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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Religion, Death, and Freethought.—The Editor</i> - - -	305
<i>Theosophy and Christianity.—J. T. Lloyd</i> - - -	307
<i>An Unsubduable Roman.—Mimnermus</i> - - -	308
<i>Ethics.—Joseph Bryce</i> - - -	309
<i>Science and Religion.—W. Main</i> - - -	314
<i>Ganderless Geese.—Arthur Rogerson</i> - - -	315
<i>National Secular Society.—Conference Agenda</i> - - -	316
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions.

Religion, Death, and Freethought.

The death of Mr. George Whale while presiding over the annual dinner of the Rationalist Press Association was dramatic, rather than tragic. Sudden deaths are not uncommon, and in the case of a man of over seventy, suffering from a weak heart, exposed to the strain of speechmaking, etc., in a necessarily vitiated atmosphere, the collapse is easily understandable—so much so that the Westminster Coroner probably dispensed with the formality of an inquest. It would have but added unnecessarily to the grief of his friends. One's sympathy goes out to them, for it is with them that the pain of his death rests. For the man himself there was a quick, painless ending to a lengthy and useful life. And it came while carrying on a work with which his deepest interests lay. If we cared more for ourselves than for those whom we love we might each wish that our own end might come in a similar manner. One moment alive and happy, rejoicing in life, and in what we are doing, the next endless unconsciousness, without pain, physical or mental. It is the thought of others that gives us pause, and one needs a more precise calculus than I can apply to determine categorically which death is the more preferable. The only certain thing is that the shock of death in such cases is with the living. It is they who feel; it is they who miss. It is death that casts its shadow over life. The region of death knows neither shadow nor grief.

* * *

God and the Freethinker.

All the papers that we saw reported the death of Mr. Whale as an item of news. That was quite fit and proper. But there was one exception. The *Daily Express*, which apparently aims at pleasing the more primitive and less educated section of the Christian world, distinguished itself by large headlines, and a placard, "Death after Denouncing Religion—Amazing Tragedy at a London Dinner." The implication of the heading was obvious. In the good old Christian way it implied that God was getting busy. He would no longer submit to people attacking religion without making reprisals, and this case was a warning to others. That is the way he used to work, and Christian literature of the olden days provided

numerous illustrative instances. And apparently there are very large numbers of Christians still in that stage, otherwise the *Daily Express* would not have had that heading. This type of believer still has a genuine belief in the watchful eye and vengeful hand of God. They believe that all honest unbelievers—the dishonest ones who keep their opinions to themselves, neither they nor their God bother about—should either be overcome by the judgment of God, or they should die in their beds repentant and believing. On the whole, they prefer the latter. They will forgive a man for living a sensible life if he will only end up with a stupid death. But a man who dies immediately after denouncing religion appeals to them, and to the *Daily Express*. From our point of view the really regrettable thing would be to die after praising religion. And yet not, perhaps, so regrettable, after all, for it would indicate that one's period of genuine usefulness was at an end.

* * *

True Religion.

Mr. C. T. Gorham, the Secretary of the R.P.A., wrote the *Daily Express* protesting against the insinuation that God struck Mr. Whale dead for being disrespectful towards him as "Cowardly, unjust, and irreligious in the extreme." I do not think the *Daily Express* was worth the protest. Mr. James Douglas is not a person whose intellectual endowments warrant one in taking him seriously. In any case, I do not see the force of the protest. If there is a God it is clearly his business to look after his own honour and his own reputation. No Freethinker objects to God doing this. What he objects to is when a policeman is called in to do it for him. But if there is a God, and if he is annoyed at Mr. Whale, or the editor of the *Freethinker*, or anyone else for being disrespectful towards him, it is his business to decide whether he will punish him, and what form the punishment shall take. And to strike a man dead is certainly not irreligious. On the contrary, it is in the highest degree religious. All religions, Christian and non-Christian, are full of such instances. There is nothing more irreligious in God striking a man dead than there is in him curing a man of disease because he does something to please him. It is quite religious. Mr. Douglas is quite religious. His God may be brutal, or vengeful, and Mr. Douglas may be stupid—or pretending to be. But it is quite a religious position. And Freethinkers should be the last to complain if God wakes up now and then and does something—even though it be only to strike an old man dead.

* * *

The Duty to Attack.

Major Putnam, who was proposing the health of Mr. Whale when the death occurred, appears to have resented the imputation that Mr. Whale was attacking religion, or that he was even speaking disrespectfully of Christianity. According to an *Evening Standard* representative, Major Putnam was "almost dogmatic in his assertion that Mr. Whale was by no

means denouncing religion," and, he added, "I have always held that Whale realised that any criticism of the abuses carried on under the name of religion should be conducted with the full acknowledgment of the faith, which has existed not only from Christ, but from before Socrates." I confess this is somewhat cryptic, but none the less I am a little puzzled. For it is clear that Major Putnam takes it as a slight on the character of Mr. Whale that he should be charged with attacking Christianity or of denouncing religion. On the contrary, I take this to be a compliment to his clearheadedness. Mr. Whale did not believe in Christianity, and he did believe that its influence on mankind had been disastrous. Why then should he not have denounced it? It was his duty to do so. Moreover, he was Chairman of an Association that also believes Christianity to be false and dangerous. The dinner over which he was presiding was to celebrate the advances made by that Association in its work, and by implication, as well as by words, Mr. Whale was denouncing religion and Christianity. Why then the disclaimer? Of course, Christians might regard the charge as an imputation on Mr. Whale, but surely every Freethinker will take it as a compliment from the enemy. May I suggest to Major Putnam that he is neither paying a compliment to the memory of his dead friend nor weakening the Christian attack when in reply to a such a charge he pleads "Not guilty." Christianity has not been weakened by that kind of policy. The better reply is "Guilty, and proud of it."

* * *

Timidity and Heresy.

I cannot understand the anxiety of some people, who do not believe themselves in Christianity, to remove from the minds of Christians the belief that they are attacking or denying their religion. And, curiously enough, only the day before the death of Mr. Whale there appeared in the *Observer* an illustration of this from the pen of Professor Julian Huxley in the course of a memorial notice of the life of his famous grandfather, T. H. Huxley. Of him he says:—

He did not know whether there was a personal God, or whether the soul was immortal—he believed that he could never know; and accordingly he refused to concern himself with the possible consequences of their uncertain truth.

I am not clear as to what is an uncertain truth, but the passage appears to me to do Professor Huxley less than justice. I do not think it is true that Huxley did not concern himself with the consequences of the belief in a personal God. I seem to have a recollection that he attacked with portentous solemnity the Christian belief in the cosmogony of the Bible, and in many places in his writings he refers to the obstacles placed in the way of scientific progress by the religious belief of the people. Surely this was concerning himself with some of the consequences of the belief in a personal God and in the soul. To say that Huxley did not see, as Kingdon Clifford and others saw, the evil consequences of men's belief in God and personal immortality would be to pay but a poor compliment to the intelligence of one who was proclaimed as being without belief in either. And to admit that he saw these consequences, but refused to say anything about them, is to ignore the wise counsel of Clifford that if a belief is true it should be shouted from the housetops. And if it is false it should be shouted from the housetops also. The man, whom Professor Julian says, exalted to the highest plane Truth and Morality could hardly have been blind to the duty that lay before him here. Otherwise the exaltation was of small value to anyone.

Can We Deny God?

And the disclaimer of any denial of a personal God! That does to some appear a very grave offence. I fancy that Professor Huxley, if he had been questioned, would have said that personality, so far as this question was concerned, was something that pertained to the human organism. It was a quality of the organism. And of personality, apart from the organism, we had not, and could not have, any conception whatever. When we speak of personality we mean, therefore, a quality of the human organism. But to talk of the existence of a personal God—meaning by God what Christians have meant by it, and by personality what we are bound to mean by it—is to string together a number of statements that are inconceivable as a whole and mutually destructive. And unless we are permitted to deny the truth of a proposition, the terms of which destroy one another, reasoning is impossible, and science nothing but a string of illusions. That a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time, and that two things cannot exist at the same time if either cancels the other, seem to me quite safe assertions, and that is all there is in the denial of a personal God. It is in the act of asserting a personal God that ground is furnished for a denial that would otherwise be meaningless.

Why Not?

It is really curious that so great pains should be taken to prove that this or that man did not attack Christianity or did not disbelieve in some sort of a God. I can understand this when the charges are brought against a man who is actually a believer. But why trouble about one who is not a believer? Is it a compliment to say that he really was not decided, but was only sitting on the fence unable to make up his mind to a positive declaration? And what are we to make of other personal Gods beside the one that occupies a position at the head of respectable society in this country? What of the personal Gods of the Greeks or the Romans? Will no one deny their existence? Can we imagine Professor Huxley saying that he could not bring himself to the point of denying that they existed? Everyone knows that he would have denied their existence most heartily, as every Christian denies the existence of other personal Gods. Professor Huxley would probably have said that a God defined is a jumble of incongruous sentences. And a God undefined is mere words—nothing at all. But what we should like would be for Professor Julian to tell us in what respect the denial of the personal Gods of the Greeks or Romans differs from a denial of the personal God of the Christian? Is it a question of chronology? Or of fashion? It certainly is not a question of logic. Can it be that you may deny a God who belongs to a bygone age, and who has no status in present-day life, but you may not deny one who is part of an existing establishment and a fashionable ornament of present-day society? I wonder!

