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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Atheism and Progress.—The Editor</i> - - - -	289
<i>Then and Now.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - - -	290
<i>Science the Saviour.—Mimmermus</i> - - - -	292
<i>Science and Religion.—W. Mann</i> - - - -	293
<i>Spirited Spooks Up-to-Date.—H. T. Wilkins</i> - - - -	294
<i>Atheism: Its Scope and Its Method.—E. Egerton Stafford</i> - - - -	298
<i>The Birth of a Ritual.—G. E. Fussell</i> - - - -	300
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Atheism and Progress.

Looking over a batch of cuttings from some American papers I came across a statement that arrested my attention, not because it was new in substance, but rather because it was very familiar, and one met it with a smile of recognition. A Rev. John Mackay, of San Marcos University, Lima, addressing a Congress of Christian workers, brought them the "glad tidings" that the wave of Atheism which had been sweeping over South America was receding, and public men were searching hungrily for religious fellowship. Now that is a statement we are all familiar with. We all know the wave of Atheism that is always receding, and never appeared to do anything but recede. In fact, it is almost impossible to discover when on earth it advanced. The curious thing is that although the wave of Atheism has receded there are decidedly more avowed Atheists in the world at the moment than at any other period of human history. And beyond the number of avowed Atheists there is the much larger number who for various reasons keep their Atheism to themselves, or disguise it under some non-committal name such as Rationalism, or Agnosticism, or who profess to have no definite opinion on the matter. But if we take Atheism in its only proper sense, that of being without belief in a God, it would not be at all difficult to prove that that frame of mind is decidedly growing. The mere fact of the indifference shown by so many to all questions of religion is in itself a proof. When a wave of religion sweeps over a country there is not any great difficulty in discerning its presence. And when one sees large numbers of men in all walks of life who deliberately declare either that they take no interest in religious questions, or define their religion in terms of a non-religious sociology, one may fairly assume the existence of a large and growing volume of definite disbelief. Of course, the disbelief is not always openly avowed. But that is a question of moral courage, and of facing those inconveniences which the religious world is still able—and ready—to inflict upon its opponents.

* * *

The Cloak of Religion.

On the other hand I do not question that there is some truth in the statement that a certain number of

public men in South America are searching for some form of religion—for other people. That, too, is not an unfamiliar spectacle. It is not at all an uncommon thing for politicians and others who for any reason wish to stand well with the general public, to appeal to religious feelings and lavishly to use religious phrases. They know that the reactions to these are fairly prompt and general with the unthinking portion of the public. Our own publicists will offer plenty of illustrations in support of this. And there is, in addition, the historic part played by the Christian religion in the politics of Western Europe. Whether the Government happened to be good or bad, it was always found a profitable game to row in with organized religion. Religion has served not only as a dope for the people who were ruled, but often enough as dope for the people who ruled. On the one hand it kept the under dog quiet, and on the other hand, the display of religion served to compensate the upper one by supplying an ethical justification for whatever he happened to be doing. To what extent religion attracts an undesirable type of character, or the extent to which it demoralizes certain aspects of character once it has taken a hold on a man, is a subject for discussion, but the fact that under cover of religion men have always found it easier to gratify their meaner passions, does not admit of very great question. Moreover, from the time of Constantine onward, it has always been found profitable by politicians and publicists of a certain type to humour and flatter organized religious bodies. The development of political nonconformity during the nineteenth century supplies a striking illustration of this, and the coquetting of the Labour and Socialist leaders with Church and chapel—but particularly with chapel, is only part of the same policy. To enlist the support of religious bodies by playing to their religious prejudices is one of the commonest of political dodges. One can, therefore, credit the statement that in South America a certain number of public men are playing to the religious gallery. Whether the people as a whole will benefit by the performance is quite another question.

A Plain Position. * * *

Atheism has nothing of this kind of thing about it to commend it. Right or wrong the Atheistic point of view may be, but it does not admit of being used as a dope. In the first place it obviously invites people to think, and thinking is the greatest of all solvents of worn out institutions. It encourages a critical frame of mind in the very act of establishing itself. It cannot set up any institution as "sacred" or beyond removal or improvement. If it does not of necessity involve government by discussion, it does place government under discussion, and against open discussion no sham can stand for long. And its test of worth is immediate and obvious. It cannot hold out a promise of some other world to remedy the sufferings in this one; nor can it divert energy from social ends into religious channels. Frauds, follies, and wrongs may exist with Atheism as with every-

thing else, but there is no extra cloak by which they may be hidden. It can, in the nature of the case have no other test of the wisdom of actions than their effects upon human happiness here. And while even that may not prevent the emergence of wrongs, it supplies a plain reason for their removal. So I am not surprised at certain public men trying to find a religion for the people. If they had the same concern to see people happy as they have to see them religious the world might be much better than it is.

* * *

Atheism a Growth.

But what is meant by the wave of Atheism receding? In the first place I have never heard of a wave of Atheism overtaking a people. People who use that phrase are always religious folk, and they have in mind the waves of religious frenzy which do actually occur. But it is simply impossible for Atheism to sweep over a people in waves. It is not an epidemic but the outcome of a reasoned process. Whether the reasoning is sound or unsound Atheism is that. And it follows from the mental history of man that while belief in God is something that civilized man inherits, Atheism represents a stage in his intellectual development. It is something he achieves as a consequence of the growth of knowledge. The overwhelming majority of Atheists were, as a matter of actual fact, once ardent theists. They have passed through the stage in which the genuine theist still is. And once a man has reached that stage what chance is there of him reverting to the frame of mind out of which he has grown? How is it possible for him to divest his mind of the knowledge he has acquired of the history of the God-idea? If he knows, as every Atheist does know, that the idea of God began in the mistaken conjectures of imperfectly instructed mankind, by what means can he divest his mind of that knowledge and get back to the simple beliefs of primitive mankind? It is, of course, possible for him never to reach an advanced position. But once having reached it, it is not easy to see how he can recede from it. Knowledge is not something that one can put off at will. The man who once understands on what a false basis the belief in God rests cannot believe at will that it rests on a basis of logic or of fact. It is easy for a Methodist to be overcome by Roman Catholicism, or for a member of one religion to join another and then return to his original family. In these cases we are dealing with related forms of the same mental state, and the transition from one to the other may be determined by all sorts of adventitious circumstances. But the change from want of knowledge to knowledge concerning a particular phenomenon is an altogether different thing. One may never reach the point of becoming an Atheist, but once having become one, nothing short of mental decay can ever reduce him to the religious frame of mind.

* * *

The Growth of Atheism.

The progress of Atheism does not proceed by means of "waves," neither does it recede in "waves." It may develop more rapidly at one period than at another, and that is characteristic of all phases of development. And an arrest of civilization such as followed the victory of Christianity may mean that its progress is very slow indeed for a considerable period. But at its best intellectual development is a tolerably slow affair, and that is a fact which every reformer should take well to heart. The Freethinker faces a world which for thousands of generations has been sunk in superstition, a world in which every one of our institutions is still saturated with it. When he talks to this world he is using a language which to most of those he addresses is almost a foreign

tongue. He has also against him all the power that threatened interests can wield. And yet with all these advantages on the side of religion, and with all these disadvantages to face the Atheistic attitude of mind becomes more general. If its presence is not confessed in so many words, it is none the less there. In the world of positive science the idea of God is to-day practically non-existent. In other branches of knowledge it is rapidly weakening. The clergy lament that whole masses of the people are "living as if God did not exist." In social matters even those who profess to believe in religion more often than not justify their work by purely secular tests, and resent the introduction of religion as being altogether out of place. The habit of thinking about the world and about man in terms of natural science grows stronger year by year. All these are so many illustrations of the growth of the Atheistic type of mind. Disguise it how we may it is that. And once established it is not the mumbling of mouldering religious formulæ that can destroy it. It can be destroyed only by the destruction of civilization itself.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Then and Now.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* of April 23 there is published an extraordinary sermon, entitled "The New Things," by the Rev. C. E. Raven, D.D., Canon of Liverpool. What renders the discourse extraordinary is the astounding fact that, on the one hand, it makes frank admissions, and on the other, indulges in extravagant claims for the Christian religion. The text is to be found in 2 Cor., v., 17, 18: "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold all things are become new. And all things are of God." That passage was not true at the time it was written, it has not been true in any age since, and it is safe to predict that it will not be true in regard to any future period. We are told that "the old order changeth, giving place to new"; but it never does so at one fell stroke, but gradually, often imperceptibly for long periods. Then there are times of reaction when the world seems to be slipping backwards, such as the present undoubtedly is. In any case, things have never become new by one firm sweep of the pendulum. Canon Raven is fully conscious of this great truth, saying, with evident reference to the beginning of our era:—

The old had become the new. The new was the true fruit and creation of those unconscious preparations for it which only in the light of it assumed their true proportion and significance.

There is a deep philosophic truth in that statement; but it is a radical error to call Christianity the religion of the resurrection, because it does not undergo perpetual renewal, or perpetual rebirth. Canon Raven may imagine that he can trace such renewals and rebirths as processes through which he and his friends are continually passing; but that such a claim is founded on anything but pure fancy no one is capable of proving. Christianity is rather a religion which has grown and developed as the result of exclusively human manipulation through all the centuries of its history. The reverend gentleman assures us that "Huxley's prophetic phrase when he spoke of the 'new reformation' is being literally worked out before us," but he seems to forget that Huxley was definitely and enthusiastically an anti-supernaturalist, whereas the Church, down to the present time, despite all the changes it has undergone, has never ceased to regard itself as a supernatural institu-

tion, entirely dependent for its success upon the active presence within it of the Holy Ghost.

