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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page.
<i>Character and the Clergy.—The Editor</i> - - -	161
<i>Civil War in the Church of England.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	162
<i>The Sacred Scene-Shifters.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	164
<i>The Religion of the Twentieth-Century Englishman.—</i> <i>A. D. McLaren</i> - - -	164
<i>"Great" Preachers.—Agnes Weedon</i> - - -	166
<i>The Composition of Light.—W. H. Morris</i> - - -	170
<i>The One True Faith.—James Edmond</i> - - -	172
<i>A Modern Catholic Service.—F. G. G.</i> - - -	173
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letter to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Character and the Clergy.

If one wanted decisive proof of the way in which religion has lost touch with the best brains of to-day, it should certainly be found in the character of those who occupy leading positions in the Churches. Quite recently I observed in a number of papers that were reviewing a new book by Bishop Gore an agreed opinion that he was one of the keenest thinkers in the Church. And yet the book disclosed nothing more than a respectable level of mediocrity. Of keen, incisive thinking there was not a trace. A smart youth of seventeen or eighteen, with the requisite knowledge of the history of theology, could have said all that Bishop Gore had to say, and it might have been welcomed as something that promised better things when the young man reached maturity. But as evidence of matured ability it was contemptible. I do not mean contemptible from the point of view of the ideas expressed, it is not impossible for absurd ideas to be wedded to a considerable degree of ability, but contemptible as evidence of intellectual quality, or as measured by the intellect of Churchmen of several generations ago. And now there lies before me a pronouncement of Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, written, I presume, at the invitation of the editor of the *Westminster Gazette*, on "The Moral Condition of England To-day." And a more stupid article it would be difficult for any man—outside the Church—to write. If we grant that he is speaking what he believes to be true, then the article shows an incapacity for understanding what is going on around us that is almost unbelievable. And there is no wonder that men such as Green, and Gore, and the Bishop of London take to religion; there is no other occupation in life in which with so poor ability they could occupy so eminent a position.

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Cause and Effect.

A really clear-seeing person would find nothing in the state of morals in England that would lead him to talk as though the people had undergone an almost irretrievable degeneration. True, tastes have altered during the past few years, but tastes have always been altering. The old think the young are moving too fast, but the old always did think so, and they have always prophesied dreadful consequences of the young

forsaking the beaten paths of their parents. It is a form of deposition which parents, for the most part, resent. And anything above this might easily be accounted for as a temporary derangement due to the war we have passed through, and the peace which the old men of Europe have inflicted on the world. For more than four years the young men were saturated in the war atmosphere, and the still younger generation brought up under the same evil influence. During the whole of that time, and for the purpose of carrying on the war, we had the government, with practically unlimited funds at its command, indulging in what was a systematic brutalization of the whole of the population. The young were brought up in an atmosphere of hatred and bloodshed, everything was done, by the suppression of news and the manufacturing of "official" and semi-official information, to lead the people to believe that a good third of the population of Europe were destitute of ordinary human feeling and decency, and that they possessed far more than their fair share of human vices, and so far as it could be done the manifestations of the higher qualities of man were suppressed so that the war spirit might be kept at full pressure. And you simply cannot do these things without, sooner or later, paying the price. Part of the price paid was the Versailles Peace Treaty. That was the first huge instalment. The other part we are now paying in the blind struggles to get back to normal civilized life. And the complaint of men like Canon Green is due—granting their honesty—to the fact that they see consequences but lack the wit to diagnose causes.

* * *

Some Curious Freethinkers.

Canon Green's thesis is that the important thing is not what men do, but what they think. And he enforces this by remarking that what a man does is partly the result of his circumstances, but what he thinks is the expression of the man himself. So we are to conclude that a man's actions have very little to do with the man himself, and his thoughts have nothing to do with his circumstances. They come from nowhere, originate from nothing, and express the "actual man." If anyone can frame a more stupid thesis than that we should be very interested in seeing it. The rest of Canon Green's article is taken up with the subordinate proposition that apart from reasons derived from religion there is no such thing as morality, no reason for calling one course of action good and another bad. His proofs of this are contained in a reference to Mr. Robert Blatchford (we should be interested in knowing whoever accepted him as either an authority on the science of ethics or of scientific unbelief) who appears to mark the limits of his acquaintance with reasoned unbelief, and two comments, one from a woman graduate of a northern university, and the other from a deputation of four Marxian shop-stewards. Mr. Blatchford, he says, denies responsibility and the reasonableness of praise and blame. I must leave Mr. Blatchford to look after himself here, although, if he did say these things, then he was saying something that was really absurd, and

showed the danger of anyone dealing with things without understanding them. The lady graduate said that there could be no science of conduct if all right and wrong were matters of personal taste and opinion, which is what no Freethinker does say, and one would like to know how much of this is Canon Green's and how much of it is the lady's. The shop-stewards came to him as a deputation—they were "superior, thoughtful men, pleasant and courteous in their manner"—and informed the Canon that the great mass of the workers repudiated all belief in a moral law, and accepted Marx's teaching that morality was a baseless delusion. Again, we should like to meet these shop-stewards, with their quite wonderful knowledge of Marx. It is surprising that all of Canon Green's Freethinking acquaintances should say exactly what Canon Green would like them to say—surprising and convenient.

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Our Blind Guides.

Of course, Marx never said that morality was a baseless delusion, nor do the great majority of the workers repudiate a moral law. The two statements are absurd, and no one with intelligence could credit either of them. What people have differed about in all ages is the application of a moral law, and what were the particular actions that were to be called moral and immoral. What Marx said was that there existed a constant, and a more or less exact, relation between the economic conditions and the current morality. But it takes a Christian to argue that because his conception of the nature of morality is questioned, therefore the existence of morality is denied. It is this kind of stupidity, or knavery, which exhibits the clergy of this country as among the least intellectual, or the least scrupulous section of the community. And one wonders what the editor of the *Westminster Gazette* was thinking about in inviting a man like Canon Green to ramble at length in his columns. If he had got a list of the writing men of Britain and picked out a name with a pin he could not have exposed his readers to more senseless twaddle than he did. These are plain words, but someone must speak out plainly about these "thinkers" of the Christian Church. And to treat them with respect is to connive at the evil, and so perpetuate the imposture of these men figuring as men of light and leading.

* * *

Cant About Morality.

This hocus-pocus talk about morality is one of the stalest tricks of the Christian medicine-man. And he is helped at the game by those semi-liberated people who are chock-full of "ethical aspirations," and who dwell upon the mystery of morality and the grandeur of the moral law as though morality were only safe so long as people did not understand it, and as though morality is not as much a field for human experimentation as anything else. What the informed thinker says is that morality is essentially a phenomenon of group life; its "laws" express the conditions under which group life may be lived with the least harm to the few and the greatest benefit to the many. Moral laws are laws of social health, and when moral laws cease to be that they lose the character of moral. Every state of association has its rules, the laws of the game, and life itself is no exception to the rule. The mystery of morality is just the "mystery" which attaches to the origin and development of any animal instinct or habit or of any social custom. If that were appreciated properly there would be no room in our Press for such exhibitions as those of Canon Green's. It would be realized that the question before us was a study of those social conditions which either raise or lower the tone of moral sentiment, and which make right conduct the easier or the more difficult. Morality

would then be recognized for what it is, a function of social life, and having no meaning or value apart from social life. And with that would go the ridiculous assumption that either the sense or the practice of right and wrong depends upon the prior acceptance of such religious theories as are held by men of the stamp of Canon Green. His dictum that Freethinkers "can offer no logical justification for praising one set of actions and blaming another," that "they have no basis for their ideas of right and wrong," is either an exhibition of clerical ignorance, or the tactics of one who is trying to impose upon the ignorance of those around him.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Civil War in the Church of England.

THE Anglican Church is theologically in a state of civil war. There are two armies in the field, one being a rebel army fighting against traditionalism, which the loyal army defends with vigour. This warfare has been going on for many years, and the heat of the battle grows greater and greater every day. So fierce has the fighting become that those not actually engaged in it are positively alarmed, among whom are several bishops and representative clergymen; and they have signed a memorial to the Archbishop of Canterbury, suggesting the appointment of a Commission to seek some basis of doctrinal agreement within the Church. The *Church Times* is very doubtful as to the wisdom of appointing a Commission, pointing out that the Commission could only issue a report which to be of any real service would have to be accepted as the Church's teaching. Upon its acceptance it would be at once a subject for study, which study would involve interpretation, and, of necessity, there would be different and conflicting interpretations, so that a resumption of the old and ugly civil war would inevitably follow. We are quite sure that the soundness of our contemporary's argument is amply established by the history of the last nineteen centuries. It is perfectly true that controversy, as the memorialists assert, only "helps to perpetuate the existence of hostility and suspicion"; but it is also equally true, to which the memorialists are blind, that no commission's report, accepted temporarily as a statement of the Church's teaching, has ever preserved the theological peace for any lengthened period. As a matter of fact, permanent theological harmony is a practical impossibility.

