure to do so was due to the insufficiency of their historical knowledge, and to their being obsessed by the philosophy of Plato. Erasmus had approached very near to the present rationalistic theory of morals, and his attitude earned the condemnation of Protestants and Catholics alike. Had Luther joined the ranks of the humanists, who from Petrarch to Erasmus had so undermined the religious position that for all intelligent men it was rapidly becoming untenable, his courage and enthusiasm might have been of some use to civilization. His lack of learning precluded this. As an assailant of abuses he may be classed with Savonarola, Wyclif, and Francis d'Assissi, but his diatribes had the effect of strengthening the system in which the abuses were inherent. What he saw in Italy, in 1511, might have been seen by an unsophisticated visitor at any time during the last thousand years. Setting out with preconceived ideas about "the city of the saints sanctified with the blood of martyrs," and with those chimerically idealistic views of the priesthood that only half-educated people can harbour, how could he help being disillusioned and scandalized? Erasmus, who first visited Rome in 1509, had seen and felt nothing of the sort, and he would be a very rash disputant who would set Luther beside Erasmus either as a man of moral principles or as an observer possessing intelligent insight. This curious obsession that morality depends upon religion is answerable for a great deal of the hypocrisy of to-day, especially of the sort we meet with in England, where men who are really Atheists go in fear of losing their means of livelihood unless they profess to be or allow themselves to be thought to be, members of some church or other.

Freethinkers have long held that the last enemy to be fought will be the Roman Church—and the disintegrating forces of Protestant Christianity are steadily weakening. But already a new substitute for "justification by faith" has appeared in America and Europe in the shape of "Christian Science." This religion is clearly an outgrowth of the Protestant mentality. The Charlatan of Wittenberg inoculated his generation with an insidious drug which is still working and still paralyzing the thought-centres of the Western mind. The Roman Church is still prospering and bracing itself for further extension. The financial and dogmatic astuteness of the organizers of Christian Science bids fair, however, to render their cult the great rival of Catholicism. These rivals may never unite their forces, but both have to be fought and both have to be eliminated before civilization can advance.

H. B. WOODALL.

Before we can bring happiness to others, we first must be happy ourselves; nor will happiness abide with us unless we confer it on others.—*Maeterlinck*.

Speak properly, and in as few words as you can, but always *plainly*; for the End of Speech is not Ostentation, but to be understood.—*William Penn*.

There is not a more singular character in the world than that of a thinking man.—*William Melmoth*.

Mr. Joad Reconsidered.

As was generally expected, Mr. Joad, still undaunted, has done his stuff again. It is bigger than ever this time—*Matter, Life and Value* (Oxford). The theory is that Life marches through Matter to Value.

While some Materialists will decry Mr. Joad's efforts as those of a metaphysical conjuror, others of us no doubt will choose to look on him as a fellow-Atheist with a bee in his bonnet. There may, of course, be a swarm of them, but one at least has been released—a very big one too.

For Mr. Joad has changed his mind on a rather important point. This is what he said in the Caxton Hall Debate: "It will not do to go on making assumptions about matter, and pretending that it does not matter what it is. It *does* matter enormously."

And this is what he says in *Matter, Life and Value*: The particular analysis of matter is irrelevant to the issue. "That twentieth century matter is no longer the hard, solid something extended in space . . . is common knowledge. But to affirm that it is a series of point-instants, a hump in space-time, or a collection of charges of positive and negative electricity does not affect its materiality."

So Mr. Joad has recanted on the major portion of his first speech in the debate, and this justifies his opponent's remark that he had argued on a parallel. I am not deriding Mr. Joad; I am applauding his willingness to learn.

It is also pleasing to note that he has discarded the Logical Refutation—surely the biggest blunder any philosopher can make. And this time it is not Materialism that is dead, but only "Materialism in its old form."

However, these considerations prevent Mr. Joad from accepting Materialism.

(a) The unique behaviour of living organisms. ("To knock the leg off a crab is to prompt it to grow a new one; it is not so with the lever of a machine");

(b) We might even draw a line between the animate and inanimate.

(c) Bergson's metaphysic on Duration.

