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Views and Opinions.

The Gloomy Dean and His Vanishing Creed.

Dean Inge has let loose what one of the newspapers describes as a bombshell. It is to be found in a volume of essays by various writers, published the other day by the Sheldon Press, which is, I believe, another name for the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. Not, be it observed, the society for the promotion of knowledge among Christians, which is so badly needed, but for the promotion of as much information as the Society thinks it good for Christians to have. Dean Inge's contribution comes at the end of the volume in the shape of a running commentary upon the other essayists; and he certainly does say a number of things that will make other preachers sit up. To them it will doubtless come as a “bombshell” because what is said is by a brother practitioner, and it is not usual for such to give so much of the truth all at once. To readers of the *Freethinker* the parts that will raise the ire of the parsons will sound as an echo of what they have been reading in these columns time after time. While the ten writers were giving their views on religion, in the *Daily Express*, the *Church Times* remarked that much of what Mr. Arnold Bennett said sounded like the *Freethinker*. I do not know whether Dean Inge reads the *Freethinker*—he probably does not—but I think I could find a great deal of what he does say if I went over only my own articles written during the past ten years. And those who are looking for evidence of the influence of a journal such as this one might well take Dean Inge's essay and compare it with selected paragraphs from its columns.

* * *

Religion and Truth.

I am encouraged to write thus because one may be excused the conviction that Dean Inge would not have written as he has done were he not assured that thinking men and women are finding out the truth about Christianity. For example, he says, after noting the lost faith in traditional Christian teaching, and pointing out the falsity of accepted teaching:—

If I had any doubts that the religion of Christ can and will weather the storm, if I had any doubts

that it is entirely independent of any false opinions about the nature of the universe, my readers may be certain that I should not have spoken as I have done. If I believed that Christianity stands or falls with a Ptolemaic universe, I should be obliged either to take the painful course of confessing that I have believed and taught all my life a creed which is as outworn as Paganism, or I should do like thousands of others—I should hold my tongue. But I am quite confident that this crisis will be surmounted if the Church has the faith and courage, and, above all, the common honesty, to face it candidly. Only let us hear no more of clergymen thanking God that theology and science are now reconciled, for, unhappily, it is not true.

I do not think it possible for anyone to make a more damaging confession as to the intellectual ethics current in the Christian pulpit than is contained in this confession. Dean Inge confesses that he would not have spoken as he has done unless he had felt certain that Christianity might be so interpreted as to be independent of certain views of the universe which the Churches once held, but which they have been forced to abandon. But a teaching is either true or false, and it is the plain duty of a public teacher to speak the truth whether the old teaching can be reconciled with the new truth or not. One must assume that Dean Inge would have remained silent, would have connived at the people being misled, if he had not imagined he had found a way of reconciling the older Christianity with what we believe to-day to be the truth. Can one really trust men who so openly proclaim that the amount of truth they are willing to admit must depend upon their ability to reconcile it with their own professional teaching?

* * *

The Clergy.

I do not know that the matter is made much better by his saying that he would have either to admit that he had been teaching a falsity, or, like so many thousands of others, have held his tongue. That at least may be taken as a declaration by one speaking from within, and who may safely be credited with knowing more about his brother clergymen than does the average layman, that thousands of clergymen do know the truth about their religion, but lack the courage and the “common honesty” to tell the people what the truth is. So that one may safely sum up Dean Inge's appeal to his brother parsons as saying that if they will be guided by him they may safely tell the truth, because he will show them how they may so interpret their religion so as to make it safe for them to do so. That, I repeat, is about as terrible an indictment of the clergy as I have read for some time. And it is not a “blatant” Atheist who says it; it cannot be removed by saying, as the *Church Times* did, that that kind of thing might be read in the *Freethinker*—as though that established its error—it is said by one of our leading English Churchmen, one of the very few men in the Churches to-day who can lay claim to any genuine intellectual ability. If that is the state of mind

which a Christian training induces, I do not know that it stands in need of any further condemnation to secure its rejection by clear thinking, honest-minded men and women.

* * *

The Old Faith and the New World.

Let me place before my readers some of the statements made by Dean Inge, and which might have been read by him in the *Freethinker* time after time. We hesitate to say how many times we have pointed out in both articles and lectures that Christianity was based upon a certain cosmogony, and that when that cosmogony was destroyed by the Copernican astronomy, the religion that was built upon the Ptolemaic system died a logical death. Now, says Dean Inge:—

The Churchmen who declare that there is no longer any conflict between Christianity and Science are either very thoughtless or are willingly shutting their eyes. There is a very serious conflict, and the challenge was presented not in the age of Darwin, but in the age of Copernicus and Galileo.

At this point the Dean follows so closely what we have ourselves said, that we may well let him speak on our behalf:—

The discovery that the earth, instead of being the centre of a finite universe, like a dish with a dish-cover above it, is a planet revolving round the sun, which itself is only one of millions of stars, tears into shreds the Christian map of the universe. Until that time the ordinary man or woman, whether educated or uneducated, had pictured the sum of things as a three-storey building, consisting of heaven, the abode of God, the angels, and beatified spirits; our earth; and the infernal regions, where the Devil, his angels, and lost souls are imprisoned and tormented.....Most certainly heaven and hell were geographical expressions. The articles in the Creeds on the descent of Christ into Hades, and his ascent into Heaven, affirm no less; and it is obvious that the bodily resurrection of Christ is intimately connected with the bodily ascension.....That the Church interpreted these doctrines literally is shown by the Anglican Articles of Religion, which declare that Christ ascended into heaven "with flesh, bones, and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's body, and there sitteth."

That is a very clear issue, and no one who knows anything of what historic Christianity has taught, or even of what all Christians believed a century ago, and of what vast numbers of Christians profess to believe to-day, can say that the Dean is overstating the case. But the Copernican astronomy leaves no room for a geographical heaven. If you accept Copernicus you must get rid of the Christian heaven—to say nothing of hell, and you must also admit that the Christian teaching about these things were quite wrong. And that is the last thing the clergy will admit. They appear to think that if they can give a new reading to an old doctrine the fact of their having for centuries taught an admittedly false one does not matter. Dean Inge quotes a brother clergyman who said that the words "into heaven" must be taken symbolically, but we must believe that the physical body of Christ was raised some distance from the ground. On which the Dean asks whether this kind of shuffling is any longer tolerable. The reply is that in any other direction save religion such "shuffling" would be denounced as dishonest. In connection with religion the relation between belief and intellectual honesty is so slight, and so little of the latter quality is expected from the average clergyman by the average man or woman, that it passes without comment. Nor, as we shall see later, is Dean Inge himself free from suspicion of the same offence. It is true his offence is not quite so gross as is that

of most of his brother parsons; his superior intellectual quality prevents that. But the difference in rejecting so crude and so ignorant a belief as that of the physical ascension of Jesus, or of a geographical heaven and hell, and giving a new interpretation to such beliefs as Dean Inge still professes, is only a question of degree. And one can imagine a Dean Inge of about a hundred years hence, turning on the rank and file Dean Inges of that date and asking them whether that kind of shuffling is any longer tolerable. After all, the vital question is not whether we can force a new reading on Christian doctrines, but what it is that the churches have taught, and what it is that Christians have believed? If they are false then Christianity ought to be rejected by all who value honesty of thought and speech.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Continued.)

The Spiritual Man.

THE *Church Times* of October 30 contains a sermon bearing the above title by the Rev. Canon Perry, D.D., Principal of the Theological College, Edinburgh, which was recently preached before the University of Oxford. Naturally the text chosen was 1 Cor. ii. 15: "The spiritual man apprehendeth all things, yet is himself apprehended of none." It is seldom that a discourse is based upon so remarkable a verse, and that so able a man as Canon Perry has had the courage to tackle so unique a problem as the one presented by the text. According to St. Paul's teaching there are two fundamentally different men, the one natural or animal and the other spiritual or heavenly. The contrast between the two he states thus: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man." To the natural man the contrast is not only inexplicable but wholly unjustifiable, and founded upon no attested or ascertainable fact. The Canon opens his discourse thus:—

Here St. Paul makes for the spiritual man, first, a great claim: "The spiritual man sees the true value of things"; secondly, a frank confession: "The spiritual man is misunderstood." Some would be as ready to repudiate the claim as they would be to ridicule the confession. For who would say that the man who passes for spiritual to-day is a master of apprehension? Incomprehensible, indeed, he may be; but in breadth of interest and insight his level is low, while his sense of values is dull.....The spiritual man in this passage is for the moment conceived as almost destitute of the natural soul and the natural body; that is to say, he is spiritual in the ideal sense that he responds perfectly to the Spirit of God, free from the down-drag alike of body and soul. *But in point of fact such a spiritual being has no actual existence in the world.*

The italics are our own, the real object of which is to call attention to the fact that the spiritual man as defined by the Apostle is a wholly impossible being. As Canon Perry asserts, "Man has his natural life of intelligence or ignorance, of good tastes or bad—his psyche. He has also his flesh, his body, which may, like the psyche, raise him up or pull him down." But the spiritual man, in the textual sense, is an anti-natural, and therefore, impossible, being. Of course, being a clergyman, Canon Perry is bound to accept St. Paul's conception of the spiritual man, and this is how he does it:—

Man, in so far as he is positively and progressively spiritual, possesses an increasing sense of

values, a growing perception of totality, of the wholeness of things. His very spirituality widens his interests, driving him out of the narrowness of self into the wide spaces of the Kingdom of God. "The spiritual man sees true values"—as Dr. Moffatt translates, "reads the meaning of everything"—because the finite human spirit is not merely in tune with the infinite, but is quickened and drawn into the infinite, so that it is touched in a measure with eternity, lifted out of its narrow limitations and set upon a new level on which wider and clearer views are possible. St. Paul thus places the natural man and the spiritual in two different categories. Doubtless, in actual life, the psychic and spiritual are blended the one with the other.

