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

Views and Opinions.

God and Earthquakes.

SOME of my readers may remember that directly after the last earthquake in Italy, a high Church dignitary explained it as due to God's anger with women for wearing short skirts. With millions of people this apology for God caused nothing but a smile. But it was quite Christian, quite orthodox, and if we grant the truth of religion, quite sensible. If anything can occur without God, then everything may occur without him, and so good-bye God. If, as even some of his apologist (who fancy themselves advanced and daring thinkers) say, the whole course of evolution discloses a "plan," then the series of changes that led up to the earthquake itself, were all part of the plan, and God is in trouble again. Really, I don't see how God can be left out of the picture unless he is abandoned altogether. And after all, when it is remembered how, a long time ago, he gave his servant Moses a recipe for a pomade, and threatened with death anyone who infringed the patent, and how particular he was with shawls and fringes and other ecclesiastical fripperies, it does not seem strange that he should deal out an earthquake or two to show that he doesn't like the present fashion of short skirts. Besides he may have remembered the trouble caused long ago when the sons of God fell in love with the daughters of men, and fears for more trouble if young women make themselves too attractive. I don't feel, then, that this particular Roman Catholic dignitary was theologically blameworthy because he said that the earthquake was God's work and that it was sent for a particular purpose. If God did not send the earthquake, who did? Of course, I, as an Atheist, do not blame him for it; but then I do not blame him or praise him for anything. To me he is quite a negligible quantity.

A Careless Parent.

But there are others beside the Archbishop of Malta who have set out to explain what God was doing in the earthquake, and a South African reader sends me a report of a sermon by a prominent clergyman who sets out to explain, as reported in the *Johannesburg Star*, how we are to view the earthquake, and similar things, in relation to our belief in God. The clergyman in question, the Rev. J. Bruce Gardner, thinks it very bad indeed that people should so think of "the Father in heaven," who "causeth his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and his rain to fall on the just and the unjust." But that is really just where the trouble lies. In these matters God is far too promiscuous. The Archbishop of Malta's theory was that as everything comes from God, and as nature works under God's control, the earthquake must have been sent for some purpose, and looking round he thought short skirts a quite reasonable ground for action. He had plenty of precedents from which to reason. When a few men offend God he does not single them out for public punishment; he sends rain or heat that ruins the crops, or he lands the whole nation in a war, or sends a disease that punishes the godly and the ungodly alike. Mr. Bruce Gardner thinks that this habit of God's of giving good or bad to folk irrespective of merit shows kindness; but it may quite easily show carelessness. He is like a man throwing pennies to a scrambling crowd, not because he wants to benefit any particular person in the crowd, but simply for the fun of seeing them scramble for it. The God of the Archbishop of Malta may have been vindictive, the punishment certainly did not fit the crime, but he was left with some show of intelligence, even though the way in which it was displayed might point to bad temper. But the God of Mr. Gardner who sends good and bad and doesn't care who gets either, behaves with the unintelligence of an inmate of an asylum.

* * *

The Indifference of God.

So "in order to see things in their proper perspective," the Rev. Mr. Gardner explains that:—

They had to distinguish between evils resulting from ignorance or carelessness or wrong-doing, and evils resulting from matters entirely beyond human control, such as drought, famine, flood, storm, or earthquake. For various evils which were once regarded as divine visitations, such as a locust plague, man was finding cures. Geology taught them that earthquakes were as much natural processes as the fall of rain, the fertilizing of the earth and the growth of seed. Their ideas of stability and steadiness of the earth had been revolutionized. They realized that they were the denizens of a whirling globe, and that that globe was always shrinking to some extent. This could not happen without disturbance. Such knowledge gave them a new point of view. There

was no longer any excuse for suggesting that such an occurrence as an earthquake was an expression of divine anger.

Even in earthquakes it was possible for human knowledge to devise means of protecting human life. It could warn people of dangerous areas, and in due course dwellings might be devised which were not so obviously death-traps, as they seemed to have been in the Italian villages. But while man lived on a globe such as the earth, he must always be subject to danger.

Now Mr. Gardner's "new point of view," which is certainly not new at all, is chiefly noticeable for the way in which he puts God out of court, or leaves us asking the simple question, What does God do? If an earthquake is not a manifestation of divine anger, is it a manifestation of divine love? If it is not that, we are left only with the hypothesis that it is a manifestation of divine indifference as to what happens to the creature God has, theoretically, been at such trouble to create. I agree there is no longer any justification for regarding earthquakes as manifestations of God's anger, but the vital consideration, for Mr. Gardner is whether there is any justification for regarding anything in nature to have a connexion with God? And if this is the case with earthquakes, what better reason have we for thinking of God in connexion with anything? It is possible, Mr. Gardner points out, for human knowledge to devise means for protecting human life, even in the case of earthquakes. But it is significant that this kind of knowledge is not derived from God. On Mr. Gardner's theory God creates nature, and then leaves man to his own devices to discover some method of dodging the murderous incidence of these God-made forces.

* * *

Making the Best of God.

Lest the carelessness of God should strike some religious folk whose brains have not completely atrophied, as something reprehensible, Mr. Gardner explains:—

The progress of science and human knowledge at every stage was due to the stimulus arising from the necessity to overcome difficulties. Face to face with death, man displayed his unconquerable soul. Disasters brought out the noble qualities of sympathy and compassion. If they were to live in the world they must accept the conditions. Man's business here was to learn, to understand and to overcome the forces which threatened his life and his well being. The process of education and moral discipline was meant to bring out the best that was in man, and in this God was definitely on his side.

The Lord is not in the earthquake as an angry being. By the trembling of the earth he reminds us that we have no continuing city. He seeks, in many ways, to remind us of what is to come. Every disturbance which rouses the imagination and touches the feelings may be taken by us as a warning that the world will pass away, but that he that doeth the will of God shall endure for ever.

We are still left wondering why, if the conquest of natural difficulties is desirable, God might not have lent a hand, or even refrained from creating the difficulties, but by this time no one who has grasped the inner meaning of theology ever expects a God to act with the slightest degree of intelligence. So we are presented with a picture of man having as his business to overcome forces which threaten his life and well-being, a God who creates difficulties that threaten his well being, and then man thanking God for creating the difficulties that he does *not* always overcome. There is a distinct humour about theology if one can only look at it from the proper angle.

But humour is possible without what almost amounts to sheer lying. Great humourists may exaggerate a little, but they do not lie. And Mr. Gardner

does—not the deliberate lying of a consciously dishonest character, but the lying that consists of a distinct and easily recognisable distortion of the truth. Thus, "Face to face with death man displayed his unconquerable soul. Disasters brought out the noble qualities of sympathy and compassion." I wonder whether Mr. Gardner thinks of sympathy and compassion as qualities that man keeps stored up, as one may put away a few pounds for a "rainy day," to be brought out and spent when bad times arrive? Human qualities are gradually developed to face the exigencies of existence, and have no value whatever apart from those exigencies. Sympathy and compassion are expressed in the face of trouble and disaster, but a God who created trouble and disaster in order to bring out sympathy and compassion would be like one who set fire to a houseful of people to encourage firemen to acts of heroism. And everyone knows that every man's soul is not unconquerable, and disasters do not always bring out sympathy and compassion. With the best and the strongest there is a breaking point at which nature gives way and sympathy is swallowed up in self, and courage weakens before overwhelming disaster. Any one who will use whatever intelligence his early religious training has left him can see this illustrated on every hand. Long continued disaster breaks, sustained disease creates and develops selfishness. These things can be seen by all; they are facts of everyday experience. There is no greater lie told by theologians than that of the purifying and uplifting power of pain. And to what end? So that God may remind us that we do not belong to this world with its troubles and disaster, but to another world where there is no trouble and disaster at all. And what will happen to character then? If sympathy and compassion depends for its existence upon trouble and disaster, what will happen when these latter die out? It is a pretty picture. God creates difficulties in order to develop sympathy and compassion, when he might as easily have given these qualities to human nature at the start, and he does this to develop human qualities for existence in a future state where trouble and disaster have no being and therefore the qualities created to meet them have no use. What a God? All one can say is that he and his followers are well-matched—as one would expect.

It is interesting to have read Mr. Gardner. He appears to me to be very much above the average parson, but he shows that all over the world the religious breed runs true to type. Apart from his theology Mr. Gardner has, I should say, intelligence above the average. But what can we get out of foolishness but folly: and saddled with a creed such as Christian theism, there are only two courses possible to an intelligent man. One is to throw the whole thing overboard, the other is to try to rationalize folly by systematizing its absurdities. Mr. Gardner has chosen the latter path. Perhaps one day he may retrace his steps and take the road that so many have trodden, with profit to themselves and others.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Where Dwells My Love?

WHERE dwells my love?

I you will tell.

Not in the heavens above,

Nor in the deeps of hell,

Doth my love dwell.

Not in castle, nor in cot,

No leagues from me apart,

My true love dwells; she dwelleth not

In any spot on map or chart,

But in my heart.

BAYARD SIMMONS.

The Morals of Marcus.

"It is the part of a wise man to have preferences but no exclusions."—*Voltaire*.

TIMES of war and stress are supposed usually to be fatal to philosophic calm, and it is curious that the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the immortal book animated by high purpose and fortitude, should have been written largely at odd moments in a tent on the battlefield. Indeed, many of the famous maxims in the *Meditations* were jotted down in the actual theatre of the recent world-war, as, for instance, at Carnuntum, on the Danube, a few miles from Vienna.