* * *

A Plea for Clarity.

I have no desire to lecture anyone, but I do venture on making a suggestion to those who have broken loose from the Christian religion. This is the very simple one that little good can be done, but probably much harm may result, from the practice of emphasizing how little certain well-known men depart from the current creed. That does not make Christians think less of their own religion, but rather more. It encourages the belief that after all the "essence" of the Christian religion is true and sound, and that these unbelievers have only exaggerated unimportant details. In heart and in essence they still admit the truth and the goodness of genuine Christianity. And

it is not that kind of thing the average Christian needs most. He is already conceited enough. What he needs always and everywhere is a sharp reminder that there are others in existence beside himself, and that his creed is in essence but a survival of a handful of primitive superstitions coated with a number of ethical teachings that civilization has forced upon it. There is no need for Freethinkers to minimize the differences of prominent men with Christianity. If these men have a name Christians will do that part of the work readily enough and untruthfully enough. But a real service to the cause of progress will be done if the friends of eminent men will point out to the public in what respects these men differed from the established religion. And if Professor Julian will do this for his grandfather, if he will point out in what respects, both by direct statement and by implication he departed from the religious beliefs of those around him, he will be doing the cause of mental freedom a service of no small value. There is really no need for us to help Christians. They are well placed for looking after themselves.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Theosophy and Christianity.

THE Rev. Peter Green, Canon of Manchester and Chaplain to the King, is contributing a series of articles to the *Guardian* under the general heading of "Difficulties of Life and Belief," some of which are extremely foolish, such, for example, as the one of April 9, entitled, "Is there Temptation in Heaven?" while all of them are marred by Christian credulity and prejudice. The reverend gentleman was appointed Canon-residentiary of Manchester in 1911, at a salary of £850 a year. Not long after this appointment he created a tremendous sensation by declaring that organized religion in this country was a lamentable failure, and that our public schools were manufacturing Atheists wholesale. Some of the newspapers began to call him the "Gloomy Canon," inasmuch as he was droning the same heart-breaking dirge as his better-known and greater brother in the Lord, Dr. Inge, who was then almost universally spoken of as the "Gloomy Dean." Whether Canon Green still entertains the same dismal view of the prospects of organized Christianity or not we cannot tell, but, judging by his numerous articles in the *Guardian*, we cannot help regarding him as a member of a somewhat narrow-minded and prejudiced school of old-fashioned orthodoxy. More than once he has given expression in these articles to his contempt for the opinions and convictions of the Modernists in his own church, among whom are not a few men of greater learning and deeper insight than he possesses. Nevertheless, he has the audacity to claim that he proclaims the only true Gospel, while they are advocates of a largely false one.

In his *Guardian* articles of April 24 and May 1 he sits in judgment upon Theosophy, and without a moment's hesitation condemns it. We hold no brief for either Theosophy or Christianity, our only desire being to be just to both; but we are profoundly convinced that Canon Green does justice to neither. Take the following account of the origin of Theosophy:—

It originated in America in 1875, appearing in India about 1879, and claimed to be a re-proclamation of the original Divine revelation, of which all other religions are corruptions and perversions. The true doctrine was at length being revealed to the world by exalted beings, called Mahatmas, who, having raised themselves above the restraints of time and place, are supposed to be now devoting themselves

to the welfare of this world. Their chosen agent and servant was Madame Blavatsky, and the truth of the Theosophic revelation was attested by "occult phenomena," or miracles.

That is by no means an accurate description of the origin of Theosophy, which, in reality, is centuries older than Christianity itself. We find it in Platonism, and particularly in Neo-Platonism, of which Dean Inge is such an ardent admirer. Zoroastrianism also contained many Theosophic doctrines, as readers of the *Rig. Veda* are well aware. This view is supported by Professor Andrew Seth's article on Theosophy in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, in which we read that "Neoplatonic doctrine of emanations from the supra-essential One, the fanciful emanation doctrine of some of the Gnostics (the æons of the Valentinian system might be mentioned), and the elaborate esoteric system of the Kabbalah, to which the two former in all probability largely contributed, are generally included under the head of Theosophy." Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) has always been called "the Theosophist *par excellence*." Eckhart, too, who flourished at the end of the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth, was a thoroughgoing Theosophist, who asserted, as Seth puts it, "behind God a predicateless Godhead, which, though unknowable, not only to man, but also to itself, is, as it were, the essence or potentiality of all things." Through lack of space we cannot enter into details, but they are easily accessible to any anxious inquirers at almost all public libraries.

Canon Green's fantastic diatribe against Madame Blavatsky's character is verily beneath contempt, and only reminds us of the vile charge which his enemies brought against the Gospel Jesus, namely, that he was a glutton and a wine drinker, a friend of tax-gatherers and harlots. To Canon Green such a charge is absolutely false, though Jesus himself is made to admit that he ate and drank like other people; but the Canon seems to repeat the very worst accusations against Madame Blavatsky with the utmost delight. That she was not a perfect woman is self-evident; but, while by no means a beauty, either physically or mentally, she had charms with which she fascinated those who came in contact with her, and made them her slaves. Theosophy as interpreted and preached by her became almost immediately an immensely popular religion. The scholarly Mr. Seccombe says that her "extraordinary cleverness, volubility, energy, and will-power enabled her to maintain her ground, and when she died on May 8, 1891 (White Lotus Day), at the Theosophical headquarters in Avenue Road, Regent's Park, London, she was the acknowledged head of a community numbering not far short of 100,000, with journals in London, Paris, New York, and Madras." A deliberately wicked woman could never have achieved such a marvellous success.

The Canon says, "the truth of the Theosophic revelation was attested by occult phenomena or miracles." Well, was not the truth of the Christian revelation attested in precisely the same way? Even the birth of the Gospel Jesus was a miracle. Luke's account is as follows:—

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee. But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this might be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give

him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered, and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore, also, that which is to be born shall be called holy, the Son of God (Luke i. 26-35).

The supernatural and the miraculous dominate that passage with a vengeance, and yet people like Canon Green accept it as literally true. Curiously enough, Christian divines reject all non-Christian miracles, regarding them as mere legends or even myths; but to us, who stand outside all supernatural religions, Christian miracles are fully as unbelievable as all others.

In his second article of May 1 the Canon repeats the statement "that Theosophy originated in an atmosphere of sordid fraud, and that its claim to supernatural revelations, if judged by its historical and scientific teaching, can only be regarded with contempt." We make exactly the same assertion concerning the origin and claims of his own religion. As found in the Four Gospels it is thoroughly steeped in the miraculous. Jesus scarcely ever moved at all without performing a miracle. The claim that he has revealed God to the world is absolutely false. So far as his alleged teaching is concerned, it is safe to declare in the most positive manner that he never said anything about God that had not been said hundreds of times before he came. Of course, all that has been, and is being, taught about God represents only what the teachers concerned thought and think he ought to be. Whether he is or is not no one is qualified to tell; but if he is he ought to possess such and such attributes of character. One thing that is absolutely certain about Theosophists is that they do not believe in a personal God. From the Christian point of view Mrs. Besant is fully as great an Atheist now as she was when she occupied the Secular platform, and this, perhaps, is the chief reason why the Christian clergy so heartily condemn her teaching. Dr. Horton, after his return from a visit to India, complained that Mrs. Besant's influence was the chief obstacle to the success of Christian missions in that country. Canon Green, expressing his estimate of Theosophy, says:—

Alike in Europe and in India its teachings are perfectly incapable of being reconciled with Christianity. Jesus as a mere man, used for a time by the "Christ Spirit," is pure Ebionism, an early heresy condemned by the Church. Christ as one of a series of "Masters" appearing at the crises of human history, is directly opposed to the teaching of the Creed about the uniqueness of "his only Son" (*Filius Unicus*). Being thoroughly pantheistic, Theosophy is without any doctrine of sin.

No serious thinker ever dreamed that Theosophy could be reconciled with Christianity, for they are radically opposed to each other in their conception of the Universe. In their ethical teaching Theosophy, Buddhism, and Confucianism are very much alike, but the three differ fundamentally from Christianity, which maintains that no one can become morally noble and true without the aid of a supernatural being. Christianity holds further that all human beings have a sinful nature, and continue to be miserable sinners until they give their hearts to Christ and become converted. As a matter of fact, we are not miserable sinners at all. We are profoundly convinced that there is no God against whom we can sin, and that we are responsible for our behaviour only to the society of which we are members.