It will be noticed that neither Paul nor Perry tells us wherein spirituality consists, or what exactly is meant by what is styled the spiritual man. We learn from the Articles of Religion that spirit is a being "without body, parts, or passions," invisible, intangible, like God; but such a being has never been seen, heard, or felt by anyone, and never can be, because it does not exist. Spirit is certainly not one of the products of evolution, nor have we ever succeeded in discovering the slightest convincing evidence of its existence and activity in any department of life.

At this point Canon Perry finds types of the spiritual man in history. The Gospel Jesus, for example, is depicted as "the ideal spiritual man." The Canon proceeds thus:—

There is for St. Paul but one perfect Pattern, and in our text that Pattern is clearly before his mind. "We have," he declares, leaving out in his haste a connecting link of thought, "we have the mind of Christ." Jesus Christ is for the Apostle the real Spiritual Man, and of him both the claim and the confession can be made with entire simplicity. "The spiritual man judgeth all things." He sees the values of all things—but at a price. He suffers from the loneliness of misunderstanding at the hands of foes and friends alike.

Unfortunately for the Canon's argument literary criticism has proved conclusively that the history related in the Gospels is so fragmentary and unreliable that a Life of Jesus is absolutely impossible. This has been frankly admitted by Dean Inge, while Professor Bacon, of Yale University, a very conservative critic, finds much legendary matter in the Gospels, with the result that no longer is Jesus seen as the perfect man or as "God manifested in the flesh." Jesus was never married; he was never the head of a home; he was never in a position to give an example as a neighbour; nor is the teaching attributed to him characterized by great spirituality. The Canon next endeavours to show the spiritual man in history, saying:—

It might be interesting, if there were time, to trace in history how far Christian character has succeeded in maintaining the double claim of the spiritual and the judicial in harmonious combination. But two illustrations must suffice, chosen deliberately from two periods of history in which there is scarcely a single circumstance common to both.

The first illustration of the spiritual man in history is found in the life and martyrdom of St. Ignatius at the commencement of the second century. Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch, but of his history practically nothing is known. The Canon admits this quite frankly, calling him "a shadowy figure of whom we know next to nothing save what may be gathered from short letters hastily thrown off in his journey from Antioch to Rome." How on earth can such a man be regarded as an ideal spiritual man? It may be perfectly true that he "saw the value of episcopacy as a unifying principle of order"; but anyone might

have done that without being in any pre-eminent sense a spiritual man. The Canon says:—

It is just the strong common sense of St. Ignatius which leads him to see that for human beings the spiritual cannot for long stand if divorced from the institution. He is not interested in Episcopacy as a form of Church government. The unity of the Church is the question for him, and even that is subordinate to the one reality of personal communion with God. But it is the very spirituality of St. Ignatius that enables his mind to cut through the subtleties of gnostics with their contempt for the visible and the institution. The position which Baron von Hugel reached by the path of history and philosophy Ignatius made his own by a swift judgment of mind and spirit.

In the case of Ignatius Canon Perry draws largely on his own imagination, but in that of his second illustration facts are abundant, and we must consider the use he makes of them. He says:—

Again, consider St. Bernard, a Western of the twelfth century, last of the Fathers whose writings both in prose and verse are valued, not for depth of learning but for fervour of devotion. Listen to this description of the Saint by his friend, William of St. Thierry: "When I entered his chamber, and beheld the place and its inhabitant, I call God to witness, a feeling of veneration came over me as if I had been approaching the altar of God." Yet the Saint who wrote, "Jesu, the very thought of thee" is the man who in his letters deals with all the affairs of the times through the tangled diplomacy of Church and State down to the theft of a pig—the man of counsel who was then the mentor and almost the maker of Popes; the man of action also who controlled the destinies of France, Italy, and Germany.

In spite of his reputation as a man whom God favoured he had traits of character which disqualified him to be known as being in any unique sense or degree the spiritual man. He was a bitter persecutor who never failed to urge the Pope to waste neither mercy nor pity on a suspected heretic.

We do not believe in persecution of any kind, but we are deeply convinced that it is our duty at any cost to express our stoutest detestation of views which we consider false and dangerous. We are the friends and supporters of all attempts to establish the truth, and the enemies and destroyers of all views which we regard as false. Christianity, being the supreme surviving superstition, we are doing our utmost to discredit and suppress. The spiritual man is an unqualified misnomer and fraud, and our opposition to and attempts to bring him to naught shall not be discontinued until he has entirely ceased to be.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christmas Pudding.

INGREDIENTS: Flowers of sulphur, a large handful of egotism, some disguised eroticism, stoned doubters, uncandid appeals, a quantity of sheep's brains, essence of false values, a large spoonful of unction, a little clerical whine, a sprinkling of incomprehensibles, a dash of modern interpretation, tincture of oily geniality, a quart of intolerance, and ten heaping tablespoonfuls of hate. Mix well, boil every seventh day, and serve piping hot.

A richer pudding, called "Papa's Delight," can be made by adding a few verminous saints and self-mutilated fanatics, a number of unwise virgins, some emasculated "fathers," a few forged documents, "authentic" relics and every-day miracles, some gaudy imagery and tinsel decorations, a few tall candles, special diluted education, a muzzled Press, some throttled queries, a number of burned heretics, a dash of "shall-nots," four quarts of innocent blood, and much infallibility. Sprinkle well with Hell-fire brandy, and serve well alight.

D. P. STICKELLS.

The Missionary Muddle.

Our grand business, undoubtedly, is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what is clearly at hand.—*Carlyle*.

Help me to need no help from men,
That I may help such men as need.

—*Kipling*.

THERE is trouble in the South African portion of the Lord's vineyard. Following the recent criticism of Church of England missionaries by Mr. Tielman Roos, Minister of Justice, a storm has been caused by further criticism of Church busybodies by Dr. Visser, the leader of the Rand Nationalists.

Dr. Visser declared bluntly that one of South Africa's great dangers was clergymen sent from overseas. He added that these English parsons came to South Africa and poked up trouble, and he advised them to cleanse the overcrowded slums in their own country before they started preaching reform in Africa.

This is not the only piece of liveliness in religious circles, for much malice, hatred, and uncharitableness has been caused by the belated reinstatement of some of the German missionaries. According to these high authorities, which not long ago regarded all Germans as "blank Atheists," every Teutonic missionary who preaches Christ and Him Crucified is a stumbling block and a rock of offence. These be brave and patriotic words, but they raise the far more important question: "Are missions doing the good they are credited with?"

China, for example, is a very stony corner of the Lord's vineyard, which yields practically no crop, but consumes an amount of men and money which might far more profitably be expended in more honest and useful directions. There are circumstances which take that enormous country out of the category of ordinary mission fields. It is only from the insular and narrow John Bullish point of view that the Chinese can be called barbarians. They have a civilization which was ancient while as yet our forefathers were painted and ignorant savages. They have a number of native religions of their own, and, rightly or wrongly, they have an antipathy from foreign ideas. It is we, who, in their eyes, are the barbarians, and, truth to tell, what with the endless quarrels and animosities of the many Christian sects who seek to make converts, and the too obvious divergence between the use of British gun-boats and the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, the spectacle offered by European civilization cannot be a very edifying one.

Left to herself China would have none of us nor of the Christian Bible. We happen, however, to possess a stronger Army and Navy than they do, so we force the Chinese at the point of the bayonet to tolerate the missionaries, whom all classes in China view with undisguised contempt. Perhaps we could better understand their attitude if the positions were reversed. That is to say, if the Chinese were able by guns and bayonets to extort terms for their almond-eyed and pig-tailed missionaries to preach Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism among ourselves. In some parts of the world the missionary is a civilizing agency; that is to say, he introduces Western Secularism and social habits. That character he does not possess in China. He has nothing but a particular brand of the Christian religion to offer the Chinese people. Not only do these various versions conflict with each other, but they all run counter to the most cherished and ingrained ideas of Chinese society. To the Chinaman the highest of all virtues is filial piety, and in his eyes some of the

most familiar texts of the Christian Bible must appear not only shocking but also immoral. We ought really to look at these things from a Chinese point of view. It is not pleasant to think what fate might befall Chinese missionaries with their unfamiliar rites and doctrines if they were imposed by bayonets and batons upon the sturdy population of our Black Country, or upon the impulsive Roman Catholics of Ireland.