Dr. Raven alludes to an incident that occurred at a meeting of the British Association at Oxford in 1860, when Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published the year before, was under discussion. As a matter of fact, Huxley "tried to avoid a discussion on the ground that a general audience, in which sentiment would unduly interfere with intellect, was not the public before which such a discussion should be carried on." However, a vehement discussion did take place in which the Bishop of Oxford took a conspicuous part. Dr. Samuel Wilberforce had already contributed an article to the *Quarterly Review*, in which he made a most bitter attack upon Darwin's theory, and his address before the British Association was merely an abbreviated repetition of that article. His only argument was that the *Origin of Species* offered a wicked contradiction to the plain teaching of Holy Scripture. His speech was a fine display of his oratorical greatness; but unfortunately he had little, if any, first-hand knowledge of the theory he so vehemently condemned. Nearing the end he indulged in the following banter:—

I should like to ask Professor Huxley, who is sitting by me, and is about to tear me to pieces when I have sat down, as to his belief in being descended from an ape. Is it on his grandfather's or his grandmother's side that the ape ancestry comes in?

To such a silly and impertinent question the great Professor was unwilling to respond; "but he was called for and spoke with his usual incisiveness and with some scorn." Of the conclusion of his speech many versions were current, but the following by the late John Richard Green, the historian, was regarded as nearest to a literal report:—

I asserted, and I repeat, that a man has no reason to be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. If there were an ancestor whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a *man*, a man of restless and versatile intellect, who not content with equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions, and skilled appeals to religious prejudice.

Mr. Faucet wrote in *Macmillan's Magazine*: "The retort was so justly deserved, and so inimitable in its manner, that no one who was present can ever forget the impression that it made." Canon Raven, referring to that notorious contest, says:—

The old things have passed away. There can be no mistake about that, about the immense contrast between the outlook of thinking Christians of to-day and those of two generations—nay, one generation, ago. Huxley's own controversy with Bishop Wilberforce is proof enough of that. No one, I suppose, of my generation, can read that story and the speeches of the protagonists in it, without the certain conviction that the ecclesiastic was not upon the side of the God of Truth; that it is the man denounced of heresy who had in his measure the more Christian outlook of the two.

The reverend gentleman is wholly mistaken. So far was Huxley from having any religious outlook at all, that he considered all questions in the light of science. As he said on that memorable occasion at Oxford: "I am here only in the interests of science."

Dr. Raven's contention is that Christianity has gained and still gains by the passing away of the old things. But Bishop Wilberforce was fully justified in the attitude of inveterate opposition to Darwinism which he took up and so zealously defended. Believing the Bible to be the Word of God he naturally concluded

that Darwinism was the word of the Devil. Then science won all along the line, and has continued to win, with the inevitable result that Christianity has now been compelled to drop many doctrines which then were regarded as essential parts thereof. And yet Canon Raven seems to think that in consequence of the passing away of old things Christianity is richer, fuller, and more powerful than it ever was before. He is convinced that the old has become the new, which is a contradiction in terms. Nothing can pass away and still remain.

Now whatever the new things are the Canon wishes to know whether or not they are of God. He asks: "Is this new outburst of spiritual life so evident among us, is it truly of God?" We are not aware of any new outburst of spiritual life in this country. Complaints have been reaching us from all parts that religion is at a painfully low ebb, and that in consequence the majority of churches and chapels are more than half empty, while those that are full owe their prosperity to the superior gifts of the men who occupy their pulpits. The Canon asks, "does this which claims to be of God satisfy the devotional instincts of mankind?" We answer by affirming that by nature mankind have no such instincts. What the pulpit calls "devotional instincts" are products of a long and carefully conducted course of religious education. Spencer tells us of deaf and dumb people in America with whom their fellow beings were incapable of communicating at all until they had arrived at mature life. At last a missionary who had learned the art of talking with such unfortunate people appeared on the scene, and when he succeeded in getting into intelligent touch with them, he soon discovered that they had no sense of God and no worshipping instinct whatever. The truth is that every child is born an Atheist, and would remain an Atheist through life unless taught to believe in God and to regard him as eminently a being worthy of worship. Indeed, the clergy's plea for so much religious teaching in the schools is based on the admitted fact that in its absence our boys and girls would grow up pure Atheists. Can anything be more preposterous than for the same clergy to affirm the existence of devotional instincts, or of the instinct to believe in God and a future world? Religious emotionalism is a purely artificial product, and whatever satisfies it is equally artificial. Thus the first alleged test of the truth of Christianity completely falls to the ground.

The second test is of like character. The Canon explains it thus:—

We need in these days, and the need is perhaps plainer than any other, men of sound learning who will test, and test rigorously in the light of new knowledge, that which Christians profess and hold. The gravest danger, I believe, to our religion in these days is its lack of that for which our Church has always stood, its lack of scholarship.

Curiously enough, there is no lack of scholarship in Christendom to-day, but, as Canon Raven is well aware, it is not on the side of Christianity, nor of any other form of supernatural religion. The new learning is secular in its character, and deals exclusively with secular realities. The tendency of knowledge is to condemn and destroy supernatural beliefs. That was the reason why the early and Medieval Church rose up in violent antagonism to Greek and Roman science. It was ruthlessly cast out as a diabolical foe of faith. Canon Raven, however, regards the lack of scholarship as the gravest danger to his religion. We agree with the Medieval Church and regard knowledge as the mortal enemy of all superstition, and with those present-day clergymen who declare that the lack of religious instruction in the day schools would eventuate in the complete elimination of all religions from the world.

Dr. Raven mentions two other tests of religion, namely the test of conduct and the test of the effect of religion "upon the life of the fellowship," but from the point of view of reason and common sense, neither possesses the least practical value. In fact, the only tests at our disposal are tests of the utter valuelessness and pernicious effect upon character and social life of all religious beliefs and practices. Our comfort and encouragement lie in the fact that ever since the publication of the *Origin of Species* sixty-six years ago supernatural religion has been steadily losing ground, and the time is certainly coming when we shall all be walking by knowledge and not by faith.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science the Saviour.

We are upon earth to learn what can be learnt upon earth, and not to speculate on what can never be.—
Walter Savage Landor.

THE clergy are very fond of pointing the finger of scorn at scientists, and of venting feeble fun at the conclusions of science. Only the other day the Roman Catholic Bishop of Strasburg anathematized a school at Brinkheim because the head-teacher taught the theory of evolution to the children. This episcopal act, worthy of the Middle Ages, takes place, be it noted, in the twentieth century, and received the plaudits of the faithful.

Science is only ordered knowledge, did the priests but see it, and much scientific knowledge has been used for the direct benefit of humanity. Did the whole of the 50,000 clergy of this country ever do so much for mankind as Lister? He fought all his life against the horrid shapes that follow the rider on the pale horse. Priests of all denominations have ever sought to make death a gruesome and terrible thing; but Lister and Simpson, and the rest of their glorious company, robbed death of half its terrors. As a result of their discoveries death comes as a nurse to a tired child, to patients who had otherwise died in the extremest pangs of woe and suffering. Lister and Simpson saved as many lives as disease had wasted, and they took a black fear out of life.

During the past two generations scientists have revolutionized the study of the causes of diseases. They have tracked, with the untiring industry of Sherlock Holmes, the causes of things pathological. They have discovered the actual germ of diseases, and turned men's minds from the old, old superstitions and theological ideas about illness and disease fostered by the clergy to feather their own nests. To the wondering priests the scientists showed the diseases grown in test-tubes, apart from the living body, bottled and cultivated. The whole civilized world owes these scientists an enormous debt of gratitude.

Sanitation and segregation of disease-patients have resulted in saving the lives of hundreds of thousands. Smallpox, which was once a terror that devastated Europe like a huge prairie fire, has been so restricted by science that it is rare to find a person whose face is pitted with the marks of the dread disease. Cholera was once a scourge that afflicted mankind frequently. The last great outbreak was in the middle of the nineteenth century, and so severe was it that the dead were buried in huge trenches, the ordinary cemeteries being inadequate for the huge number of victims. The death-rate from fevers is to-day the lowest in the records of the world. Typhus, typhoid, and scarlet fever, are now almost completely under control, and the two former diseases are on the point of extinction. From diphtheria the death-rate used to be one in two, but has now fallen to four per cent. Puerperal fever,

which once decimated the mothers of England, is now so uncommon that a nurse risks her situation if a patient is affected. Malta fever, which was responsible for many hundreds of cases yearly among sailors and soldiers, has been stamped out. This tedious fever used to necessitate the staying in hospital for one hundred and twenty days of strong men in the very prime of life, and often caused permanent wreckage of health.

Consumption and cancer, two most dread diseases, are now occupying the serious attention of scientists. It is a sign of the secularization of the times in which we live that medical representatives of nearly forty nations, using almost every modern civilized language, were present at the International Conference on Tuberculosis at Westminster three years ago. Few gatherings have ever brought together so many diverse nationalities with but one humane object, and that, the conquest of a disease whose ravages are worldwide. The late Lord Curzon, who represented the British Government, said at the opening session:—

You are here to help to relieve mankind of untold but preventable misery. Deaths from consumption in Great Britain and Ireland still amount to a thousand weekly, and in many other countries the figures are much worse.