Canon Green closes his article by calling Theosophy "this absurd superstition," but surely Christianity is

a much greater and more absurd superstition still, and the doom of all superstitions is to be driven off from a world enlightened by science.

J. T. LLOYD.

An Unsubduable Roman.

Bird of the lithe, bright, grey, golden morn,
First of all and sweetest singer born.

—Swinburne.

For proud and fiery, and swift and bold—
Wine of life from heart of gold,
The blood of his heathen manhood rolled
Full billowed through his veins.

—James Thomson.

Not Cæsar dying amid Roman sighs,
By Pompey's statue seems more great than thee.

—Anon.

THE personality of Lucretius, the great and, perhaps, the noblest of the Roman poets, is one of the most extraordinary, and one of the vaguest in the whole world of literature. He comes before us in his book, *De Rerum Natura* (On the Nature of Things), very clearly and distinctly; he is, as it were, always present to the reader, but the details of his life are so shadowy and misunderstood. Yet, in spite of this elusive element in his life, in some way this old-world Freethinker comes closer to our modern hearts and sympathies than many others of those of the far-off time in which he lived. Across the gulf of twenty centuries, across the far deeper abyss of an older civilization and alien and archaic language, we recognize in him a brave soldier in the Army of Liberty. In this respect he has a place of his own in our affection, which not even Virgil, with his tears of mortal fortune, nor Horace, who sang so well of wine and women, can entirely displace.

There is no gainsaying the force of the genius of Lucretius. By personal acclaim he is accepted as the most powerful of the Latin poets. Indeed, one English singer, Elizabeth Browning, was so impressed by his sonorous verse and profound scepticism that she was induced to say that the old Roman "denied divinely the divine." Gladstone, who was an excellent judge of rhetoric, quoted some very daring lines from Lucretius in the speech on the Oaths Bill before the House of Commons, generally admitted to be the finest triumph of oratory that the great statesman ever delivered. These two instances show that great literary genius survives throughout the centuries, although "caviare to the general." The pomp and majesty of ancient Rome has long faded, "like snow upon the dusty desert's face," but the old Pagan's jewelled words remain a precious legacy through the ages.

The fundamental ideas which lay at the heart of Lucretius' work were that the universe is ruled by natural law, and that mankind is free to work out its own destiny, undisturbed by gods or goddesses. Lucretius was a very far-seeing man, and a complete Freethinker. He denied the doctrine of a future life and its ethical usefulness. He declared the hereafter to be a fable and a dream. He told the priests that they could not frighten a poet with stories of hell, for poets had greater imaginations, and could see things for themselves. Moreover, and this is really astonishing, he anticipated many of the scientific ideas of the nineteenth century.

Writing nearly two thousand years before Darwin, Lucretius perceived the truth of evolution, the indestructibility of matter, the survival of the fittest, the true origin of language, the progress of society. To us these things are but comparatively recent tidings. Twenty long centuries ago they dawned on the pro-

phetic mind of the great Latin poet "dreaming on things to come."

Small wonder that the name of Lucretius is immortalized by his Atheistic work, *De Rerum Natura*, so finely put into English prose by Munro. The original remains, by virtue of the author's rare genius, the finest didactic poem in any language. In this amazing poem, for whole pages together, he reads like a modern poet. We may gain some notion of the general effect of this masterpiece if we conceive Tennyson to have devoted his extraordinary talents to versifying Spencer's *Synthetic Philosophy*, or Swinburne to have subordinated his splendid gifts to the poetic presentation of Darwin's *Origin of Species*.

Lucretius is a poet, and more than a poet. Mark the ideas, as well as the beautiful words in the following. He is pointing out that death is dreamless rest, and not as the priests pretend:—

Thou not again shalt see thy dear home's door,
Nor thy sweet wife and children come to throw
Their arms round thee, and ask for kisses more,
And through thy heart make quiet comfort go.
Out of thy hands hath slipped the precious store,
Thou hoardest for thine own, men say, and lo!
All thou desired is gone. But never say
All the desire as well hath passed away.

Lucretius is so modern. Some years ago W. H. Mallock, a fine but neglected scholar, turned some of the old Roman's verses into the quatrains of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*. So remarkable was the resemblance that a reader could be forgiven for mistaking the one for the other. Our poet's predominant claim to-day, however, is his scepticism. He is man's champion against priestcraft. According to him, the great curse of human nature is religion, which priests still use to fool and degrade mankind. Now and again his cheek flushes with anger, as when he records, in lines of great beauty, the terrible guilt prompted by religion against the most sacred ties of humanity. No poet has presented us with a picture more finished than that of the sacrifice of Iphigenia to the gods, a story almost "too deep for tears." We see the hapless maiden butchered to make a religious holiday. Lucretius concludes his account with lines that make us feel his heart throb with indignation as we read:—

Learn thou then
To what damned deeds religion urges men.

A most marked characteristic of Lucretius was his passionate ardour for knowledge. His pathos and tenderness in contemplating the riddle of the universe have already been noticed. His was a tenderness which felt sympathy with men even in the days of the gladiatorial shows. His sympathies were so broad that they included animals as well as humanity. He voices in splendid Latinisms the helpless grief of animals sorrowing for their young. His allusions to children are always touching and beautiful. His love of science, his austerity of character, the splendour of his genius, rank him among the really great poets, who, like stars, shine for ever in the firmament of art.

When we reflect on the present condition of priest-ridden Ireland, Spain, Portugal, and Italy, when we think of the 50,000 priests battering on their fellow-countrymen in Britain, when we remember the ages-long struggle of reason and religion, written in blood and fire during the centuries, it is but bare justice to acknowledge that this old-world Freethinker, two millenniums ago, fought the battle for Freedom. Lucretius also helps us to understand the magnitude of the struggle between reason and religion. In his days, each, as it were, armed with simple weapons, fought together. Now, Freethought, armed with greater knowledge, marches to battle in the hope of certain victory.

MIMNERMUS.

Ethics.

A DISCOURSE FOR NURSES AND CHILDREN—Continued.

XIII.

THE next group of desires, nurse, I have classified as the Recreative: and that these are an important element of human nature is apparent from the prominent part they have played in the social and national life of all the great nations of history. I need only instance the Olympic games of the Greeks, or the chariot races of the Romans, to show how highly civilized peoples have recognized the importance of this desire of man's nature.

When early man had clubbed a sufficient number of females for his requirements, he would naturally look around for some other form of amusement. And one can imagine another fellow caveman, seeing him standing idly by the cave entrance challenging him to throw his club the farthest, the winner to have his pick of the other's stock of females. And as soon as man had invented the bow and arrow, what more natural than that he should arrange a Bisley meeting where the younger members should try their skill as marksmen at the target. Again, the hunter in the first instance might hunt his game for food, but the exhilarating excitement of the chase would lead him also to hunt for mere sport and pastime. And what began as a barbaric sport has, curiously enough, come to be the recreative amusement of the aristocracy of modern times. A Chinese gentleman sets out upon a big-game expedition, just as the well-to-do British sportsman, or the heirs to the throne of Britain go out to India to kill lions and tigers. And the lesser English squire, in accordance with tradition, rides to hounds to hunt the diminutive fox.

One of the most interesting studies is the play of animals, which are mostly intended to teach their young those offensive and defensive tactics necessary to fit them for the battle of life. And man appears to view his recreative pleasures in much the same way. He spends a month at some seaside resort to brace himself up for the exacting labours of the other eleven months. Or he feels jaded after a hard day's work and goes to the pictures or the theatre at night as a pick-me-up. Human nature is very complex; and some things that appear trivial at first thought, and a little inconsistent with man's supposed dignity, are often of the utmost importance. And sport and amusement are like the chaff which it is necessary to give a horse if his corn is to do him any good.

All work and no play, so say the children's books, makes Jack a dull boy. We recognize childhood especially as the play-time of life, and modern educationists have come to recognize its importance. The playground is a necessary adjunct to the school, and public bodies everywhere have provided facilities to meet this need in after hours. The playmates of our childhood are often remembered to the closing years of life. Men like John Stuart Mill, who is said never to have had a childhood—his father regarding human nature as something akin to an intellectual grindstone—and who cannot look back to the innocent play-time of early years, lack one of the pleasantest recollections of life. Like a bachelor who has never known the delights of a courtship, their life is incomplete, and devoid of those sentiments which arise out of such associations. St. Paul somewhere speaks of putting away childish things on reaching manhood; but the need of play and recreation is felt in all stages of life. We may smile at a Gladstone felling trees, or a millionaire becoming enthusiastic over a game of golf, but such is human nature.

The word "play" comes from a Saxon word meaning a game, that is, any exercise undertaken for mere amusement or diversion; and it came to be applied more especially to the drama and the theatre. The term play-house is Saxon, while the word theatre is derived from the Greek, and considering the evil repute in which the mediæval theatre in England was held, due mostly to the calumny of the Church, it is noteworthy that the word "play" should have come to have a moral significance of the worthiest kind. We advise a person to "play the man," when we wish to incite him to a better course of conduct and act consistently with a high morality. Or we speak of "playing the game," meaning to act honourably and straightforward.