What it costs to convert a Chinaman in blood and treasure we do not know, but it is very certain that missionary societies expend upon a barren soil like China an amount of energy and money which might be used to far better purpose in remedying social shortcomings at home among men and women, who destitute of the morality of Confucius, stand in as much need of reclamation as the almond-eyed race whom we pretend to pity and remain to cheat.

Some time ago, it was gravely calculated that the mission harvest, on the most favourable computation, amounted to the extremely modest figures of two Chinese per missionary per year. Even so, the quality and reputation of the converts were open to the most distressing suspicion. The renegade heathen Chinese has a confirmed habit of turning his spiritual studies to very material account, and is even said to frequent mission stations, and even to succeed in being converted in turn by all the missionaries, Anglican, Roman Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, and even the Salvation Army, in return for being provided with rice and money. The unfortunate sequel to the tortuous rule of conduct is that one unctuous scoundrel figures as half a dozen converts to the Christian religion, and a bad Chinaman is transformed into a worse Christian.

Unquestionably, the matter of missionaries will have to be duly considered, and as Jews are looked upon in Christian quarters with hardly less benevolent regard than is the Chinaman, we must be interested in seeing what public opinion determines. The missionary question with Jews, that is to say, Christian missions to them has never been even a comedy. It has been the most rollicking of farces, compared with which "Box and Cox" and "Charley's Aunt" are perfect tragedies. Although enormous sums of money are spent yearly, it is not a danger to Judaism, and is never likely to be. There may be Jews who have become Christians from wholly conscientious motives, but few people have met such paragons of virtue. Some of these converts become missionaries in their turn. It is an easy method of earning money, if not so honest as handling a tailor's iron.

When the body of the Jew was taken and burnt alive in order to save his soul, those who perpetrated the cruelty were at least straightforward in their objects. They acted as other savages had acted to them, and as, we fear, many religious folk would act to-day to those who differ, though the former be not Chinamen and the latter remain Europeans. In the light of history it is strange that any self-respecting Jew should change his own religion for Christianity. One god is more credible, or less incredible, than a divine Syndicate with a sooty Devil and God's mother on the Board of Directors. Further, Christians have persecuted Jews for many centuries. They have shed their blood like rivers, and heaped upon them every insult from the ravishment of their women to the fastening on them of an ignominious gaberdine, and penning them, like cattle, in loathsome Ghettos. Every Jew has a perfect right to loathe the religion of Christ. To their undying honour the Jewish people do not dissemble their love. There is a society in England for the conversion of Jews to Christianity. It has an income of about fifty thousand pounds a year, and the number of its converts appears to be

so small that every one of them, on the average, appears to cost the society a year's income, which, as old Euclid would say, is absurd.

The whole question of missionary enterprise requires serious reconsideration. The matter cannot be evaded much longer by men who may be called Christians, who may even be ordained to the Christian ministry, but who must certainly have never been converted to civilization. MIMNERMUS.

The New Censorship.

THE insolence of a certain type of moral reformer; the one who sets himself up to pass final judgment upon any real or supposed social evil, is almost beyond description. He seems to be incapable of thinking even for a moment that his conception of what is moral may possibly be wrong.

For my part, I have no objection to moral reform, and I have no objection to anyone expressing his disapproval of anything he believes to be detrimental to the individual or society. Even the man whose disapproval of certain things turns out to be unreasonable has a right to give expression to that disapproval, provided he can do so without becoming a mere humbug. What needs to be kept in mind is the fact that what is moral reform cannot always be decided out of hand, if justice is to be done all round. Morality, like everything else, is relative; otherwise there would be a much more widespread consensus of opinion as to what is moral and immoral.

That the Stage should be worthy of human nature, and a source of joy to all lovers of dramatic art, I have no desire to dispute, but I object to any body of men or women being set up to dictate to drama lovers whether they shall or shall not go to see a certain play. Yet, as readers of newspapers are aware, in all seriousness a number of women have banded themselves together to take every possible step to purify the stage. They are going to make war on stage indelicacy, in the moral interest of young men and women.

If the insult to youth were not so glaring; and if the proposed attack on the liberty of every playgoer were not so serious, one would take this well worn rag-time excuse for moral reform as a joke which some fussy old dame must somehow or other palm on to society every now and then.

The implied idea that middle-aged and old men and women never need the stage cleaning for their benefit simply reveals the hypocrisy, or the shallowness of the women who have set themselves up as the moral washerwomen of the dramatic world.

There is no justification for the theory that young people who sit side by side at a sex-problem play are in certain danger of coming to moral grief, as a result of being in such a situation. There may be danger if they have not previously had training in moral restraint, but the danger is not due to the play alone, any more than the danger of getting burned if one puts a finger into the fire is due to the presence of a fire in the room. There is no reason why fires should be abolished because some fool lacks restraint and gets burned; nor is there any reason why sex-knowledge should be kept off the stage, even if an odd person here and there does go astray after seeing a sex drama. Yet one lady member of the Stage Purification Society can talk like this, "when young men and women become accustomed to sitting side by side at these sex-climax plays they are bound to lose that sense of reserve or modesty on which so much depends."

Admitting that a certain amount of reserve and of modesty is necessary to the carrying on of civilized society, the assumption in the above passage that these two qualities of human nature can only be acquired and retained by those who are ignorant of everything in connection with a sex-climax, is typical of the Puritanical humbug who is always going to keep everybody else from moral danger. Such thought is in keeping with the mentality of those who say they will "stick at nothing" to prevent "this dirt that no one really wants" being put on the stage.

That the average young person who goes to see a sex-problem play does, or should, lose his reserve and modesty would, I think, be difficult to prove. In the case of those whose reserve has been overstringent, a process of mental relaxation may set in as a result of being given a better insight into human relationships; and that is all to the good if a much better perspective *re sex matters* is attained.

It must be remembered that a slackening off in respect of reserve in sex matters is not necessarily equivalent to immodesty, while, on the other hand, an attitude of rigid reserve is often the outcome of cant and humbug.

That an author may by means of a sex-play lift the veil of ignorance and reveal the true state of affairs seems to be above the mental capacity of our stage reformers, when they can talk in the following strain:—

Such plays tear down one of the essential principles of clean living. Civilization is founded on reserve, and if you destroy reserve you lower the level of civilization. Nothing can justify the public display of coarse sensuality with the single object of appealing to the lowest instincts

Here again we have the insidious implication that clean living can only be had as a result of ignorance while, with true Christian hypocrisy, the facts are not faced. Such plays, when properly written and presented, do not "tear down one of the essential principles of clean living." They reveal in some cases the difficulties which arise in human sexual relationships; and, in many cases, the rotten state of affairs in matters of sex under a Christian civilization.

That is what the stage washerwomen are in reality afraid of: they have no desire to see practical Christianity placed in proper perspective. They wish to prevent such plays as "Rain" educating people to the fact of religious and sexual emotion being closely related.

It would be difficult to prove that any author, even of the worst type of sex-climax play, has set himself the task of degrading public morals. I do not mean to suggest that every author's standard of morals is high, but a play may be vulgar, it may be suggestive and indelicate, not because the author desires to lower the standard of decency, but, rather, because he has found so much of society vulgar, suggestive, and indelicate. Consequently he has reflected these things in crude fashion, owing to lack of that consummate art which presents the worst side of human nature in the clearest light without harming our moral perspective.

Even if a play does tend to create an unhealthy moral atmosphere that is no reason why a given body of people shall say no one else shall see the play after they have seen it. The proper way to deal with such an artistic failure is to work for the creation of a more widespread desire for the best that dramatic art can produce. Then there will be little need to trouble about the subjects with which the dramatist deals.

The application of the censorship is the wrong method; it is the method of the moral coward and intellectual humbug; and is a form of inquisition

against which all healthy-minded persons should revolt. No lover of dramatic art desires a public display of coarse sensuality, but that is no reason why a clique of so-called moral reformers should be allowed to dictate as to what shall and shall not be presented on the stage.

Freethought in the sphere of art is as important as Freethought in any other sphere, and no one has the right to prevent a normal-minded playgoer from going to see even the worst type of sex-problem play if he chooses to do so. The playgoing world is not to be dictated to in the interest of a comparatively few weak-minded people who may take the wrong turning after seeing the leg of an actress, or hearing her say something naughty to her stage lover.

The only ground on which a sex-problem play should be condemned is that of artistic failure; and if that is done in the proper way through the medium of honest and sound expression of opinion, there will be no need to chirp about moral reform on the stage, nor will there be any need to inaugurate societies for the washing up of stage indelicacies.