One of the greatest of the Roman Emperors, Marcus Aurelius, was no feather-bed soldier, reviewing his troops at a very safe distance from the fighting front. His philosophy was thought out amid the storm and stress of actual battle, the elation of real victory, and the sorrow of defeat. What others learnt in calm, he learnt in tempest. The most perfect expression of "the gospel of those who do not believe in the supernatural," was produced to the dread monotone of war. Far away on the wide Roman marshes might be heard the ceaseless sound of beating horses' hoofs and the marching feet of men. The barbarians were gathering their legions, and no man could say what the morrow would bring.

Marcus died in the camp surrounded by the soldiers he led. "Why weep for me?" were the last brave words, characteristic of the noblest Roman of them all. His legacy to posterity was his book of *Meditations*, which was never intended for publication, and in which he recorded his inmost convictions on life. Burdened with the weight of empire and of Rome, he penned such words as these, not to be read at the distance of twenty centuries without an accession of pride and strength:—

Every moment think steadily as a Roman and a man to do what thou hast in hand with perfect and simple dignity.

And, again:—

Do every action of thy life as if it were thy last.

This life, he tells us, is all that concerns us:—

Though you were destined to live three thousand, or, if you please, thirty thousand years, yet remember that no man can lose any other life than that which he lives now, and neither is he possessed of any other than that which he loses.

Epicurus bade his followers depart from life as a satisfied guest from a banquet. Marcus Aurelius, in sterner language, bids us leave life's stage as an actor who has played his part, short or long. It is this sane view of things which has caused the *Meditations* to be one of the most prized of volumes. It is this wise Secularism which takes tired men back to Marcus Aurelius when all other religions and philosophies have failed them. What a book might be written of the great men who came to the *Meditations* in the sad moments, where fame and fortune, and honour itself, seemed as unreal as the fabric of dreams. For, by the irony of fate, this austere ruler has become also one of the great consolers of his fellow men.

Oh! the charm of Marcus Aurelius! He was so much more than a mere writer, for he bound men by something stronger than a chain of roses, the thrill of the dance, or the sparkle of Falernian wine. It is not his grace of language that causes men to read his little book to-day. It is not merely his philosophy that causes men to turn to him from all other wisdom. It was not to Lucretius, with his world-grip of human destiny; nor Virgil, with his tears of mortal fortune; nor Horace, who sings so sweetly of wine, women, and summer days, but to the austere soldier-leader that

men turned in the last resort "with close-lipped patience for their only friend."

The waters of thought slip slowly away, and it is not a little amazing that the ideas of this ruler should still have sufficient vitality to move the minds of men of our generation. It is a wondrous achievement to cross all frontiers and to bridge the gulf of twenty centuries. Small wonder that Ernest Renan, a writer of nice distinction, and a rare critic, has spoken of the *Meditations* in terms of more unmixed eulogy than he bestowed elsewhere.

The *Meditations*, be it remembered, were never intended for publication, and were written for the author's eye alone. They are simply the ruler's note-book, where he entered his thoughts on serious subjects. The little volume was considered for long a literary curiosity. It fitly headed the very brief list of the writings of kings, a class not in any way remarkable for literary genius. Critics talk of the Greeks as being the teachers of Marcus Aurelius. It may be true, but the golden book of the *Meditations* could only have been written by a Roman. The strength, the tenderness, the humanity, the resignation, these are the gifts of the lords of human things, the masters of the world.

Matthew Arnold has pointed out that the *Meditations* are counsels of perfection. They do not claim to be other than self-communications. The maxims should be read, as they were written, one at a time. Marcus Aurelius addressed them, not to any reader, but to himself, as the sentinels and supports of a conduct of life. The present moment is one in which such high-minded advice is priceless, for in all the world's literature, there is no other book so full of a sane Secularism. It is because the *Meditations* are a bracing tonic in a time of moral slackness that the book ranks among the ethical assets of our day. The pomp and majesty of ancient Rome has long faded "like snow upon the desert's dusty face," but the great ruler's words of wisdom remain a most precious legacy because he saw life steadily and saw it whole. What a man! His private note-book has excited the admiration of the intellects which have moved the world. Few writers have compressed so much thought into so small a space.

MIMNERMUS.

Materialism in Athens and Rome

WHEN Aristotle departed from insurgent Athens, the Lyceum he had instituted was directed by his trusty friend and disciple, the illustrious philosopher Theophrastus. Much as Aristotle must be venerated as the creator of zoology, so his colleague and successor, Theophrastus, has long been celebrated as the parent of botany. Two important treatises on plant life, as well as a work on physics, have survived from the past. Of his other writings little is known. Theophrastus was affectionately regarded by Aristotle, and to him the Stagirite bequeathed his many manuscript works.

Theophrastus was succeeded by Strato who departed more widely from Aristotle's teachings than his predecessor. But fate has been unkind to his compositions, and all that has come down to us is preserved in quotations taken from Strato's treatises by other philosophers. Still, even these fragments suffice to prove that Strato was a fearlessly independent thinker and investigator. A pupil of Theophrastus, when his master died, Strato was appointed to the vacant professorship and taught in the Lyceum for eighteen years. He conducted various studies in natural science, and was familiar to his contemporaries as "the physicist." It is interesting to notice

that in contradistinction to Aristotle, Strato completely rejected the theory of a divine intelligence external to the cosmos, and attributed all natural phenomena to causes of a physical character which operate by natural necessity. Somewhat vaguely, he appears to have viewed life as a mode of motion. To him the brain was the seat of mentality, but he seemingly dissented from Democritus' atomic philosophy, and pictured material nature as circumscribed in space.

So far as is known, Strato was the last of the outstanding scientific seers in Aristotle's academy. The study of literature, ethics, and grammar now usurped the throne previously occupied by natural inquiry. Still, the permanent problems of physics and metaphysics prove ever attractive to mankind, and another group of speculative thinkers revived and restored the atomic doctrine to its earlier position. It exercised an important influence during the period embraced by Greek and Roman culture, and found occasional adherents even in the Ages of Faith. With the rising sunlight of the Renaissance it reappeared to play its destined part in the re-emergent natural and humanistic sciences.

The philosopher who now directed ancient Greek thought along the atomic path was the celebrated and much maligned Epicurus. Many students, both men and women, gathered in the Garden of Epicurus, where their researches were directed by the master. There, the teachings of Democritus "from whose waters Epicurus irrigated his gardens," were expounded. Small advance, however, was made on the theories of Democritus. The doctrines of the infinity of space, the evolution and dissolution of material aggregates, and the atomic character of the soul itself were the leading themes. No overruling intelligence was admitted, and all events were the outcome of natural causation. Final causes—teleology—scarcely concern us.

Epicurus did not deny the existence of the gods. But there is nothing to fear from the immortal divinities, or even from death itself. At death the soul is immediately resolved into the original atoms of which it is compounded. As for the gods they are made of ethereal stuff, and dwell afar from the homes of men. Indeed, the divine beings haunt:—

"The lucid interspace of world and world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm."

Epicurus taught that hedonism is the true rule of life. Human happiness is the real desideratum. We all instinctively avoid pain, and seek pleasure, satisfaction, or content. Epicurus never made his doctrine the excuse for mere sensuality. There is conclusive evidence that the philosopher was a man of splendid character, whose many acts of kindness commended him to all. Moreover, the regimen of the academy of Epicurus was distinguished by the utmost simplicity.

Doubtless, in later times, men called themselves Epicureans, who would have been scourged from his garden by the philosopher. Yet for centuries the Epicureans numbered many noble adherents, and the school survived as late as the fourth century A.D. Among the immediate disciples of Epicurus were men so eminent as Metrodorus, Hermarchus and Colotes. Also, the tutor of Cicero, Zenon of Sidon was an Epicurean philosopher.

Lucretius, the greatest Roman poet, lived in the spacious days of Cæsar and Cicero. Upon his shoulders the mantle of Epicurus fell, and to the great philosophical poet Lucretius, the doctrines of Democritus as interpreted by Epicurus, owe much of

their modern fame. The story of his insanity and suicide is very probably a Christian invention designed to belittle the most gifted and eloquent exponent of Epicurus.

The last of the classical philosophers to expound his opinions on man and the universe in poetical form, Lucretius was an impassioned advocate of what he regarded as the sacred truth. He seemed confident that the enigmas of life and mind will ultimately yield their secret in response to man's searchings into Nature. If the themes that inspire his magnificent poem were provided by earlier thinkers, *De Rerum Natura* preserves in deathless lines the philosophy of his great forerunners. Thoroughly logical and consistent throughout, Lucretius regards Nature as a unity. He applies the atomic theory not merely to the inorganic, but to the living world, including its mental manifestations. The philosopher-poet postulates the soul, consciousness, or ego as something indissolubly associated with the body, and with corporeal death the soul perishes. The immortality of the soul so eloquently proclaimed by Plato is to the Latin poet a dark and sinister delusion. The fear of the fickle and treacherous gods, and the dread of death are the leading causes of all human ailments.