Christianity, and particularly the Puritan section of it, has always desecrated the love of amusement. Taking a pessimistic view of life, it has always insisted more on its sorrows than its joys. Puritanism set itself out to kill amusement, and stamp the joys of life under foot. But the object of its special aversion was the theatre. The strolling player of ancient days was regarded with as much moral reprehension as the heretic. Being brought up in the Presbyterian faith, I never saw a stage-play until I was up to manhood; the Westminster Confession teaching that stage-plays and dancing, along with adultery, were breaches of the Seventh Commandment. The epithets that the Church applied to the theatre remind one of the horrid phrases the Christian fathers used in reference to woman. But this opposition, which took the usual form of mud-slinging, and which lasted until quite recent years, has cost the Church very dearly. Human nature is stronger than religion; and while we find every form of amusement drawing crowds of spectators every night of the week, the congregations of the Churches are rapidly dwindling away. I have often thought a history of the conflict between the Church and the stage might make an interesting volume. As in all the other conflicts which the Church has waged, it has been hopelessly beaten; and the President of the Wesleyan Conference some years ago was reluctantly obliged to confess that even their most worthy members, when away from home, made no scruple of attending the theatre, and that the opposition of the Church had broken down. The Church, at one time all-powerful, and dominating life at every point, has not been able to hold its position against the recreative need of human nature.

I once read the reminiscences of a clergyman who had been stationed at some place where, he said, the only amusements of the inhabitants were—fights and funerals. And it is surprising how soon a crowd will gather at a street fight. All spectacular displays, whether they be fights or funerals, a burning building, or a procession of Highland pipers, appeal to the same instinct. Indeed, when you come to look at human life in its various manifestations, it is remarkable how large a part of its activities are exercised in the search for amusement and diversion. I have before remarked the variety of ways in which man has sought to satisfy his simple desires; the manufacture, for instance, of a thousand and one drinks to assuage his thirst. And so it is with his recreative desire; man's inventive faculty has been everywhere employed in finding out ways and means to relieve the monotony of life. If he lives in Northern climes among continual frost and snow, he will skate the frozen waters, or go sleighing over tracts of snow-clad territory. If he lives beside the water or by the sea, he will take to bathing or boating, and catch fish as a pastime. If he sees a hill or a mountain, the ascent will strike him as being grand sport; and the sight of a wild beast at liberty

will make his fingers itch to pot it with a gun. The present generation is one that is remarkable for the increased facilities it has afforded to gratify this desire. The moving pictures have been a source of pleasure to multitudes of the poor whose previous enjoyment was limited perhaps by an annual visit to the seaside. And the introduction of the motor-car has opened up possibilities that were little dreamed of by a past generation. And who shall say that these developments are not all to the good?

Human nature will always prove stronger than religion in the end; and notwithstanding the church's opposition to amusement and love of sport, it is playing a losing game when it conflicts with human instincts. Religious bodies are coming more and more to realize this, and are catering for this sporting instinct in a variety of ways. Of course, there have been times when the Church took a more lenient view of such indulgence, as when the parson and the squire rode to hounds together, and celebrated the "kill" over a few bottles of good port. Which reminds me of a story told of one of these hunting parsons. He was a bachelor vicar in a moorland parish, and practically lived in the vestry, his wants being supplied by an old lodge-keeper. On one occasion he sat down to pen his sermon and got as far as the text—"The righteous shall flourish like a green bay tree"—when he heard the sound of the horn, and leaving his manuscript he set out to follow the hounds. In the meantime, some visitors entered the Church, and seeing the vestry door open, walked in. They noticed the heading of the sermon, and a young wag among them dexterously erased the word "tree," and, imitating the vicar's handwriting, substituted the word "horse." The vicar returned later in the day, and all unconscious of any tampering with the document, finished his sermon. On the Sunday morning in the pulpit he read out the text, "The righteous shall flourish like a green bay—horse." He stopped: the wording sounded unfamiliar, and he picked up the manuscript a little puzzled, but failed to detect any error. "Damn," he said, "it is horse." But the hunting parson is out of fashion like the King's Jester, who was a familiar figure of the long ago, until Puritanism killed him.

Besides these purely physical pleasures, man finds delight in intellectual ones. It has been said that if one half of the pleasures experienced in the realm of the imagination could be translated into real life, the world would be a far happier place. Wit and humour may not be directly the expression of this desire for diversion, but they undoubtedly minister very largely to it. The comic papers, foolish as they may seem, have their uses; while the modern novel has added enormously to the pleasures of the mind. The modern facilities for the gratification of this very human desire, the employment of our faculties for purposes of pleasure and profit, has had a large share in breaking down the dominance of religion in human life. The abnormal craze for excitement such as we see at a football match between two good teams, may possibly be little more than the reaction from ages of Puritanical suppression, but in the main there can be no question that modern sport has tended to a saner and healthier view of life. At least it shows that amusement and recreation are fundamental needs of human nature that will not be gainsaid.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

In every school the educational aims must be moral training, public spirit, personal and vocational fitness, and, above all, the cultivation of German national character and the spirit of international reconciliation.—G. Gooch, *Constitutions, Germany*.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of Oxford doesn't like the irreverence shown at weddings. Presumably very few pay much attention to the half indecent marriage service of the Church beyond the fact that it is a marriage. For our part, we should much like to see the State doing something towards clothing the marriage ceremony with a little more dignity than it does. There is the service in Church, which is more or less of an insult to decent-minded people, and there is the ceremony performed before a registrar, which is generally performed in some dingy little room in some out-of-the-way corner, as though it were something to be ashamed of. If the State were not so much under the influence of parsons of one kind or another it would see to it that the civil ceremony was performed with all the dignity and impressiveness possible. But the parsons will not have it so. They know that in that case the civil ceremony would grow much more rapidly than it does. And if the parsons once lose control of marriages, funerals, and christenings, they might as well shut up shop altogether.

It is not generally recognized that there is in this country only one legal marriage, and that is the civil marriage. There is none other recognized by law. It is true that the Church of England parson performs marriages, but that is because he is a State official, and the State empowers him to act. But he is as much a State official as is the Registrar. He is, in fact, the Registrar acting in another capacity. And with variations the same holds good of marriages performed in chapels. Unfortunately we have got into the habit of speaking of civil and religious marriages, whereas there is only one legal marriage, no matter whether performed by one official or the other. The proper way would be to speak of a marriage accompanied by a religious service or without it. But the religious service is the mere trimmings, and is in no wise essential to the marriage itself. It is the contract, recognised and endorsed by the Secular State, which is of importance. The religious service is, in strict law, of no more importance than jumping over a broomstick.

Shorter sermons are the Rev. Dr. Percy Dearmer's cure for dwindling congregations at divine service. He suggested at the Conference of Parochial Church Councils, held at Swanwick, Derbyshire, that sermons should not be more than ten minutes long, and expressed the belief that the younger generation would be increasingly attracted by churches where they could "drop in unobserved," and where the services were short and varied. There is something almost pathetic in these suggestions. There is, of course, the implication that people, especially young people, no longer take their religion seriously. They are prepared only to give odds and ends of their time to divine service, and to "drop in" to church for a few minutes when they have no more important or interesting way of passing their time. We wonder what some of the stern old Calvinist ministers of seventeenth-century Scotland must be thinking, if they are in a position to learn of this falling from grace. As Buckle tells us in his *History of Civilization in England*, the Scottish ministers of that period believed in lengthy sermons, and the ordinary clergyman preached for about two hours. But real zealots, like the celebrated Forbes, thought nothing of preaching for five or six hours at a stretch. The same congregation would sometimes remain together for ten hours! Truly the Church has fallen on degenerate days, spite the multitude of religious revivals that have either just swept over the country, or are about to engulf us.

Two families in the village of Alilat, near Homs, in Syria, were burned alive in their houses for refusing to adopt a new religious faith. A prophet arose in the village, and founded a new sect, converting all the inhabitants, save the two families, who stubbornly refused to

accept his teachings. Their neighbours, infuriated by this resistance, burned down their houses, with the families inside. We can imagine that well-meaning, if muddle-headed, Christians will read this account with a shudder, and suggest the advisability of converting these infidels to the milder Christian faith. And yet the Old Testament contains accounts of massacres far more terrible than this, carried out by the express command of the old Hebrew God, whilst, as everyone knows, burning for heresy has been a common punishment inflicted by Christians upon their fellow-Christians. And without doubt Christians would emulate the barbarians of Syria to-day, but that the force of secular civilization restrains them, both through legal forms and through the pressure of public opinion. In Syria we have a terrible example of what religion, pure and undefiled by common sense and non-religious influences, results in. Perhaps it may give those who talk glibly of the need for more religion in our dealings with social and economic problems cause to think.