These are serious words, and they serve to show that science is being used in the direct service of humanity. The dreadful plagues of consumption and cancer are by no means the only evils being fought by medical men. Medical officers of health, employed by municipalities, have done, and are doing, noble work for the bettering of human conditions. Scarcely less valuable is the work done by schools medical officers, who, in the midst of graver duties, have saved us from the reproach of being a lousy nation.

Away in far Panama science achieved another famous victory. The attempts of the world-famous engineer, Ferdinand De Lesseps, to construct the canal connecting the Atlantic with the Pacific Ocean was frustrated by fever, the labourers employed dying in hundreds. Thanks to the skill, courage, and knowledge of the American army doctors the cause of this disease was tracked. To-day the canal is one of the wonders of the modern world, and the Panama zone, no longer a plague-spot, is a well-used highway of the commerce of civilization, and as safe as Regent Street.

Science is a real saviour. It is science which keeps London, with its 7,000,000 inhabitants, one of the healthiest spots on the earth's surface. It is science that holds once-dreaded diseases at arm's length. During the last great world-war it was science that safeguarded the troops against fevers, typhoid, lock-jaw, and other horrors. The clergy, who opposed the use of chloroform because they said it interfered with the Almighty's primal curse upon woman, are not equipped with mentality, education, or training, for passing judgment on science or scientists. Civilized men cannot accept the criticism of science by men who are mental barbarians with much enthusiasm. For one thing is perfectly obvious. Men may be ordained to the Christian ministry and yet have never been converted to civilization. Men may wear the garments of sanctity and respectability, and yet be no better equipped mentally than the priesthood of the degraded superstitions of darkest Africa.

MIMNERMUS.

The saying that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing is, to my mind, a very dangerous adage. If knowledge is real and genuine, I do not believe that it is other than a very valuable possession however infinitesimal its quantity may be. Indeed if a little knowledge is dangerous, where is the man who has so much as to be out of danger?—*Huxley.*

Science and Religion.

STILL another contribution to the great library of books dealing with the warfare between these ancient antagonists. This latest addition is the work of J. Arthur Thomson, Professor of Natural History at the University of Aberdeen, under the title, *Science and Religion*.

An examination of this work will enable us to take stock of the relative positions of the two combatants, compare the casualties sustained, and the ground lost or won.

To those, like the present writer, who can remember the fighting in the eighties of last century, who followed with intense interest Huxley's article in the *Nineteenth Century*, when he trounced Gladstone and other pompous and ignorant defenders of the Bible legends, the present phase of the conflict seems a very tame affair. The defenders of religion to-day show a very chastened spirit to that of the domineering, fulminating, and dogmatic defenders of religion of the last century. They have even abandoned that pharasaic tone of moral superiority, the pretence that if a man did not believe in their outrageous and incomprehensible dogmas, it was because he wished to live an immoral life.

The distinguishing characteristic of modern defences of religion is not any new evidence the defenders bring forward in confirmation of their religious beliefs: they do not attempt it, but the surrender of evidence they formerly relied upon with the utmost confidence to prove their case.

In fact, Prof. Thomson goes so far in this direction that it is somewhat surprising that he should consider it worth while to write a book about what was left from the destructive criticism of science. The only difference we can distinguish between his views and those of the Atheist practically amounts to a pious aspiration after belief in a *Prime Mover* (p. 102), whatever that may be, and a vague possibility of some undefined future existence after death. He has certainly gone to the limit of concession. To concede more would mean unconditional surrender. Indeed, the history of the conflict between religion and science has been nothing but a series of surrenders upon the part of religion, of positions which have been rendered untenable by the progress of science.

The first staggering blow to religion in modern times was the discovery by Copernicus (later brought into prominence by Galileo), of the movement of the earth round the sun, which flatly contradicted the prevailing belief, founded upon the Bible, that the earth was fixed. Religion was strong then, and forced Galileo to recant his belief, but in the end the truth prevailed and religion had to retreat.

About fifty years later Newton discovered the law of gravitation, by means of which the planets revolve in their orbits. This discovery was immediately attacked by the theologian as "Atheistic," because it substituted natural law for the operation of the action of God. Again, the truth proved too strong and again the theologians were obliged to accept the truth they were unable to suppress; and now they impudently claim Newton as a pillar of religion!

During the first half of the nineteenth century religion took the offensive in this conflict. The Earl of Bridgewater, perhaps with an eye to favours to come, bequeathed £8,000, to be paid to the author of the best treatise on "The Power, Wisdom, and Goodness of God as manifested in Creation." The sum was divided into eight parts, and a thousand pounds was given to eight writers for eight separate volumes, commencing with Chalmers in 1833, and ending with Whewell in 1839. These are the once celebrated

Bridgewater Treatises, which were, by a mass attack, to rout the infidel and place religion upon a firm scientific foundation for all eternity.

The best men available were enlisted upon the works, among them being Sir Charles Bell, the eminent anatomist; Chalmers, the Scottish philosopher; Buckland, the great geologist; Roget, the physician and author of the famous *Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases*; and the "Omniscient" Whewell, who was an historian, a professor of science, and a Doctor of Divinity.

Each of the authors illustrated the principle of design in nature by examples taken from the particular science or philosophy upon which he was an authority. Sir Charles Bell's work, for instance, was entitled *The Hand as evincing Design*.

It was a great day for religion when the series was completed. Here were the two antagonists, in the conflict of the ages, reconciled at last. Science had become the handmaid of religion, pointing the way through nature up to nature's God. The criticism that the argument would have been better thrashed out if a similar sum had been offered to present the opposite view, could be safely ignored as a piece of envious infidel carping. The work had a great sale, and the Church had rest for twenty years.

Then the conflict broke out again with as much violence as ever. Darwin's *Origin of Species*, published in 1859, completely destroyed the Design argument at one blow. The famous Bridgewater Treatises were discredited and consigned to the top shelf. To-day they may be found in the second-hand boxes and barrows at the price of a few coppers.

As Professor Thomson observes:—

There are two fatal objections to Bridgewaterism. The first is that the data of science cannot furnish a basis for the transcendent inference that there is a God.....The other obstacle that the Bridgewater argument had to face was the growing evolutionism. For even before Darwin, naturalists were beginning to show how adaptation could be naturally accounted for; and Darwin advanced a thought-out theory (p. 113).

As the Professor further points out:—

The big fact is that the natural history of adaptations *is being* worked out, and we must recognize a "Divine purpose" in the way in which "things make themselves."

Unfortunately there would still remain the still greater enigma: How did the Divine purpose make itself?

Now let us see, taking Professor Thomson's work as a measuring rod, how it has fared with science. How has the Materialistic view of nature fared. Have the new discoveries in science confirmed or discredited his views?

Take, for instance, the foundation stones of nineteenth century materialism, the indestructibility of matter, and the persistence of force. How has that fared? Let Professor Thomson answer: "There are no mysterious disappearances in Nature. No matter or energy, if one may distinguish the two, is ever lost" (p. 171). Note the expression, "If one may distinguish the two." Now the opponents of materialism did distinguish between the two. They declared that matter in itself was inert and dead, and that force was something else added to matter. The materialists, on the other hand, declared that matter and force was one and indivisible, no matter without force, and no force without matter. Upon this we have the following:—

The idea of inert matter must be entirely given up; there is a bustle in the very dust. It is plain that matter has become very tenuous or delicate; and yet there is a remarkable modern justification of the old conception of the "hard" atom. The

general result of the modern enquiry into the constitution of matter is to make the material screen more tenuous than it seemed to our forefathers, and some have drawn the conclusion that this has made the spiritual order or the spiritual aspect of reality more accessible. It is probable, however, that this idea is a confusion of thought. The spiritual is spiritually discerned (pp. 53-54).

When it was discovered that the Atom was not indivisible; that it was built up of electrical units, it was declared that matter had disappeared altogether, and with it Materialism. But Sir Oliver Lodge, who is an authority upon electricity, tells us that electricity itself is matter; that it is atomic in its constitution. The atomic theory itself stands exactly where it did before these new discoveries, and remains the foundation stone of modern chemistry, and there is, as Professor Thomson points out, a justification for the concept of the hard atom :—

For it seems that the inner rings of electrons form an impenetrable bulwark, so that the heart of the atom is, after all, as hard as a cannon ball (p. 41).

Upon the question of life, over which such furious controversy has raged, we shall deal in our next article. W. MANN.

(To be Concluded.)

Spirited Spooks Up-To-Date.

A quiet town in Gloucestershire has been excited by the strange pranks of a ghost in an old house on the outskirts of the parish churchyard. The residents are awakened at midnight by loud sighs on the staircase, followed by hissings through the keyhole. Chairs have been thrown across the room, and pictures and beds violently heaved on to the floor. A clergyman, who has been called in to lay the spirit, says it is that of a former hanguan whose shirt was borrowed and never returned by a tenant of the house. The ghost says he cannot enter heaven without it.—*Weekly London Sunday Stunt* (current issue) starting the "story."

FROM THE "SUNDAY SHOCKER."