But about what are the theologians perpetually fighting with one another? Canon Peter Green, of Salford, tells us in an interesting article in the *Manchester Guardian* of February 22. He deems it wise to inform the ordinary layman what the differences are "which at present divide those who specially glory in the name of 'Catholic' from those who would lay stress on their 'Evangelical' character, and again those who style themselves 'Liberal' Churchmen, or Modernists, from those whom they (but not those of whom they speak) call Traditionalists." He says:—

To take first the older and in some ways the more pressing matter of controversy, we may say that the points at issue between Catholics and Evangelicals gather round the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. And there are three points of dispute. One is the rite itself, the Catholics being utterly dissatisfied with the form of service as at present in the Book of Common Prayer, whereas the Evangelicals, almost to a man, resist any alteration in that form. Secondly, there is the question of the perpetual Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, not for the purpose of the communion of persons suddenly taken ill, but for such devotional practices as "prayer before the Tabernacle," and "visits to the Sacrament." And thirdly,

there is the question of the use of the Blessed Sacrament, so reserved, not only in private devotion but for public use in church in a service which is, to all intents and purposes, the post-Reformation Roman Catholic service of Benediction. It need hardly be said that the Evangelicals are utterly opposed to permission being granted for either the public or private use of the Reserved Sacrament.

From his present article it is impossible to learn what Canon Green's own view of the Lord's Supper is, but there are indications that he regards it as something more than a commemorative meal, and that he differs from the Catholics only on two points, namely, the purpose of the Reservation of the Sacrament, and the use of the Sacrament, so reserved. At a regular Communion service the priest consecrates the bread and wine before him, which in consequence become in substance the body and blood of Christ. Then a certain quantity of each element, thus changed in substance, is reserved for the purpose of the communion of persons suddenly taken ill, according to the Evangelicals, but, according to the Catholic party, is perpetually reserved for use, not only in private devotion, but at a public service in church known as the service of Benediction. As merely a commemorative feast the Lord's Supper is at least an intelligible rite; but as a sharing of the body and blood of Christ in company with Christ himself it becomes a purely magical rite, and clearly shows itself to be a survival of the cannibalistic feasts of the primitive Pagan world. Canon Green admits that in the Anglican Church at present chaos and confusion bewilder communicants. In one church in London Mass is said in Latin, and "in a great number of churches there is held, either every Sunday evening or very frequently, in place of Evcn-song, a service described as 'Devotions before the Blessed Sacrament.'" The Canon is hopeful that this chaotic condition would end if the two parties met in the true spirit and sacrificed non-essentials for the sake of peace; but the Archbishop seems to share the opinion expressed by the *Church Times*, that there is very small likelihood that a Commission, if appointed, would succeed in securing peace in the Church.

Canon Green has no patience whatever with the Modernists. He characterizes "the claim that the Church ought to revise her formulæ so as to bring them into harmony with modern ways of thinking and so to commend them to the modern mind" as wholly unreasonable, and we agree with him. Christianity cannot be made acceptable to the modern mind without divesting it of its identity. In reality, this is what the Modernists are doing. They are repudiating traditional Christianity; but, with culpable inconsistency, they continue to use traditional terms, which is surely a species of dishonesty. Canon Green, too, is convinced that "the formulæ of the Church should contain nothing contradictory to the established facts of science"; but, unfortunately, the moment he turns his attention to science he completely loses his way. His estimate of the position of Darwinism in present-day science is entirely false. There is not an atom of truth in the cheap sneer that there are in scientific thinking "constantly changing fashions, fashions no sooner established than discredited." Darwinism has now been the fashion in scientific thinking for the space of fifty years, and is more firmly established to-day than ever. The fact is that Canon Green is either woefully ignorant of science or guilty of deliberately misrepresenting it. He says:—

Forty years ago, under the influence of the teachings of Darwin, teleology was utterly discredited in science, and any belief in some "divine far-off event to which the whole Creation moves" was the mark of a mind blinded by theological prejudice. To-day teleology is dominant in philosophy and biology.

It is indisputably true that Darwinism dealt a fatal blow to the argument from design, but it is equally undeniable that it does the same to-day, and does it more effectually than it did forty years ago. It is men of letters, like Mr. Chesterton and Mr. Hilaire Belloc and a few clergymen who confidently assure the public that Darwinism is dead. No accredited biologist holds that opinion. In 1903 Lord Kelvin, an eminent physicist, declared that "modern biologists are coming once more to a firm acceptance of something, and that is—a vital principle." Replying to that statement in the *Times* of May 17, in the same year, Sir E. Ray Lankester, a leading biologist, said: "I do not myself know of any one of admitted leadership among modern biologists who is showing signs of 'coming back to a belief in the existence of a vital principle.'" A few years later Sir Edwin contributed an article to the *Daily Telegraph*, entitled, "The Maligners of Science," in which he said: "The assertion that the theory of evolution as left by Darwin is now held to be inadequate is fallacious." During last year Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S., delivered a series of public lectures on Darwinism, in which he avowed his enthusiastic acceptance of the illustrious naturalist's theory of evolution. Writing in the *R. P. A. Annual* for 1922, Professor Sir Arthur says:—

Why is it that men who investigate the body and brain of man, and their behaviour under health and disease, are convinced followers of Darwin? These are our reasons: When we watch the development of the body before birth we see it pass through a series of stages which we can explain only by supposing that man has had the lowliest of origins; he passes through the same phases as apes do—all save the final ones, wherein man and ape differ. We see his master organ, the brain, begin in the same way as in lowly animals, and then rapidly assume its dominant size and power.

Now, if Darwinism still holds the field, and holds it with increasing firmness, does it not inevitably follow that its rejection of the teleological argument is even more thorough than it was forty years ago? We confidently challenge Canon Green to supply the names of three admittedly leading modern biologists who adopt and advocate the argument from design. He asserts that "to-day teleology is dominant in biology," which is obviously a lie. It is perfectly true that many psychologists, such as Lloyd Morgan, McDougall, and Sidis, speak of some psychic processes as teleological or purposive, but with them design or purpose is characteristic of the organism, and not an external force or entity exerting influence upon it. Dr. Sidis cannot employ terms scathing enough in denunciation of the teleological doctrine of teleology.

It is the triumph of modern science that accounts for the present turmoil in the Anglican Church and in other denominations as well. Science is a Secularizing factor, and in spite of themselves the Churches are falling under its spell. Theology has received notice to quit, and it is slowly but surely taking its departure.

J. T. LLOYD.

You all know to what condition the Catholic Church had sunk at the beginning of the sixteenth century. An insolent hierarchy, with an army of priests behind them, dominated every country in Europe. The Church was like a hard nutshell round a shrivelled kernel. The priests in parting with their sincerity had lost the control over their own appetites which only sincerity can give. Profligate in their own lives, they extended to the laity the same easy latitude which they asserted for their own conduct. Religious duty no longer consisted in leading a virtuous life, but in purchasing immunity for self-indulgence by one of the thousand remedies which Church officials were ever ready to dispense at an adequate price.—*James Anthony Froude*.

The Sacred Scene-Shifters.

Miching mallecho—this means mischief.
—Shakespeare, "Hamlet."

Uplift thy cross and go. Thy doom is said.
—Buchanan.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH who was, in his own characteristic way, a keen theologian, declared that religions did not die but they changed, and that Christianity itself was undergoing a transformation. The alteration has been taking place so quietly that it appears to have been wrought with the complete unconsciousness of clergy and congregations alike.

In England, the lamented Dean Farrar and other clergymen seem to have been important factors in this silent revolution. With quiet persistence they persuaded a very large number of their co-religionists that "hell," contrary to belief, was not much worse than "heaven," and that everlasting punishment meant only an eternity of boredom. Blood and brimstone were eliminated from the vocabulary of the educated clergy, and left only to the leather-lunged soldiers of Booth's Salvation Army, and to the Roman Catholic Church. After that came the deluge, which has brought upon its flood undogmatic religionism and the rest of the beautiful nonsense which now passes for the religion of Christ.

This dilution of dogma has had its disintegrating effect upon all the Churches. Secularism has become the order of the day. Painful Sabbaths have been replaced by pleasant Sunday afternoons. String bands and soloists take the place of brass-throated preachers. Tame Labour leaders, lady preachers, actresses, and other notorieties threaten to oust the very parsons from their pulpits. This has now been carried so far that it threatens the complete transformation of Christianity. Often the results are startling. Some time since, at a leading Metropolitan place of worship, a well-known actor and a famous contributor to *Punch* occupied the pulpit to pronounce eulogiums upon a world-renowned Freethinker. The queue of people outside the building gave the finishing touch of comedy. It was magnificent, but it was not Christianity as taught for twenty centuries. It surprised one; it was like meeting one's favourite dog in the form of sausages.

Nor is this all. The Prayer Book and hymn collections are being severely pruned. Changes have been made in these hallowed volumes, and barbarous and unseemly language eliminated. The Psalms attributed to David have been rendered fit for recital in a drawing-room, and dogmatic hymns replaced by doggerel with a democratic flavour. It has even been suggested that the "strong language" of the marriage and funeral services needs toning down. It is truly amazing. If this iconoclastic spirit prevails, the Holy Bible and the *Pink 'un* will be the only publications likely to cause anxiety in young ladies' colleges.

The fact is that the Christian superstition is crumbling. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism as at the present day. Never have men attended churches and chapels so little; never have they attended hospital and philanthropic meetings so assiduously. Christianity is being emptied of dogma, and is becoming secularized. The supernatural element in Christianity no longer satisfies, for no faith can satisfy which is based upon outworn ideas and outgrown ignorance. The world-war has woke people from their complacency. Scepticism means approach to the truth, and truth cannot consort with superstition. Men nowadays no longer accept from their pastors and masters the beliefs of their ancestors. Over the pulpits of the fast-emptying churches is inscribed, "To the glory of God." That is the voice

of twenty centuries. Secularism sounds the triumphant note of the future: "To the service of Man."