The artist, whether dramatic or otherwise, has a right to deal with any subject he chooses. If he fails in his artistic treatment he must be censured or criticized for his failure, but not on the ground of his subject being immoral. Reprimand on moral reasons should only take place if there is evidence that the author intended his treatment of the subject to make for immorality. Even then it is for the play-going public to reject the work, and not for a set of professional moral reformers to establish a Grand Inquisition against freedom of thought in matters of play-writing and play-producing. Least of all has anyone the right to decide that no one else shall go to see a play which is considered by a few people to be immoral. Attempts to curtail the individual's freedom of thought in relation to dramatic art ultimately lead to the creation of a public opinion which is not only ill-balanced but also very unhealthy.

One aspect of the censorship of plays by the small clique of moral humbugs, which appears to be an offshoot from the Bishop of London's Council for the Promotion of Public Morality, is of course, overlooked by most people. I mean the fact that these reformers of stage morals are so very eager to run after any play which they suspect to be immoral. They must be at the "first night" of every play which promises to be wicked in the matter of sex, if it is at all possible to get there. Thus they make sure of their opportunity of seeing and hearing the indelicacies and vulgarities about which they afterwards make such a noise, in their attempts to prevent others from seeing, hearing, and judging for themselves. Most moral reformers seem to be capable of seeing filth where no normal person would expect to find it, or could find it if he tried. Possibly that is why the moral reformer waxes so enthusiastic when he denounces the evil which he has discovered. He has enjoyed in secret such a feast of indelicacies that he must needs react in public against his own mental orgy, in order to salve his conscience.

The tragedy of the clique of washerwomen by which the stage is to be cleansed from all evil lies in the fact that if the modern drama tends to produce as much immorality as these moral reformers would have us believe, then Christian people must be in a worse state of degradation than even Freethinkers believe them to be.

It is thus that Christian moralists repudiate by their reforming activities the theoretical claims which they make for the efficacy of Christianity.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Dam the Channel.

YES, we would go to France this year—at our own expense. The old baggage Sterne says that they order things better in that country, but he is never to be taken seriously, although he took seriously the style of Master Rabelais. So to France we went, and stayed at a little fishing village where the natives use the bandstand for the drying of washing. There were no drains, and if the water trickling down the roadside was red, someone was washing out wine bottles; if it was a motley blue then someone's raiment was being cleansed.

From the village to Boulogne we made a pilgrimage to see the famous procession which included a real live Cardinal, and lesser lights. Sweet are the uses of necessary advertisement, for the Roman Catholic Church needs it. Schopenhauer contributed a valuable hint to both sides of the matter when he wrote that religion is the metaphysics of the people. Into what category the procession must appear we do not know. Some native wag had included the arrival of the "Devonia" from Brighton as a "festivity"; French wit is as elusive as the Irish kind. In the tea-shop from where we witnessed the parade, the fight for tea and "Ba-Bas," when it was over, was more impressive. A Ba-Ba is a spongy cake flavoured with rum and smothered in cream; an acquaintance of ours, nine years old, summed up her holiday by saying that she was going to "eat and look." This only requires the use of two senses.

After seeing the result of a civilian fight and the dispersing of the sundry banners, we returned to our café hotel with its sanded floor and multitude of various drinks. Ten centimes would produce the magic polka and one-step with fearful accompaniment of drums, castenets, cymbals, and bells. Nearly everyone danced. Everyone laughed and chatted. Philomele and Jan, the two Ganymedes, would dance also. Philomele had the sweetest of smiles; Jan had a *retroussé* nose and all the roguish traits that go with it. Philomele would fill up your glass with Benedictine in such a manner that the contents seemed to defy the laws of gravitation. The liqueur seemed to bulge over the sides and appeared to be heaped in the centre. We were dangerously near to believing in miracles.

In the morning an old woman walks into the café loaded like a camel. She has on her back a bag and a crate of mussels; the two together are as big as herself. It is hard work wresting a living from the sea that completes the holiday-maker's picture.

As the tide is going out the big waves dash into little ones; the little ones run along the sand. In sea language they seem to say, Gobble! Gobble! Gobble! and then fizzle out, leaving a faint mark from their feet, but as Oliver Wendell Holmes says, "The sea remembers nothing—it is feline. It licks your feet; but it will crack your bones and eat you." In all ventures on the sea, chance and luck are the dominant notes; what wonder then, that the black-robed fishers of men have an easy task to gather their faithful flocks with the urge of Fear and Hope. We moderns must be content to witness steam trawlers fighting superstition.

At Amiens in the Cathedral there is a piece of substance as small as a grain of wheat. It reposes in a big glass case which has two big slots at the sides "*pour la culte.*" The object is stated to be a piece of the bone of St. John the Baptist; this is going back even further than Madame Tussauds. Although the city of Amiens was almost deserted on our last visit, this piece of bone has been saved, together with the Cathedral. There is no fear of supplies giving

out; could not the same power have saved for a little while the bones of some thousands whom we knew? There was bustle and stir in the city. General Foch and Joseph Cook were to be seen; there was an "unveiling" taking place near Albert. The Cathedral there is still a mass of ruins and the famous statue has never been found. There are still traces of the wreckage of houses, but there is the newness of the fresh buildings slowly covering up the traces of four years' madness.

An irresistible desire to see Englebelmer had to be satisfied. On the very spot where we toiled and cursed and groaned on a wet day when we pulled into a position vacated by a battery of the Royal Naval Division there was a reminder of the past. At this position we found a tailless magpie in a cage, forsaken, wet, and miserable. As we came down the road with the September sun shining, sure enough there was a live magpie hopping about in the same place, with his glossy black feathers streaked with white; seven years and a half to make a coincidence, with a difference!

There were lilies growing on the River Ancre: there is a loneliness on Thicpval Ridge that stirs old memories, and the question came as I looked across the familiar undulations of the country, "What have you done to make this thing impossible to happen again?" I answer, "Not much; not enough." There was a Yorkshire miner who brought me an extra blanket whilst on duty to keep my miserable body warm. On the very spot there is a stack of corn waiting to be carried to the barn. He was killed. There was a young boy who confided his love affairs to me; he cried when a piece of shrapnel hit the velvet nose of his horse. He was gassed and died. There was the young officer, Mr. Shearer, who passed by that orchard never to return. During the ennui of waiting we would try to make a contact with sanity. He was an artist and his sister was a friend of Ambrose Bierce. Down this road had come a handful of German prisoners; here a British General had kicked some chalk into my porridge—my only encounter with such an exalted person. O Memory! what are thy gifts? In the rag-bag of tragedy and comedy what shall we take out to treasure? Only that which is of use to your fellow men. Begone and have done with regrets. On the warm banks of wild flowers the grasshopper sings of eternity; make haste.

A long journey and we reach our Café Hotel. There is an air of gaiety among the smoke and voices; again the organ makes feet swish over the sanded floor. Our host looks very tired; he has never completely recovered from the wound in his right lung. The dwarf wearing a sailor's hat is dancing with Philomele, and out of a chaos of mixed emotions from some fifteen days emerges a thought from Nietzsche: "Since man came into existence he hath had too little joy. That alone is our original sin." The English Channel will have to be dammed.

WILLIAM REPTON.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

Mr. H. J. Adam's lecture on the "Imperfections of Nature," provoked a very lively discussion and many questions. The speaker replied very suitably, and altogether we spent a most interesting and profitable evening. To-night (November 15) Mr. Palmer and Mr. Leonard Ebury debate the desirability of the Freethought movement committing itself to a political programme. It is a question that is often keenly discussed amongst Freethinkers, so we hope for a good audience and a lively debate.—K. B. K.

Acid Drops.

We hardly think our readers will remember the name of Major John Fitzgerald Jones, even though a name ending with such a horrible anti-climax may have impressed itself upon the memory of some. But he is the gentleman who some time ago distinguished himself in his abuse of the *Freethinker* when it was suggested it should be placed on the tables of the Salford libraries. That, we believe, is Major Jones's sole title to fame, and if a chimney sweep set fire to the British Museum he might win notoriety. Now Major Jones is on the Salford Council, and Mr. F. E. Monks, the President of the Manchester Branch of the N.S.S., was the retiring candidate, and offered himself for re-election. So Mr. Jones saw another chance, either because he is a peculiarly well developed specimen of the religious bigot or because he saw "good business" in playing to the religious gallery. At any rate, he issued to all the clergy in his district an appeal from which we take the following:—

I am very anxious that all leaders of Religious Thought in the St. Thomas' Ward should give their assistance in the task of defeating Mr. F. E. Monks' attempt to re-enter the Salford Borough Council. With the ability of Mr. Monks no one can find the slightest fault, but it is that very ability which constitutes a real menace to Christian work in Salford. Mr. Monks is a prominent member of the Freethinkers' organization, and has frequently taken the chair and addressed meetings on their behalf at the Pendleton Town Hall and other places in Manchester and Salford.