OUR special commissioners in all parts of England continue to send strange and thrilling accounts of the pranks of Poltergeists in prosaic houses in London Streets, or in charming villages embowered in honeysuckle and roses where the soft sound of the cow winding her horn o'er the lea is interrupted rarely by voices uplifted in song and praise returning at eventide in motor-coaches from Newmarket races. We select the following from hundreds of cases :—

Tramway-car services and all traffic have been brought to a standstill in a North London thoroughfare by crowds of many hundreds of people who have assembled in front of a lodging-house in a Kimpton Town street, where remarkable disturbances have been heard at midnight. A potman (Mr. James Swipes) of a local inn, who lodges at the house, told the representative of the *Sunday Shocker* that two nights ago, he was awakened by a loud rumbling in the chimney, but put it down to thunder. Then he heard moans coming from the cellar, followed by whistling on the landing and hoarse cries in an adjoining closet. A succession of crashes and heavy falls in a bedroom beneath suggested that someone was vainly searching wardrobes and chest of drawers and overturning them in rage and despair. "By this time," Mr. Swipes added, "I was quite awake. I went down stairs and in a room underneath I found clothes strewn in confusion on the floor, and heavy wardrobes upside down. A slight cough came from behind me. I turned and saw the ghost of a County Council dustman, a former lodger here, who signed to me with his hand to come out on the landing. He (the ghost) said with a horrible expression of malig-

nant rage, that he wanted his trousers, and he felt sure that old Geeser (the landlady) had pawned 'em within an hour of his death three days before."

Mr. Mephistopheles, said the ghost, had sent out word by the doorkeeper of Hades to say that the rule against admitting gentlemen who turned up without trousers had been strictly enforced, hitherto, and he (Mr. M.) had no intention of relaxing that rule in favour even of a dustman. Perhaps the other place could accommodate him until the said garments were discovered.

"In broken accents," concluded Mr. Swipes, who remembered that phrase in our serial last week, "the ghost said he went and knocked up St. Peter, who refused to let him in because his shirt was tarnished and too skimpy. 'Ow can I 'elp these 'eer ruddy profiteers wot will use shrinking calico in mikin' shirts,' the ghost groaned. He said he should come back again for his trousers next night, and just then our cuckoo-clock coughed three times, which I think he mistook for a cock-crow, because he faded away."

Other lodgers state that the disturbances are increasing nightly. An undertaker, who was called in, offered the ghost a pair of plus fours and scarlet garters if he would go away quietly. They were scornfully refused.

The landlady, Mrs. Geeser, who has vainly tried him with a well-known brand of pants and underwear more suitable for his spiritual surroundings, was awakened last night by a crash in her room, and, starting up, found the ghost looking at her with a diabolical expression over the rail at the foot of her bed. It shook its finger warningly and said it should lay violent hands on the landlady's "Dorothy Perkinses" if the trousers were not soon returned.

Aided by Mrs. Scrubbs, the charlady, all the lodgers are hunting for the missing pawnticket of the trousers.

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Little Puddington-on-the-Marsh, a charming old-world village of Tudor-timbered houses and immemorial elms thronged with jackdaws, and the birthplace of Josiah Scrooge, who, in 1820, founded the "International Toast and Water Christians' Association to fight the Devil with Tambourines and Bagpipes," is all agog with excitement. Old wives a-sunning themselves at their doors were gossiping in emulation of gaffers partly occupied in poking sows' ribs visible through cottage styes, and the theme of all conversation was the amazing adventure of the squire's son last night in the church-yard. "I tell ee, it was like this 'ere," said an old thatcher in the bar of the Royal George to the *Sunday Shocker's* representative, "pa'son's son is a lively young chap, and fond of his little drop. He left me and Bill Hodge on the green at 11.45 p.m., and I remember we had twenty-four bitters, twenty-eight stouts, and a topping of "Three Star" awteen us. As he was a passin' through the church-yard the bell struck twelve, and he 'eard a moanin' and a groanin' comin' from the foot of some yews by a moulderin' tomb. Summat in white started up, and waved its fins up and down and moaned in a 'orrible way.

"'Wot,' said young squire, 'you ain't lost your shirt, 'ave you? Don't tell me, g'along!'

"'No,' whispers the ghost, 'I've lost my grave!'

"'Losh (hic) yer grave? (hic),' said squire's son. 'Then serve you right, you old fool, for bein' out this time o' night.'"

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If you see it in the *Sunday Shocker*, it is true.

¹ An expert in occult matters says this is a baffling neologism in astral language.—*Editor, "W. S."*

Readers should note that our Free Insurance Scheme has now been extended to cover risks of damage to furniture, etc., that may be incurred in genuine spiritual disturbances.

H. T. WILKINS.

Acid Drops.

When one remembers the obloquy to which the Atheist Charles Bradlaugh was exposed for advocating the discussion of what is now called birth control, it is significant to note that in America at the recent Neo-Malthusian Conference clergymen belonging to five different denominations united in urging that support of the churches be given to the movement. When the clergy come in in the name of Christianity one can be quite certain that that movement is gaining ground. We have not the slightest doubt that if by any possibility Free-thought could be tacked on to Christianity we should soon be told that Jesus Christ was the founder of modern Freethinking.

We see that at the Easter celebrations at Rome every pilgrim who crawled up the twenty-nine steps of the house of Pontius Pilate received absolution from his sins for nine years. Nine times twenty-eight makes two hundred and fifty-two, so that each of these believers will have an unexhausted ticket for free sinning for a great many years after he is dead. One wonders what he will do to work it out in heaven?

A New York paper announces that the New York Presbytery has permitted two ministers to retain their ministry although they have announced their disbelief in the Virgin Birth and several miracles, including the raising of Lazarus from the dead. We cannot understand this fastidiousness. Why a man should go picking and choosing among miracles passes our comprehension. When a man can believe in the resurrection of Jesus, what on earth is to prevent him believing in the resurrection of anyone else? As Voltaire said about the miracle of the saint walking a hundred paces after his head had been cut off, it is the first step that counts. If a man can believe in the first one the other ninety-nine should not offer any great obstacle.

Major R. A. Marriott, D.S.O., in his book, gives reasons for considering that "Arabic rather than Aramaic was the language spoken by our Lord." If we consider for one moment that the question of Christ was definitely settled by a miracle, the matter would be there for acceptance or rejection. Would this please the thousands who live on the cross? We think not. It is much safer to make the myth of Christ into a thousand phantasmagorical shapes, so that, even if we had no comparative myths in which to notice the points of resemblance, the mind would weary of chasing this figure through miles of exposition. In this respect the numberless army of expositors protest too much; what a great book Sir Sidney Lee wrote on Shakespeare, the facts of whose life can be written on half a sheet of note-paper, and the writer then could not be sure that he had the truth.

A shaft of light has penetrated the skull of at least one reviewer who, in noticing *Memories of Forty-Eight Years' Service*, makes the following profound remark to add to the gaiety of nations: "It becomes clear that there is no training for war but war." A Daniel come to judgment! The cat is out of the bag at last, and we trust that the factory is now built to ensure a liberal supply of artificial lungs and eyes that will be needed after the next great war following government by newspapers, with musical interludes by Dean Inge.

The rulers of the moral roost in England have nothing to be proud of now that one of the few ways of getting a living is by joining the army. Before a meeting of the Hull Municipal Libraries Committee the question of recruiting posters being posted in public libraries was discussed. A Mr. Pashby suggested that men don't want work which means training for war, but this reasonable remark was met by Archdeacon Lambert, who stated that the posters did not say that the men would be required to enlist. Whatever the posters say or leave unsaid, we are able to gauge the atmosphere of the Archdeacon's position. Very well, reverend sir, and spiritual pastor of sheep, if you cannot see the direction of events amplified by the Gadarene swine press, Sir Charles Higham can. This gentleman is not professionally a purveyor of musty metaphysics to the poor, but all who do not put their thinking out with the washing or to the parsons will agree with this public man, when he said:—

The world is drifting surely and swiftly towards another war; I can see the writing on the wall; I can see the cure. Startle the people into peace just as we startled them to enlist.

And we trust that the demonstrations over London which are shooting at a pigeon, may put a nail in the coffin of war. You never can tell, but one thing is certain, the Churches in that respect are hopeless, helpless, and utterly out of touch with the rapid development of chemical warfare. The next war will be over before Bishops can button up their gaiters, or decide on what "guff" they are to preach to the troops.

Locality makes no difference to the attitude of mind taken up by Dean Inge. This gentleman, who has presumably subscribed to the thirty-nine articles, writes and talks as though he was outside the purview of the fossilology perpetuated by the Church of which he is a member. Speaking at New Haven (Connecticut), apparently as a follow-up of the Pilgrim Fathers, he said that the United States divorce statistics were a dark stain on a civilized country, and in Britain, he asserted, marriage was becoming nothing more than an institution only lasting as long as a momentary passion. Bending or breaking in marriage is a question about which none should ask the advice of a Dean or anyone else interested in mansions in the sky; the only part where divorced people should trouble the religious fraternity is in asking for the return of the marriage fees, as, in spite of professional assistance, the job has been a failure.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has issued its report for 1924, a volume of more than 250 pages. The *Times*, in noticing this publication, remarks with unction that it affords abundant evidence of the Society's continued attention to the twofold duty which it assumed at its foundation in 1701—"the spiritual care of our countrymen overseas and the evangelization of non-Christian peoples." Apropos of which, we notice that the Right Reverend Wilmot Vyvyan, D.D., Bishop of Zululand, writing in a Sunday paper, remarks that "Revolt means at the best death to the natives and at the worst the massacre of the white population." Which affords a striking demonstration of the truth of the assertions made by evangelical Christians that their religion makes all men brothers, irrespective of colour. But all the same these Christian evangelists hold the sound doctrine, it seems, that if anyone has got to enter into the heavenly mansions, it is preferable if possible that he should be a "nigger."