We are glad to see that the *Daily Herald* celebrated the anniversary of Huxley's birth by an article, giving a brief account of what that great Freethinker did for science and humanity. The article is prefaced by that famous quotation from Huxley's autobiography, which contains the passage that "there is no alleviation for the sufferings of mankind except veracity of thought and action." Unhappily, the writer does not take this advice seriously to heart, for he says: "He it was who invented the term *agnostic*, which many ignoramuses confuse with *unbeliever*, still regarding Huxley as an *Atheist*." This quibble is worthy of a Christian Evidence Lecturer at his feeblest, for if the writer is competent to write a biographical sketch of the famous scientist, he must know perfectly well that in the sense in which Huxley used the term *agnostic* he was an *unbeliever*. And in so far as Huxley was without knowledge of God, he was an *Atheist*, even though he may have preferred the newer term *Agnostic*. Whilst he lived Christians were in no doubt as to which camp Huxley stood in, and no man, perhaps, in modern times has been so violently vituperated by Christians. But now that many of the things that Huxley fought so valiantly for are won, and his fame as scientist and humanitarian is firmly established, Christian apologists are playing the old, old game of trying to claim him as one who was almost one of themselves—at least as one who was not an *unbeliever*. "In matters of the intellect follow your reason as far as it will take you without regard to any other consideration," said Huxley when defining *Agnosticism*. We suggest that no one who is intellectually honest would attempt to identify such a man with a religious believer who bases certain of his ideas upon faith in supernatural things, the existence of which, he frankly admits, reason cannot prove.

"Every man has a right to be properly clothed and fed," said Mr. Henry Mess, London Congregational lecturer in economics, at the regional Copec Conference at Hull. No one will dissent from such a general principle, except, we suggest, the genuine Christian. For such a principle to be enunciated at a Christian conference is a curious example of the vast change that has come over the churches. Running through every chapter of the New Testament is the theme that material comfort and well-being are of no consequence to the earnest Christian, who should exhibit a lively scorn of such things, and fix his eyes on the Kingdom of God, and the mansions in the sky. And the early Christians, to give them their due, lived up to this anti-social ideal, as Lecky and other historians bear witness. Those more enthusiastic Christians of to-day—such as Salvationists—pay lip service, at least to other-worldliness, although they usually manage to jog along fairly comfortably in this world whilst preparing for the next. But the least Christian of all Christians, those who have been most powerfully influenced by the work of Freethinkers, are frankly denying the fundamental principle of their creed—namely, that man's chief concern is with the next world, and his interest in this one only trivial—and are

adopting various non-Christian social ideals in place of the old anarchistic Christian ones taught by the founder of their faith. But then real, old-fashioned, hell-fire Christianity is at a discount these days, when clergymen are adopting many extraordinary schemes for filling their half-empty churches, and the ordinary man and woman has little interest in the Church save as an institution that marries some people, and buries others.

Not the least debt that the world owes to the Hon. Bertrand Russell is on account of the way in which he has insisted that scientific workers cannot disclaim all responsibility for the social effects that their purely scientific researches may produce. And another cause for gratitude is the warning he has given us that science has not greatly improved men's desires, but *has* greatly increased their power to satisfy them, so that the application of science to warfare now threatens the human race with destruction in another world-war whilst its application to industry, necessitating an ever higher degree of specialization in every worker, is tending to reduce us all to standardized automata. In *Icarus* he uttered his warnings and expressed his fears; in his new book, *What I Believe*, he tells us of his hopes. Science and science alone can change human nature, he believes. "Science can, if it chooses, enable our grandchildren to lead the good life, by giving them knowledge, self-control, and characters productive of harmony rather than strife. . . ."

He is severe upon the self-styled moralists, remarking that "One is tempted to think that they value morals as affording a legitimate outlet for their desire to inflict pain: the sinner is fair game, and therefore away with tolerance." In particular, they have doomed masses to lives of squalor and pain through their opposition to birth control. Says Mr. Russell: "to be killed suddenly and then eaten, which was the fate of the Aztecs' victim, is a far less degree of suffering than is inflicted upon a child born in miserable surroundings, and tainted with venereal disease. Yet it is the greater suffering which is deliberately inflicted by bishops and politicians in the name of morality. If they had even the smallest spark of love or pity for children they would not adhere to a moral code involving this fiendish cruelty." Mr. Russell has written a stimulating book, and one that makes us more intolerant than ever of the power which a priesthood, saturated with barbaric notions of religion and morality, exercises, using it to hinder the progress of the race towards greater peace and happiness.

The Freedom of the City of Wakefield was conferred upon Mr. Lloyd George the other day. Afterwards Mr. Lloyd George entertained the deputation, which had travelled from Yorkshire, to luncheon. Then there was trouble. It was discovered that there were thirteen present, and this company of highly-civilized people, including an ex-Prime Minister, could not sit down with that unlucky number. So someone had to go out and get another person from wherever possible. Then the luncheon proceeded. And every one of these people—including Mr. Lloyd George—believed himself to be civilized. In some respects, probably. But what a strong layer of the savage was there? And how near the surface? And it is such minds as these that so many look to for guidance! And then wonder when things go wrong!

Lord Hugh Cecil says that the Christian religion being what it is we have no right to keep it to ourselves, but should support missionaries in taking it to other countries. Certainly we have no desire to keep our share. Anyone is welcome to it, free, gratis, for nothing.

We see that the Ecclesiastical Insurance Society has had a very profitable year. As a business enterprise that is very gratifying, but what a commentary on the faith of these parsons in the providence of God! They

all believe that we are watched over by a merciful providence, that everything happens for the best, and that nothing happens but by his will. But in case of a slip on the part of providence they insure themselves just as any Atheist might, and in issuing the policies the company takes into consideration just the same matters as do any other company. God does not make so much difference after all.

Lord Haldane said the other day that when, during the time he was Lord Chancellor, a deputation of Labour representatives came to see him, saying their party wanted a certain number of appointments, he told them: "You have come to the wrong person. My only test is whether the candidate is a God-fearing man or woman, with a strong sense of justice." A strong sense of justice is quite correct, but where does the "God-fearing" come in? Perhaps it is only an illustration of the easy way in which men drop into the use of cant phrases, but a man of Lord Haldane's calibre should be more careful, and not talk like a Methodist preacher or a Salvation Army captain.

Our popular speakers on religion, plain or coloured, have the same respect as our journalists for the public memory. A newspaper correspondent is determined to put on record the fact that Judge Rutherford taught that in the autumn of 1914 all the Gentile kingdoms would be overthrown, the Church would be glorified, the Kingdom of God established on earth, and all the good Israelitish ancients would be resurrected in Palestine. Judge Rutherford is now delivering the same message, yet it is consoling to know that *one* person remembers what was said the day before yesterday.

Nonsense is nonsense, whether bellowed at a street corner by a Salvation Army speaker or written by Mrs. Margot Asquith. In her book, *Persons and Places*, she writes the following journalese made popular by our Sunday papers:—

I never saw a country that did not tempt me to say, "Thank God, I am English," or a religion that did not make me pray for others and bless my God.

We trust that her God is grateful for her attentions; he would think twice before damning a person of her quality, "who caught Lady — in her two dates of Rosebery's two Derbys." Judging by the plentiful supply of money that society has for divorce purposes this book at 21s. a copy should sell well.

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.

The National Secular Society.

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

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

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

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

To Correspondents.

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

H. DIXON.—Back numbers are being sent for distribution. We are obliged for all you are doing to secure new readers, and would like all our friends to be equally busy. Every new reader tells. Glad you think so highly of Mr. Cohen's *Christianity and Slavery* as an instrument of propaganda. We should be only too glad to print an edition at one penny per copy if some one would defray the cost. We are quite willing to give our labour, but we have nothing else to give.

J. G. BURDON.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue. "FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Miss Violet Murray, 5s.

H. BAYLISS.—The fact of the matter is, one must suppose, that very few people have the courage to stand alone. It is one thing to champion an advanced view with a crowd of a respectable size. It is quite another to stand alone, and make the crowd listen. Perhaps we had better put it that the genuine reformer is born, not made. Thanks for compliment. We are not likely to rust out, and when one is doing the work one loves it takes some time to wear out.

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.

If you want knowledge work for it—*Ruskin.*

Sugar Plums.

We again remind Freethinkers all over the country that the National Secular Society holds its Annual Congress this year in London on Whit-Sunday. As usual, the morning and afternoon meetings will be for members and delegates only, and will be held in the Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road. The evening meeting will be held in the Scala Theatre, and there will be an unusually good list of speakers. A luncheon will be provided for attendants at the Conference, and it is probable that an excursion of some sort will be arranged for the Monday following the Conference. The Agenda of the Conference appears on another page.

We should like to see every branch of the Society represented at this Conference, and we trust that this will be the case. Branches that cannot send a delegate direct may appoint a London member to act, but the Conference invites members from all parts to meet each other, and this opportunity should not be lost. Any possible arrangement for the accommodation of visitors to the Conference will be made if they will write at once to the General Secretary, stating precisely the kind of accommodation they require, and for how long.