The views of Lucretius concerning the physiology of sensation appear primitive from the modern scientific standpoint. Yet his arguments and illustrations, clothed as they are in lofty poetic diction, appear very remarkable in the then backward condition of biology. Many of his ideas, however, have a truly modern tinge. The existence of bodies is evidenced by the senses. Again, the existence of space is an indispensable postulate if we are to explain motion, or account for the differences in specific gravity where different solid bodies are concerned. Lucretius almost anticipates the modern germ-theory of disease in tracing contagious and infectious maladies to the presence of minute particles constantly flying through the air. He also adumbrates the theory of the survival of the fittest, and much of modern Darwinian doctrine.

The Roman singer has exercised a lasting influence in the domains of philosophy, science, and letters alike. Mrs. Browning's appreciation of the poet as the greatest of Tyber's minstrels who "denied divinely the divine," and Tennyson's superb poem "Lucretius," are immediately recalled to memory. Huxley once associated Lucretius with Goethe as two of the world's supreme songsters, who were inspired by the grandeur and glory of science.

The light kindled by the philosophers of old Greece, to be perpetuated in later Rome, was not entirely extinguished even in the darkest ages of ecclesiastical ascendancy. In Italy and Moslem Spain, thinkers influenced by the Epicurean evangel carried forward the great tradition. Some were reduced to semi-silence or obscurity, but contrived to survive despite the sullen and vindictive antagonism of the Church.

As the secular spirit grew stronger in Europe, students scanned the writings of the ancients with increasing interest. The pantheistic sage Giordano Bruno was deeply impressed by Lucretius, as were others of his contemporaries. Indeed, Bruno modelled some of his scientific essays on the Roman's masterpiece, inasmuch as he penned them in a prose form. And in the Age of Enlightenment, Voltaire, Holbach, and other eminent rationalists carefully studied the poem of Lucretius.

Some captious writers allege that Lucretius rendered little aid to the natural sciences. Still, his work, to claim the least, certainly served to perpetuate the teachings of his masters, Democritus and Epicurus. And apart from the intellectual and emotional enjoyment derived from the perusal of great literature, many thoughtful readers must have been pre-

pared by the poet's insight into the problem of the rise and progress of civilization, to receive without prejudice the doctrine of evolution, when this was enunciated in strictly scientific form by Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and others in the nineteenth century.

Again the complaint that the atomic theory, so powerfully presented by Lucretius, exercised no material influence on the growth of science until a little more than a century since, is silenced by the rejoinder that physical science as a whole, and chemistry above all, were insufficiently advanced to utilize this far-reaching doctrine. Dalton, however, did make the atomic principle the basis of chemical science, and in his hands, and in those of Berzelius, it became the indispensable working theory of that branch of physics. And to this day, despite the recent modifications in theory, the atomic principle remains secure as the necessary foundation of all the multitudinous applications of organic and inorganic chemistry alike.

T. F. PALMER.

The Idealized Christ.

SPEAKING in Hyde Park a few weeks ago, I asserted as emphatically as I could, that the Christ of nearly all Christians who are seriously influenced by the growing culture and knowledge of to-day, is not the Jesus of the New Testament or any historical personality, but an idealized figure. After I had left the platform, a middle-aged man came up to me and said: "Your statement is perfectly true; do not all people idealize the object of their worship?" This admission, coming from one who regards himself as a Christian of some sort, is significant. It states a general fact, and at the same time indicates the direction in which historical criticism, and the effort to humanize the very imperfect morality of the New Testament, are now influencing the followers of the Galilean, whose gospel won its triumphs in Europe by "purely spiritual means."

For any religious system a nimbus of moral perfection must be thrown round the man, whoever he is, that is chosen or invented as its figurehead. Especially under the pressure of an advancing civilization are devotees obliged to eliminate the weaknesses and the unattractive features of the founder of their religion, and sometimes this process is applied even to the early missionaries of the faith.

An interesting question suggests itself—how far would this idealization be possible if we had a complete record of the life of a real human Jesus? The Fourth Gospel is regarded even by some Christians as mainly romance, and the unknown writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* portrays, amid a resounding mass of quotations from the Old Testament, a Christ who is the high priest of God, and at the same time the great sacrifice demanded by deity for the salvation of the world. As the central character in certain modern literary productions, surely we have had a surfeit of him. Lew Wallace's *Ben Hur*, Papini's *Story of Christ*, and the host of other compositions of this kind are mainly phantasies, while in the domain of art the Egyptian Serapis probably provided the background for the traditional representations of Jesus Christ. (The oldest picture of Christ in the Roman Catacombs shows him as Orpheus with the lyre). To Christian communities artists dare not present a picture of Jesus as a youth rebuking his mother, or as a thaumaturge transferring devils from a human being to pigs. When he is not the good shepherd he is usually either the divine infant in his mother's arms, or a very saintly figure praying in Gethsemane. Why can no Roman Catholic idealize a single one of

the popes, and no Protestant make an attractive saint of Luther or Calvin? Simply because they know too much about them.

But the lives of nearly all the reputed founders of the great religious systems of the world are wrapped in obscurity, and this has contributed very materially to their fame and to their authority. A sinless Saviour-God or divine prophet, though he would be no asset to a community of growing men and women, is essential to a system that purports to save souls, and once the faith is crystallized into an orthodox scheme of salvation, its more or less mythical founder can be easily exalted to any standard of perfection required, partly by a well-organized hierarchy, and partly by the cultural influences of the age. An ideal God must be better than the deity of Christianity or any other orthodox religion, because there is less of him. But Jesus Christ is supposed to be the revelation, in human history, of the character of God, and the process of idealizing him has resulted in the most divergent pictures. The Conservative statesman sees in him a bulwark of the existing political and economic system against revolutionary tendencies, some Socialists regard him as the divine democrat of latter-day Labour parties, while for the Christian Scientist he is the forerunner of Mrs. Mary Baker Eddy.

But historical truth should not be lightly tampered with. This practice of adapting, of reconciling manifestly contradictory views, is akin to falsification. It is worth noting, too, that Christians scrutinize very closely such teachers or spiritual guides as Socrates, Confucius, Buddha and Mohammed, and most eagerly bring out all their short-comings in bold relief. It is, of course, a pious duty to do so. But spurious admirations confer no more real dignity upon Christ than they confer upon Mohammed or Buddha.

From another point of view I think one is justified in protesting against the exaltation of Christ. It fosters the spirit of make-believe, and from this to charlatanism is only a step. "Back to Christ!" is a cry still heard occasionally amid the thousand and one problems that perplex us. But the primitive Christianity to which we are directed does not exist. It never did exist. There is no body of consistent doctrine in the New Testament, but a mass of irreconcilable stories concerning Christ, more or less bitter personal controversies, and fantastic absurdities derived from apocalyptic literature. What was the intellectual and social condition of the masses when the standard-bearers of the Christ-ideal were able to suppress all scepticism regarding it, when mystics abounded in Europe, and promises of eternal life were accepted at their face value? The life, work and teaching of the Jesus of our gospels, which all bear the impress of a mythical age, are still the subject of endless dispute, and if they are no longer the starting-point of conflicts that ensanguine a continent, still the red record of its "spiritual" conquests can never be idealized out of Christendom. Does the moral experience of the human race reach its culmination in Christ in an age of science and Freethought when his very historicity is called in question?

When we turn to the ideal man of the great thinkers and moralists of antiquity we are in a different world. Epicurus advised his followers to choose some good man, to keep him before their eyes and act as if he saw them. Seneca says much the same thing, and in particular urges men to maintain an unperturbed attitude to all that destiny may have in store for them. No unprejudiced observer can see in the gospel Christ, that equanimity that never desponds, the serenity of the truly wise man of the Greeks at their highest and best. It is needless here

to quote the words of ill-humour Christ addressed to his own disciples, his threatening invectives directed against the Pharisees, the Sadducees and those who supported them, or his violent procedure at the cleansing of the temple. The Christ-picture, such as we have it, does not owe its origin to Greek or Roman philosophy. To that extent it is original. It is likewise unhistorical—a composite picture made up of mythical features current at the time in the Eastern Mediterranean lands and of Jewish-Hellenic moral doctrines borrowed from the Old Testament and the Neo-Platonism of Alexandria. True, there are sympathetic features in the Jesus of the gospels. His outlook on the world is not bound by any narrow nationalism, he caresses children, and he sides with the poor and the oppressed. But these features have left a comparatively faint mark upon European history because they appear associated with a false and distorted view of life as a whole. Not one word does Jesus Christ say on behalf of toleration or free investigation in all matters of religious belief—rather the opposite, with the result that the faith based upon his life and teaching at its best makes for intellectual stagnation, and at its worst has been responsible for persecution never before known among men. The claims of his followers to temporal power and to supreme authority over the religious conscience may be blamed till Doomsday, but the spirit that has inspired and given vitality to these claims is all implied in the New Testament.

A. D. McLAREN.

Our Missionaries.

If we look around among other primitive peoples, do we not find that the result of their contact with European civilization and Christianity has everywhere been the same?

What has become of the Indians? What of the once so haughty Mexicans, or the highly gifted Incas of Peru? Where are the aborigines of Tasmania and the native races of Australia? Soon there will not be a single one of them left to raise an accusing voice against the race which has brought them to destruction. And Africa? Yes, it, too, is to be Christianized; we have already begun to plunder it, and if the negroes are not more tenacious of life than the other races, they will doubtless go the same way when once Christianity comes upon them with all its colours flying. Yet we are in no way deterred, and are ever ready with high-sounding phrases about bringing to the poor savages the blessings of Christianity and civilization.