The Rev. F. R. Burnett, Vicar of St. John's Church, Chelmsford, has just reminded us of the "good old days," when England was thoroughly Christian. On the appointment of churchwardens, he informed the Vestry that there is still a law on the Statute Book, and therefore still in force, which enacts that as soon as the Church bell stops ringing for service it is the duty of the churchwardens to go round the public-houses and turn out the people they find there. Doubtless the vicar

sighs for these pious days of old. He should have been a parson in seventeenth century Scotland. Then he could have fined and imprisoned those who refused to attend kirk, and also have had the church doors locked whilst he delivered a two or three hours' sermon, and stationed guards in order to see that no miserable sinner slipped out before he had finished.

A proposal to allow Sunday boating in Rouken Glen Park and Hogganfield Loch, Glasgow, has led to an enquiry as to the practice in other cities. The replies show that Manchester, Cardiff, and Hull are much more godly than London, Leeds, and Birmingham, for whereas the latter modern Babylons permit their citizens to hire boats on Sunday, the former do not. And yet we have little doubt that a majority of the citizens of Manchester, Cardiff, and Hull are non-Christians. The manner in which the Sabbatarians are able to get their own way about Sunday recreations is a striking illustration of how a small, unscrupulous, well-organized minority can dictate to the unorganized majority. There is no longer any popular desire to observe the Sabbath—if there ever was—and yet there are innumerable obstacles placed in the way of those who desire healthy amusement on Sunday. And those obstacles are maintained simply through the machinations of a comparatively small handful of fanatics, who are prepared to use any and every method to get their own way.

Bishop Weldon has been at it again. In an address at Stockton recently, he remarked that he did not think the promise of obedience in the marriage service was a degradation. He objected to it, however, because the promise was never kept, and thus the solemn ceremony was desecrated. He would omit this one-sided promise on that account, substituting for it a promise of service on both sides. Doubtless when we have arrived at such a state that practically no one deems it necessary for the marriage contract to be made a religious ceremony at all, the Bishop—if he is still living—will discover that he agrees still with public opinion, and objects to church marriages on the grounds that marriage is a purely secular affair, or that desecration of some sort is involved. One is forced sometimes almost to admiration of the adaptability displayed by the immutable church, and its keen appreciation of what is popular, and what is likely to make it unpopular.

The Bishop of Norwich preached the Spital Sermon at Christ Church, Greyfriars, Newgate Street. (The Spital Sermon takes its name from the Priory of St. Mary Spital, following the dissolution of which the Easter sermons were preached from St. Paul's Cross, in St. Paul's Churchyard.) On reading a brief report of the sermon we were vaguely reminded of Mr. Pecksniff, Mr. Chadband, and certain other deeply religious and moral characters from Dickens. No greater benefit could be bestowed upon the younger generation, said the Bishop, than to instruct them more fully than at present in the subject of duty. What a magnificent sermon Mr. Pecksniff could have preached on that theme!—particularly if he had been addressing the little pauper inmates of the workhouse. Never mind giving kiddies good food and clothing, and a decent home, never mind giving them education, or showing them some of the wonders of nature and the beauties of art and literature, just teach them to be humble and know their proper place towards "their masters and pastors." And then there are Christian apologists who wax exceeding wrath when their opponents tell them frankly that Christian ethics are slave ethics!

The Bishop further told his congregation that it was the sense of duty coupled with the open Bible that had made England great. We wonder what the Bishop understands by the term greatness of England. Does it conjure up into his mind the violent acquisition of foreign territories, by devout soldiers and sailors, who invariably prayed to the Lord, and impressed upon the rank

and file the need also for praying for a good, Christian slaughter of the natives or the white enemies contesting with them for the coloured man's territories? Or is he thinking of the industrial system, also run for the most part by profoundly religious and moral individuals, which is at present condemning over a million persons to the horrors of unemployment, and which houses many millions in slums? England is great, truly great, because it has produced such men as Shakespeare, Newton, Darwin, Faraday, Paine, and Bradlaugh. It is great not because of the Christian religion, but in spite of it. Its great contribution to human knowledge and progress has been made possible by the patient labours of scientists and thinkers, poets and reformers, who have gone about their labours with little or no time to waste upon theology. It has been by studying the open book of nature, or the needs and weaknesses of their fellow men, and not by muddling their brains and poisoning their minds in the study of the ancient and not altogether reputable literature of the Bible, that the men who have made England as great as ancient Greece was, have done their work. And long after Christianity has ceased to be a living faith, and when its gods and saints are ranked with the personages of the more ancient mythologies, and are forgotten save by antiquaries, the influence of the great secular thinkers and reformers that England has produced will be as great as ever—for that influence is imperishable.

In that far off happy day, when Freethought becomes a regular and insistent criticism of life, the spirit as indicated by the following extract from a review will be the rule and not the exception:—

We have no common purpose, such as goes to the making of a national ideal; "the only national festivals are Derby Day and the Cup Final"; our mental food "consists mainly of a weekly dish of crime served up in the Sunday newspapers." Let us get rid of humbug, he cries finally, scrap all the dead authors, the "grizzling Ibsens, Tolstoys, Strindbergs, and Zolas," and make place for "men with frank Western temperaments; men like Emerson and Whitman."

Mr. W. Margrie, the author of the book reviewed, is, we are told, in religion, hardly to be regarded as a safe guide, but few reviewers have the courage to hit the turnip head of religion with the quarter staff of common sense. The inhibitions of reviewers would make a volume for psychology.

How to Help.

There are thousands of men and women who have left the Churches and who do not know of the existence of this journal. Most of them would become subscribers if only its existence were brought to their notice.

We are unable to reach them through the ordinary channels of commercial advertising, and so must rely upon the willingness of our friends to help. This may be given in many ways:

By taking an extra copy and sending it to a likely acquaintance.

By getting your newsagent to take an extra copy and display it.

By lending your own copy to a friend after you have read it.

By leaving a copy in a train, tram or 'bus.

It is monstrous that after forty years of existence, and in spite of the labour of love given it by those responsible for its existence, the *Freethinker* should not yet be in a sound financial position. It can be done if all will help. The Paper and the Cause are worthy of all that each can do for them.

To Correspondents.

GREYS FYSHER.—Thanks for cutting. We had not noticed the appearance of the book, which is evidently one worth getting.

H. MANBY.—In such a case we should not dream of advising a man what to do. We could only point out to him the consequences of a decision either way, and then leave it to him to decide. When it comes to taking a decision which may affect a man's position or future he is the only one who may properly decide. All that a friend can do is to help him to realize the nature of the road that lies before him more clearly than he might otherwise.

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

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

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

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the 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.

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

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 at the following rates (Home and Abroad):— One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

The National Secular Society's Annual Conference, as decided by the voting of the Branches, will be held this year in London. The date is Whitsunday, May 31. The handsome Scala Theatre has been engaged for the evening public demonstration, and there will be a good list of speakers, particulars of which will be announced later. The morning and afternoon meetings will be for the conduct of business, and will be open to members and delegates only. We are hoping to see a good number present at both meetings, and trust that every Branch will manage to send a delegate to the Conference. Those Branches which cannot send a delegate direct have the right to appoint a local member to represent it, and either by direct or indirect representation every Branch should have a spokesman at the Conference.

In spite of the weather we have been having we venture to say that London at the end of May is a glorious place to visit, and many members will doubtless combine business with pleasure by taking this opportunity of visiting the Capital. As those members who come from the provinces will require accommodation, they should write without delay, giving the fullest particulars—length of stay, nature of the accommodation required, etc.—to Miss Vance, at the Society's Offices, as early as possible. The more time given the better. Wembley is likely to prove an attraction this year, as last, and those who leave it late may have to put up with what they can get.

Now that the summer season is at hand, we venture to once again call attention to the possibility of gaining new readers for the *Freethinker*. The worry and anxiety of keeping a journal such as this in existence is not, we are afraid, properly appreciated by all those who value its existence. Such a task has always been

a hard one, but the hardship has been intensified during the past ten years. But we have always felt, and still believe, that there are enough potential readers for this paper in Great Britain to enable it to pay its way if we could only get into touch with them. The way to do this in the case of a paper with money behind it is to advertise. But with a paper that has at best but a hand to mouth financial existence that is a practical impossibility. There remains, therefore, only the policy of personal advocacy on the part of our friends. And we beg them to bear in mind that every new subscriber gained is a step towards lessening the difficulties with which we are—week in and week out—struggling. If only 1,000 of our readers made up their minds to secure a single new subscriber it would be help of the most valuable kind, and of enormous importance to the Cause. We seriously invite all concerned to think over the matter.

Meanwhile, we may point out that we are always ready to send the paper free for four weeks or more to any addresses that are sent us on receipt of postage.

In *The Marvels of Modern Physics* (Watts & Co., paper, 1s. 6d.), Mr. Joseph McCabe provides an easy outline of modern theories of physics. Readers will find here much that they would have to wade through many volumes to get, and Mr. McCabe appears to have well digested his materials, and to have faithfully summarised the main and most important teachings of many of the latest works on the subject. The world disclosed by modern science is a very wonderful one, and makes the miracles of religion look very poor and contemptible. We hope the volume will have the circulation it deserves.