The afternoon meeting of the Conference will be chiefly devoted to the reading of brief papers dealing with the place and value of Freethought in social reform. These afternoon discussions have hitherto proved of great interest, and there should be no exception this year. The subject is important, and it is all for the best that now and again Freethinkers should gather together and discuss just where they stand in relation to the progressive life of the race.

We have received a letter from Mrs. Rachael Fox with reference to our comments upon the Panacea postcard movement, which professes to heal disease by soaking the postcards in water and then drinking the concoction. She informs us that we are wrong in saying it is produced by the superstitious use of the New Testament, although the New Testament foretold it. It appears to come more from Joanna Southcote. We do not know that the information impresses us very much. We were only impressed by the prevalence of a frame of mind not one whit removed from that of the most primitive of savages. We can quite believe that the New Testament foretold it, and that Joanna Southcote endorsed it, because in this matter they were both on the same level. The incident only serves to show what a lot of work still lies before Freethought. We have only scratched the surface of the age-long superstition of the human race.

In a note from Mr. A. B. Moss we see that he has just celebrated his seventieth birthday, fifty years of which has been spent in the Freethought Party. Mr. Moss has had a long and useful career, and he is not out yet. He sat for about twenty-five years a member of one of the London Councils, and during that time never failed to do what he could to see that justice was done to Freethought and Freethinkers. In all his public life he never hid the fact that he was a Freethinker, and always claimed all the legal privileges that had been won by Freethinkers, and to which Freethinkers were entitled. Mr. Moss is still active in the Cause, and we hope will remain so for a long time to come.

With reference to our recent paragraph on *Freethinker* sales, it has been suggested to us by one reader that if we could get someone who would act as a kind of agent for it in each locality, and make it his or her business to see that it was introduced to newsgagents and others wherever possible, a great deal of good would result. We like the suggestion, and it is one that has occurred to us before. Anyway, we shall be pleased to hear from any responsible person who would carry on this kind of work. There is no reason why it should not bring income to the one engaged and also to the movement.

Science and Religion.

II.

(Concluded from page 294.)

ANOTHER sheet anchor abandoned by Professor Thomson is that of the divine origin of life. The defenders of religion put up a tremendous fight over this position. They declared that all life emanates from previous life. That it did not originate naturally or spontaneously. That the first appearance of life upon this earth was due to the creator. Here, indeed, was the "finger of God," as the Egyptians remarked, when they saw the Plague of Lice. The last mutterings of the defenders of this view are still to be heard in the Entelechy of Driesch, and the Élan vital of Bergson, Professor Thomson gives up the defence as quite hopeless.

When the chemist produced urea, an animal product, and indigo, a vegetable product, in the laboratory, the dividing line between the living and the not living became very thin. To-day the animal and vegetable products manufactured by the chemist would comprise a long list.

Upon this question of the origin of life Professor Thomson points to the importance of the recent work of Professor Baly and his colleagues, who produced formaldehyde—which is believed to be the first carbon compound to be built up in the green leaf—from water and carbonic acid gas, acted upon by light rays. After further experiments he succeeded in forming sugar, which is believed to be the second carbon compound formed in the green leaf. With further experiments he was able to induce the formaldehyde to unite with nitrates, thus forming nitrogenous carbon compounds approaching the proteins which are characteristic of living matter. Professor Thomson observes:—

The importance of Professor Baly's work is that he has approached the confines of living matter without using any material or means not readily available in Nature. With the help of light he synthesized nitrogenous carbon compounds from carbon dioxide and water and nitrites. This may be said to be knocking at the door of abiogenesis.¹

The Professor does put up a fight over "mind." The Materialist, he says, claims that mind is "the mere by-play of cerebral processes, the foam-bells on the stream." The answer to this, he says, is "that 'mind' counts. Ideas, as Hegel said, have hands and feet." Which is just one of those futile things Hegel would say. The Professor proceeds:—

As long as it is agreed that the psychical life is an efficient cause, we need not include among the axes that threaten personality the difficulty involved in thinking clearly about the body-and-mind relation. That the life of the mind and the life of the body are in intimate correlation is an every-day fact of experience, corroborated by many different kinds of experiments. But beyond that who has any scientific certainty? (p. 137).

This is, at best, merely an argument from ignorance. The fact is that the defence of the mind, as a cause, a spiritual cause, instead of an effect of matter and motion, has become increasingly difficult under stress of the physiological facts discovered during this century, and unknown to the Materialists of last century. Professor Thomson recognises this, and speaks of the great discoveries of the twentieth century, of the part played by the ductless or endocrine glands, in regulating the functions of the body, such as the thyroid, supra-renal, the pituitary body, and so forth. These glands, he remarks, produce "potent chemical messengers," which are carried by the blood to all

parts of the body, with remarkable effects. He observes:—

If a child suffers from thyroid deficiency it remains arrested in development both bodily and mental—a cretinoid caricature of humanity. By the use of thyroid gland of some mammal like a sheep, the handicap of natural deficiency can be in some measure removed. This is one of the miracles of modern medicine. Now it is certain that a change in the normal efficiency of these regulatory glands may change the whole tenor of a life, altering mind and mood, character, and conduct, as well as the state of health (pp. 139-140).

Since this was written, so quickly are fresh discoveries made, there is no need to use thyroid extract, or cat thyroid gland, for it has been found the chemical iodine constitutes an efficient substitute, and is now everywhere in use for that purpose.

How does Professor Thomson meet this fresh confirmation of the dependence of mind upon matter? His reply, if it may be described as such, is incredibly weak. After observing: "It has been said that the ductless glands determine the personality." He objects:—

The ductless glands correspond to accelerators and brakes, and no one can doubt their importance; but there are not less the nimble brain, the strong heart, the active liver, not to speak of controlling power and good will. Moreover, the personality is made as well as born, and it is for a man to adjust himself to the deficiencies of his ductless glands. Beyond a certain limit he must decree his weird; up to that limit he is master of his fate and captain of his soul (p. 140).

Fancy telling a person who had developed into a cretin—that is, an idiot—through the failure of the thyroid gland, that he is the "master of his fate and captain of his soul." And what is the use of a strong heart and a good liver anyway under the circumstances?

Theologians have always credited man with a religious instinct, implanted at birth, but Professor Thomson surrenders this argument unconditionally. After observing that another axe used against religion "has been found in the study of the origin and history of religions." He remarks: "There seems to be little warrant for supposing that early man was endowed with an innate tendency to build up a religious creed or ritual. Early man was a seeker after life rather than a seeker after God" (p. 146).

Lastly, the Professor deals with the old and cogent argument against a beneficent creator, in the existence of pain and evil. He observes: "No one can forget the terrible indiment of Nature in William James's essay, *Is Life Worth Living?*" which runs as follows:—

Our sacred books and traditions tell us of one God who made heaven and earth, and, looking on them, saw that they were good. Yet on more intimate acquaintance, the visible surfaces of heaven and earth refuse to be brought by us into any intelligible unity at all. Every phenomenon that we would praise there exists cheek by jowl with some contrary phenomenon that cancels all its effect upon the mind. Beauty and hideousness, love and cruelty, life and death keep house together in indissoluble partnership; and there gradually steals over us, instead of the old warm notion of a man-loving Deity, that of an awful power that neither hates nor loves, but rolls all things together meaninglessly to a common doom.

To this Professor Thomson objects that there is no hideousness in wild nature! We would invite his attention to the crocodile and the alligator. If they are not hideous then there is no meaning in the term. These horrible creatures live on other animals, and many men and women in the tropics lose their lives through being seized by them. If that is not cruelty,

¹ J. A. Thomson, *Science and Religion* (pp. 92-93).

what is? The Professor says he agrees with William James when he says: "If there be a Divine Spirit of the universe, Nature, such as we know it, cannot possibly be its *ultimate word to man*," and observes:—

The fact is that William James thought natural religion had suffered "definite bankruptcy," and he was not very sorry. He saw in Nature no harmonious spiritual intent, only *weather*. He speaks of men of science whose goodwill exceeds their perspicacity, who keep publishing natural religion in new editions, but for his part he was tired of it (p. 193).

We cannot avoid asking the question, says the Professor, what is the meaning of man? "Will there be anything to show for it if the earth should wax old like a garment? To use the sarcasm of Anatole France, will God then say to his courtiers: 'That was a good play, let us have it over again'" (p. 197).

Well, that might be so from God's point of view. It was sport to him, just as pelting frogs was sport to the boys in the old fable; but it meant untold suffering to us. No decent-minded God would consider it a good play.

In his summary of the position at the end of the book Professor Thomson says: "Scientific data do not in any direct way furnish a basis for religious conclusions. But science, with its disclosure of the Order of Nature, may suggest and enhance the religious view" (p. 200).

He thinks that Nature is congruent with a religious interpretation; partly, "because there are discernable in Nature certain great trends which are in the direction of what man at his best has regarded as progress."