If we look at the missions of to-day, do we not almost everywhere learn the same lesson? Take, for instance, a people like the Chinese, standing on a high level of civilization, and therefore, one would suppose, all the better fitted to receive the new doctrine. One of "the most enlightened mandarins in China, himself a Christian, and educated at European universities," writes in the *North China Daily News* an article about the missionaries and their influence, in which, among other things, he says: "Is it not an open secret that it is only the meanest, most helpless, most ignorant, necessitous, and disreputable among the Chinese who have been and are what the missionaries call 'converted'?" . . . I ask whether it cannot be proved that these converts—men who have thrown away the faith of their childhood, men who are forbidden by their teachers to show any sympathy, or indeed anything but contempt, for the memories and traditions of our ancient history—whether it cannot be proved that these men, as soon as they have had to relinquish the hope of worldly gain, have shown themselves to be worse than the worst of the Chinese rabble?

F. NANSEN.

(*Easton's Life*, pp. 341-2).

Acid Drops.

Harrogate Town Council has by two votes prohibited games and entertainments on the Stray on Sunday. The Council thinks it would be detrimental to Harrogate as a health resort. We fancy the only people to whom it will be detrimental will be the parsons.

Another man who ought to be sent to Harrogate every Sunday is Captain Larking. He has solemnly protested against Mr. George Lansbury's advocacy of Sunday games. With all the solemnity of a double distilled essence of asinity, he says to Mr. Lansbury, "Make no mistake, Sunday has been the bulwark of the character and moral strength of Britain." We do not quite know what Captain Larking means, nor do we expect he knows himself, but he has heard someone say it, and that is evidently enough. All the same we do not think that Captain Larking's displeasure will seriously disturb Mr. Lansbury.

We note that all purchasers of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* will receive a table, free. The table should prove quite useful.

The chaplain of the Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum, the Rev. Albert Whitely, was asked, according to the report of the Select Committee on Estimates, just issued, "As far as the services which you conduct are concerned, do the patients appreciate them and follow them?" In reply Mr. Whitely said:—

I do not think you could find a more responsive congregation in any Church. They love their chapel. Sometimes some of my clerical friends come and they will preach a sermon for me, and they go away simply astounded at the way in which the congregation join in the services. You would be astonished to hear how they take part in the services. They really do love their chapel.

There is nothing new in this testimony. The close connexion of religious conviction with certain forms of criminal offence is well known, and the aptitude with which inmates of asylums for the mentally afflicted take up with religion has been noted and commented on many times by expert observers.

Thin people, we learn, usually live longer than fat. Nevertheless, there are no grounds for the suspicion that lean Christians deliberately starve themselves in order to postpone meeting their awful Bogey in the sky.

The *Daily Mirror* thinks the modern girl is an improvement on her Victorian sister. The difference, says our contemporary, between the Victorian spinster and the Georgian bachelor-girl is a profound one, but it is one that is better and happier for women. This is in the nature of a backhander for our parson friends who, owing to a slump in the religious industry, now find time to slander the modern girl as a relief to their disgruntled feelings.

As a sidelight on that beautiful Christian dream of one brotherhood of Christian believers throughout the world, the following by the Rev. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, of U.S.A., is helpful:—

About one-fifth of the Bible was prediction at the time it was written; a portion of this has been fulfilled, and the other portion is yet to be fulfilled. God has proved by that which has been fulfilled that his method of fulfilling is literal—that is to say, every word of prophecy is to be fulfilled, just as the simple meaning of the language would imply,

In other words, the Bible means what it says, literally. Nowadays, thousands of Christians deny this. And

Christians everywhere have different ways of interpreting Holy Writ. Therefore, the brotherhood dream will remain a dream so long as Christians cannot agree about what God really meant. We might well say, with history to support us, that the Bible must have been sent into the world to keep men apart from one another. If this was God's intention, he couldn't have adopted a better plan. After nineteen centuries of Christian religion and talk of brotherhood, Christians are still buried in separate portions of cemeteries.

The President of the National Sunday School Union drops a hint which circulation-hunting newspaper proprietors will welcome. He says:—

Will all [Sunday-school] teachers support those newspapers that print each day a quotation from the Bible. I look forward to the time when every worth-while paper will insert a whole chapter from the Bible each day, and I hope that these chapters will be arranged for the newspapers by the International Bible Reading Association.

Somehow, we fancy Sunday-school teachers, though they have a touching faith in God's Providence, will continue to buy the newspaper which gives the best insurance benefits.

After the announcement by Sir Oliver Lodge at Bristol on matters which anybody and everybody can be an authority, because you have to be dead first to know anything about them, various other experts on the beyond and somewhere else are called in by the *Daily Mail* to bellow amen. The Rev. H. B. Workman welcomes anything which is anti-materialistic. The Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Sharp, President of the National Free Church Council, thinks that Sir Oliver Lodge's pronouncements are all to the good. Canon F. W. Cooper, of Prestchurch, Manchester, thinks that certain people who have passed over help those who remain on earth. If you are not too tired, we will add another one to the Greek invocation of Ducdame. Father Francis Woodlock, of the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, Mayfair, in effect says that Sir Oliver may be right, but the vintage—very very old—of the Roman wine cask is a more authoritative source of knowledge. It is somewhat disconcerting to know, however, that about the time when Sir Oliver was talking of unseen helpers, a hurricane swept Santo Domingo, and a preliminary estimate gives the killed at 300. Ten mothers were killed in an explosion at Nancy, France, and twenty-five children were thus rendered motherless. How long can such vapourings of Sir Oliver, blessed by priests and pastors, be allowed to bemuse people who have their work cut out in decently adjusting themselves to the only life they know?

The parish church of Eaton, a suburb of Norwich, was struck by lightning. Celestial negligence again.

Among the epoch-making events in high life, to which the 'umble looks up to for guidance and example, is the record made by Mr. Winston Churchill in the *News-Chronicle*. Sir Evelyn Wood, through regimental discipline, made Colonel Brabazon shave off his beard. We trust the 'umble will continue to turn up the whites of their eyes to the caste that thinks it is being taken seriously.

A farmer and his wife, in Jersey, have, according to a newspaper report, parted with ninety-one good pounds and ten shillings to an individual who was supposed to deal in black magic. Mass for the repose of souls comes in another category to those who are incapable of making two and two make four.

Says *Railo Times*, the task of the B.B.C. as universal

entertainer is no light one. We are willing to admit that. But as regards those hours of silence ordained in the interest of the ecclesiastical industry on Sundays, will the B.B.C. please explain what kind of entertainment the licence-holder is supposed to derive therefrom? We may say that, with the exception of a small pious minority, there is almost universal dissatisfaction with the silence item of entertainment.

Someone has asked: How do people live to be a hundred? Apparently nobody can supply a plausible answer to this conundrum. Some centenarians eschew all the ordinary pleasures of life. Others smoke, booze, and break the Puritan's hundred and ten commandments. Some get right with God, keep parsons, and pray without sneezing. While others treat God and Hell as a morbid joke, and endeavour to make the best of the only world they know anything about. So perhaps the answer to the question is merely: "God only knows."

The *Methodist Recorder* supplies two columns of warning about the "Perils of the Vestry." Any of our readers who are wistfully regretful concerning the religion they have sloughed off may take consolation from the fact that they have also eluded the aforesaid perils.

An American paper says that the heat and drought that have been ravaging America from the Rockies to the Atlantic have done an enormous damage to food-stuffs. Nevertheless, we see no reason why Americans should not go through with the business of "harvest thanksgiving." It would be quite in order to thank the Lord for not making the destruction even worse. He might have done, you know, but for the fact that he has a reputation for mercifulness to uphold.

On the authority of an American preacher we learn that: "It is not very difficult to believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has come into the world; that is a matter of history." For the benefit of those who gulp down not-very-difficult beliefs, we may add that the "fact" of a god disguised as a man having visited this earth is a fact of Christian history only. It is feasible, of course, because similar things are recorded in volumes of fairy tales. But these are myths.

Mr. K. Williamson, a writer in a religious weekly, appears to belong to the class of Christian ass who is so humble that the more his God kicks him, the more he feels sure he really deserves to be kicked much harder. Apparently starting from the thesis that God is a merciful chieftain, he argues thus:—

Disasters may come my way that seem out of alignment with anything I have directly done to bring them upon my head. Yet on a wider view I cannot but concede that when my wrong-doing and my punishment are assessed and audited, there is still a balance of punishment due to me that I have not suffered. He hath not rewarded us according to our iniquities.

We should diagnose Mr. Williamson's complaint as a diseased conscience, whose morbidity is due to the germs of Christian "sin" obsession.

Apropos of this religiously induced morbid mental state, we would ask the Freethinker, whose children are allowed to receive religious instruction at school, whether he thinks his children are likely to be better off with or without that morbid bias. Quite likely we shall be told that this can be removed in the Freethinker's home. But the process is analogous to attempting to drive out poison from the physical systems. It can no doubt be done, but prevention is better than cure. And it is better for the system—physical or mental—if the poison is never allowed to enter it at all.

The readers of a weekly journal have been asked to say whether sex instruction should be imparted at school. Of those readers who object to such instruction, some appear to think that ignorance is the same as innocence; others imagine that wholesome knowledge is dangerous. All seem not to have outgrown the stupid Christian theory that sex is an essentially evil thing. We suspect that the ideas concerning sex held by the objectors are so impure as to make the objectors afraid their children will be taught similar ideas in the schools. They need not fear that wholesome sex knowledge would serve to counteract the impure knowledge picked up in the street. In any case, knowledge of the vital facts of life is more useful to the child than ignorance.