At the monthly meeting of the Federation of Rate-payers' Associations, held at Stratford, E., on Friday, May 1, Mr. W. G. Walter drew attention to the fact that in the Annual Report it was assumed that only Christians were endowed with civic or other virtues, and moved a resolution to the effect that all references to religion should be eliminated from the proceedings of the Federation. Freethinkers, Jews, Unitarians, and others made at least equally good citizens, and thanks to Freethinkers the law now made no distinction, and we have Freethinkers on the Privy Council, in the Cabinet, in Parliament, on Municipal Councils, and on Boards of Guardians. To assume that Christians were of a superior grade was to condemn such great and good men and women as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Mark Twain, Charles Lamb, Matthew Arnold, Shelley, Swinburne, Burns, Shakespeare, Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, George Eliot, Goethe, Heine, Thomas Hardy, Eden Philpotts, Victor Hugo, Anatole France, Ibañez, Lord Morley, Thomas Carlyle, the great scientists and historians, and thousands of others, which, of course, would be absurd. He himself discarded Christianity and all other forms of superstition more than forty years ago, and had certainly never been regarded either as a bad man or a bad citizen in any of the countries he had lived in.

The resolution was lost, but we consider that Mr. Walter did a service to Freethought in raising the matter. If Freethinkers on public bodies would show themselves more energetic in calling attention to the fact that others beside Christians existed, the arrogance and impertinence of Christians in public affairs would soon decrease. In the respect the motto of Freethinkers might well be—There are Others.

Mr. George Whitehead is undertaking—under the auspices of the N.S.S.—one of his "missions" in East London. He will lecture at the usual meeting place of the West Ham Branch, outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, to-day (May 10) at 7. He will also speak outside Forest Gate Station on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings, at 7.45 p.m. We hope that East End Freethinkers will bear these meetings in mind.

As will be seen from another column, Tyneside Freethinkers are beginning to bestir themselves with propaganda for the summer months. There are very many hundreds of Freethinkers on Tyneside, and if a fair proportion of these lent a hand there should be a number of strong branches of the N.S.S. built up in a very little while. We hope they will take the hint.

Too late for insertion in last week's issue we received notice that Mr. Lew Davies, of Leeds, was visiting Hull to deliver some lectures for the Branch. We wish that those responsible for sending notices would see to it that they are sent off in good time so as to reach us, at latest, by first post on Tuesday morning. It is impossible for them to get inserted otherwise. Anyway we are glad to learn that Mr. Davies had good meetings in Hull. Mr. Friend, of 26 Webster Street, Hull, writes that he will be pleased to hear from other speakers who happen to be in the neighbourhood, with a view to arranging meetings.

Atheism: Its Scope and Its Method.

II.

(Concluded from page 278.)

IN science the sceptical attitude and the habit of careful investigation have yielded good results in the rejection of useless theories and in establishing theories better able to stand the test of criticism; but, unfortunately this attitude of mind and method of working are too frequently restricted to a few subjects claimed to be scientific. It is the work of Atheism to see that scepticism and the fearless application of reason play their part in the study and exposition of every sphere of research. It must be remembered that science does not of necessity consist in the application of certain rule-of-thumb tests and the use of retorts and various implements of measure and weight. All these may or may not be useful and necessary; but it is possible to be scientific without them, as, say, in the study of sociology, or of mythology, and in the greater part of the field of psychology. The question as to whether a subject is being examined scientifically or not is decided by the way in which the data concerning the subject are collected, classified, tested by analysis and comparison, and by the way in which theories are ultimately deduced. If all this is done by the most appropriate means, without prejudice in favour of preconceived ideas, and in as complete a manner as possible, then we may say we have been scientific. And it is for this in relation to the whole field of human activity and thought that Atheism stands. In fact it may justly be claimed that the most thorough-going methods of scientific research are Atheistic, as the sceptical attitude and the application of reason do not require a god in any department of study. Of the results there is no doubt, in the minds of those who have rejected external authority, that the new theories born of what may be called the spirit of Atheism in human thought and investigation are grander than the old creation—myths. This is so even to the minds of those who accept modern science and try to free it from its Atheistic colouring by short cutting their non-theistic conclusions and bringing god in to fill out, and save themselves from damnation.

Admitting that some of the details are liable to subsequent correction what could be grander than the idea of the universe having existed at a time when it was much less complex than it is at present? Think of it as a nebula, or a number of nebulae, which were in perpetual motion, and by revolving, cooling, and condensing, took on various forms and thus produced the suns, stars, comets, etc., which

have become known to astronomers. The mind becomes almost dizzy when it makes any prolonged effort to imagine vast masses of fiery substance whirling about at an almost inconceivable velocity, and forming not only the solar system, but many other systems within the universe.

Yet this is what seems to have been going on for countless years; and great luminous bodies have been formed but, after a while, having lost their heat and light they have continued to whirl about like dark, mournful portions of the universe, fit memorials of their own extinction and warnings of the extinction which may await every other planet in the universe. At times two of these whirling spectres clash together and thus produce fresh heat and light in the form of a new luminous body, which is to go through the old process of evolution; birth, development, decay, and death, as it were. This, of course, only applies to the various bodies constituting the universe. In the light of modern science there is no evidence that the universe ever began to exist, or that it will cease to do so. It is only the various forms, under which portions of the universe appear, that are subject to the cycle of birth, development, decay, and death. The universe is immortal.

The theory of evolution which so concisely, yet comprehensively, describes what is going on in the universe at large, is being applied to everything in connection with the life of man.

Man himself develops from a simple cell of protoplasm, into a somewhat homogeneous protoplasmic cell-state, and then gradually into the great cell-kingdom which his physical structure presents to us. By slow process the protoplasm, which is the fundamental of physical life, develops into the tissue, nerve, and muscle, which go to the making of the various organs of the human body. In time the nerve system with the brain is developed, and we find there appears a dim sort of consciousness, which as it becomes more and more clear evolves into the thought of the child, then of the youth, and finally of the full-grown man.

Man, however, cannot escape from decay, followed by the dissolution of his physical structure, along with which vanish all his mental powers. And while the process of evolution on the sociological plane cannot truly be described as a biological process it is a form of natural evolution and must be treated in the same spirit in which we deal with biological evolution.

We must endeavour to trace the evolution from the simple form of society to the more highly complex social community, and treat the development of the various units whether called gens, phratry, tribe, or nation as natural units inter-related but often clashing with each other, but bearing no relation to anything in the form of so-called supernatural government. And, we must seek to explain the rise or fall of a people or a nation by a study of the conditions under which they lived; especially in relation to the economics of life, as the satisfaction or otherwise of the requirements of man's stomach plays so great a part in his success or failure.

Just as there is no supernatural architect, planning and building the wonderful natural structures, which we see around us in the form of plants, trees, mountains, birds, fishes, so there is no such architect moulding or building up human society, or guiding the development of primitive signs and speech into the finest poetry and the most nervous prose; or into the greatest masterpieces of painting, sculpture and architecture. All these accomplishments of man are the outcome of the conflict between his physical and mental capacities and the natural objects with which he is surrounded, supplemented far too often by warfare between man and man.

It may be as well to point out that evolution does not explain why the universe exists; nor does it indicate any final objective, or purposive end, towards which the development of the universe is moving. Evolution briefly describes how the universe develops, and tells us of the various things and beings within the universe which fall or are shattered to pieces after being built up, or which die after being born and undergoing a period of growth. But all this has nothing to do with inner meanings or anything of that kind.

In the spheres of philosophy and religion Atheism has played an important part by its challenge to tradition and all other external authorities and by its rejection of the theistic interpretation of the universe.

There is no proof of the existence of an all-wise, all-powerful, and all-loving god who takes care of us all. There is so much suffering and misery; so much flagrant injustice; so much waste and so many failures where success is deserved that we are quite justified in denying the existence of a god who is capable of looking after the universe in a proper manner—and no other kind of god is worth considering.

Not only is the success and happiness of the unscrupulous and hardhearted built upon the failure and misery of others, but even the success and happiness of the noblest types of men cannot be said to be without the same foundation. It is difficult for the best of men to avoid causing sorrow to one man when in the act of helping another.

The attitude of doubt which Atheism has persistently taken up towards religion until it has to some extent found its way into the camp of the religionists has greatly shaken religion to its foundations. So much so that with many religion has reverted to a mere social habit, instead of being a matter of conviction. The imperfections of the Bibles and religions of every kind have been pointed out; no religion and no scripture having been found to be a body of unmixed wisdom. In every religion there is much that is mythical, much that is unreasonable; and much that is of small ethical value. Magic, miracles, witchcraft, monkery and self-torture have abounded in the religions of the world; and wars in the name of religion have mocked the very idea of human brotherhood which religions have taught. The fact of religion being an obstacle to progress has been kept to the front by Atheism. In the interest of religion prayers and fantastic or crude magic performances have been held up as being of more value than medical skill. In the government of a people, priest-rule has often been looked upon as more beneficial than the rule of laymen; and even now the hand of the priest is not entirely withdrawn from the helm of the State. In the sphere of learning religion has offered myths in place of knowledge by way of interpreting the universe, and the emotions of man have been played upon until his mind has grovelled in the dust before deified men, animals, trees, stars, and all sorts of common objects, until the "great spirit" could be found in almost everything and it little mattered whether man worshipped a pebble or a worm, he was sure to find his god.