Now it is just this discovery of order, unity, and simplicity in Nature, the reign of law, in place of the supernatural, that caused all the trouble for religion, and caused that conflict between religion and science which has ended in the defeat of religion. When it was discovered that storms and eclipses, thunder and lightning, and so forth, were the result of infrangible natural laws, and not due to the arbitrary interference of a God or Gods; then men began to suspect that everything else happened in a similar manner. This process went on with accelerated force until now we find an apologist like Professor Thomson quite frankly admitting: "Scientific data do not in any direct way furnish a basis for religious conclusions."

As to the idea of progress. It is true, as he says, that progress can be traced from "the whirling nebula to living creatures." But that is only half the process. The time will come, however much it may be prolonged, when, owing to loss of heat, the earth will become uninhabitable, like the moon, an airless, waterless desert. In comparison with the age of the earth the existence of man occupies but a short period, and of civilised man—if he may be described as such—a shorter period still. And probably the earth will continue to roll through space for billions of years after man has disappeared from its surface. Where does the law of progress apply here? And who is it that hails man as the crowning masterpiece of evolution? Man himself!

W. MANN.

MR. G. WHITEHEAD'S MISSION.

Mr. Whitehead started his London Mission on Sunday, May 2, with meetings in Finsbury Park and Regent's Park in the morning and evening respectively. The rest of the week he addressed meetings at Highbury Corner, seven altogether. These were well attended, the crowd being sympathetic and interested from start to finish. Opponents mounted the rostrum nearly every evening, and there were multitudes of questions. Altogether, Mr. Whitehead reports, the best week he has had at Highbury.—E.

Ganderless Geese.

We publish the enclosed article as a further proof of the way in which any straightforward attack on the pretensions of the clergy is rejected by the general press. It would not have appeared here had the papers to which it was sent accepted it. Had it been phrased in the name of some mythical "true religion" its fate would have been different. We pride ourselves on not being a priest-ridden country. The claim is quite unjustifiable. We are ruled by the most hypocritical clergy in the world. The fact that they dare not openly assert their rules, serves but to intensify the hypocrisy manifested.

DON'T read this if you belong to the fortunate few who have the privilege of opening their cinemas on Sundays. To those energetic exhibitors who have shown, and continue to show, a bold front to the kill-joys, I also say that my advice is not intended for them, but only for the faint-hearted many who want, but lack the courage and energy to win for themselves, freedom of action in respect to the Sunday opening of cinemas.

To these I say: You are afraid! That's what's the matter with you. Afraid! Even when your best interests are at stake! You are too cowardly to strike the blow that can rid you of an interfering and obstructive Church. You! whose collective power is greater, far greater, than those religious sects who have hampered and annoyed the cinema industry since that shackled giant was a tiny thing. You spineless beings! to take a licking lying down with scarcely a blow in return for the freedom you desire; but only a whimper wrung from your supine frames that you are being treated unfairly.

Can it really be that you are wanting Sunday opening? Do such phantoms of lassitude deserve to get it? Overawed; you gaze at the tremendous shadow of a domineering clergy and take it for granted that it is all substance. And you whine and wail that you have tried and tried to get the thing you reached out for, but without success, because of the shadow—because of the shadow!

Poor ganderless geese, sitting on pot eggs. Would your Watch Committees refuse that which you covet, if the majority of a long-suffering public demanded it also? They would not dare, or if they did, would be kicked from their places with the heavy boot of public opinion.

You—only some of you—foregather. And what then? You resolve to apply for permission to open your cinemas on Sundays and—cringing suppliants—propose that the hours of opening shall not clash with Divine Service!! Oh! paltry specimens of freedom seekers!—your plea also contains a clause that the pictures you intend to show shall be suitable to the day! Pharisees! Hypocrites! This is not what you want. What you really want, and you know it, but are afraid to give the challenge, is: Sunday opening at any time you like, both afternoon and evening. Your theatre to close at the customary week-day hour or before as you demand. A programme that the public wants, chosen by you as you would choose any week-day programme. You have crawled long enough, consequently your progress has become worm-like. Arise! Too long have you muzzled the dust. Bombard the public with the missile of publicity and as Allies, fight—and win.

Ninety per cent. of the public don't want to go to Church. It is safe to assume that seventy per cent. want amusement, recreation, or rest. And you want money. That's what you're in business for. Cast off the skin of hypocrisy then, and fight the fight of freedom of action. Face the clerical skeleton and its sycophant minions, the Watch Committees, with the demand that the people want open cinemas,

the Sabbath notwithstanding. Your timidity and wrong methods of the past must give way to courage and better organization. Don't blink it. The Church—not Watch Committees—is your opponent. Knock her into impotency by a direct appeal to the public. You will win. Are bound to win. Get up and fight.

Here is a suggestive scheme; the germ of that larger one which you shall make, and conquer with. Every exhibitor to be in the scheme whether he is a member of the C.E.A. or not. Let no lazy exhibitor escape either his donation or his share of the work. Every renter to come into line. Every manufacturer connected with the industry to do the same. The support of all amusement bodies, etc., to be secured if possible. The assistance of the lay press a necessity: the co-operation of trade papers is assured. These are the main lines. Exhibitor's slides should be a big factor in the campaign. They may be worded somewhat as follows:—

The majority of the public desire Sunday opening for cinemas. Do you? If a picture is fit to be shown on week-days, what objection can there be to its presentation on Sundays? Vote for Sunday opening of cinemas, and retain your right to liberty of thought. Use your programme or house organ for short articles, paragraphs, etc.

Examples: Do you consider it wrong to ride in a charabanc on Sundays? Is golfing a sin when played on Sundays? Is it a crime to listen to the band in the park on Sundays? If not; it cannot be wrong to see the pictures on Sundays. You have worked hard all the week. If you would enjoy yourselves at the pictures on Sundays, vote for Sunday opening.

Use the D.C. or other posters to be supplied by the C.E.A. Ultimately—during any one week or specified period—give to every adult patron who visits your hall a card worded as follows: "I record my vote in favour of Sunday opening for cinemas." (Instructions: If you want Sunday opening, give your card up intact as you pass out. If you do not, kindly tear card in two and give up one half.)

See that a suitable slide is put on your screen for this special occasion. These cards become the evidence your advocate will produce when you make your demand from the authorities. You want freedom—Fight for it. You want Sunday opening—Fight for it. Remember that the British Empire Exhibition last year was a financial failure because it was closed on Sundays. The public is with you. Fight—and win.

ARTHUR ROGERSON.

Obituary.

DEATH OF MR. J. M. GIMSON.

The name of Gimson is held in well-deserved honour by Freethinkers all over the country, and it is with the deepest regret that we announce the death of the oldest surviving member of the family, Josiah Mentor Gimson. The father, and so far as Freethought is concerned, the founder of the family, Josiah Gimson, was instrumental in getting the fine Secular Hall in Leicester established, and gave liberal and loyal help to Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Foote, and others. His sons followed in the path their father marked out, and J. M. Gimson helped readily liberal movements of many kinds. He was a Freethinker in the widest and the best sense of the term, and we readily offer our modest tribute of respect to a sincere member of the greatest of armies engaged in one of the greatest of fights. Mr. Sidney Gimson, President of the Leicester Secular Society, and a familiar name to all *Freethinker* readers, is the last surviving son of Josiah Gimson, and to him we offer our sincerest sympathy in the loss of a beloved brother.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

THE PALM COURT OF THE GRAFTON HOTEL, TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD (opposite Maple's).

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 31, 1925.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, Manchester, West Ham, South London, and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. C. Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive, West Ham, North London, South London, and Manchester Branches.
"That Miss E. M. Vance be re-elected General Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by the Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches:—
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Messrs. H. Theobald and Co. (Incorporated Accountants) be appointed Auditors."
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. James Neate, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. Gorniot, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by Newcastle Branch.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. H. R. Clifton and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, nominated by Liverpool and Manchester Branches.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. Quinton (Jnr.) and Mr. J. G. Dobson, nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. F. P. Corrigan, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Mr. S. Samuels, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silverstein, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
9. Motion by Bethnal Green Branch:—
"That this Conference, bearing in mind the great importance and propagandist value of the public exercise of those legal rights won by generations of hard fighting, calls upon Freethinkers everywhere to exercise them to the fullest possible extent."
- 9a. Motion by Manchester Branch:—
"That this Conference regrets the failure of the Executive to publish a Directory of Branch Secretaries, and also a weekly report of work done, as agreed to by the Preston Conference of 1924."
10. Motion by Birmingham Branch:—
"That in order to ensure full representation at the Annual Conference, the expenses of delegates be paid by the parent Society."
11. Motion by Mr. J. T. Lloyd:—
"That this Conference, recognizing the strenuous efforts at present being made by the different sections of the Christian Church, whereby a larger measure of State support may be given to their sectarian teaching in elementary schools, and recog-

nizing also the threat to progress involved in a further endowment of the sects, again expresses its sense of the danger to education in these efforts, and reaffirms its conviction that a policy of exclusive secular education in State-supported schools is the only one which promises justice to all concerned and holds out the hopes of the growth of a sense of healthy citizenship in the rising generation."