A writer deplores the fact that many people think only of work, and seem to hate any sort of pleasure. Have some fun, says he. This kind of advice will hardly please the parsons, who are always deploring the alleged fact that people nowadays think too much about enjoyment, and not enough of the ultimate destination of their immortal soul. But perhaps the champion of fun is only trying to deliver a counter-blast to the "Christian kill-joys," who think it sinful to try to be happy in a world which their God deliberately made full of unhappiness as a consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve.

From *John Bull*:—

Sir W. Jowitt: "Men in the future will work only three days in the week."

Then they will go to the devil in the other four.

There is a touch of the Delphic Oracle about this comment of our contemporary's. Does it mean that when the workers are able to supply the nation's needs by three day's work, that will be dangerous because they cannot be trusted to keep out of mischief during the other four days? If this is what is meant, the writer of the comment must be an out and out believer in that inspiring Christian doctrine which affirms the essential depravity of human nature. One would expect such a comment from a little Bethel preacher, but it seems hardly consonant with a paper that professes great admiration for the sterling character of the average working man.

In readiness for the next war to end war, the chemists have a deadly liquid which aeroplanes can drop on a town; two tons of it would kill every person in a path seven miles long and thirty yards wide. No one has the right to be horrified at this, if he supports the ancient theory of our diplomats and statesmen that a dispute between nations can be settled only by the people of one nation killing the people of the other. If the justice and equity of a dispute can be discovered only through organized slaughter, then let the means of slaughter be as effective as possible, so that justice and equity shall emerge as quickly as possible.

The Vicar of Chaddesden, Derbyshire, is beginning to see the light—or feel a draught. In his Parish Magazine he says:—

Why has religion so little hold upon the mass of the people? Because religion has been, and still is, built up upon punishments and rewards, and people have found religion out.

People to-day are exceptionally well educated, and graduates of all the universities are as common as flies in summer. No educated person to-day is going to accept worn-out shibboleths such as can be found in the Bible, nor are they going to accept statements which rely solely upon what is called "tradition."

We know well enough that in medieval times, when learning was confined to the very few, when any particular sect or school of thought lacked the proofs for its opinions it simply forged them and was pretty certain not to be found out. But those days are gone for ever, and to-day orthodox religion, or indeed any religion, has

to make good its statements by very definite and positive statements by very definite and positive proofs.

All this is good for religion, because it indicates the mind of the individual, and opportunity is thus given to correct or verify any particular faulty doctrine, of what appears to be a faulty doctrine, and there are such at the present time.

It would seem that the Vicar ought to leave his Church. But the conclusion shows he will not. He will remain there and explain how if you look at a myth from a proper spiritual point of view it becomes a scientific truth—until some one does for that what others have done for the Christianity of yesterday. So the apologetic game goes on. All that one can say is the amount of religion left behind grows steadily less, and constant dripping wears away a stone. The analogue of that is that continuous contact with commonsense has an effect on even the thickest of religious heads.

A large Congregational Church in Derby is to be converted into a Cinema. An official of the Church informed a representative of the *Derby Telegraph* that the Church had become too large for the congregation. There was, he said, no call to-day for a Church seating a thousand people. Freethought has had its effect, evidently.

We have received what we judge to be a circular letter, signed by a Mr. Hartford Harris, hoping that the majority of our readers will support him in a protest against the exploitation of religious subjects by purely commercial interests. He has been shocked by a performance of a film called the "Ten Commandments." Again, he complains that a musician has just produced "a hotch potch of the world's most sacred music," under the title of "Anon Dominic," as a gramophone record in which there is actually interpolated the alleged voice of John the Baptist. The damage will be irreparable by this destruction of faith by "so-called artists," unless some protest is made.

Having paused to do a few shivers, we recover enough to point out that there is a great commercial exploitation of religious faith in other directions. There is the selling of candles and masses in the Roman Catholic Church, there is the exploitation of sacred wells, and sacred remains, the holding of musical services and numerous other things. We do not know whether Mr. Harris is a parson in disguise, or whether he has relatives in the trade who like to maintain a monopoly of these methods of exploitation, but we can assure him that the only real way to stop religious fools being exploited is to knock the religion out of them. But it is not safe to cast Beezlebug out by Beezlebug.

We are indebted to the *Evening Standard* for the information that Fortune Tellers are Making Fortunes. An inspection of the latest list of wills will disclose that many preachers about mansions in the sky leave a good share of the world's wealth behind them for the very simple reason that they cannot take it with them.

England is threatened with the dreadful rumour that the Oberammergau Passion Play is to be reproduced in this country. The writer of "Londoner's Diary," in the *Evening Standard* makes the following grave announcement: "I trust that all men of taste will arise in horror at the proposal," and follows with the sapient observation: "Whatever may be one's religious convictions, it is highly unpleasant to visualize the commercialization of the Christian drama." What, one might ask, is the whole profession of preaching but the commercialization of the Christian drama? And what, also, one might ask, makes the Oberammergau Passion Play right in one geographical spot and wrong in another? There are no prizes for the answer.

National Secular Society.

THE Funds of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

The following form of bequest is sufficient for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by will:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society, and I direct that a receipt signed by two of the trustees of the said Society shall be a good discharge to my executors for the said legacy.

Any information concerning the Trust Deed and its administration may be had on application.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—ANONYMOUS, 5s.

J. WRIGHT.—Thanks for cutting. We have no doubt but that the good folk at Bath will bear up against the shortage of parsons. People usually do.

W. H. SISSONS.—The Secretary will probably write you.

H. BARNARD.—Next week.

T. BLAKE.—Have already an article in hand on the subject.

KERIDON.—Crowded out of this week's issue.

J. CLAYTON.—Yes, we have a very busy season before us, still, better wear out than rust out. Have written you on other matter.

H. CLOUGH.—No one takes up seriously with reform work expecting an easy time. But it is not an unpleasant time, if one has one's heart in the work.

S.A.—There is very seldom any bother nowadays in taking an affirmation. If you experience any difficulty let us know.

T. MARTIN.—Mr. Cohen is far too busy with own special work to undertake—excepting occasionally—lectures for outside bodies. He has had to decline quite a number of such invitations during the past few weeks.

S. W. ELSTON.—We note your pleasure on reading *War, Civilization and the Churches*, but we do not know that supplying members of the League of Nations at Geneva would do much good. It is far more important to get the book well read among the people. That is the direction from which pressure to end war must come.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Roselli, 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.

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

On Sunday next, September 28, Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, on "The Coming of the God's." This will be the first of a series of four lectures under the title of "God and Man." There will be reserved seats at 1s., or a course ticket may be obtained for 3s. 6d. We hope that Liverpool friends will do what they can to make these lectures as widely known as possible.

The arrangements for the debate between Mr. Cohen and Mr. Barbanell, of the London Spiritualist Alliance, are now completed. The discussion will be held in the large Queen's Hall, Langham Place. Tickets, numbered and reserved, Stalls, 5s. and 3s.; Grand Circle, 5s. and 3s.; Unreserved, Balcony, Area and Orchestra, 1s. As the date of the discussion is Sunday, October 12, and no more tickets will be sold than there are seats for, we advise application as early as possible. Tickets may be secured from the National Secular Society's Offices, The Rationalist Press Association, or from the Office of this Journal.

Some friends of the late Captain E. J. Ellam are trying to get a sum of money together in aid of his widow, who is left without means of support. Captain Ellam served with distinction in the war, was decorated and mentioned in dispatches. He will be known to readers of this journal by his articles written under the name of "Lamel" and also by his two books, *Buddha the Atheist*, and *A Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity*. He was a much travelled man and well known in India. Those of our readers who are disposed to help this fund should write Mr. A. Deane, of 13 Beecroft Road, Brockley, S.E.4.

We were pleased to see the following in the *New Leader* from the pen of Mr. J. Allen Skinner:—

During the time Prebendary Gough was engaged in his campaign for religious freedom in Russia, there was exhibited in Brompton Parish Church a petition against the enactment of Mr. Thurtle's Blasphemy Laws (Amendment) Bill. Brompton Parish Church is Prebendary Gough's Church.

The whole of Mr. Skinner's article is well worth reading. It is a timely and much-needed protest against the extent to which the State at present interferes with the legitimate freedom of the individual. Much of our liberty is at present at the mercy of men who by a mere political accident have been thrown into office to-day, and who will be, by another accident, thrown out to-morrow.

But it is worth while remembering, with regard to Prebendary Gough and the *Morning Post*, that nothing is now heard of the campaign of religious lying that was carried on so vigorously for several months. What has become of the thousands of priests who were tortured and killed for attending Church, of the Russia in which all the Churches were closed, etc.? We are glad to think that we had something to do with squashing that particular set of lies, which were circulated here with the dual purpose of creating ill-will against a State which would have nothing to do with religion, and by frightening timid Freethinkers in this country into silence of compromise.

The Present Importance of Physics.

THE minimum definition of a Materialist we take to be one who holds that all emergents are finally dependent on physical conditions. That leaves on one side all definitions of matter, and gives emphasis to the fact played by physics as the basic science.