Fortunately, in spite of the sway which the religious instinct ultimately came to exercise over human life, other instincts developed and urged man on to doing things which have made for progress, however slowly that progress may have been brought about.

Man has often been greater than his religions and consequently he has from time to time made changes for the better in his mode of living and in his ways of social intercourse. Changes which no doubt would not have taken place had man been as profoundly devoted to the will of God as he professed to be. Even changes that have been declared to have been

brought about in accord with the "will of God" have in reality had a natural cause for their origin. The introduction of the "will of God" is but a kind of sympathetic magic catch-phrase to keep his almightiness in order.

These remarks about religion are not made concerning all but Christianity, but all including Christianity. It is a fallacy to exclude the latter as if it were a religion apart. It is not so, but is merely one of the many forms or systems which the general development of religion has taken on according to geographical and historical conditions. Myth, magic, legend, miracle, and all degrees of immortality are to be found in the scriptures, the churches, and the general history of Christianity. Even the so-called life of Christ reputed to be contained in the Gospels, is as unreliable as any divinely written book is expected to be; and religious belief has set up a very high standard of unreliability.

Approaching the Gospels in a sound Atheistic attitude of mind, and that is the only attitude in which they should be approached, we find there is nothing reliable told of Jesus who is supposed to have walked the soil of Palestine. In the Gospels there is too much and too little data for a composition of a biography of Christ. Too much in the sense that quite a number of different biographies can be derived therefrom by writers of strong imagination belonging to different religious sects. Too little if we attempt to write a consistent biography with what may be claimed as the merely natural incidents. Even the question as to which are the facts belonging to the life of Jesus cannot be answered with certainty. What we find is a composite sketch of a character called Jesus Christ, made up of such a mixture of good and evil, naturalness and so-called supernaturalness, all served up in the form of obvious myths and possible fact, that the problem becomes hopeless in the light of any reasonable conception as to the writing of biography.

In the sphere of ethics Atheism has done much to clear from morals the dead weight of religious cant, and to place morals on a humanistic basis by insisting upon the historical fact that morality is the outcome of the evolution of social life, and not a heaven-given bundle of rights and wrongs. The latter are not fixed and unalterable rules of conduct regulating what must and what must not be done. All rights and wrongs are relative to the times and conditions under which men live; and the recognition of this fact tends to make life more understandable, and human intercourse more enlightened.

Unfortunately the spread of the correct attitude towards life's problems is not so rapid as one could wish. Much of the ground has been cleared by Atheism in the past, but there is still much to clear before we can advance and build as we desire.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Society News.

There was a large and representative gathering of Tyneside Freethinkers at Newcastle Town Moor, near North Road entrance, on Sunday last, to support the meeting inaugurating the Summer outdoor campaign of the local Branch. Mr. J. Fothergill, of South Shields, officiated as chairman, and was supported by Messrs. Bartram sen. and jun., R. Chapman, and several other friends and visitors from a distance. Mr. R. Atkinson delivered an argumentative address upon the application of Freethought principles to practical social issues, and, after questions at the close, there was a good sale of literature.

The Birth of a Ritual.

WE are a people who live by externals. Appearance is the thing that matters to us. When we consider some action, we do not ask ourselves much more than how it will look. We care for the conventions of our neighbours, much more than any other people, except the Americans, who are of our own race. And so we create a ceremonial and, having carried out the ceremonial with as much pomp and circumstance as it will bear, we return to the ordered routine of our ordinary everyday life, completely satisfied, and with our febrile consciences at rest.

There are many examples, great and small, of this mad method of living, but scarcely one has been so significant or new as the formality with which we remember Armistice Day. It arose out of what was the most significant happening in our living; an event which removed us gradually but effectively out of our swathings of self-complacency. Wounded there, we hastened to recreate the atmosphere so necessary to our existence immediately an opportunity offered. (Please notice that I do not comment upon the morality of our action. I merely state it.) And much in the manner of our carrying out our self-imposed Sunday observances, we created an annual ritual to be observed for memory's dear sake.

Once a year our rulers, and thereafter ourselves, proceed in procession, the former clothed in the fancy dress of office and ceremony, to the Cenotaph. First the galaxy of fame, and the whole of the people stand silent for two minutes; next we have a musical ceremony, and then offerings of flowers, arranged in circles and crosses in accordance with the old Egyptian symbols of fecundity, are placed at the base of the stone. In the evening those who choose and can pay the specially enhanced prices of such a national occasion, rejoice in over-eating and unusual drinking and dancing. On the next day we feel that we have done all that is demanded of us. We have honoured the dead, whom the world's pre-war folly inevitably sacrificed on the altar of the modern Moloch, and we have indulged the atavistic feeling of ancestor worship. A large number of living heroes, and their merely sublunary needs, do not interest us. They are only an ordinary result, which we mournfully admit is one of the normal, and therefore unavoidable results of all war. "As it was in the beginning," is, in the fashion of men's thought, as true to-day as when it was written.

The ritual of Armistice Day is the major celebration, but there is a minor one. It is the salutation of the Cenotaph in the military manner by professional warriors, when in the special garb of their trade, and by the hat-doffing of civilians. How much of this salutation is formal and perfunctory, dictated by the need for keeping up appearances, even at this early day, it is impossible to say, but it is easy to grant a kindly estimate and imagine that much of it is dictated by a serious feeling on the subject of the war and all its folly. It is nevertheless to be observed that the majority of those who carry out the ceremony are either youths, who are too young to have had any actual experience in the field, or old men whose years denied them that salutary experience. Of the men in middle years who pass by few perform this ceremony. Those who do are of the class who were undisturbed in their Anglicanism by the war.

The war has only been ended a few years, and we still recall the poignant emotions of those four years. A reality, although less distinct than at its inception, still endures in this ritual; but it is perceptibly less distinct than it was, and as time passes it will grow less and less. The thing it was designed to

recall will gradually be forgotten, and another piece of ceremonial, by no means to be abandoned, will have been added to our national life. With the passing of two generations, supposing that our present civilization should last that long, it will become a public holiday, and will convey as much to the then modern people as the Lord Mayor's show does to us. It will be something to go to!

But I cannot imagine that we shall abandon our habit of placing a large number of wreaths on the Cenotaph all the year round, and a great mass on a particular day, to the accompaniment of a splendid piece of pageantry. Nothing would be so averse from our national character, and it is impossible of conception; but the sense of this war is bound to become as vague as the terrors aroused by the Napoleonic wars or the Indian Mutiny. All that we shall retain will be the ceremony.

And when, in the effluxion of time, we have forgotten its meaning, there will arise the opportunity of an interpretation of the ceremonial. By the use of fantastic imagery, by the dangerous process of argument from analogy, by a twisting of the plain sense of words, which is so fascinating to man's confused method and apparatus of thinking, we shall come to regard, first, the ceremonial as important for its own sake, and second, the Cenotaph as the altar of the Unknown God. To many of the more confused, the symbol and the reality will grow more closely intertwined until they finally become one. Then will the placing of circlets and crosses of flowers upon the stone take on a new virtue. It will become an action having virtue, such as all sacrificial gestures possess.

The country has acquired a large number of these phallic memorials, and, although for future generations, it will be more significant to place floral oblations on the main pedestal in Whitehall, a sufficient virtue will attach to the local offertory to ensure that the practice will continue all over the country.

A new religion is in process of formation before our eyes. It possesses a ritual, and it will doubtless soon possess a mystical interpretation. It may grow into a dangerous rival of the other dogmas, but that is doubtful, because so soon as it shows signs of developing so far, it will be assimilated by the official hierarchy: and that is the more likely, because they took a prominent part in its birth, and they will thus be able to engorge it the more readily.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Correspondence.

WHAT IS FREETHOUGHT?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A short time ago I found myself engaged in a controversy in the columns of this paper. In the course of the correspondence my protagonist sharply questioned my right to the self-assumed title of Freethinker. I therefore feel impelled to write a short article asking the question: What is Freethought?

On the negative side I can assert without fear of contradiction that Freethought is thought which is free from prejudices against people and ideas and free from pre-conceived notions about ultimate things. On the positive side perhaps the simile most nearly expressive of Freethought is the Scientific Spirit of Enquiry. I want to take as my illustration the man Jesus.

I will lay my cards on the table and will say that I consider some of the contributions to this paper about Jesus to be opposed to the essential spirit of Freethought. It is one thing to condemn the superstitions which have made a foolish myth of the Nazarene and it is quite another thing to condemn the man himself on the ground that generations of his followers have been fools. The fact is that Freethought must pluck the fine feathers of ecclesiasticism from Jesus Christ if it is to justify its own title.

In taking Jesus alone, as a scientist takes an atom alone, one primary difficulty must be overcome. The lapse of time since he lived and the constant spiritual storms that have raged about him since that time create a need for a very tentative acceptance of the letter of the gospels. Words change their meanings from year to year and translations notoriously distort original meanings.