12. Motion by Executive :—

"That the attention of all concerned in the propaganda of the National Secular Society be directed to the need for keeping such propaganda in line with the avowed aims and objects of the Society."

13. Motion by North London Branch :—

"That this Conference recommends the adoption by Branches of a rule whereby Branch Secretaries shall receive an agreed portion of the members' subscriptions towards the out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties, and also suggests that the Executive, where necessary, be asked to make a donation, annually or biennially, towards this honorarium, provided that the membership does not fall below a given number, local conditions being taken into consideration, and that the details having been worked out by the Executive and accepted by the Branches, the rule be carried into effect forthwith."

14. Motion by Executive :—

"That this Conference, while recognizing that the political situation has not been favourable to any direct action for the repeal of the Blasphemy laws, welcomes the action of Mr. George Lansbury in introducing a private measure to that end, and strongly urges Freethinkers everywhere to keep the existence of the Bill before their representatives in Parliament, and to continue the work of educating public opinion to the utmost of their power."

15. Motion by Mr. George Whitehead :—

"That in the opinion of this Conference a systematic literature campaign should be adopted and carried out in such a way that it would supplement the ordinary propaganda where such exists, and take its place where it is absent."

16. Motion by Mr. R. H. Rosetti :—

"That this Conference, while noting the rapid disintegration of orthodox Christianity, is also awake to the great, and in some respects growing, prevalence of gross superstitions among all classes of the community, and is of opinion that a more outspoken policy on the part of those who have rejected all religious beliefs would do much to check the growth of what it regards as a serious threat to the better elements of our civilization."

17. Motion by Mr. H. R. Clifton :—

"That, recognizing the desirability of keeping in touch with individual Freethinkers unable to openly co-operate with the work of the Society, this Conference calls upon the Executive to take steps towards the formation of social circles in various localities, having for their objects the promotion of social intercourse, the promulgation of the Society's views through the medium of the local press, the distribution of the Society's literature, and correspondence with headquarters on matters of local interest."

18. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss :—

"That bearing in mind the frequent occurrence of cases in which the desire of witnesses and others to avail themselves of the provisions of the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888 are frustrated through the ignorance or bigotry of magistrates or magistrates' clerks, this Conference urges upon the Home Secretary the desirability of circularizing police, county, and coroners' courts in order that those concerned shall not be denied or prevented from exercising the right to affirm as conferred upon them by the law."

The Conference will sit in the Palm Court of the Grafton Hotel, Tottenham Court Road (opposite Maple's): Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the doors; Members, the current card of membership. Only members of the Society are entitled to be present. A public demonstration will be held at 7 p.m. in the New Scala Theatre. Luncheon for delegates and visitors at the Grafton Hotel at 1 p.m., price 2s. 6d.

By order of the Executive,

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

C. COHEN, *President*.

Correspondence.

THOMAS PAINE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the month of January, 1895, a Paine exhibition was held at the Bradlaugh Club, following a similar one at the South Place Institute the previous month. At both of these exhibitions was to be seen the table on which Paine, "in the year 1792 wrote several of his invaluable works." One of the speakers at the Bradlaugh Club Exhibition was Edward Truelove, who gave a sort history of the table. It was when Paine resided with Rickman that Paine used this table. Truelove told us that when a young man he went to see Rickman, who proudly showed him many Paine relics, among them, the table and some manuscripts. He then went on to tell us that many years afterwards he saw the table in a shop in Holborn, but couldn't afford to purchase it. He lost sight of it again for a time. More years elapsed, and the table turned up again. This time, Truelove being in "better fettle" (his own words), became its possessor. "It seemed," he jocularly added, "as if an inscrutable providence had decreed that I should finally become the owner of the table." I noticed that while Truelove was addressing us, his hand rested lovingly on the table. Once when removing his hand, he seemed to lose the thread of his story, but, his hand again finding its resting place, his thoughts returned, and he resumed his tale. A diagram of the table, with the inscription on the brass plate, appears in Rickman's *Life of Paine*.

I understand that George Anderson bought the table, and presented it to the Bradlaugh Club, where it was placed in the "Paine" Room. Some few years afterwards the club dissolved, and from that time I have seen or heard no further of the table. Can any of the readers of the *Freethinker* inform us as to what became of the table, and tell us where it is now? A. G. B.

CHURCH PARADES.

SIR,—My own little experience of church parades may interest "Serving Soldier." I determined, on joining the Army, to evade at all possible costs being compelled to go to church. The Army had a very short and sweet way of dealing with cases like mine. "My dear fellow," said the orderly sergeant when I told him my views, "you're the very type we want. Of course, you needn't go to church. You solve a great difficulty for me. Report to-morrow (Sunday) morning at 6 a.m. to the mess corporal." I did so, and found out my duties for the day were (with a comrade, who for "pinching" a blanket that didn't belong to him was "C.B.") to serve 300 recruits like myself with their food. I had two large pavilions to keep clean, dozens of tables to scrub, 300 basins, 600 plates, and a large number of tea and soup and stew pails to keep spotless three times during the day. I finished my Sunday "day of rest" at 6.30 p.m. On the other hand, the church parades finished invariably at 11.30 a.m. at the latest, and had the rest of the day to themselves (except the very few who were on fatigues, which were given in rotation). After the fourth Sunday in camp I was faced with the problem, which of the two fates was the greater evil, and decided that bearing the punishment of hearing nonsensical sermons about Jesus for half an hour was more in my line than 12

hours' solid work at scrubbing in the interests of sanitation. I then found that my reputation had been extended to other orderly sergeants, who kindly insisted that digging trenches and filling sandbags on the East Coast from 7 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. every Sunday in winter, with the support of a meat or stale cheese sandwich at mid-day, was as healthy an occupation as could be given me, seeing that I did not believe Sunday was a day of rest. After four Sundays of this I became converted, and expressed a strong desire to hear sermons, and finish the day's work like a good Christian at 11.30 a.m., and, looking back at my evasion of "martyrdom," I want to say frankly, it's church parade every time for me if I had to do it all again!

H. CUTNER.

"SCIENCE THE SAVIOUR."

SIR,—Mr. Bernard Shaw pointed out, twenty years ago, that the law of the conservation of energy applies, apparently, in the case of human credulity. "Mimnermus" does not believe in miracles outside the realm of what he calls "science," but with what avidity he accepts the assertions of the Research Defence Society, from the leaflets of which his article in your issue of May 10 appears to be compiled!

His god is named "Medical Science." The doctrine of the cult is this. Instead of insisting upon personal purity and temperance and a wholesome environment as the two main factors of health (lessons we have been very slow to learn), it is decreed that the devotee must be inoculated against every possible disease, and thus artificially "protected." The new evils brought into the world by this outrage against Nature are ignored or denied. Religion has had its superstitious phases, but they have been insignificant compared with the phase through which medical "science" is now passing.

As "Mimnermus" truly points out, cholera and typhus have vanished, and scarlet fever and typhoid are "almost completely under control." Commonsense sanitary measures have effected these things; but that fact has not prevented the bogus "Saviour" from recently starting a new and totally unnecessary rite in regard to scarlet fever (consisting of inoculating everybody under the fallacious idea of thereby discovering who might be a possible subject of that disease, and then inoculating against it), while nothing but the certain rebellion of ex-service men prevents his attempting to emulate the anti-typhoid tyranny of the Army in civil life. The fairy tale about the stamping out of Malta Fever will not bear five minutes' examination. It was fully exposed years ago by Dr. Hadwen in the *Contemporary Review*. The same writer has exposed other similar claims; and the Church of the new "Saviour" has its inquisition methods for heretics. "Mimnermus" is hard up for something to worship.

BEATRICE E. KIDD,

Secretary, British Union for Abolition of Vivisection,
32, Charing Cross, S.W.1.

It is probable that at some future day an historian will arise who, with broad and sweeping brush, will depict the Decline and Fall of Theological, as Gibbons did of Imperial Rome. He will need to be a large-hearted, generous man, capable of sympathetic appreciation of views and opinions which his reason condemns. That once effulgent city of God, which, like a "dome of many-coloured glass," over-arched Europe, will be his subject. In perfect calm, neither hating nor loving, but with kindled imagination, he will paint its remote splendour, its palaces and temples, and angels hovering with purple wings, and then the gradual fading of the glorious pageant into common day.—*Jas. Cotter Morison.*

Let us think freely and speak plainly, and we shall have the highest satisfaction that man can enjoy—the consciousness that we have done what little lies in ourselves to do for the maintenance of the truths on which the moral improvement and the happiness of our race depend.—*Leslie Stephen.*

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.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Warfare and Peace in Nature."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, Right Hon. J. M. Robertson, "Christianity and Progress."

OUTDOOR.

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

FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S. (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. R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture; 6, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road entrance): 7, Mr. F. Carlton, "The Lourdes Miracles."

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President :

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary :

Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

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