(d) Psychology is only adequate for physiological conclusions; it is vague about psychic activity. Mind is the "bare activity" of awareness. There is a fundamental dualism between a thing and its truth, otherwise "the egg . . . would be simply the collection of the truths which were true about it, and the truths not being truths about anything, but one another would cease to be truths." There is also evidence of mind in such things as "the deliverances of the moral sense," emotion for beauty, and in "the testimony of the religious and the . . . mystical consciousness." On top of this we are told that minds can "think without the preceding stimulus of sensory experience." (This is very remarkable; and one may wonder whether any minds would ever have existed had it not been for sensory experience).

As for the alleged inadequacy of Materialism in science, neither Mr. Joad nor myself, not being scientists, is competent to discuss. And meanwhile let him note that the hypothesis that chemical changes are essential to organic life has led to a study of the connexion between Biology and Chemistry, and that progressive psychology is still embedded in mind—physiology (with even phrenology pushing its way forward).

But suppose these gaps in our knowledge were filled. Would Mr. Joad then have to resign himself to a "mechanical" interpretation of nature?

I believe not, for it would then be possible for his poetic nature to give Materialism a teleological flavouring with his Life Force as the guiding principle, and matter, instead of being "blindly pushed," would be "intelligently pulled."

In Part I, Mr. Joad deals with Life's struggle with Matter. At first it is a "mere blind thrust of energy," with an unconscious Purpose! but gradually the Life Force asserts its superiority. Matter imposes conditions and limitations, and this makes life struggle, by which it acquires new faculties, and finally becomes aware of its goal. Geniuses are sent to guide the way, for the

vast majority are not given Awareness of the Ultimate Purpose.

Part II reveals the U.P. Having overcome matter, life—beg pardon, Life—reaches its objective. Development implies direction, and direction implies goal. The word "higher" implies an objective standard. Aesthetics, for example, is awareness of Beauty, and reveals the existence of a world of value. Ethics is awareness of goodness, and reveals another value, and so on. Value, then, is the located goal, Life the striving principle, and Matter the obstacle.

To the question, What is this Life Force? Mr. Joad frankly says he does not know. It cannot be defined, he says, and cannot be known. It is over and above the sum total of its monads (units). "Each individual mind is a current of life . . . temporarily diverted from the main river." At death its faculties are transferred to the mainstream.

The outcome, then, is that Life "advances by emergence from awareness of matter to awareness of value," and "ends in contemplation of value."

The mundane Materialist might be excused for asking, "What then?"

Ah! Then we shall "gaze for evermore upon the beauty that lies at the journey's end."

* * *

Far be it from me to discourage Mr. Joad's cultural pursuits—and possibly we Materialists are of the vast majority whom the Life Force has not yet inculcated with Awareness of the Ultimate Purpose. At the same time it imposes a severe strain on the imagination to suppose that all this time Science is being baulked by a Vital Principle which goes marching through the ages, and which has chosen one Joad of the twentieth century to be its prophet.

I could support Mr. Joad if he would either:—

(1) Spell vital principle without capitals, make it unconscious, and treat it metaphorically, or (2) put the whole thing in a novel and sell it as a piece of honest fiction.

I only find fault when he makes the Vital Principle an objective and self-conscious reality. When it comes to objective reality the V.P. is on a par with Mickey the Mouse.

For a fuller treatment of Mr. Joad's state of mind, however, see Tylor's *Primitive Culture*.

G. H. TAYLOR.

One thing seemed to Everitt extraordinary. Not a chaplain had he seen since he was wounded. This was notoriously out of keeping with tradition. Everyone knew that no-man's-land swarmed with Chaplain's administering consolation spiritual and spirituous, and picking up Military Crosses like so many gooseberries. Everitt's experience of these men of God must have been exceptional, for he never saw one of them in front of reserve trenches, and associated them chiefly with Concert Parties and Church Parades. A gramophone was the sole social stock-in-trade of the Loamshire's Chaplain. He would deposit this instrument among the men's bivouac when they were out "resting," and lounge near it, smiling foolishly while it blared brazen versions of "Roses are Blooming in Picardy," and "Colonel Bogie." For the rest, he made an occasional point of asking men "how they were getting on," and, receiving only colourless and embarrassed answers, retired with obvious relief to the more civilized shelter of the officers' mess. There at least he would find whisky and bridge and the conversation of educated men. On the not infrequent occasions when the Battalion's daily duties called it into unpleasant localities, the reverend and gallant gentleman was less in evidence. What he did no one seemed to know. Rumour declared he pressed the Colonel's trousers, but more probably he merely laid low like Br'er Rabbit. At long last he was trepanned by a fire-eating Colonel into a burial party in front of Ypres, and immediately afterwards returned to England for a prolonged rest. But doubtless Everitt's experience was exceptional and unfortunate.—"The Somme," by A. D. Gristwood, pp. 73 and 74.)