On April 11, 1923, Mr. Monks moved on the Council that the *Freethinker*, which is a filthy and disgusting anti-Christian paper, should be placed on the tables of the Public Reading Rooms of Salford. Although all the Socialists present (9) voted for it, I am glad to say this effort was defeated.

I think you will agree that it will be much safer for the work of your Church if Mr. Monks is not re-elected to our Council.

The result of the appeal was that Mr. Monks was returned with an increased majority.

Major John Fitzgerald Jones is an amusing person, although he apparently takes himself with amazing solemnity—but that is a common failing of stupid people. Mr. Monks is not objected to on the ground of lack of ability, or honesty, or industry, but he does not attend the same church that Major Jones graces with his presence, and he would not, therefore, have him on the Council. Major Jones, we observe, is engaged in the fur business, and we wonder whether he would be equally careful not to make a profit by having business intercourse with unbelievers? But he probably draws the line at the point where his religious intolerance would affect his pocket. "Filthy and disgusting," when applied to the *Freethinker* does no more than make us smile. It was the very phrase which he used on the occasion when he opposed the paper before. And surely, even if he had resorted to prayer, he might have developed a new name by this time. Why not a pornographical periodical, or something of that kind? We do not suppose that Mr. Jones reads the *Freethinker*, and it is probable he would not understand it if he did, but he might work up a new phrase after being quiet for so long.

Quite seriously, Major Fitzgerald Jones represents a peculiarly detestable type of character that cannot but make for the general deterioration of public life. He would sooner have on the Council a dishonest Christian than he would have an honest Freethinker. And to prevent the latter getting on he would stoop to all kinds of mean and discreditable appeals to religious bigotry and sectarian prejudice. Such men can never make for the elevation of public life, because their action tends to keep out those who are of chief value. The man who will go fawning to the church or chapel would have Major Jones's support, and he would deserve it, for the support of such men is in itself a condemnation.

The man who is honest enough to express his real opinions, and who will not make Sectarianism the ground of an appeal for support, will not have his patronage. Men like that cannot but lower the tone of public affairs, and the sooner they are sent back to their native obscurity the better. Major Jones may be quite right in saying that the Church will be much safer if Mr. Monks can be kept off the Council, or imprisoned, or buried. But a man with the capacity for thinking that one might reasonably attribute to an educated rabbit would hardly have made such an admission. If the election of admittedly honest, able, and industrious Councillors makes the work of the Church in Salford more difficult, so much the worse for the Church.

A clergyman of the Church of England has refused to marry a couple because they were Nonconformists and had not been baptized. Naturally, the Nonconformists are indignant, and, as a matter of fact, any English citizen has the right to be married in a Church, whether he has been baptized or not. For, so far as the marriage service is concerned, the parson is a State official performing a civil marriage with religious ceremonies of his own accompanying it. That is a point which should never be overlooked, but which is usually not mentioned. The only form of marriage recognized by the State is the civil marriage, and whether it is performed in church, or out of church, it remains that. The parson is merely a person licensed by the civil power to perform marriages.

But the case throws a curious light on the intellectual ethics of the pulpit. In any other profession where a man finds that he cannot perform the duties for which he is paid, he is expected to have the common honesty to throw up his job. In the pulpit the occupant may no longer believe in what he is paid to preach, he may decline to carry out the duties for which he is paid, he may remain silent for years concerning doctrines the falsity of which he has long been convinced, but no one thinks any the worse of him. No one appears to expect that clergymen should be mentally honest or straightforward. And this attitude does really constitute the strongest indictment that can be brought against Christianity. By common consent a lower standard of intellectual honesty is accepted in the pulpit than would be accepted in any other department of life.

In the *New Leader* Mr. H. N. Brailsford has some timely words on the threat to freedom. It is agreed that there is less real freedom since the end of the Great War, and an attempt by force openly made by a powerful Government is a reversion to tyranny and barbarity. The best way to kill bad ideas is with better ones, and the free expression of opinion, even if wrong, will find its ultimate solution through having come to the surface of open discussion.

Following the other papers the *Leeds Mercury* has commenced a series of articles on the question of "Is Christianity Played Out?" To get really authoritative opinion they have selected parsons, and asked them. Naturally each parson replies, "It isn't," which, after all, is not very surprising. What else could a parson say? Does one expect a bishop when he is asked whether his business is played out, and there is nothing left in it, to reply in any but one way? The curious thing is that this should be considered a good advertisement for the Churches. Probably they are banking on the mentality of those who are still with them, and fancy that if they are told by bishops and the like that Christianity is still all-powerful, they will continue to support it. They may be right in this, and as for those outside the Churches it may be recognized that it is almost hopeless to expect to recapture them.

But the significance of the question remains. And its mere existence proves at least the suspicion that

Christianity is getting played out, whether it is admitted or not. We say getting played out because it is still far more powerful than many seem to imagine. Granted that it is losing real hold on men of genuine intelligence, it has still a hold over masses of people. The way in which politicians pander to the Churches and chapels proves this, and in the matter of votes it is not intelligence, but numbers that count. The votes of five hundred fools will exert a more decisive influence than those of fifty philosophers, and it is in this fact that the power of organized Christianity expresses itself.

Apropos of the last point, it is noticeable that in the appeals to the voters in recent elections there is a growing diminution in the appeal to electors to use their intelligence on the issues before them. From the Communists on the one side to the Conservatives on the other each paper orders its supporters to vote for this or that party. If we have not yet got to the kind of "graft" elections that take place in America, we are rapidly reaching a point where independent intelligence plays a diminishing part in settling the political affairs of the country.

Religion turns up in the most unexpected places. The site of a public lavatory does not appear to open much opportunity for religious opposition, but the proposed site of a new one at Exmouth has produced it, because, it is said, it is between two churches. But it is an underground affair, and why that should be objectionable to people going to Church is more than can easily be seen. But with one lot objecting to a display of ladies' underclothing, because it rouses impure thoughts in the minds of Christians, and another lot objecting to an underground lavatory because it disturbs them on their way to church, one can never be quite sure where the Christian conscience is next going to break out.

Mr. J. Selby writes us from the United States that in North Carolina the prayers for rain that were offered up some time back were followed by two weeks of the driest, hottest weather during the entire rainless period. Then a little rain came, but so soon as the vegetation began to show up and to look as though it were beginning to enjoy life, a killing frost came on and it was all put to sleep again. We must presume that the Lord was getting annoyed at those officious worshippers who spend their time telling him what he should do, or who advertise the deficiencies of their deity by proclaiming what he has not done, and inviting him to do it. No one likes that sort of thing. A public advertisement of one's shortcomings is likely to breed resentment.

Dr. Hensley Henson has again returned to his attack on the faith-healing Christian fakirs. He marks it as striking that while the "ignorant Greeks"—who are, of course, quite good Christians—are beginning to turn from their healing shrines to medical science, the reverse process appears to be going on with us. But only with Christians, we may point out, and in this they have the glorious example of Jesus Christ. Had it not been for Christianity the whole game of the religious fakir might long since have disappeared.

There is one very telling confession of Dean Henson's that is worth quoting. He says:—

Sick rooms are the breeding places of superstition, as marshes are of the mosquitoes which carry malaria; and the worst developments of that spiritual malady which is known as sacerdotalism are connected directly with the frailty and fears of invalids.

Now that is quite sound, but one immediately thinks of the immense service sickness has been to Christianity, of the degree to which all the clergy have stressed the value of Christianity when one is sick, of the "Wait till you die" cry, etc. Where would Christianity have been without the maladies born of humanity's sickness? That is the best of Christians when they go for one another—just a little of the truth is allowed to escape.

"Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

THE purpose of this Trust is to acquire sufficient funds which, by investment, will produce an income of £400 annually, the capital remaining intact. It is an endowment secured by legal Trust Deed, administered by five Trustees, of whom the editor of the *Freethinker* is one. It means giving the *Freethinker* permanent financial security, and is thus a businesslike and sound scheme, which should commend itself to all supporters of the Cause. A full explanation of the Trust was given in the issue of the *Freethinker* for October 4, and any further information will be given to anyone interested. At least £8,000 will be required, but, considering the number of Freethinkers at home and abroad who value the *Freethinker* and its work, there should be no great difficulty in securing that sum. It should be enough to remind givers that every gift to this Trust equals an annual donation.

Previously acknowledged, £3,323 9s. Mr. and Mrs. J. Neate, £10 4s.; "Mathematicus," £5; E. Hirst, £1; "X. Y. Z." 2s. 6d.; Peter Green, £10 10s.; "Manchester," £1; J. Brodie, 10s.; "North Down," 10s.; S. Clowes (2nd sub.), 10s.; W. Clowes (2nd sub.), 10s.; D. G. Sharp, 5s.; "Cymro," £1; J. Robinson, 5s.; K. Anderson, 2s. 6d.; Ernest, £2 10s.; H. Lupton, £1; G. Shambrook, 5s.; W. Napier, 5s.; J. Harvey, 5s.; J. Balfour, 5s. Total, £3,359 8s.