For two thousand years the churches have been praying "Our Father," and the day of disillusionment came when the flower of the manhood of the civilized world fought like wild beasts and saturated Europe with its blood. Secularism does not pray, but it works for the service of man for man, which will lead, ultimately, to the elimination of superstition and to the glorification of humanity.

Education, too, has played its part in broadening men's minds. Knowledge has widened in ways never dreamed of in the Oriental philosophy of the Christian religion. New tones have grown into human sentiment. All the lights and shadows of life have shifted, and its whole surface has been dyed in different colours. The conscience of the race is rising above priestly dogmas. A new impulse is at hand to make men join hands and hearts. This impulse is Secularism, which marches to ultimate victory under the glorious banners of Liberty and Fraternity.

MIMNERMUS.

The Religion of the Twentieth-Century Englishman.

THE Englishman's religion has long been the subject of adverse criticism by countless foreign observers, but this fact can hardly be regarded as conclusive evidence of a disreputable national character. What most nations are proud of at home is often the very thing that meets with least appreciation abroad. We are assured by our neighbours that there is no word in any other language which exactly represents our *cant*. A German once defined it as "the equivalent of a lie uttered with a good conscience." If this definition is correct, the thing itself is certainly not unknown to the plodding Teuton, who is a pastmaster at reconciling his interests with his conscience and labelling the result a *Weltanschauung*—an attitude to the world expressed as a philosophy of life. The Scot's mind is tinged with a kindred zest for system; but the Englishman cuts a sorry figure at reducing his ideals to a philosophy. He is too intensely practical, and too ready to accept what he does not quite understand; provided, of course, it is expedient to accept it. Where the German speaks of his particular type of "culture" as God's agency for the regeneration of mankind, and the Frenchman of *la mission civilisatrice*, the Englishman frankly bases policy on "Christian virtues." One may recall, too, that it is a commonplace of Italian writers that a brigand nearly always repeats his "Ave Maria" before dispatching a wayfarer. Is this appeal to the Virgin a form of cant, or is it to be rather interpreted as a sign of Christian humility of a kind?

But expediency as a foundation for religious belief is beginning to show large cracks under the strain put upon it, and it is a strain in which every country now shares. The outcry of the religious world is that it is confronted on all sides by indifference. Men and women, especially of the younger generation, no longer argue about religious doctrines, they feel them as unreal. The acrid theological wrangling over infant baptism and election, contemptible as it may appear in the twentieth century, at least pointed to a vital interest in religion. Compared with the speculation of half a century ago on the origin of man and the source of divine revelation, candles, incense and the eastward position afford a sorry bone of contention to a hungry soul. When the spirit of religious institutions reacts feebly to the intellectual and moral environment, they often revert to their primitive emphasis upon the observance of externals.

"No one ever sees a religion die." This may be perfectly true; but the extraordinary feature in the present state of English religion is that the traditional Protestant faith is decaying perceptibly. We are favoured by the professional cleric with a plethora of explanations of the present position. It does not need them. On the upper rung of the ladder is the "national Church, on the lower the Salvation Army, and in between these what is left of the Nonconformist conscience. In all of them there is much more than a suspicion that they do not, collectively, express either the mind or the heart of the nation.

There is an Established Church in England. The popular conception of it is nearly always somewhat hazy, and occasionally the bare fact of its existence seems to be forgotten. Some of the younger bishops and clergy have just presented a memorial to the Archbishop of Canterbury suggesting the appointment of a Commission to draw up an official statement of what is fundamental in the faith. Other members of the Establishment are insisting upon the prosecution of the Modernists. Both the Anglo-Catholics and the Evangelicals are said to have under consideration, for 1922, extensive plans for a campaign to deepen the religious consciousness of the nation.

In the very sordid sphere of material assets the Church's position is said to be far from healthy. This is bad news. However difficult it may be to say definitely what the Church represents in the nation's spiritual culture, it is not to be denied that "living" and "preferment" are among the most frequent terms in the ecclesiastical vocabulary. In all my travels I have not, elsewhere, come across an advertisement quite like this:—

An Advowson with immediate right of presentation to a living in the county of Berks, net annual value £600, is available for purchase with stone-built rectory in 2½ acres grounds; 21 acres of glebe and fishing rights.

The advowsons of livings have a recognized cash value, much like the goodwill of any ordinary business. Mortgages are raised on them, clergymen's wives take an active part in the traffic in them, and the patronage to some of them belongs to Roman Catholic peers. A rich variety of patrons is the characteristic mark of the Establishment. The same may be said of those watching the spiritual interests of the plain everyday man. The Rev. C. E. Douglas (*Yorkshire Post*, February 22) tells us that one bishop, on hearing of Principal Major's heresy concerning the nature of the resurrection body, merely remarked: "All I ask of the Church of England is that it shall last my time." There is no unction about that Right Reverend, and I respectfully suggest that he be promoted to a higher see where sincerity is appreciated. He is at least satisfied about the foundations of his faith, and demands no restatement of "fundamentals." In these days he deserves a certificate of orthodoxy.

A few days ago, crossing Wellington Bridge, I counted thirty-one church-spires, and I happened to know that on the preceding Sunday there was a congregation of seven in one of the churches. In the City nineteen of the Establishment's churches have been recommended for demolition. On May 9, 1920, their total congregations numbered 309. Of course they pay no rates, and the clerical staff and caretakers attached to them are said to draw about £50,000 annually.

The "rock of Scripture" used to be the foundation of the Nonconformists' faith. But latterly they, too, have embarked upon a forward policy. They now pin their faith to a progressive revelation. This has sterilized the sacred message for the average Englishman, who does not shine in drawing nice distinctions between literal and general inspiration. His neigh-

bour north of the Tweed revels in them, and often wonders how he will spend eternity. For the English Nonconformist the heaven of the Apocalypse was quite good enough, and he furnished a bountiful supply of street-corner preachers and tract-distributors to announce the glad tidings. But these men and women are beginning to find other occupations to make life worth living in the twentieth century. Young men of ability cannot be induced to enter the ministry, and even the modest effort of the churches to retain complete control of one day in seven meets with growing hostility. The "survival of the fittest" applies here as much as anywhere else. Our newspapers are asking why people do not go to church. The question of real interest is why they do go.

The perplexities of youthful clerics struggling with their religious emotions no longer supply themes for popular novels. The whole crop of egoistic prigs, "accepting the universe" because they could not help themselves, would now be sent to work on the land. If any still survive, let us hope that they will learn to steer a prudent course midway between those who believe too much and those who believe too little.

Our times are not the wander-years of English Protestantism. Nor do they mark her *via dolorosa*. She has passed both stages and is silently capitulating to the fiat of evolution. The test of a religion's vitality is, Does it remain part and parcel of the texture of the cultural life? Does it exercise any direct influence on the march of ideas? Protestant Christianity can never again inspire a poem like *Paradise Lost* or an oratorio like the *Messiah*, not because poet and composer have declared war upon it, but because high art exacts absolute sincerity which will not allow the artist to impose upon himself. There is a floating body of reverent Agnosticism in England, but it is a highly imperturbable product of that middle-class mind which is too well satisfied with its own world of ideas to feel much enthusiasm for anything else.

When a religion begins to crumble there is always a competition for the dismembered limbs. Hence an all-round clamour for new values, typical of periods like ours. Unfortunately, the supply exceeds the demand. For a brief space Eucken was the prophet of the new hope, but the war came and he was seen to be a thinly disguised form of "Deutschland über Alles." He yielded the lime-light to Bergson's "vital impulse," which in turn was thrust aside to make room for more advanced speculation in the realm of the occult, or for the Catholic Revival. Is there any future for the new missions, or are they but fleeting figures that will hardly fill even one detached chapter in the history of a troubled age?

The standard-bearers of the "one true faith" are working hard to bring home to England the seriousness of existing conditions before she has time to forget that she, too, was once a Christian country. The missionaries realize that the genuine Englishman is not happy with a creed, and that he does not like Authority, especially if it is infallible, to dictate his belief. Besides, he has an empire of his own, and a spiritual dominion within which the nations are to dwell in peace, under divinely appointed leaders, must be offered to him very tentatively. For this reason the Revivalists wisely take their stand on the defects of Protestantism rather than on the positive merits of "the faith once delivered to the saints." They are expounders, not crusaders. The existence of three hundred Protestant sects is their chief asset. With this disunion is contrasted the cohesion of one flock. But here, again, there is a drawback. The word suggests a number of ideas which Englishmen dislike.

There are other competitors in the field. The converts to Spiritualism are not rushing in quite so fast as they were a year or two ago, but they include some

notable captures. At first the war was blamed for "the new craze." This short cut to a scape-goat was most unsportsmanlike. The "craze" was well on its way before the war, and Church dignitaries long hesitated whether they should welcome a fellow-worker in the vineyard or oppose a competing interest. Some of them are still hesitating.

None of the new claimants will be suppressed by the methods which decadent rivals may bring to bear against them. The scientific baggage of the twentieth century is fairly heavy and only a considerable effort will enable the English people to shoulder it successfully. "Good form" counts for quite as much as religious experience in this country. Nor does science easily make converts among those who crave immediate returns in the way of spiritual values. The old materialism, we are told, is bankrupt. The new seems to possess almost unlimited resources.

A. D. McLAREN.

"Great" Preachers.

Learn of me for I am meek and humble of heart.
—Jesus.