Therefore Materialists will watch with satisfaction the widening domain of physics as year by year the adoption of its results by other sciences brings them into affiliation. The present (1930) importance of physics compares so favourably with that of the last century that its progress may perhaps best be appreciated by observing that, whereas formerly it was often considered a branch of science, it is now recognized as the very roots. In what follows we shall endeavour to summarize its present position under four categories: (a) its Method; (b) its Progress; (c) its Scope; and (d) its Limitations; with brevity as the keynote.

A.—THE METHOD OF PHYSICS.

As a part of science, Physics aims at answering the question. How? It is descriptive?

It thus aims at establishing working hypotheses, which are fundamental principles of science. An hypothesis is a piece of scientific imagination, and differs from artistic imagination only in that it is in agreement with certain definite percepts (whereas artistic imagination creates a concrete and individual form, quite apart from whether it has a correspondence with reality). These hypotheses are devised to furnish a basis on which to build a system which will correspond with the behaviour of the material world, whenever we are able to compare. When comparison is attended by verification we say our hypothesis works, and we have established a working hypothesis.

The next step is to find how far it extends, *i.e.*, how many facts of experience it will cover. An advance is made when a wider range of observed phenomena is brought within the scope of our general principles.

It is of paramount importance to recognise that a scientific theory may be abandoned without loss to the scientific method. This is illustrated in the new theory of atoms. Nature behaves *as if* the present theory were true—and the behaviour of Nature is the ultimate criterion of truth. We can still use the old "billiard-ball" theory where in simpler problems it is unnecessary to introduce structural complications. But to describe things like radio-activity and spectroscopy we must bring in the newer features (electrons and protons). The new theory is thoroughly materialistic, for it has shown law where law was not hitherto seen.

There is, then, no claim to finality in the details of scientific truth. There is finality in the scientific method, which is the only working method. But, unlike religion, science develops. In consistent Christianity the alleged utterance of an alleged man-god who lived an alleged 2,000 years ago hold good for all time. But the scientific theory is only justified so long as it works. And meanwhile we must utilize it. To refuse to use a tool because some day a better one may be invented would indeed be folly.

So when the philosopher asks, "What is truth?" he must go to the scientist, who will tell him it is the workability of hypotheses, and that is a criterion to which even the "rational" truths of Mathematics must finally conform.

Against this definition of truth it is sometimes objected that the hypothesis of a flat earth worked for centuries. The objection disappears when we re-

member that by "earth" was denoted a relatively local tract of land and sea. After Columbus' voyage the word "earth" took on a new meaning. But the hypothesis that if one walked far enough one would fall off certainly did not work because it was never tested.

In recapitulating, we may say Physics is descriptive, and proceeds by working hypotheses, the behaviour of nature being the criterion of truth.

B.—THE PROGRESS OF PHYSICS.

It is now fully understood that the popular textbook divisions of Physics into properties of matter, heat, light, sound, electricity and magnetism are purely arbitrary. First one partition and then another has been removed, and at the present rate of progress we shall soon be left with a complete interrelatedness, and therefore a unity, a oneness about the whole of Nature, and according to Millikan this unity will also include life and mind. (cf. *Science and the New Civilization*, 1930).

Heat, as has long been known, comes by molecular motion; the molecules in a flame, for instance, being in a higher state of energy (motion) than those of the cold vessel, communicate some of their energy by beating against it, and thence to the contents of the vessel.

Radiant heat and light are essentially the same phenomenon; both the ether waves being identical save for wave-length. Both are identical also with electric wave phenomena—save again for wave-length. We are here dealing with "Ether-Physics."

The next partition to go—and we are here following Millikan again—was that between "matter-physics" and current electricity, electric currents being simply motions of electrons.

And now the partition between "Ether-Physics" and "Matter-Physics" is gone; matter and ether waves are fused together in Einstein's Equator, making matter and ether indistinguishable terms.

Experiments by Harkins and Millikan have shown that energy and matter are fundamentally similar. Stars and atoms disintegrate by radiation (loss of energy) and can be rebuilt by collisions in interstellar space. (cf. *Freethinker*, No. 24).

Millikan also tells us that electrons are both particles and waves, and that light-waves are also corpuscles. Energy, too, is represented in "packets," or "atoms of energy," of which there cannot be less than one of these units—a "quantum," *e.g.*, a "photon" in the case of light. (cf. *Quantum Theory*.)

And so Lodge reminds us in *Beyond Physics* (1930) that not only are light and electricity physical, but they may be considered material as well, it being merely a matter of nomenclature. He would add not only gravitation and cohesion to the material realm, but goes on to affirm that as regards things like beauty and aspiration "all these ultra-material things are known to us only in their association with matter." "I postulate then, as the one all-embracing reality on the material side, the ether of space." (*Beyond Physics*). He then, as a true Spiritualist, goes on to make his material universe an instrument for the manifestation of spirit, whereby latent properties of animation lying about in space "come to fruition by interacting with matter."

But as he tells us this is only speculation, and does not claim scientific authority, we need not include it in the progress of physics. The point is, that Physics traces all phenomena back to fundamental principles. At present electricity is one of these. It cannot be expressed in terms of something more fundamental. We

cannot yet generate electricity; we can only generate electric currents. The question, "What is electricity?" is therefore meaningless. We might as well ask, why is a batsman out when he's bowled? The correct question is, "what does electricity?"

G. H. TAYLOR.

(To be concluded.)

Secular Education in China.

THE petition of twelve missionary bodies to the National Government in Nanking to repeal the recently promulgated laws forbidding the teaching of religion has been answered. Nanking denies the petition, summing up reasons which show that "to have elective religious courses in junior middle schools and to have the privilege of worship in primary schools embody obstacles too difficult to permit the Ministry to grant the request."

The religious bodies who signed the petition are: Church of Christ in China, Methodist Episcopal Church, American Baptist Society, Protestant Episcopal Church, United Lutheran Church, Swedish Missionary Union, Evangelical Church, Church of the Brethren, Rhenish Missionary Society, Methodist Protestant Church, Basel Missionary Society and United Methodist Society.

The following is a translation of the reply, made by the Minister of Education:—

Your petition requesting that all grades of church and mission schools be permitted to have elective religious courses and primary schools to have the privilege of worship, has been received.

Upon consideration of the points raised in your petition, we find them not free from misunderstanding. Let us consider these points *seriatim*.

1.—The first point, that we should use religious teaching in the training for life, is not far from the truth. But this depends upon whether you utilize in your teaching the ideals of all religions, such for example as the teaching of equality and mercy in Buddhism, of universal love and service of others in Christianity; one cannot limit the teachings exclusively to those of one religion. Furthermore, religion cannot be taught by outward forms and practices. If you conduct courses on religion and have worship limited to one religion only, this is in fact mere outward formality and from the educational point of view is not an essential in the training for life.

2.—In the regulations governing the establishment of private schools, the restrictions on religious education are not limited to one particular religion. If we allow any one religion to inculcate exclusively its own principles in non-adults of junior middle school grade and below, this will preempt their minds and deprive them later on when they have reached years of maturity of the ability to exercise freedom in the choice of their religion. This is really the placing of shackles upon their liberty of thought.

3.—Since the principal purpose of your churches in establishing schools is to make education widely available and is not intended to employ education to entice or compel students to become church members, therefore the restrictions against the propagation of religion do not run counter to the prime purpose of the churches in conducting schools.

With regard to the idea that all the children of the 200,000 Christians must be enrolled in church schools, this seems to us to be on the same plane as the attempt to view the world from your own door step and such an idea should not continue to be cherished.

4.—If you propose to experiment in education, basing your experiment on projects related to science and social conditions, this is something

which the Government unquestionably approves and permits. Religion, however, is one type of abstract intangible imagination and is outside the category of educational theories and there is therefore no reason for the Government to permit religion in schools for the purpose of experimentation.

To sum up: There is not only one religion. If we allow each religion in the name of education to vie one with the other to propagate religion, the natural tendency will be to create divisions and strife. The Ministry of Education, in order to guard against such a possible future calamity, is obliged to impose these restrictions which do not apply only to Christianity but to the other religions as well.

Hence to have elective religious courses in junior middle schools and to have the privilege of worship in primary schools embody obstacles too difficult to permit the Ministry to grant the request. Moreover, we hope that you will consider in a sympathetic way this our humble opinion regarding the restriction upon propagation of religion in schools. Let this be considered final and not subject to further review.

At present it appears that there are two solutions to the question which will determine whether or not religion shall be included in the education of Chinese children. The first is that all missions close their schools and that the Christian Church withdraw from educational work as a protest. Bishop White, of the Canadian Anglican Mission in Honan, has already made this gesture, not only ordering all schools to be closed but also ordering buildings to be torn down so that they might not be used by the Chinese for their own purposes. The question arises as to whether or not that is not just exactly what the Chinese Government wants done.

The alternative is for the Chinese Churches, under whose control the Mission schools are perfectly willing to be, to inform the Government of their sympathy with the constructive education of the Christian schools, and to express their feeling that the Government policy is a mistaken policy, running counter to their deepest convictions.

The movement to eliminate the Christian religion from schools has been growing for a year. The first indication came when it was announced that the mission schools had to register. That edict seemed harmless enough and many of the schools did not mind doing so. However, the first provision in the registration stated that no compulsory chapel services or Bible studies would be allowed. The next step followed closely with an order that even voluntary Bible studies be eliminated in the primary and junior-middle schools. In the primary schools worship was likewise forbidden. This order implied that if the missionaries wanted to teach children in their formative years they would have to do it outside school hours and in a separate building.