Correction.—The list of subscriptions acknowledged last week "as per F. Collins," should have read, "per A. Vanderhout." We are obliged to Mr. Collins for pointing out the mistake, and to Mr. Vanderhout for his interest in the Fund.

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the "Freethinker Endowment Trust," and crossed Midland Bank, Limited (Clerkenwell Branch). All letters should be addressed to the Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

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.

J. STAUNTON.—Many passages in the Bible are duplicated, sometimes in almost the exact words. This would naturally arise from some compiler welding together two or more narratives.

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.—Thanks for MSS received. We do not know when Mr. Cohen would be able to visit the United States, even if he is ever able to do so. He has plenty to do this side of the Atlantic.

E. SEBOLDS.—Morality is entirely independent of religious beliefs, and save so far as religious teachers have embodied certain moral teachings, religion can hardly be counted as a help to morals. And there has been positive injury in the shape of the distortion and perversion of moral feelings, as shown in the encouragement of intolerance, persecution, etc. There is no such thing as an innate moral emotion. We have emotion that is directed towards a religious object, and that is all. The persistence of religion proves no more than the difficulty of removing a wrong idea once it is firmly established.

S. CLOWES.—We are obliged for further subscriptions to Trust Fund.

G. SHAMBROOK.—As you say, every little helps. The burden would be unnoticed by any if it were shared by all.

M. BARNARD.—Obliged to hold over till next week.

S. DOBSON.—We are glad to learn that Mr. Ratcliffe was so much appreciated by his audience at Birmingham. That the opposition was "good" must have been pleasing to the lecturer. The trouble is that the quality of the religious opposition nowadays is so wretchedly poor.

J. ROBINSON.—We shall get there in time, and in erecting a building it is single bricks that count.

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

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

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

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

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 15) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall, Stratford. Those who wish to attend from other parts of London will find the Town Hall very easy to get at. Buses from all parts of the City and West End stop outside the doors of the hall, and Stratford Station is only a few minutes' walk away. Mr. Cohen will speak on "Evolution and God," and that subject at present should attract a fair number of Christians. There will be questions and discussion following the lecture.

On Sunday next (November 22) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, on "Do the Dead Live?" Judging from the last meeting held there the hall should be well filled. But we again take this opportunity of impressing upon Freethinkers in Liverpool and district that these two special lectures will have failed to achieve one of their objects if they do not result in bringing them together for the purpose of carrying on a systematic propaganda. Those who are willing to lend a hand in this direction should write to Mr. McKelvie, 29 Claremont Road, Seaforth, Liverpool.

The Manchester Branch is adopting the policy of holding meetings in different parts of the city in order to get into touch with new people. Judging from those present at Mr. Cohen's lectures on Sunday last in the Broughton Town Hall, the experiment will justify itself. The audiences were just a little smaller than is usual, but there were a larger number of strange faces present and that is all to the good. Mr. Black presided in the afternoon and Mr. F. E. Monks in the evening. Mr. Monks, by the way, has just been returned to the Salford Council with an increased majority, in spite of the bitter opposition of certain Christians. We deal with this matter in "Acid Drops."

A friend interested in promoting the circulation of the *Freethinker* suggests that if all would send for a supply of the advertising slips we print, containing a "tear-off" applying for specimen copies to be sent, and then slip these into their letters, or offer them in likely quarters, it would be a good plan for getting into touch with

new people. We shall be pleased to send on a supply to anyone who is interested.

They evidently do some things better in the United States than we do. In the *New York Telegram* we note in the Radio programme the announcement of a talk on "Jefferson, the Freethinker." We are quite sure the religious crowd that look after the B.B.C. would never tolerate that. It would be "Jefferson, the enlightened Christian," or some other term that would shut out so dreaded a word.

In another paper, the *Mount Vernon Daily Argus*, we see that Mrs. Joseph Lewis has been debating the subject of religious instruction in the schools with the Rev. Carl S. Weist. Mrs. Lewis stated the case for the elimination of religion from public schools temperately, but with force, and we do not see that Mr. Weist met her objections. We had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Lewis when she was in England, and we can quite believe that the parson would not have the easiest of times with so able and so determined a lady.

We are asked to remind Plymouth readers that a meeting of the local Branch will be held to-day (November 15) in the Labour Hall, Richmond Street, at 7.30. The speaker will be Mr. J. Bazell, and the subject, "Reason versus Religion." We hope that Plymouth Freethinkers will do what they can to make the meeting successful, and to encourage further efforts on the part of local workers.

Armistice Day and a Play.

NOVEMBER 11, seven years after the Armistice, found the churches still eager to canalise the popular emotions into streams which will make religious institutions flourish. The hundreds of thousands who died in the Ypres salient are to be commemorated by the erection of an episcopal church—notwithstanding the fact that Jews, Atheists, Parsees, Moslems, Catholics, Unitarians, and ordinary human beings constituted the vast bulk of our armies. I wonder how many Tommies "communicated" in the church which now claims to monopolize their "shrine"?

The majority of the war memorials are actually part and parcel of the church-buildings they are used to bolster up. Of those memorials which do not form part of a material church-building, the vast majority consist mainly of a sign of the cross, and contain untruthful, misleading or banal quotations from the Bible. They are usually "unveiled" by or in the presence of an officiating priest in a white gown.

The "two minutes' silence" on Armistice Day, as all the other sad and solemn expressions of a people's grief, may well be considered, approved, or disapproved, on purely secular grounds. Certainly in schools and institutions where people congregate it may be considered desirable to invite a united concentration of thought on our common sorrow. More than this one cannot say. Nearly always organized mourning means organized hypocrisy. It is not necessary to tell us to salute an empty monument every time we pass the cenotaph: nearly all of us have hearts too full of deep regret to be satisfied with a perfunctory raising of the hat (for one sex only), and two minutes once a year of the silence that really means something if spontaneous.

Besides there is a distinct inappropriateness about the date itself. The day of regret and solemnity should not be in celebration of the only bright day in the four years of the war!

Armistice Day, the day the fighting ended, the day when we and our late enemies fraternized—why

should we regard this with pained regret. Let us rather mourn, as a nation, on the day the first shot was fired, or on the day the Versailles Treaty was signed. It will not in any case prevent millions mourning all the other days of the year as well.

The B.B.C. has so often been criticized for its blatant religiosity that I should like to praise the good intentions of the 2 LO programme on Armistice Night. "The White Chateau," a play broadcast by an excellent company, might be expected to disarm rational criticism. Of the play itself one may say that there is not a line of Jingoism, or of patriotic gush.

"The White Chateau" however is an exceedingly poor play. Its scenes at their best recall a mixture of "The Four Horses of the Apocalypse" and "Old Bill," without the crude power of the first or the intentional humour of the second. It is the sort of dialogue the junior Girl Guides at a Church School would write and act. There is a sort of rhyming chorus between the acts: the poetry of which can be gauged by the following gems:—

God gave the day for labour and delight;
For love and slumber God gave the night.
Kisses, sleep, laughter; song and sin and flowers,
Were not these enough to fill the Twenty-Four Hours?

and again:—

You know about the Grand Attack,
And how we drove our enemies back.

and worse (if possible):—

God, in whose name such things are done.
To whom each side makes anxious prayer,
How finely is Thy mercy spun,
Who knowest all, and still canst spare.

The dialogue is depressingly dull and contains no single merit. Its conclusion is characteristic:—

PHILIP: Please God.....

THE VOICE: Youth and Faith hand in hand, the
heralds of Peace.....Hate cleansed by suffering (*a
note of triumph creeping in*), ambition thwarted by
calamity. Only Fear now to be overcome.

"Only fear now to be overcome." What does that mean? Europe overcame its fears pretty well during the four years of war. It is conceivable that a little fear might be a wholesome check to beginning a new war!

As to the "Godism" of the play, it is sickening to hear the VOICE (supposed to be the ghost of a devastated chateau) talking nonsense like this:—

The patience of God may be wearing thin.....Why
should He for ever be pulling His naughty children
out of the fires that they light themselves?

Yes, of course, man is responsible for the war, and not for the peace! If God could bring about an Armistice on November 11, 1918, what was He doing during the four years of the war?

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

The "Blessed Assurance" of Immortality

My uncle David Woodward once said to me:

"When I was a boy I used often to sit and listen
While the old Friends who sat on my father's porch
After Monthly Meeting, each told the others
That he had experienced a 'blessed assurance'
Of immortality.

And I used to think 'How wonderful it must be
To be old enough to have that spiritual experience!'

"But, Howell, simple folk deceive themselves with day-dreams,

For I am older now than any of those
Old Friends was then,

And I want thee to know that I have never had
Any such 'blessed assurance'!"

HOWELL S. ENGLAND.

The Intuitional Factor in Morals.