In examining Christ without prejudice myself I find I am left with a figure in whom many of the ignorant superstitions of his time are deeply engraven. But I find also four outstanding qualities in his nature which mark him out as one of the greatest figures in history. First, I find an amazing sincerity of purpose, an utter earnestness which causes me to cross swords with those who call him "imposter." He may have been a deluded man in some respects; but would you call Voltaire a charlatan for ridiculing the notion that the seas had once covered the mountain-tops? Secondly, I find a man who had never stooped to the sins and follies found in all other men; a fact which one can prove psychologically by an analysis of the actions and utterances of Jesus. In the third place, I perceive a mind in which the highest conceptions of human morality are set out with crystalline beauty and clarity. Finally, I am forced to conclude that the miracles, which may have been distorted and exaggerated, are founded upon fact, and indicate that he possessed in superlative degree a direct power over nature which authenticated persons in various countries at all times have exhibited in certain degrees.

Now, I maintain most strongly that these things can be proved by anyone who cares to bring Freethought to bear upon Jesus, and I assert categorically that the conclusions to which one comes in regard to these things provide the only rational platform from which to launch an attack upon degenerate Christian superstition.

The hold which Jesus Christ has over the imagination of white mankind has been possible in the past and will continue strong in the future, not so much because some believe him to be a manifestation of God upon earth, but through the power of the four qualities which I have indicated. These qualities of Christ enable his followers to assert that whatsoever is good is Christian and whatsoever is Christian is good, and we shall need a very close and searching analysis of Christ himself in order to clear up the confusion which such generalizations involve.

It is the purpose of this brief appeal to point out the uselessness of attacking the follies of fools whilst disregarding the greatness which they conceal. The task of Freethought is not to destroy what is worthless without emancipating from confusion of thought those things which make life worth living. If to the man Jesus there have been grafted gross relics of the material and sentimental legends of the Nile, and tortured portions of the thought of the lesser Greeks, there burns beneath it all the pure fire of a sane and noble spirit who can provide inspiration for the better ordering of our world. If the life of Christ was clouded by traditions of the ancient Jewish faith there yet rises above the clamour of lamentations and appeals to Jehova the voice of Christ saying: "Why do ye not even judge of these things for yourselves?"

Lest I be mistaken for a Christian apologetic in disguise, let me again remind my readers of my full recognition that Jesus had his limitations and made profound mistakes. In this connection I would say it is better to bend the mind in an examination of the things involved in his mistakes than to attack the exaggerations of those mistakes which are so evident in orthodox and historical Christianity.

It is certainly a superstitious folly to create a god in the image and likeness of man; but to aspire to create man in the image and likeness of the God in whom Christ believed—whether he was right or wrong—I have no doubt to be the quintessence of sanity.

HUBERT C. KNAPP-FISHER.

[NOTE.—We relax our rule with regard to lengthy letters, because the above contains much about which readers of this paper will disagree. But we must urge upon all who criticise the virtue and the necessity of brevity.—ED.]

CHURCH PARADES.

SIR,—Paragraph 1268, *King's Regulations*, states: "The religious denomination of a soldier shall be..... (a comprehensive selection of sects).....or any other denomination as stated by the soldier." (My italics.) Other paragraphs direct that a soldier, where possible, shall be paraded and marched to the place of worship of his denomination, by an N.C.O. of that denomination. Where such N.C.O. is not available, any N.C.O. may be ordered to conduct the party to and from the church door only, though this is to be avoided if possible.

These regulations cannot be employed to coerce an avowed Freethinker. If he will take the trouble to "state" in writing that his denomination is "Atheist" (or "Tree-worshipper," for that matter), the C.O. has the unavoidable duty of recording the fact, and then can do no more than try and find an Atheist "place of worship," to which he may be marched, "if possible."

In my own case, when desiring to be recorded as an Atheist, I had to meet quibbles as to whether the word indicated a religious denomination, but the instruction, "as stated by the soldier," could not be circumvented; moreover, if the authorities held that I was compelled to have a belief, as opposed to an unbelief, I suggested that I might state myself a Confucianist. It was held that in military law Atheism or any "statement" constituted a denomination, even were it a one-man denomination, but it is quite likely that a Freethinker less determined, or less-informed, might have been persuaded to embrace an orthodox sect, or might have foolishly and unnecessarily committed an act of insubordination.

Thus, although the regulations obviously do not contemplate Freethinking soldiers, it cannot be said that the men are denied liberty of conscience. What civilian Freethinkers might justly oppose is that the men are compelled to keep up religious observances so long as they do not dissociate themselves from all organized sects, and that those sects are advertised by the ceremonial attendance of the national forces, for which Freethinkers help to pay.

In the case of ninety per cent. of recruits—I speak from wide personal experience—the question "Religion?" evokes a blank stare. After some cross-examination by the recruiting sergeant ("What Sunday-school did you go to?" etc.), the recruit allows himself, as I did, to be "hugged down" as so-and-so, and treats the whole matter with indifference. When subsequently paraded for worship, he regards the proceedings as one of the many not-arduous exhibitions of military pomp for which it is his duty to furbish himself. The actual service goes on in an atmosphere distinctly irreligious. Nevertheless, the whole thing gives religion a distorted importance in the minds of these irreligious men.

The authorities do not regard compulsory religious parades as essential to the welfare of the soldier, but they *do* wish to maintain the establishment of chaplains. In peace time chaplains do not get a salary; they get a grant of so much a head for soldiers attending their services. If attendance were voluntary, the grant would fall so low that the chaplains would have to be kept at a salary, though their work had disappeared: the authorities would not dare to dispense with them. (Roman Catholic padres are amusingly insistent that their parades shall be full strength—let Sunday fatigues be done by C. of E. men!—but it is the dissenting ministers who are frankest about the financial side of military attendance.)

Soldiers who get themselves into trouble about Church Parade, particularly N.C.O.'s who refuse to march parties of men to and from church, have only themselves to blame. On enlistment they knowingly entered into a by no means one-sided contract, and their part of that solemn contract was that they should obey all lawful commands, and not seek to subvert what for the time being is a lawful procedure. It is for the nation, more or less represented by the high court of Parliament, to alter the duties it requires from its soldiers. Till then, the individual soldier is quite wrong in defying legally-enforceable discipline, particularly when, by making known his opinions in the proper manner, he can avoid personal attendance at any religious function which offends his conscience.

SERVING SOLDIER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING, HELD ON MONDAY,
APRIL 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Gorniot, Moss, Neate, Rosetti, and Samuels, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

New members were received for Birmingham, Glasgow, Manchester, North London, and the Parent Society.

The draft of the Annual Balance-Sheet was discussed and ordered to be printed and matters were arranged for the Executive's report.

The President reported the final payment of Miss Jane Day's legacy.

Correspondence from Leeds and Birmingham reported. Final arrangements in connection with Mr. Whitehead's Freethought Mission were reported, and the Secretary instructed to utilize his services while in London in Finsbury Park.

Re Conference.—By the vote of the Branches it was decided that the town in which the Conference should be held this year be London, and it was resolved that the Secretary make arrangements for the hire of the New Scala Theatre.

Notices of motion for the Conference Agenda from the Branches were read, and motions from the Executive also were suggested, and the whole remitted to the Agenda Committee, Messrs. Cohen, Moss, and Rosetti being elected. Arrangements for the Conference Public Meeting were also made.

It was reported that the Town Hall, Birmingham, had been booked for a lecture by Mr. Cohen for December 10. The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

Obituary.

Freethinkers will learn with the deepest regret of the sudden death, under dramatic circumstances, of Mr. George Whale, Chairman of the Rationalist Press Association. Mr. Whale was presiding at the Annual Dinner of the Association and had only just concluded what we hear was a most interesting speech, when those near him noticed there was something amiss. A sudden seizure had deprived him of consciousness, and he was at once carried from the room with some of the diners, who were medical men, in attendance. Unfortunately all efforts were in vain, and Mr. Whale died very soon after. The function, of course, came to an abrupt termination. Mr. Whale was a man well advanced in years, and had been for a long time identified with the R.P.A. One of the daily papers—the *Daily Express*—announced in big headlines, "Death after Denouncing Religion." Probably it was thought the heading would appeal to the lower class of religionists, who would see in the incident the hand of God. We believe we are only doing justice to Mr. Whale in saying that he would rather his end came while he was still carrying on the work in which he was interested than at a stage when his capacity had been weakened by disease. One can face death in no better cause, and in no better manner. All the sadness of such a death rests with those who are left. And they are never without the consolation of contemplating a life which had spent its energies in the service of justice and humanity. The cremation will take place at Golder's Green on Saturday, May 9th, at 12 o'clock. Mr. F. J. Gould will conduct the service.

Rationalism does not attack religion; it tries to explain it. The clergy argue that human reason is too imperfect to understand the mystery of revealed religion, and that therefore we need faith. But the divines do not seem to realize that they are reasoning even when they are offering reasons why we should not reason. And since reason we must, why not reason honestly and bravely instead of timidly and incorrectly?—*Man-gasarian*.

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 postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE.—(Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French by M. Deshumbert on "Les Défenses Naturelles de l'Organisme." All invited.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "Religion and the French Revolution."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Class Interest versus Civilization."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6.15, Mr. J. Marshall, a Lecture.

FINSBURY PARK.—11, Mr. G. Whitehead, a Lecture.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Hanson, Hart, Keeling, Drayton, and Ryan.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. C. H. Keeling, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will lecture outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E., on May 10 at 7, and May 11 at 7.45. On May 12, 13 and 14 outside Forest Gate Station at 7.45.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. R. Atkinson, a Lecture.

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