THE above quotation always occurs to me whenever my whimsical mood takes me to sit at the feet of any of the "great" preachers of the "Word." I have found them all alike, from the hysterical girl preacher of fourteen years I once heard, who was simply a bundle of nerves, to the well "got up" Nonconformist, with his flowing silvery locks and his lips, eyes, and manner all tuned up for the spectacular. I have heard a "star" of the Roman Catholic firmament, and I well remember the arrogant look of superior wisdom and triumph with which he regarded the "dense" and vast audience. And when he spoke, no fluent phrases with graceful gesture as one might have expected from his notoriety, but just "a bull in a china-shop," with Chapman Cohen crouching underneath the counter. Another priest I heard was a far less impressive figure, but his attempts to hide the defects of an imperfect enunciation through a physical disability, combined with ill-timed and wooden gesticulation, were painful in the extreme. But, of course, one had to remember that he was the son of an illustrious family, and this, no doubt, was a sound commercial asset, attracting a "full house" and fittingly impressing the mob who hung on his words much in the same way as the unfortunate wretches who worshipped at the shrine of his glorified ancestry. He told us that "the mind of man could never discern the cause of human suffering." I wrote a long letter to him on the subject and concluded by saying that much tribulation in the world would be avoided if he, and such as he, were kept at the humble but useful task of digging potatoes.

At the same time I must confess that I have heard sincere preachers, even of the "Word." You can hear good ones at small meeting-houses where the individual has been wrestling with sin, bad beer, a large family, and the bailiffs in. There you get eloquence indeed, fiery, jerky, with a touch of the real "old stingo."

I have also a painful recollection of an unfortunate Salvationist who had spent most of his life among the criminal tribes of India. I was moved by the man's intense sympathy. He was almost wasted to a skeleton, but he really believed he was doing good work. He told us he lived with the tribes, and the conditions he described were dreadful. I shook him by the hand and told him I felt sorry for him. He did not seem to understand me, but I knew what I meant, especially when I found myself consuming a dainty supper of cold chicken in a home where every comfort is the general creed, and we do not even wink our

eyes more than is absolutely essential for the moistening of our organs of vision. My point is that the poor Salvationist believed in mortification and hard work, and my friends and I prefer calm serenity and the azures of Italian skies. But the poor fellow was honest. He knew nothing of rudimentary tails or the mysteries of the Nebula and the wonders found by Joseph McCabe in the Milky Way. He had a heart of sympathy and I am pleased to think he will never live to be old. He was too kind for this world, and my only wish for men like him is to speedily "get hence" and come back to earth again as—

Some sweet-scented herb whose tender green
Fringes the River's lip on which we lean.

He was a victim designed to serve a useful purpose in the outrageous Scheme of Creation, and I don't think the most copious dose of Freethought, combined with steak and onions, would have saved him. The experiences of such as he make us more sensible of the enjoyment of the good things of life which would have a tendency to grow stale if we never encountered the woes of others in odious comparison. Which reminds me of the vicar's wife who said to her friend, Lady Adipose Tissue, "Let us go down to the village, dear, and look in at some of those wretched people who are out of work. John says it cheers them up, and it certainly makes one feel glad to get back and enjoy the comforts of home again." The vicar's wife was quite right. She perfectly understood the meaning of Self in the Scheme of Creation, and sensible women of that character are rarely troubled with bile in the stomach. And so it is with the "great" preachers. The foolish self-sacrifice of the man Christ is ever on their lips, and I have heard some of them dilating on the "refining influence" of poverty with so much enthusiasm that the ooze of a seven course dinner was plainly visible on their florid countenances. Oh, isn't it a fearful game?

And now Woman has appeared in the pulpit still using this unfortunate Nazarene as a means of forcing her own personality into the limelight.

We had a lady preacher here in Liverpool a little time ago, and as she has now reached maturity as a "great" preacher, I was anxious to see if, according to the breed thereof, she was "true to type." She was going to tell us "What was wrong with the world, and how we could put it right." She had a great opportunity. The world, she said, was very sick, but Jesus would come with his healing balm as soon as we cared to invite him. It reminded me of an old quack doctor I used to know, a born humorist. His outside assets were a clean shave and a silk hat and frock-coat. Internally he was full of pawn-tickets, and he would tell the mob in the market-place, "I don't want your money. I am only here to advertise the goods I sell." This lady preacher said we needed a spiritual awakening. God was Love, and we only needed to prostrate ourselves before him when the rocks would open and the fountains of grace commence to flow. God was lavish in his gifts to man, but she failed to explain why steak and onions so seldom come in the way of the unemployed.

According to this lady everything serves a useful purpose; disease is good for the doctors and the undertakers she seemed to infer. Nothing is wrong; God is behind it all with his Fatherly eye, etc.

I put her a question to this effect:—

Did she not think that scientific research and physical knowledge of the Scheme of Creation had disclosed the sinister fact that murder was its universal law, and how could she reconcile this with a Merciful Father who had created animals with unerring instincts to destroy each other in order to maintain life under this hideous and monstrous scheme?

And might it not be possible that the pernicious

doctrine of self-sacrifice as preached by Jesus was the cause of all our woes so far as mankind were concerned, as opposed to the more rational outlook on Life, where refined and cultured self-preservation would be the method of world-emanicipation and more strictly in harmony with natural law?

The "great" preacher seemed perturbed. She was before a vast audience composed largely of the clerics of Liverpool, but she was aware also of the presence of a necessary disinfecting hostile element. The parsons realized that their job was in danger, but that was nothing to the lady. Her reputation was at stake, and it was badly scorched before she had done with my question. She told the audience that my statement was a misreading of science, and though the animals were killed by each other it was done very quickly and almost without pain. She wished to know if I had read Professor Thomson on the subject, or Professor Somebody Else, or was I aware that God was Love, and He had done all things wisely and well? I felt inclined to rise and say: "No, my dear, I have not read the books you mention, but I have been bitten by God's fleas."

AGNES WEEDON.

Acid Drops.

It is clear that a general election is near at hand, and Mr. Lloyd George is as evidently bent on rallying the religious interests to his side if he can manage it. There are negotiations going on with the Churches in the matter of making the provision for definite, and demoninational religious instruction in all elementary schools compulsory. That is intended to capture the Church party, and the other day there was a breakfast party given at Downing Street to Free Church representatives. No report of what was said was issued to the Press, except that the talk was about religion and that the Prime Minister laid down the following general proposition: "That it is necessary for the Churches to stimulate the spiritual revival that is needed in order to improve the material conditions of the people." We are also told in the *Daily News'* account of the interview that one of those present said afterwards that the Prime Minister "did not ask us to back Mr. Chamberlain and himself at the next election. All he asked us to do was to pray for him." Well, that is enough. To pray for him meant to work for him, for the Prime Minister is not quite fool enough to think that the prayers of the Free Church ministers will win him the election. He would hardly be content if they prayed for him and voted for the other fellow. The request has just that atmosphere of humbug about it that would serve to endear it to British Christianity.

In any case the combination spells danger to all lovers of real reform and enlightened justice. Free Churchmen are not likely to give their support to Mr. Lloyd George—neither are Churchmen for that matter—unless they receive good value in return, and, in any case, arrangements of that kind spell danger to the rest of the nation. It means that national advantages are to be sacrificed to sectarian advantages. For all that these people are after is the welfare of their particular Church. Nothing else is of much account. What we should like to point out is that so long as Mr. Lloyd George or anyone else is Prime Minister it is a piece of impertinence to make these back-stair arrangements with this or that religious sect. A fair-minded man would realize that he is Prime Minister of Britain, not the leader of a Christian sect. His religion is his own business. He is entitled to have what religion he pleases, but to use his position to help any religion is to misuse his power and to brand himself as unfit for the place he occupies.

We should dearly like to see a full report of what did occur, and of what actually was said, particularly as we are told that Mr. Lloyd George "supported his argument with illustrations from European and home history." Mr.

Lloyd George's ignorance of European history has always struck us as being so complete—in this respect he is unique in the record of British Prime Ministers—that it would be entertaining to go over his illustrations and estimate their worth. It would, we suspect, be history as understood and taught by the ordinary dissenting local preacher. In that respect the Free Churchmen were wise in not publishing any detailed report.

Major Leonard Darwin, speaking at a dinner of the Eugenics Education Society, said: "Two centuries hence eugenics will have become a factor in religion." If this be so, religion will have to greatly change.

"The clergy of to-day are subject to many temptations," declared Mr. F. Perrott at Caxton Hall, Westminster. Unfortunately, the Men of God appear to be able to withstand everything except temptation.

The latest sensation in Stirling, says the local *Observer*, is a lecture announced by a local minister to enable him to pay the rates of his "modest little Manse." This gentleman's salary is £400 per year. Not a colossal salary, true, but we gather from the New Testament record that his Lord and Master was not in receipt of anything like that sum.

A rather interesting discussion has been proceeding in the *Glasgow Herald* on the relative morality of pre-reformation and post-reformation Scotland. It is largely a domestic quarrel, and to the impartial outsider it is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. The picture of the "purity" of Protestants as against the "impurity" of Catholics is as much a myth as is the purity of the primitive Christians as against the impurity of the contemporary pagan world. Contemporary writers of reformation times are not struck by the purity of the reformers so much as by the ferocity and the intolerance of both parties. And if, as usual, there were some features in which one party was better than the other, it was worse in other directions, and on a balance the amount of good and evil was about equal. And we scarcely think that the morality of Catholic Scotland could have been lower than the morality of Presbyterian Scotland as depicted by Burns and other writers. For lechery and drunkenness one would think that the Scotland of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could hold its own against any other period.