THE ethical problem presents itself in two main aspects. The first involves the question of the external standard of morals, viz.: What is moral conduct? The second relates to the internal sanction of morality and is expressed by the question: What is the true motive for moral conduct on the part of individuals and how can it be logically connected with the external standard?

Satisfactory answers to these two questions would completely solve the problem, but it is remarkable that while ethical speculation has from the earliest times been practically agreed as to its answer to the former of them, its reply to the latter is still the subject of some controversy. It seems to be generally agreed that moral conduct consists of such actions as are essential to the fullest corporate welfare of the social group to which the standard applies, and ultimately (in its relation to the world at large) of all human beings. But answers to the second question still differ, and—disregarding the religious or supernatural sanction—may be broadly classed under three heads:—

(1) Egoistic Hedonism or "enlightened self interest." It is questionable whether this theory is now seriously held by many. Though it may sufficiently account for conduct into which hedonism enters in however small a degree, it fails entirely to account for those highest examples of moral conduct in which hedonistic motive plays no part whatever. It also involves a logical fallacy. If I refrain from cheating someone over a business transaction solely because I recognize that "honesty is the best policy" for me, and not from any feeling that honesty is the "right" policy, my egoistic motive can only be based on the fact that I am living in a community wherein dishonesty is disapproved of and entails a risk of punishment. But since all human beings are supposed to be actuated by the same egoistic motives it is difficult to see how such a moral sentiment as a disapproval of dishonesty could ever arise in a community of them. and in the absence of such a sentiment the egoistic motive would lose its logical basis.

(2) Altruistic Hedonism, or the classical Utilitarianism of Bentham and his followers. This, which makes "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" the aim of moral conduct, is so well known that it needs no description. It must be pointed out, however, that though claiming to furnish a purely moral sanction it still makes individual happiness its sole motive. It seems to regard the social welfare as merely the sum of all the separate individual welfares, and is logically nothing more than egoistic hedonism extended from one individual self to the "greatest number" of individual selves. Moreover, in common with all ethical systems which base moral conduct on considerations of happiness, it betrays a logical weakness in the relationship it sets up between individual and social happiness. Why should I so act as to bring about the individual happiness of others when in so acting I feel that it is my duty to disregard my own happiness? How can another's, or many others', individual happiness serve as an end for me when my own noblest impulses tell me that mere personal happiness is to be held of no account?

(3) Evolutionary Ethics. This appears to provide the true solution of the problem, for it bases moral conduct, not on any considerations of happiness whatsoever, but on a moral instinct or intuition, necessarily evolved under social conditions and necessarily (though unconsciously and, so to speak, mechanically) directed toward the social welfare. Such a basis of moral conduct is built on the firm foundation of

evolutionary science, and, being independent of hedonistic implications, is free from the logical objection which has just been referred to as a difficulty in the Utilitarian theory. This moral instinct, or intuition, is, of course, what is commonly called "conscience." Of its existence in all sane and normal human beings there can be no doubt for all experience an irresistible conviction of its reality and power. The only controversy is as to its nature and origin, for while religion claims it as a mystic faculty divinely implanted in the human mind, science regards it as a product of mental evolution under the influence of social conditions. That this latter view is the true one, and that the human conscience is a purely natural faculty of the mind brought about through a gradual process of evolution, becomes fairly clear when we tabulate all the physiological functions leading up to and constituting behaviour in a serial order, from the lowest neural and psycho-physical reactions to the highest manifestations of moral conduct. We may tabulate them as follows:—

(a) Automatic action. Primary vital processes independent of both consciousness and volition.

(b) Reflex action. Psycho-physical activities independent of volition, but sometimes accompanied by consciousness.

(c) Instinctive behaviour. Psychic activities, being always associated with consciousness. Probably involuntary in early stages, but volitional during later developments.

(d) Hedonistic conduct. Always conscious and always volitional. Actuated by desire for pleasurable feelings and aversion from painful feelings, whether as affecting the self or others.

(e) Moral conduct. Always conscious and very strongly volitional. Independent of any desire for pleasure or aversion from pain, but entirely controlled by a sense of "right" or "duty," and often acting in opposition to the hedonistic impulses and overcoming them.

Here we see how the conscious and volitional elements in animal behaviour and human conduct are developed in successively higher degrees and a gradually ordered series—such a series as we find everywhere characterizing the products of evolutionary development. Hence it is natural and reasonable to conclude that the sense of right and duty lying at the root of moral conduct is an innate and fundamental quality of the human mind, evolved in response to social needs and directed to the promotion of social welfare. And this view completely escapes the difficulty of bridging the gap between the "welfare of the individual" and the "welfare of the community" which besets all systems of hedonism or utilitarianism however altruistic they may be. For on this view the welfare or happiness of the individual becomes of no account as such, the sole motive of moral conduct being the innate moral sense which, though of necessity individually developed, has been so developed for the sole purpose of social and racial welfare.¹ Moral conduct has, in fact, to be completely differentiated from hedonistic conduct, and the moral motive has to be regarded as operating on a principle of quite another order than the simple one of a balance between conflicting desires for happiness. Thus there is no need to adopt Professor James's paradoxical definition of moral conduct as "action in the line of the greatest resistance," any more than we need resort to paradox when we see a small weight outbalancing a greater one in the steel-yard balance. Here the mechanical principle of the lever modifies the simpler

¹ The word "purpose" here used must, of course, be taken to imply nothing more than the operation of those natural evolutionary factors which are now so familiar to students of social science that it is quite superfluous to dwell on them.

principle that a heavier weight overbalances a lighter one.

This change in the fundamental conceptions of ethics brought about by the application of evolutionary principles to human social development bears a close resemblance to the change in certain philosophical conceptions brought about by the same cause. The pre-evolutionary views of the "Experimental" school of philosophy as to the origin of our *à priori* cognitions of "necessary truths" in mere individual experience are no longer generally held; and the old utilitarian ethic, similarly based on conceptions of individual pleasures or avoidance of pains as the sole motives of moral conduct, has given place to the conception of a socially evolved and innate moral sense. Indeed, the parallelism between philosophical and ethical thought goes deeper than this resemblance in the influence wrought on them by the doctrine of evolution. Philosophy and ethics, regarded in this intuitional aspect, possess certain characteristics in common which seem to indicate a profound and fundamental community of nature and origin as products of mental development. It will accordingly be of interest to examine these common elements.

A. E. MADDOCK.

(To be Concluded.)

From the Eastern Sea.

In the course of a long letter—so lengthy and detailed that only a synopsis can be given in the limited space of the *Freethinker*, which is so busy fighting the hosts of Christendom that, with the best will in the world, it has little time or space to deal with the other superstitions that distress the earth—Mr. Yoshiro Oyama refers to many aspects of religion in Japan. Our correspondent is a man of eager and painstaking research and an omniverous reader of books and periodicals—the noble and undying passion of whose life is the stamping out of all religion, which in its various forms, and one similarity serves only to obscure counsel and hinder the true progress of mankind; and which he sees very clearly can only be achieved by intelligence, reason, experience, and the utmost honesty of purpose; primarily the duty and attribute of any man worthy the name of intellectual. It is noted that "intellectuals," in Japan as here, are confused and corrupted by the atmosphere of primitive and modern Buddhism—the modern, like our modern Christianity more widely mischievous; the primitive Buddhism, unlike our early Christianity, philosophically atheistical. A religious leader lately gave a restaurant dinner to about thirty representatives of old and new sects (a picture of the grave and reverend seigneurs accompanies the note), but these, suggests Mr. Oyama would all be like blind men groping in the dark. In an atmosphere of world-wide Freethought, he says it is a deplorably narrow and futile experiment the propagation of any religion, a mere threshing of chaff, sickening to every sensitive soul that reads and knows the true grain of history and experience. Modern Buddhism, our friend notes, much resembles modern Roman Catholicism.

Mr. Oyama tells us he translated "The Terrible Tennessee" from the *Freethinker* and had it printed in *The Chugai Nippon* with a view to support J. T. Scopes, the teacher on trial, and to attack the barbarism of Christian America; adding that evolution was true and Scopes a brave and admirable man. The Japanese papers in general opposed the *Freethinker* views, supported the religious persecution, condemned Scopes, and concluded it was right to set

him on trial. Some time ago Mr. Oyama sent one of the leading journal pictures of Thomas Paine and Francisco Ferrer with a few historical remarks. They were rejected, the journal seeming to be unaware that Paine was a great pioneer reformer and Ferrer a martyr for the modern school. Solitude is still the fate, he says, of the man who would speak the truth: he is surprised that Japanese journals appreciate the religious views of the late W. J. Bryan: Japan seems to bow to Christian America: still he is more and more glad he is an anti-religious Free-thinker.