When the restrictions of the Government had reached this stage a petition was drafted to modify them. Since that petition still further restrictions have been made known and mission schools are now not allowed religious books, magazines, or pictures in their libraries.

The National Education Association recently recommended to the Government that no organization which is not wholly Chinese be permitted to conduct primary schools or kindergartens, and that no foreigner should be allowed to teach or hold responsible positions. The matter has gone no farther than a recommendation but the Government usually accepts the recommendations of the Educational Association.

Since the petition was received the Government had announced that the date of school registration has been extended another year to July, 1931, excepting in Shanghai and Nanking. At the same time, it was

made known that graduates from a non-registered school would not be recognized in higher schools and that students wishing to obtain passports to the United States in order to go there and study must first promise to include no studies of a religious nature in their curriculum.

Reprinted from "The North China Herald."

Holism versus Vitalism.

GENERAL SMUTS and Professor Carr are at loggerheads over a matter of no little importance, to wit—Life—including The Universe, of course. Life with nowhere to live would end all disputes. Though not actually engaged in the combat, Professor Lloyd Morgan has been dragged into the arena by Professor Carr.

For the benefit of the public I have appointed myself custodian of the reputation of these gentlemen. I shall not attempt to settle the matter, however, as I am short of paper at the moment, and some little distance from the British Museum.

My responsibility being *stupendous*—the subject *prodigious*, and the space at my disposal *ultra-microscopic* in comparison, it is incumbent upon me to be brief.

Whenever a dispute was submitted to Jupiter for settlement he dismissed it with a nod of the head and a wave of the hand. But I am not Jupiter, neither has the dispute been submitted to me. And further, a nodding acquaintance with life and the universe is not sufficient. A nod or a wink may do for a blind horse, but one must get right up to "Life and the Universe"—look it straight in the face—grip and wrestle with it.

Now Mr. G. Santayana requires 900 words to explain the character of an Englishman. That's extravagance. I've heard it accomplished in *two*. On the other hand, Mr. H. Belloc only uses 192 to explain *How to sharpen a scythe*, and gives a good edge to it. Professor Carr, however, wins easily with 75 words to explain Vitalism. Poor General Smuts is only an *also ran*. Of course he has to wrestle with a *whole Universe*, and following the advice of William James, gives it us thick in a whole volume. Feeling like John William Mackail, that though a thing be good, it is better with a little Greek, he labels it Holism. But to deal with Holism in the raw would defeat my purpose. I have no desire to leave you like Schopenhauer debating suicide, or yet like Hamlet cursing the Almighty for his canon 'gainst self-slaughter. But neither would I leave you like Oliver Twist empty in the stomach. Rather would I leave you composed with the post-prandial feeling of a Pepys. "Waiter!—Roast Holism for two. What?—Oh well then boiled—no sauce."

"Thanks—yes a pinch of salt goes well with it."

As I was about to say—if Mr. Brown, after consulting his Bankbook, *should* marry Miss Smith, the Two Become One—lawfully that is—and the Church, forgetting all about Vitalism and Professor Carr, agrees that it is so. The Income Tax Authorities however persist in regarding them as Two—and Brown pays. That is contrary to General Smuts' theory, for he stoutly maintains The Universe, as a Whole, Manifests a Tendency to Wholeness. Only a tendency mark you. He does not suggest any pigheaded obstinacy—a *slight* tendency will do if the Income Tax Authorities will take to blinkers and leave us alone.

Now, according to Dean Inge—a man of culture and many words—not lacking in wit at times, though seventy last birthday—if Brown and Smith are Churched they do really and truly substantiate General Smuts' theory, but if not, they give it a foul in the solar plexus so to speak. ("I say Waiter—can we have some more salt.")

To proceed. Any additions to the Brown family still leaves them—One Whole—The Browns. Should Brown senior fail to appreciate Holism in the raw and drown himself, it leaves General Smuts unmoved, and his theory one complete Whole. That as I say is Holism. Not bad is it?—What about a cocktail to swill it down, "Waiter—bring Two Red Velvets sharp—and don't forget the Borage and Orange Peel."

("Here's to Lord Athlumney and Professor Carr with the taste of boiled Holism clinging to the lips.")

Now, when Mr. Brown looks at Mrs. Brown with a *defiant eye*, does he see her. He does *not*. He sees Mr. Brown with a watery eye.

When Mrs Brown condescends to glance at her better half, what does she see. She sees the whole of Mrs. Brown with the defiant eye in the wrong face. (What's that—not convincing?)

Well then, suppose Mr. Geo. Robey is asked to write an article—"Why I Am Worth £500 a Week"—and after looking in a mirror he sits down and writes—"Why I Am Worth More Than £500 a Week"—That is Vitalism. In plain language, Vitalism is a slang term for the utter inability of every individual to see himself as others see him. Professor Carr includes women, but I have some doubts about women.

A French writer complained that he could only discover twenty-five species of women, but he was no Vitalist—not according to Professor Carr. Vitalism only allows a man to perceive one woman—at a time that is. To me, Paul of Tarsus was a sounder Vitalist. He saw men and women—through a glass darkly I'll admit—but he spoke his mind about them. It is not recorded whether he was initiated into Eleusinian Craft robed in a wet blanket and a Red Velvet in his hand, but he wrote as one would say—"Help Yourself."

("What's that—you'd like to hear what Professor Carr says. You shall. Here it is.")

The Vitalist theory is that the universe does not consist of material objects, but of spiritual subjects of experience, and that each such subject in its activity expresses its own nature. In such a universe the activities of other subjects will appear to each individual subject whom they affect as an object of perception and (mark this) the form of such objects of perception will be determined for each living individual by its own nature.

("Only seventy-three eh?—That's Red Velvet")

"At every moment a thing is more than it actually is at that moment"—says Professor Carr. To this I say No! When Brown looks at his Bankbook before putting the question to Miss Smith, it may be so—never afterwards. He sees his banking account with one eye closed, and Miss Smith—through a glass—or two—darkly. After marriage they see each other as Life-worshippers and his Bank Book disappears.

I approached General Smuts on this, but he referred me to Professor Lloyd Morgan, who informed me that the Bank Book would possibly Emerge from some hole or corner when Smith was dead.

CULLWICK PERRINS.

The Mad Parson.

I WONDER, YES I WONDER.

THE most noticeable aspect of this grossly materialistic age is that our young people have almost completely lost the sense of wonder. So used have they become to contemplate the marvels of science, the conquest of the air, the possibilities of wireless and the everyday motor fatalities that they can think of nothing higher than an airplane or anything lower than a motor-cycle. If a sense of wonder ever is present in the faintest degree, it functions solely about mundane things, the expression often being used that it is a wonder we escape with our lives.

The very recklessness of this hazardous age is symptomatic of the indifference of our Youth to the Reality of the Infinite; we seem to think only of the Here and Now, and seldom, if ever, of the After and always. When we have opened our throttles, so to speak, and are taking the corners of life on top gear, as it were, we have no time to think of God. And I hope I may not be misunderstood when I say that when one (or generally two) are speeding at something round about seventy, thought of anything other than the maintaining of an equilibrium, that delightful balance of centripetal and centrifugal force would be to court disaster—that is for this earth life. But if the motor cyclist has said in his heart there is no God but Speed, the Almighty is not unmindful even of the falling of a pillion passenger,

for the bikes of God crash quickly, and they smash exceedingly small.

It is comforting, in these times of Sunday sport, of short skirts, of sweet-shops open seven days a week, to find that among the poets, wonder and awe are expressed with the same fervour as in days gone by, that the Spiritual side of man is not entirely ignored, and that the innate longing for immortality still finds expression in songs beloved of the common people.

I wonder, Yes I wonder,
Will the angels 'way up yonder
Will the angels play their harps for me?

These beautiful words, expressive of a devout longing, are not the sentiments of jaded cock-tail drinking youth, but the soulful yearning of one confessedly growing weary of a million miles travelled and a million of sights seen. Ah, dear friends, all is vanity, and the satisfaction that is not of God satisfies not. I can see in my mind's eye this dear old Christian outside the Churchyard, his hand outstretched for pity. Naturally he was poor, but it is written that the poor are always with us, and as William Blake expresses so beautifully:—

If all were as rich as we,
Then Pity no more could be.

So we must thank the Almighty for the inestimable boon of Poverty which, as seen in others, arouses the feeling of Pity in our tender hearts. Even if our sense of Justice frequently commands us to restrain wildly generous impulses, making us withhold the copper from the street singer who, apparently, is not genuinely seeking work, still let us pity him. God alone knows how, but a sympathetic smile may reflect a spark of comfort to his starving wife and weans.

The Churchyard is a setting beloved of poets and artists. All manners of picturesque beggars, flutters and jettors, deserted mother with child—you know that touching song, "Out in the dreary street ta-ra-ra"—robins picking crumbs from the snow on Christmas Eve, and street artists (with crutches) exhibiting boards on which are travesties of fish heads and Amy Johnson. All gravitate towards God's Acre, their hands, as it were, outstretched for pity—and coppers.

Will I drive up to the Pearly Gates of Glory,
In a chariot of Shining Gold

Will I see the friends who've gone up there before me,
When I'm safely gathered in the fold?