In either case the argument is destructive of the claims of Christianity. For both Protestant and Catholic are branches of the Christian Church. The Catholicism which is assailed by the Protestant is one of the oldest form of historic Christianity, the only form of which we have any sure evidence for very many centuries. And if the consequence of its reign was to leave the people in the state depicted by the extreme Protestant, what are we to say of the alleged moralizing influence of the Christian creed? If the Catholic is right and a consequence of the revolt against the Catholic Church was wide-spread demoralization among the people, it is plain that its own influence upon character could not have been very effective for good, seeing that a mere rejection of theological doctrines was enough to set up moral deterioration. In any case, and upon any theory, the plea of the moralizing influence of Christianity goes by the board.

We venture to draw the attention of the Home Secretary to a cartoon published in the *Cunard Magazine* and reproduced in the columns of the *Birmingham Weekly Mail*. It represents Noah and three members of his family in the Ark, surrounded with animals, and the letterpress runs, "Noah in the main cabin of the Ark, reproaches second officer Ham for omitting to indent for disinfectants." Now that is clearly blasphemy, and we suggest that runaway Shortt should screw up his courage to the sticking point and set the engines of the law to work. Mr. Justice Avory might be relied on to conduct the case for the prosecution.

The Lord Chief Justice has resigned, and we do not think his resignation will be regretted. He was appointed only a year ago, at the age of 77, and his appointment was a mere piece of political jobbery. He was put there to keep the place warm for Mr. Gordon Hewart, and retires now the other man is ready. It was a scandal to appoint a man of his capacity and age to such a post, and his labelling blasphemy as a dangerous crime was a measure of his capacity and stupidity. We speak in this way with reluctance of so aged a man, but when he takes a position of dignity and responsibility it is adding wrong to wrong not to speak plainly. It would have been quite impossible for any man of genuine culture to have spoken of blasphemy in such terms as did this one year Lord Chief Justice, and for the dignity of the English bench we hope that better and younger men will in future occupy so important a post.

The Lord Chief Justice's services in keeping the place warm will be duly rewarded. His pension is raised from £3,500 to £5,600 per year. This extra £2,100 pension for sitting in the chair of the Lord Chief Justice for about twelve months cannot be considered bad pay. And the only thing of note that he said during the whole of the time, the only thing that will cause him to be remembered, is the sublime imbecility that blasphemy is "a most dangerous class of crime." The poor patient public has to pay even for stupidity. Before that he was known as the "flogging judge," owing to his partiality for the lash.

The *Yorkshire Post* (February 28) states that the question of allowing Sunday tennis in the public parks is at present arousing a good deal of strong party feeling, for and against. Already Sunday boating is permitted at Roundhay Park, and it is expected that there will soon be a hefty discussion in the City Council in regard to Sunday golf on the links controlled by the municipal authorities. Rev. Francis Wrigley, of Salem Congregational Church, Leeds, has entered the lists as a stout antagonist of Sunday games in the Leeds parks. He points out that Sunday "has been, in the past, the great safeguard of religion," and that it "will become simply another bank holiday" if the present secularizing tendencies are not checked.

In Streatham there is a similar agitation for Sunday games, and also similar clerical opposition. Rev. A. Wright, of All Saints' Church, bases his antagonism on almost the same grounds. "If Sunday was scrapped, the sluice gates would be opened to still further neglect of God and religion." The reverend gentleman improves the occasion by also denouncing Atheistical and Socialistic Sunday-schools. The keynote of this campaign to prevent Sunday games is clearly professional interest, and it is as well to know that in this respect there seems to be little choice between the Anglican and the Nonconformist soul-saver. We urge this matter upon the serious attention of all wage-earners and Labour leaders, for it is their class that especially stands to lose by enforced "Lord's day observance" of this kind. Members of the other classes have their own tennis courts and golf links and make full use of them on Sunday.

On the door at Brompton Oratory one may read a notice announcing that on Sunday, March 12, the film "Christus" will be produced in St. Wilfrid's Hall. "Admission by ticket only, price 2s." We doubt whether this charge is legal. In Manchester a non-religious body was not allowed to produce film pictures and charge for admission. At most of the Sunday concerts in London the charge is, at least nominally, for the seat only. Where is the "spunk" of a people that can tolerate such discrimination between the religious and the secular sections of the community?

The brothers Wood are at Burton, where the beer comes from. In three quarters of a column of evangelistic cliché Mr. Frederick Wood fulminates against everything except

housemaid's knee, and concludes with the necessity for prayer. He says: "With prayer they could shake the town from end to end." The history of prayer assures us that by these means not one beer barrel can be shaken from the top of the pyramids that greet the visitor to Burton-on-Trent.

A Burton-on-Trent paper announces a Hotchkiss gun class and Sword Drill for the local yeomanry. Presumably the sword drill is to be relied upon when we are visited by an aeroplane dropping a ton bomb of poison gas. As we are assured that we are a Christian country, evidence in support is now forthcoming from the pages of the *Burton Daily Mail* (February 27). If Voltaire should come again and pitch his tent in the town of Breweries, Churches, Chapels, and poverty, we should laugh and weep at the muddy-minded beast of ignorance, and also the lilliputian efforts of evangelists to clean up the mess created by the war, sanctioned, approved and blessed by the Christian religion. The brothers Wood might do worse than read the files of the *Freethinker* for the years 1914-1918 as a spiritual purgative and an aid to clear thinking.

A lady called as a witness in a Portsmouth police court declined to either take the oath or to make an affirmation. She said she was an Atheist and demanded that her evidence be taken on her word. Of course, the magistrate was unable to take evidence in the circumstances and she was ordered to stand down. We cannot quite understand this lady's position, since the affirmation is really taking evidence on the word of a witness that the truth will be spoken. Probably, what was in her mind was the thought that the asking for any undertaking implied that the truth would not otherwise be told. That may be so, but, on the other hand, in the absence of some undertaking we do not think that it would be possible to prosecute anyone for telling a deliberate falsehood in a court of law.

The Monmouthshire Baptist Association passed a resolution of protest against the teaching of Atheism in South Wales. It is particularly upset at the knowledge that children are being taught "there is no God." We imagine, as a correspondent suggests, that the complaint should be that the children are not being taught there is a God.

Pity the poor clergy! One after another the things for which they have fought are being given up. Bishop Welldon, Dean of Durham, now says that the Puritan Sunday is, "I am afraid," a thing of the past. He says that there are large numbers of people who will not go to church in any case, and therefore the various Councils ought to sanction Sunday games and sports in public spaces. But, he says, these should only be permitted at times which are not the hours of "divine service," and should not be games that would attract spectators. Perhaps if arrangements were made that the games should be played in underground passages this would fall in with the Dean's suggestion and meet with his approval.

The Dean's comments let the cat out of the bag nicely. He does not like Sunday games, but he is afraid that they cannot be prevented much longer. And as they cannot be prevented it will be best for Christians to pretend to be in favour of them. That will prevent the Church sinking still lower in the public estimation. But they must not be permitted during the hours of divine service, because that would enter into open competition with the churches. And that robs the suggestion of the last shred of decency. For if Sunday games are good, it is the most brazen of trade interests which demands that they shall be prohibited during such times as the churches are open for business. And if they are bad, it means that these Churchmen are ready to connive at anything so long as it will help to keep them a little longer in a position where they can live on the credulity of the general public. The clergy to-day have neither the courage to stand by a principle nor the honesty to give it up.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

March 12, Manchester; March 19, Leicester; March 26, Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

L. MASON.—Thanks for suggestions, which we will bear in mind. We quite agree with you as to the necessity for keeping the matter of the Blasphemy laws before the public. It would be advisable to get a leaflet out for electioneering purposes explaining what these laws are.—We should like to see the North London Branch meetings better supported than you say is the case, but a letter of the kind you send should come through the secretary of the Branch. Anyway, we hope that North London Freethinkers will note the announcements in our lecture notices and duly attend.

A. BARTRAM.—We already supply a number of libraries with free copies of the *Freethinker* and will add the Newcastle ones to the list if they will show the paper in the reading room. So far as our means permit we will do the same with other libraries in the country.

J. S. FAULKNER.—Glad to hear from a Christian reader of this paper of so old a standing. As such you will recognize that it is quite impossible to publish a paper week after week and fill it with matter that will please all readers. Some are certain to disagree with what is published, and others will think some in "bad taste." There is a certain discipline in taking what is given.

W. B.—Thanks for versification of the mediæval story of the tailor in heaven. But it is rather too lengthy for our columns. You will find a prose version of the tale in Spencer's *Study of Sociology*.

F. G. GRAHAM.—Pleased you find *Theism or Atheism?* and *A Grammar of Freethought* so valuable for propaganda. We, too, should like to issue an edition of both works at such a price as would place them within reach of all. When that long expected millionaire comes along this may be done. We agree with you as to the fine field for Freethought work that Wales offers. Keep pegging away.

AN OLD FRIEND.—We are greatly obliged for what you have done.

G. ROYAL.—Many thanks for sending card, and for your help in pushing the question of the abolition of the Blasphemy laws. We want the names of as many clergymen as we can get who are on the right side in this matter.

J. H. PARKER.—We quite appreciate the difficulties of one like yourself in Belfast to-day, but we do not see in what way we could be of service. The whole Irish question is a splendid example of the demoralizing influence of religion, and it is to be hoped that when the political situation clears a little the consequence will be to clear the priest out of politics.

A. LENTZNER.—MSS. received. It is not without merit, but we are afraid that it would not be of sufficient general interest to our readers for us to use.

T. BLSEY.—Your description of *The Other Side of Death* as a "corker" is flattering. All we can say is that we intended it to be a "stopper" so far as one superstition is concerned, and if it serves that purpose we shall be content.