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MYTH OR HISTORY?

SIR,—Your contributor, Dr. Harvey, takes a novel point of view for the Freethinker in saying that the Gospel records contain any history at all. His theory has its difficulties, and it seems better to treat the whole story as mythical. For instance, if Jesus really predicted his resurrection (even in the sense of restoration) he was taking a big risk, for we are told his enemies desired his death to the extent of taking special precautions by guarding his tomb. We are also told that the guard was bribed by the chief priests to say that in spite of vigilance his disciples helped him to escape—a singular circumstance. It is also curious that Jesus could walk "sixty furlongs" so soon—his feet must have been in a bad way! If this crazy record is to be taken seriously, your contributor is not quite accurate in places, viz., Jesus is reported to have said, "It is expedient for you that I go away" (Dr. Harvey omits "for you") before the crucifixion not after. Also, the writers do not give the impression that they were prepared to expect a resurrection, they say themselves they didn't understand what Jesus meant. Dr. Harvey also says that Paul "came later and told them what to preach"! Paul persecuted them for preaching it, and when he afterwards said he was converted by seeing Jesus himself, at first they would have none of him, much less "took to his theories like ducks to water."

One agrees with Dr. Harvey that the apparition theory is absurd. He says the myth theory is untenable "as any" to explain all the facts. Surely his own is more so!

WALTER JAMESON.

Society News.

A CROWDED house listened to Dr. R. P. Paranjpye, former Minister of Education, Bombay Presidency, on "Religion and Progress in India," who lectured, owing to the unavoidable absence of Dr. Stopes, through illness.

The story of how Religion is responsible for the lack of Progress and Education in India, is the same as it is to-day in some Western States in Europe.

Every appreciation is shown to Missionaries who devote their time and energy in enlightening the people, and medical assistance, but unfortunately, whenever Religion is introduced it creates more harm to the people than good, seeing that there is enough of Religious strife already of their own.

Interesting questions and some discussion followed, the audience having accorded a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer, the meeting concluded.

There was a good sale of literature, also a number of tickets sold for the Caxton Hall Social of the N.S.S.
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LONDON.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station): 11.15, Mr. H. Snell, M.P.—"The World's Cross-currents of Hope and Fear."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Sir Albion Banerji, C.S.I., C.I.E.—"Indian Educational Problems."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Dr. Harold Moody—"Brotherhood in the World of Colour."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Public Hall, Clapham Road, close to Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"False Claims of Religion."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Debate—"Is the Christian Doctrine of Immortality Rational?" Affir.: Mr. H. Everett; Neg.: Mr. E. Botting. Thursday, March 27, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, Social and Dance, from 7.30 to 11.30. Admission 1s.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, entrance Theobald's Road): 7.30, Mr. F. W. Read—"Egyptology."

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. (Town Hall, Birmingham): Mr. Chapman Cohen—"The Savage in our Midst." Doors open at 6.30, commence at 7.0. Admission Free. Questions and Discussion cordially invited.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton, N.S.S.—"Can We do Without Christianity?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, A Door, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. A. M. Rennie, the well-known London and Glasgow Entertainer will speak upon "Some Dramatic Psychological Moments."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. E. F. Wise, C.B.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Dr. John A. Widtsoe, President, European Mission, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints—"The Philosophy of Mormonism." Will all those who intend to be at the meeting on March 30 kindly note that the lecture will commence at 7.0, and not 7.30; this is necessary as the Lecturer will have to return to Manchester at 9.10.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, Manchester): Saturday, 3.0, Annual Meeting. It is important that all members should attend.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Whitehall Road, Gateshead): Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture at 3.0, on "Where are the Gods?" and in the evening, at 7.0, on "Is Christianity in Harmony with Science?" Musical programme from 2.30 and 6.30.

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