I was discussing this lovely verse at our morning Fellowship last Sunday morning, when one of our students—Alec Smart by name—put to me the opinion that the aged beggar appeared to be a doubter, a sceptic, and probably, worst of all, a Modernist. I had to deal very severely with such debased criticism, the outcome I feel sure of the pernicious doctrines of Bishop Barnes and Dean Inge. It is entirely fallacious to attribute any rationalistic opinions to the venerable mendicant or to accuse him of lack of Faith, merely because in all Humility he expresses his simple trust and child-like belief in the form of a question. No, no, a thousand times do I deny that the saintly beggar has been corrupted by the cynicism of modern youth. Rather must we think of him as the embodiment of self-abasement and true humility. It is not that he doubts that ethereal strings of celestial harps will be played beyond the clouds, but he humbly questions his own worthiness to be played to by angel fingers. Ah, that he who has been tramped abroad in many lands, and starved and begged, and been buffeted, as it were, from pillar to post, begging his bread from door to door, and smoking fag ends; ah, it is hard for the dear old soul to realize that he will be an honoured guest in God's House, that Pearly Gates, and Chariot of Gold will all be for him. But so will the Compensation of God, who is all Compassion and Justice, that the duller the life led in this Vale of Tears, the pearlier will be the gates, the goldier the chariot, and the jazzier and more personal will be the appeal of the harpist. Yes, yes, this palsied patriarch will be re-united to those dear friends who went before him; his dear companions ("pals" I think is the vernacular) denizens of doss-house, of work-house, and even of prison, those who truly believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, will all be crowded on the other side of the pearly gates to greet the veteran who had never forgotten Awe and Reverence and Wonder. It is a touch-

ing picture and raises a lump in the moist eye of the most stoical. Methinks I see them now, their sins and shins washed clean, their wings deftly hung on shoulders, a happy band, blowing saxaphones and singing lustily to the glory of God, and striking lyres in no un-mistakeable manner to give the freedom of Heaven to an old Pal who has fought and won, and wondered, and believed.

J. EFFEL.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."
MALTA AND POPERY.

SIR,—Mr. Corrick has taken a long time over his letter. I guess he has had to submit it to his masters. Whether a single or a joint effort it is sufficiently ridiculous.

The first sentence makes the egregious statement that the whole reason of my "interference" is that I am afraid the Maltese will stick to the priests in spite of the pains I have taken to show what "abject chattels" they would be to do so. Somehow it had never struck me that my fame was great in Malta. For one thing the Maltese do not as a rule read English—or anything else. It is one of the items in the indictment of the priests that "after 120 years they have kept 80 per cent of the Maltese in ignorance." (*Blue Book* p. 50.) Still, I believe there are some copies of *Priestcraft* in Malta, and those who have read it may have retailed its contents (*e.g.*, through the newspapers) and its home truths may have gone widely afield amongst the illiterates. I hope so.

Mr. Corrick's next point is that because Lord Strickland invited an inquiry by the Pope, the Pope's acceding to the request could not be called interference. Make remarks like this to somebody less sophisticated, Mr. Corrick—to somebody less cognisant of the crookedness of Catholic controversy. Lord Strickland *may* have asked for the enquiry because he thought the Pope was as good as he ought to be. Or he may have asked for it in order to force the Vatican gang into the open. If the latter, then he succeeded admirably. The "enquiry" resulted in a demonstration (summarized in the British *Blue Book*) that the Vatican was behind the traitorous behaviour of the Maltese priests, *before* the "enquiry" and during the course of it, the interference grew worse than ever—the gang meanwhile telling lies (*lies*, Mr. Corrick—I do not mince my words—the lies are set out in the *Blue Book* for anybody to read) about its efforts at conciliation. The gangs Jesuitical rascality, very mildly described as interference, was such that our Government got tired of it and suspended our Maltese constitution.

In his first letter, Mr. Corrick referred to a sentence of banishment on Father Micallef. Any casual reader would think (and was probably meant to think) that this meant a proper sentence by a competent court. But when you are dealing with Roman Catholic's look out for double meanings. I asked Mr. Corrick to give the name of the "tribunal" that passed that sentence; also, had Father Micallef left Malta? I do not know how much squirming Mr. Corrick (? and his masters) have done whilst conspiring the "reply"—but here is the fatuous results: "The reports in the Press suggest that the sentence was passed by the Franciscan Order, and that Father Micallef has quitted either Malta or the Order"—and Mr. Corrick makes this further fatuous (and impertinent) addition: "Mr. Boyd Freeman, however, untiringly reminds us of his special knowledge on these matters, and should be much better able to answer his own question"—as if I am an insider of the slave compound! Tell your masters to prime you rather better, Mr. Corrick.

Father Micallef was ordered out of Malta by a scamp of a foreigner named Father Carter. Do I hear you bleating about strong language Mr. Corrick? I speak by the book, the *Blue Book*. Some of Father Carter's rascalities, proved in court (a competent court) are described on page 26. Now the "tribunal" which "sentenced" Father Micallef to banishment was composed of Father Carter's pals in the Vatican gang—and in his first letter Mr. Corrick suggests that the findings of such a tribunal ought to have made Lord Strickland ashamed of himself!—but enough for this time.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN,

Society News.

OUR meetings are attracting a good deal of attention at Trawden, and on Friday last we found a good assembly awaiting our arrival. There was a big element which was certainly hostile to our position, but we were given a good hearing. The questions were mainly crude, but that there was much interest aroused was shown by the many small groups after the meeting closed arguing the various points raised. Our meetings at Higham, Waddington and Clitheroe were all successful.—J.C.

SEPTEMBER is drawing to a close, and there are still gaps in the books of the N.S.S. Each gap indicates an unpaid annual subscription, and members responsible for those gaps will feel obliged for this reminder, and remit without further delay.

Our Society's work and influence is on the increase. Last year the Executive was responsible for the delivering of over 300 lectures, and I am hoping we shall beat that number this year. Many thousands of N.S.S. leaflets have been distributed in different parts of the country, and by a simple device, it is tolerably certain they have been read. We have some good workers and good work is being done. There is a feeling of real pleasure and satisfaction with the sincere Freethinker in the knowledge that by a regular annual subscription he or she becomes associated with the work and workers of our Society.

A meeting of London and Provincial secretaries was held on September 13, at the N.S.S. offices, and proved very useful and interesting. Besides providing an opportunity for the exchange of views and suggestions, the personal contact was a good feature, and should ensure the success of similar meetings in the future.

Mr. J. T. Brighton has been doing good work in Darlington with a course of lectures, which appear to have aroused considerable attention and interest. Mr. Brighton is an enthusiastic Freethinker, and Darlington wants waking up. The Executive of the N.S.S. accepted responsibility for the lectures.

R. H. ROSETTI,
General Secretary.

Obituary.

MARGARET BOWMAN.

ON Monday, September 15, the remains of Margaret Bowman were interred at St. Pancras Cemetery, East Finchley. Wife of the late E. Bowman, both of whom were active and respected members of the Kingsland Branch, N.S.S., Margaret Bowman remained a convinced Freethinker up to the day of her death, which came suddenly and painlessly at seventy-four years of age.

A large number of sorrowing relatives and friends assembled at the graveside, where a Secular Service was read by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

GOD AND MAN.

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LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—11.15, Mrs. Grout—"Evolution and God."

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mrs. Grout—"Lies told to Children."

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road): Saturdays, at 7.30. Wednesdays, at 7.30, Effie Road, opposite Walham Green Station. Various Speakers.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Arlington Road, Park Street, Camden Town): Every Thursday evening, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Sun., 7.30, Stonehouse St., Clapham Road, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday at 8.0, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, at 8.0, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mrs. Venton—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. C. Tuson, E. C. Saphin, H. J. Savory and A. H. Hyatt. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. Tuson and J. J. Darby; every Thursday, at 7.30, Messrs. W. C. Aley and E. C. Saphin; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside the Park Gates, Bayswater Road, during and after the meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.15, Messrs. C. Tuson, and A. Hearne.

INDOOR.

HIGHGATE DEBATING SOCIETY (The Winchester Hotel, Archway Road, Highgate, N.): 7.45, Mr. H. Everett—"Have Animals Rights?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit—"Will America Civilize Europe?"

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN MARKET.—September 21, at 3.0 and 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

COLNE (Swan Croft), September 22, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

CLIVIGER.—September 25, at 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

ENFIELD (Barnes Square), September 19, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

HARLE SYKE.—September 23, at 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S.—Monday, September 22, at 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson and D. Robinson, at Beaumont Street; Tuesday, September 23, at 8.0, Messrs. D. Robinson, P. Sherwin and C. Thompson, at Edge Hill Lamp; Thursday, September 25, at 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Shortt at corner of High Park Street and Park Road. Current *Freethinkers* will be on sale at all meetings. Attention is drawn to Mr. Chapman Cohen's Course of Lectures, the first of which will be given in the Picton Hall on Sunday, September 28. Reserved seat tickets are obtainable at the outdoor meetings.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S.—Meeting of members at Socialist Club, Pilgrim Street, at 3.0.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S.—The Committee meets at 4 Swilly Road, on Tuesday, September 23, at 7.30.

PAISLEY BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will be at the following places commencing Sunday, September 21. Sunday, County Square; Monday, Abbey Close; Tuesday, Barrhead; Wednesday, Abbey Close; Thursday, Collier Street, St. Johnstone; Friday, Abbey Close.

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Secretary: MR. R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1927, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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