J. BRESE.—Sorry to have missed you when we were last at Birmingham. We note Colonel Amery's reply to your enquiry as to his attitude on the Blasphemy laws. It was evasive, and we are afraid not much help would be given from that quarter. But we feel sure we can rely upon your pressing the matter when the proper time arrives.

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

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

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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.

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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.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—

The United Kingdom.—One year, 17s. 6d.; half year, 8s. 9d.; three months, 4s. 6d.

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Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 12) Mr. Cohen visits Manchester. He will lecture in the Rusholme Public Hall, Dickenson Street, at 3 and 6.30. Manchester friends will please note. The last time Mr. Cohen lectured there he was favoured with some opposition from the local clergy. We do not know whether they will venture to renew the attack. Next Sunday (March 19) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Leicester.

There were two fine audiences at Nottingham on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen. In the afternoon there were numbers waiting outside the hall in which the Cosmopolitan Debating Society holds its meetings for the doors to open, and the place was inconveniently crowded by the time the chair was taken. Even then many were unable to get in at all. The Corn Exchange, where the evening meeting was held, is a much larger hall, but that was again well filled. Judging from the interest and the applause at both meetings those who came seem to have enjoyed themselves thoroughly. There was a good sale of literature, and notices of the meetings appeared in the local papers.

Glasgow friends will please note that Mr. Lloyd lectures twice in the city to-day (March 12). The morning meeting will, we presume, be held in the City Hall Saloon, Candleriggs, at 11.30. We are not sure whether the evening meeting will be held in the same building, and we have no further information to hand. But the local advertisements will give full particulars. We hope that the Glasgow saints will see to it that the hall is crowded on both occasions.

We have received several letters dealing with those which have appeared in recent issues from G. O. W., Mr. Marriott and Mr. Bayfield, including one from Mrs. Bayfield herself. We regret that their length and our very limited space prevents their insertion. Mrs. Bayfield resents the imputation that she objects to hearing views different from her own, and from what we know of that lady we should say that her resentment is quite justifiable. Her objection is to political articles appearing in the *Freethinker*, and we object to that ourselves. But in this respect our correspondents appear to have gone wide of the mark. There is a very distinct difference between a political discussion and an article which claims to deal with the philosophical basis of a rationalized society. With the latter we are all more or less concerned. How far the State is justified in interfering with the freedom of the individual, or how far voluntary co-operation is able to take the place of governmental rule cannot well be called political questions, but we do not observe that any of our correspondents address themselves to this fundamental issue.

We have received a letter from Mr. Joseph Fothergill the spirit and the letter of which we quite endorse. Mr. Fothergill's letter is an earnest appeal to Tyneside Freethinkers to be up and doing during the forthcoming summer. Summer is a time when there are many

opportunities for propaganda, and if the friends on Tyne-side will take full advantage of the opportunities that offer they will not alone spread the gospel over a wider area during the summer months, but they may provide the nucleus for effective work during the winter. Those who care to help, or have suggestions to make, might write Mr. J. Fothergill, at 3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock, South Shields.

Notices in connection with the N. S. S. Conference have been sent out to the Branches by the General Secretary, and we hope that those concerned will be busying themselves in the matter. All matter for the Conference Agenda should be sent in as soon as possible. After the next meeting of the Executive, which will be at the end of this month, we shall be in a position to say where the Conference will be held this year. We hope that the improved railway facilities will enable a larger number than usual to attend. It is the one occasion when Freethinkers from all parts of the country have the opportunity of meeting each other.

We venture to again call attention to the form in connection with the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws which is printed on the last page of this issue. We must try to get someone in each constituency who will worry the candidates at the approaching general election, and who will also see that they get an answer to their question. If we do not show ourselves in earnest over the matter we shall have only ourselves to blame if our efforts fall short of success.

At its meeting the other evening the Committee of the Society appointed the Rev. R. Sorensen to act as Secretary. Mr. Sorensen is a young man, and is one of those Christian ministers who prefer their religion to stand without the support of the policeman and the prison warder. We consider it fortunate that the Committee has managed to secure a clergyman to act as Secretary, as that will remove from the public mind the suspicion that the Committee is acting as a cloak for "Atheistic propaganda." The Society has but one object, that of repealing laws that are unjust and partial in their operation, and as such offend all with a keen sense of social justice. As we have often said, it is a measure of social justice and sanitation. The Society's office is at 5 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C., and the subscription is 2s. 6d. per year. Those who wish to help by either joining the Society or forwarding subscriptions will please write the Secretary at that address.

The Rev. Godfrey Bell, who had been sent a copy of Mr. Cohen's pamphlet on *Blasphemy*, writes from Streatham, "I agree with the writer that the laws relating to Blasphemy in our country are anomalous and stupid, and that any 'faith' which feels the need of such defences must be in a parlous condition. Let us by all means have fullest freedom of speech." We are glad to welcome the Rev. Mr. Bell as among the elect of his profession.

A friend living at Streatham wrote Sir W. Lane Mitchell on the question of the Blasphemy laws. He replied to the effect that he could not interest himself in the Gott case, and a further letter brought no reply. We trust that Freethinkers and some others will interest themselves in Sir W. Lane Mitchell when election time comes round. We quite believe that the last thing in which the vast majority of the present Parliament are interested is justice.

One of our readers who has been interesting himself in finding new outlets for the *Freethinker* writes that the paper is now on sale on the bookstall at Mark Lane station. We hope that our readers who use that station will bear this in mind. All the bookstalls will take the paper, and all other of our publications, to order, but not many of them display it. We are the more grateful to our friends who do what they can to induce newsagents to show the paper, and we hope that more will help in

this direction. The present state of trade makes these helping efforts of more than usual value.

We are very pleased to learn that Mr. A. B. Moss had a large and appreciative audience at Birmingham on Sunday last. There were many strangers present, and a number of questions were asked at the conclusion of the lecture. There was also a good sale of literature. These are all features that give cause for satisfaction to all engaged in the work.

The Composition of Light.

WHEN one holds up a prism of glass to the light one sees through it the colours of the rainbow. What is the explanation of this? Before attempting to explain this phenomenon let us be clear on one or two preliminaries. The sun is for ever giving out radiations, which are known collectively as sunlight. The solar radiations are supposed to be conveyed through the ether (which is believed to pervade all space) in the form of waves; the transmission of the solar energy being somewhat analogous to the sending of a hump along a rope fastened at one end, and jerked at the other. The hump created by the jerk travels through the medium (the rope), although the rope itself does not move forward. The *ether waves* are of various lengths, and can produce different effects. If they fall upon our bodies the longer waves may be absorbed, and the energy of the wave-motion be transformed into heat; if they fall upon the retina of the eye, the shorter waves may produce the sensation which we call light, and if they fall upon a photographic plate or upon a green leaf, the shortest waves may produce a chemical action. These shortest waves are known as *actinic waves*. In passing through the ether the waves do not give rise to any of these effects.

These radiant rays, which, in addition to possessing heating properties, possess the peculiar power of exciting the optic nerve, are not all of the same wave-length. The different rays can be arranged thus:

Dark Heat rays; Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet; Actinic Rays. The only essential difference between them is that the wave-length continuously decreases from first to last. Thus the shortest waves to which the eye is sensitive give rise to the sensation of violet, whilst the longest give rise to the sensation of red. Heat waves have a greater wave-length than even red light waves, and the actinic rays have wave-lengths less than that of violet light. The wave-length of red light is .00007594 centimetres, and that of violet light .00003930 centimetres. Which is, I fear, of an order of minuteness beyond our comprehension.

The *dark heat rays*, the *visible spectrum*, and the *actinic rays* together make up what is known as the *complete spectrum*. All the rays have heating and actinic properties in different degrees and under different conditions, but only those of the visible spectrum have the power of exciting the sensation of vision. The intensity of light rises from a minimum with the red rays, rises to its maximum with the yellow light, and returns to a minimum with the violet rays.

Now common observation shows us that light travels in straight lines; were this not so, there is no reason why we should not be able to see round corners. But when a light ray passes from one homogeneous medium (such as air, for example) to another homogeneous medium (say, water) it is bent, or refracted, at the surface of separation. This explains why a pond of water seems more shallow than it really is, and why when a stick is stood in water, that part which is below the surface of the water seems to be bent away at an angle from that part which is in the air. When a beam of white light (which is, of course,

compounded of the various coloured lights of the visible spectrum) passes through a glass prism, each constituent of the beam suffers deviation at the surfaces of separation to a different extent. The light of shortest wave-length is deviated most, and that of longest wave-length least, and thus the different constituents of the beam are, as it were, separated, each travelling in a definite direction determined by the refraction it has experienced. This phenomenon is called *dispersion*. Obviously the red rays are bent least, the orange a little more, and so on to the violet rays which are bent most of all.

The coloured band of light, ranging from red, through orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, to violet, is called the visible *spectrum*.

Newton was the first to demonstrate that the light coming from the sun is of a composite character. He caused a beam of sunlight to come into a dark room through a small shutter, and then to fall upon a glass prism held so as to refract or bend the light downwards upon the opposite wall. The light was found to be drawn out into the coloured band, now known as the visible spectrum.

White light can be compounded of its constituents. This synthesis can be effected by interposing a second prism of the same material and angle as the first, with its angle reversed, between the first prism and the screen upon which the spectrum is received. The dispersion of the first is thus neutralized, and white light reformed from the coloured light. An easier method of indicating that white light can be compounded of the coloured lights of the spectrum is to paint them on the different sectors of a piece of round cardboard as nearly as possible in the proportion in which they appear in the spectrum. If the card be then twirled at a rapid rate, it will be found that the light from the card gives rise to the sensation of an impure white or grey. The reason for this is that the sensation of light endures for an appreciable length of time, and the eye experiences all the colours on the card before the sensation produced by the first impression has faded. Hence, there is a kind of compounding of sensations, and one seems to see a dirty white. (The impression which the retina of the eye receives lasts for about one-tenth of a second.)

Rainbows are caused by sunlight falling upon drops of water, whether in the form of rain or spray. The observer must have his back to the sun; and the centre of the bow is the point in the sky directly opposite to that occupied by the sun at the time of observation. In the *primary rainbow* the red colour is at the outer edge, and the violet colour at the inner edge. In the *secondary rainbow*, which is sometimes seen above the primary, this order is reversed; the violet colour is on the outer, and the red on the inner.

The radius of the primary rainbow as a whole is always about 41 degrees, and that of the secondary bow about 52 degrees. When, therefore, the sun is on the horizon the bows seen are the largest possible. As the position of the sun above the horizon increases the centre of the bows get more and more below the horizon, and the arcs which are visible get smaller and smaller. When, at length, the sun has an altitude of about 41 degrees the primary bow disappears; and when the sun's altitude exceeds 52 degrees the secondary bow also disappears. This is why rainbows are never seen in the British Isles in the middle of the day in summer.

It is not easy to explain the optical cause of the rainbow in simple terms. Light falling upon a raindrop is internally reflected and emerges dispersed into the spectrum colours, from violet to red. From the lower drops violet light reaches an observer's eye; and red light reaches him from the upper drops; while the various drops between contribute the intervening

colours of the spectrum. In the secondary rainbow the sun's rays undergo double internal reflection in the raindrops, and emerge broken into the spectrum colours from red to violet.

Our knowledge of the spectrum is of enormous value in determining what elements are present in the heavenly bodies. When such substances as sodium, strontium, and lithium, or compounds containing them (salt is a common example of a sodium compound) are burnt in a non-luminous flame, and the light from the coloured flame observed through a prism, a spectrum is seen consisting of bright lines, which are different for different substances. The light of incandescent sodium vapour, for example, produced by burning common salt in a flame, when observed through a prism is characterized by a yellow line, and the forms of light emitted by other substances when burning are each distinguished by rays of a particular colour and position in the spectrum. It is thus possible to analyse a substance by examining the light it emits when rendered luminous. The instrument used for this purpose is called a *spectroscope*, and consists essentially of one or more prisms, with an arrangement for limiting the breadth of the beam of light, and a convex lens for making the rays parallel. It is also fitted with a kind of small telescope for viewing the analysed light. When this instrument is fitted upon a telescope and the telescope is directed towards the sun, a rainbow coloured band, having numerous dark lines at right angles to its length, is seen. These lines are the representatives of substances whose luminous vapours exist in the sun, and by identifying them with lines produced by burning terrestrial substances, it is possible to determine the materials of which the sun is composed. The same principle can be applied to the stars and other celestial bodies.

The colours of bodies are also explained by reference to the composition of white light. The colour of transparent bodies is due to the constituents of white light which they permit to pass. A piece of blue glass is blue because of all the colours of the spectrum it transmits easily only the blue, and absorbs most of the others. Red glass, similarly, is red because it permits only red light in quantity to pass through. If, therefore, a piece of red glass and a piece of blue glass, each of sufficient thickness, are held together, they are quite opaque. Transparent bodies, like water, and ordinary glass, transmit all the colours of the spectrum with about equal facility, and therefore appear colourless when thin layers are used. But since no substance transmits light of all wave-lengths equally, there is no perfectly transparent substance. If a strip of coloured glass be held between a spectrum and a screen it appears as a black shadow on the screen in all parts of the spectrum save where the colour is which it is able to transmit.

The colour of opaque bodies, on the other hand, is due to the constituents of white light which they are able to reflect. If light from a lantern, in a dark room, be thrown upon a sheet of cardboard painted with various brilliant colours, and the light reflected from the sheet be caught on a white surface, it will be seen that the colour of the light reflected is the same as that of the part of the card from which it comes. A red substance, for example, is red only when there are red rays falling upon it, which it can reflect. It absorbs all the other constituents of white light. Hence, if it be held in blue light, for example, it will appear black. A white substance (like paper) appears white because it reflects all the constituents of white light equally well.

Coloured opaque bodies, if passed through a spectrum, only appear coloured when in that part of the spectrum which is the colour they appear to have in white light. Thus, a violet-coloured substance only

appears violet when in the violet rays, seeming to be black anywhere else, since it cannot reflect other colours.

Bodies which neither reflect nor transmit any colours are black.

The absorption of certain constituents of white light necessitates a certain using up of energy. But energy cannot be destroyed, but only converted from one form into another. Heat appears to be the lowest form of energy, *i.e.*, it appears impossible for any other forms of energy—light energy, sound energy, kinetic energy, electrical energy, chemical energy, etc.—to manifest themselves without a certain amount being converted into heat energy. Theoretically, therefore, a blue glass should get hotter than a red one, because the former absorbs all the red rays, and these have a greater heating effect than the blue rays.

W. H. MORRIS.

The One True Faith.

IN August, 1920, a religious world conference was held at Geneva, that old home and haunt of hard-shell piety. It attracted little notice outside ecclesiastical circles. A lengthy discussion on the subject at a March (1921) meeting of bishops, deans and others, held at the Anglican Chapter House, Melbourne, and a bare half-column report in the Melbourne papers represents all that most of Australia knows about the matter, and as most of Australia doesn't read the Melbourne papers all is very little. The idea of the Geneva Conference was to compare and analyse creeds, to make the most of the points of agreement, to minimise differences and to see if the One True Universal Faith could be evolved. The fact which I didn't like to tell the crowd at the Chapter House or to wire to the gathering at hard-shell Geneva, lest the deans and bishops should rend me asunder and I should be bitten by archdeacons, was that Ferdinand Tudor Smith and I had found, evolved, produced and preserved the One True Faith over three years ago. It was never Universal, for it never had more than four followers. I don't think it has any now, and two of the followers didn't know they were following. That sort of thing is a hindrance to universality. But the purity of the product stood every test.

The Geneva Conference was only a very partial success; in fact, it was only the tenth part of 1 per cent. of a success. In the first place, only Christian sects were invited, for the one thing that Christians agree upon, however much they hate one another, is that all non-Christians are spiritual trash. Then the Roman Catholic Church stayed away bodily, as it always does. It goes one better than the rest in a strictly logical sense, for it declares not merely non-Christian but non-Roman Catholic sects to be spiritual trash. This is not only a religious but a political necessity. The one asset of a Pope is his undivided and unquestioned headship of the Church, so that doubt, coalition or compromise is not to be thought of. Britain's King-Emperor is head of two established churches, Anglican in England and Presbyterian in Scotland, yet both might slide away from him and melt into any sort of new combine without diminishing his revenues or perceptibly reducing his authority or blowing one tile off the roof of Windsor Castle. He is such a versatile individual that he would doubtless be willing to heal the breach by also being head of an established Roman Catholic Church in Ireland if anyone would lend an ear to the proposition. The Czar was chief of the Orthodox Greek sect in his dominions, but if the chieftainship had been lost and the Church dissolved he would have been Czar none the less. Also the Othmans were Sultans before they were alleged

Caliphs, and might have ceased to be Caliphs and yet remained Sultans. But the spiritual power is no side-show with the Papacy. It is the only asset—the one basket with one egg in it—and not to be risked. Yet even with this great limb lopped off its deliberations the Geneva "world" conference was a remarkable affair. The Eastern Church, after some 1100 years of isolation, came out of its spiritual cave and attended with its alb and cope and crozier, and it rubbed shoulders with 69 other sects, some of them not 1400 days old. Everybody was very polite to everybody else and very accommodating in theory, but nobody really gave away anything. The One True Faith didn't develop. Yet Tudor Smith and I once had it stowed away.

The original idea was a purely legal one. It was that all the sects should be made to submit their rules (*i.e.*, their doctrines) to the Arbitration Court. The Court was to go through them and evolve from them one set of rules, taking the best, and rejecting the worst and most trivial. Then, with these for a basis, it would create the One Big Church or Established Church, registered as a trades union and therefore entitled to the support of all unionists. This idea brought up against an insuperable difficulty at the very beginning. A pure universal creed was wanted and most of the universe had never heard of Justice Higgins and his estimable but rather futile court.

Tudor Smith, the most remarkable and original chemist that ever lived, tackled the problem from the purely scientific side. It is the only way to tackle anything. If the Hereafter is ever revealed a chemist will be mixed up with the revelation. He was moved first by his own wonderful invention for the condensation of ideas so that blocks of thought or slabs of consideration could be handled as easily as coal. Believing that the truth must be scattered among the creeds somewhere, he armed himself with a boiler the size of a moderate gasometer, a small pit of coal and a water-distillation plant. Into the tank were put samples of every known faith with any pretensions to having a hereafter in it, the size of the samples being proportioned as nearly as possible to the reputed number of adherents. I remember that there was one ton of Roman Catholicism, which was taken as the natural unit. The aloofness of the Church, though proof against argument, wasn't proof against chemistry. There was, I think, about 8 cwt. each of Buddhism and Greek Orthodoxy. Hinduism was large. The quantity of the Samaritan faith and of Moravian Brotherhood was infinitesimal. The tank was filled up with distilled water and the mess was boiled and stirred for seven days so that each creed might be boiled on its own Sunday, every day being some Church's Sunday. Then the fire of persecution was allowed to go out, and the stuff was given seven days to cool.

The first visible result was a thick black leathery scum or cake or morass on top. It smelled like alligators. It was three feet thick and as it couldn't be skimmed off it was removed with a hook to a safe distance as if it had been a dead octopus. I suppose it is there yet. At the bottom of the tank was a sediment of evil-looking rocks which defied chemical analysis and had no discoverable value. In between was about a gallon of purest, clearest fluid—evidently the pure doctrine at last. So the attempt had been a real success of a sort, though the small quantity of truth as compared with the immense quantity of dogma was disappointing. But a far worse disappointment was in store. This priceless residue also defied analysis, so, like Pilate, we were left asking helplessly, "What is truth?" But, unlike Pilate, we had the matter before us in a bottle; yet 1900 years had left things no further advanced. All that the most rigid investigation showed was that the matter in the bottle was a perfectly unknown substance of which the

world possessed no previous record and that there was in it no impurity of any sort. Whatever it might be it was itself and nothing else.

Tudor Smith decided that no further progress could be made save by experiment. If it was impossible to say what the fluid was made of, and write it up, the next best thing was to find out what it made of people who drank it, and write *them up*. So one drop was administered in rum to a bookmaker who was also an Atheist. Having no doctrine of any sort inside him, he seemed a virgin field to experiment on. The bookmaker died immediately, and afterwards swelled up to an unprecedented size. The post-mortem caused much comment, but yielded no information. The condition of the bookmaker's innards was unprecedented, showing that no one had previously swallowed truth in its pure state.

When the bookmaker had blown over and we had recovered from the shock, another experiment was made. Half a drop was administered to a bishop of the highest character. He instantly resigned his diocese, gave away everything except his oldest suit, and started for the Backblocks to be a hermit. A day later he vanished altogether. Possibly he went up in a fiery chariot, as wheel-tracks were found near where he was last seen.

It was obvious that the human race was quite unfit for truth. Dogma was good enough for it—possibly a great deal too good. An experiment with a single drop of our fluid on a fire blew out the side of the house, and subsequent explosions lasted for a day and a night and devastated a good deal of country. In the end we left our sample, tightly corked, at the bottom of a dry well, which we afterwards filled in. Also we decided that Pilate had a narrow escape.

(Sydney Bulletin.)

JAMES EDMOND.

A Modern Catholic Service.

I HAD met the priest socially, when the business in hand was to amuse some children, a secular pastime in which he proved himself an adept. Travelled, well-read and holding surprisingly broad-minded views on secular subjects, he was an interesting personality as a man and a paradox as a priest. Learning later that he was in the habit of combating criticism of his creed by replying to written questions which are dropped into a box at his church-door, and realizing the value of such one-sided propaganda, I decided to attend to learn how modern Catholicism treats enlightened attack.

The church was bare and the magnificence of the altar with its dozens of candles hardly atoned for the discomfort of the wooden seats. The congregation, if one is to judge by the knee-bending and sign-of-the-cross-making, made up for the paucity of its numbers by its intense piety. Women and children were by far in the majority. The service was the usual hymn-singing prayerful appeal to Jesus and for His Immaculate Mother, and was a fitting preamble to the "pièce-de-résistance"—the sermon.

Dressed in garish robes and irresistibly reminding me of Chu Chin Chow, the priest solemnly announced the first question. "If the Church be infallible, why did it condemn Galileo?" At this I sat up and began to take a serious interest in proceedings, for there seemed to be too much common-sense in the question for it to fit well into the proceedings. I hardly expected the priest to give a Freethinker's obvious reply that since Galileo's astronomy has, in the main, been proved correct and the Church's "astronomy" has been a source of humour to the thinking portion of the population, the obvious inference is that the Church is not infallible. Nor did I expect the worthy

cleric to point out that the Church has systematically persecuted all who doubted its teachings and that Galileo was only one of the millions who have suffered for the truth; but I certainly did not expect to hear the obvious distortion of facts, crude lies and callous ignorance which followed. "Galileo tried to show that the sun is the centre of our solar system; that the earth revolves round the sun and that it was therefore impossible for Joshua to cause the sun to stop in its path. While Galileo dealt with his science he was in the right, but outside his own sphere he was completely ignorant. If he had stuck to science the Church would not have touched him. Modern astronomy has shown that it was the Church that was right and Galileo wrong, for no modern astronomer holds the views that Galileo did." Thus, by a process of quibbling and misrepresentation, he lulled his flock back into a state of mental torpor.

Three other questions relating to doctrine were dealt with in a similar manner, followed by the sermon proper, which consisted in an amusing historical review of the history of Roman Catholicism in Wales. The fallacy of putting one's trust in legend and tradition was brushed on one side with the remark that any legend must have some foundation in fact, and the speaker carefully showed that the period when Catholicism dominated Wales synchronized with the era when Wales was the premier nation of the world in art, education and morals. It was also shown that although most nations have claimed St. Patrick, Mid-Wales was his birth-place, and by a similar process of "reasoning" Pelagius could not have been a Welshman because he was a heretic.

The proceedings terminated in an elaborate flummery before the altar, with much incense-burning, bowing, prostration, and the lifting up on high of a brass or gilt cross which was finally carefully restored to its cupboard and the latter locked. The Deity and St. David were requested to reconvert Wales to Catholicism, but the priest carefully pocketed the key of the cross-cupboard, presumably lest one of his congregation should be as carnal-minded as he was prayerful. A Latin prayer and a hymn to the clinking of coins on a plate terminated the proceedings, the priest and his acolytes disappearing in a solemn procession into the "wings."

The outstanding feature of the evening was that the moment the cleric ceased to be a man and donned his clerical robes, he cast aside the mental scruples and ethical honesty by which the majority of mankind are secularly characterized. As a priest that man would lie, persecute, and even die for his Church. His early training had become such a part of him that intellectual honesty in matters appertaining to the Church was an absolute impossibility. This priest crystallized in himself the effect of organized religion on the young intellect. The effects of the incense-burning and superstition-mongering will linger in the minds of the children present until they die. Their children will be born into an atmosphere tainted with superstition, yet there are Freethinkers who claim that the battle is already won and we may put aside our weapons. Until we can guarantee to the children of posterity an environment sterile of the germs of this disease we cannot even claim a single skirmish. What does it matter if our scientific Materialists gain intellectual battles if the priests are always a generation ahead of us? Winning intellectual battles in this generation are nullified in the next while the Church possesses the children. Before a universal success is possible we must be able to guarantee to posterity's children an atmosphere disinfected of the germs of this disease of the body politic. Buechner has shown us in his *Mind in Animals* that there is very little "instinct" unexplainable in terms of Reason and Heredity, and we have little to fear from inherited superstition given a

sterilized atmosphere for the children. Before success can assume reasonable proportions we have to oust religion from the schools and universities, and if we once turn the cleric from these domains we may safely look forward to a superstition-free future. F. G. G.

Correspondence.

"THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH."
TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Cohen has been good enough to send me a copy of his brochure with the above title, and I daresay I may put the following question which arises out of the chapter on Spiritualism. Mr. Cohen would probably agree with our leaders in scientific thought who insist that to a scientifically trained mind it is an unpardonable error to begin an enquiry with a (latent) conviction that something is impossible. All discoveries, I suppose, have been retarded by the vast amount of *a priori* conviction, which they had to survive, that they were simply impossible, and, therefore, no evidence could be sufficient to substantiate them.

Now, recently, I came across a lawyer, hard of head, in the prime of life, an authority on Finance, who had given twenty years of scrupulous investigation of spiritualistic phenomena. Scores of times, he told me, he had touched materialized spirits. Again, among the leaders of the Psychological Research Society is an old acquaintance of my own, an extremely able philosopher and logician, very cool-headed and unemotional, and, I should say, unimaginative, who testifies that the existence of "spirits" with whom communication is possible is "scientifically proved up to the hilt."

I may say that it is a matter of no interest to me whatever whether these evidences of an after-life are proved or no. For a time I felt inclined to disbelieve them, but I now see that the inclination came from a wholly unwarrantable notion that they were impossible. I would, therefore, ask Mr. Cohen if he is not proceeding on a similar *prejudicium*.
E. LYTTELTON.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on post-card.

LONDON. INDOOR.

FULHAM AND WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (West London Trades Hall and Institute, 66 High Road, Chiswick): 7.30, Mr. E. Wright, "Walt Whitman, Poet of Democracy."

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7.30, Mr. P. J. Raymond, "Five Cardinal Proofs of the Existence of God." Discussion Circle meets every Wednesday at 7.30, "Coronet" Hotel, Soho Street, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Debate—"Does Communism furnish a solution for our economic and social ills?" Affirmative, Mr. R. E. Cooke; Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W. 9, three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Debate—"Does God Exist?" Affirmative, Mr. L. B. Augusto (West African Moslem); Negative, Mr. F. Corrigan.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Ethics and Industry."

COUNTRY. INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall, Candle-riggs): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 11.30, "Acts of God in the Light of Science"; 6.30 (Corporation Hall, Lobago Street), "A Menacing Sign of the Times."

LEEDS BRANCH N. S. S. (19 Lowerhead Row, Leeds, Young-man's): 7, Mr. Snow, "British Israelite Religion—The British Israelites."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "How to prevent a Bloody Revolution."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme Public Hall, Dickenson Street, Manchester): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "Is Religion a Disease?" 6.30, "The Foundations of Faith, with special reference to Bishop Gore's *Belief in God*."

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