Doctors of medicine with high sounding titles, says our good friend, are much overvalued by the people. There are medical men of high character in the country, but numerous others whose skill is suspect and who are highly superstitious; such "skill" and superstition combined were brought to light in a most amazing scandal. Such medical men, generation after generation, unabating and unrelenting, have traded on human flesh and in the almighty gold. They are little concerned about the honour of their profession and, while science is neglected, they practise only to earn money. Of all else they are unconcerned. If their patients are Catholic they subscribe to that superstition, if Buddhist, etc., they follow that: corruption could hardly go further: one detests such chameleon championship: these men who ought to be the incarnation of skill and learning are but the incarnation of ignorance and mammonism: morality and commonsense never get a look in, and the laboratory of science is exchanged for the temples of superstition—the one contradicts the other, but not in the minds of such "medicine men," having by economic pressure or native feeble-mindedness, made the first great apostacy, the rest easily follows.

Mr. Oyama regrets to inform us of the death of Mr. Kesson Kuzumi, philosopher and freethinker, who died in poverty on August 7, 1925. He fought his way to his present position and wrote eighteen books during sixty-six years, two of which have been banned. The following is his will—taken from his diary:—

1. Do not perform any rite after my death.
2. Enough to inform friends of my death by postcard.
3. Do not wish to be made a saint or to be enrolled amongst the gods.
4. Useless to set up a grave post. Give flat refusal to chants from monks and Shinto priests.
5. Please publish my complete works by all means. To do so, it will be necessary to have some money—ask some well-to-do friends for help.
7. Have a well-stocked library, which should be, if possible, distributed through a public library. I do not wish it scattered away uselessly.
8. Do not allow the performance of a wake before coffin by friends and family, occasional prayers, or anniversary masses, and do not give memorial presents to friends and acquaintances. They are all nonsense. Do not gather to bid adieu to the remains. It is also nonsense and unnecessary for me. Burn the remains and throw ashes into the sea.
9. Cry freely if feeling sad.
10. Come and help my family before and after death—if any relative, intimate friend, or acquaintance really thinks of me.

Mr. Kuzumi was a well-known writer and critic, dramatic and literary.

Here, surely, was a man who thought much of life and little of death; a man, one might suppose, of settled, unselfish purpose, whose little life was given for the good of the world; the kind of stuff of which the real great Freethinker is made; as selfless at last as the most devoted Christian, but utterly without religion, burning with zeal to the last hour of his life for the welfare of the world; an object lesson to all presumptuous piety, or feeble freethought, that the great, full, and happy life can

be lived without imaginary beyonds, and powers not of ourselves, not of the plain root virtues born. Truly as Mr. Oyama laments (and as with us) it is sad to see Japanese authority rejecting gems for pebbles, and throwing these precious stones into the garbage can. The Japanese Mrs. Grundy, it seems, is also suspicious of the fine arts and is shocked by the human form divine—just, we suppose, as a religious body of our own was scandalized the other day by the scantily-draped models in a shopman's window! These no doubt suggesting to prurient piety the intimacies of the feminine toilette, hence disturbing to the fragile morality of the average man of God.

This year in the French Art Exhibition certain nude studies were much debated; some even refused a place, among these the famous "Le Baiser." But in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, there bristle innumerable shrines and temples of minor superstitions, with some Christian churches. Here are performed incantations, prayers, fortune-telling, faith-healing, etc., every art to deceive and exploit the ignorant people, at the same time spreading the most terrible superstitions. Here, also, owing to religious fears, the anatomist can hardly get dead bodies for the dissecting table. This welter of faith and charlatany, while the offspring of more regular Oriental religions, is very different from these; but the whole taken together, concludes Mr. Oyama, whether dying now or destined to endure, shows that in Japan, at least, religion is a failure.

Mr. Oyama writes from a sick bed, in which he has been since last July. He has few friends in his own country, but many in Western Europe and America. We trust he will soon be well again and enabled one day to revisit these shores on a lecturing tour. One feels one could depend on his saying nothing "subversive" of our best traditions of intellectual Freethought.

A. MILLAR.

Correspondence.

WAS JESUS A FREETHINKER?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Most of your correspondents, including those who use the name of Colonel R. G. Ingersoll as a missile, seem to ignore that great Freethinker's deliberate and eloquent support of Miss Ettie Rout's position.

Surely we shall not go far wrong in committing ourselves to Ingersoll's rational and wholly admirable humanitarian view of the man Jesus. Whether mythical or historical, whether invented by priests or slowly accumulated from a simple narrative into a supernatural superstructure there is a Jesus even if there never was.

From ancient times till now the battle has raged quite as much round our conception of Christ as that of the B.V. Mary's immaculate one of Jesus. It is very curious to find almost the first question on the subject was in the terms, "What think ye of Christ?"

And here is what Ingersoll thought (see *What Must We Do to be Saved?*):—

Let me say here, once for all, that for the man Christ I have infinite respect. Let me say once for all that the place where man has died for man is holy ground. And let me say once for all that to that great and serene man I gladly pay the tribute of my admiration and my tears. He was a reformer in his day. He was an infidel in his time. He was regarded as a blasphemer, and his life was destroyed by hypocrites who have in all ages done what they could to trample freedom and manhood out of the human mind. Had I lived at that time I would have been his friend, and should he come again he will not find a better friend than I will be.

That is for the man.

For the theological creation I have a different feeling.....

For the man who in the darkness said "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" for that man I have nothing but respect, admiration, and love.

Back of the theological shreds, rags, and patches hiding the real Christ, I see a genuine man.

I feel I am in no way inconsistent in endorsing Colonel Ingersoll's view while agreeing with John M. Robertson's "myth" theory.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

A CORRECTION.

SIR,—The second and third paragraphs from the end of my reply to Mr. Barnard in your last issue were unfortunately reversed; a fact that inevitably destroyed or obscured the sense of both passages. Would any reader who may have perused the letter kindly re-read those two paragraphs in their proper sequence and the meaning of each will at once become obvious? Also "radius rector" should be *radius vector*.

KERIDON.

THE GREATEST BLASPHEMER IN HISTORY.

SIR,—Here is a thought which has often occurred to me, and I should like, with your kind permission, to place it on record: Why did not the great Jehovah, whom Christians are always boosting up, and grovelling before, show his power when Pompey the Great threw open the Temple at Jerusalem and marched his legions through the Holy of Holies, the punishment for this profanation, as decreed by Jehovah himself, being death? This action of Pompey in proving to the world the helplessness of this much-vaunted bugaboo justifies history in bestowing on Pompey the title of Great. Pompey the Great than whom no more daring blasphemer ever lived. All hail to this great Roman for destroying Jehovah's silly pretensions.

While on this subject I should like to say that I have often wondered why great infidels, such as Bradlaugh and Foote, should feel indignant of having a story ascribed to them by Christians of having pulled out their watches and defied God to strike them dead in five minutes' time. This seems to me a very good argument, for it is to be presumed that God would strike them dead if he were able to do so; and, in any case, it shows absolute sincerity. If a man pretended to be an accomplished pugilist, would not his pretensions be exposed by some little fellows coming up to him and pulling his nose and daring him to do his worst, and then walking off whole ad scot-free? This is the true *argumentum ad judicium* so strikingly exemplified by Pompey the Great. It is an argument much out of fashion, but strongly believed in by the ancients.

Kafue, Northern Rhodesia.

J. E. ROOSE.

RELIGION IN IRELAND.

SIR,—A letter in your last issue from Robert Brown, Belfast, makes me feel sorry that the Freethinkers of the city have not a Secular Society Branch or club of some sort where they could meet and encourage each other in the good fight. I don't myself live in the city, but am within reasonable distance. I was able to be present on the last two occasions when you visited Belfast, and I hope the time may not be too distant when we shall have the pleasure of hearing you again.

Referring again to Mr. Brown's letter, I should like to say that I thoroughly agree with him as to the pernicious spirit of tyranny that reverence for the Bible engenders among Protestants in N. Ireland. I should also like to endorse what you have said repeatedly in the *Freethinker* since the Dayton trial, *i.e.* that the Christians of these islands are very little different to those in Kentucky or Nebraska. At least it is so in North Down. Of my neighbours and acquaintances here I don't know one who even knows what Evolution means. Few of them, indeed, can even realize what the Scopes' trial was about. Only a very few of the P.E.S. teachers know anything of science, and not one of them would ever dream of mentioning such a thing as the evolution of man to the children in their charge.

The Bible to the average Ulsterman, especially in country districts, is just what it was to the Scots of Calvin's time. Changed times and different environment may prevent them following out the scriptural in-

junctions to the same conclusions as their Scottish ancestors, but that is all.

NORTH DOWN.

"THE GOOD OF GOOD."

SIR,—Mr. J. T. Lloyd writes beautifully and convincingly. But when he ends his last week's article with the words: "Furthermore, genuine Freethinkers do not bemoan the departure of their faith, nor wish they could recover it again. The death of their supernatural beliefs was the luckiest and happiest thing that ever happened to them," one is inclined to question the rather sweeping statement. For one thing, religious communities, apart from their foolish beliefs, yet motivated and traditioned by them, often develops a kind, collective morality, and lead sweet and gracious lives. They do not know the truth, or the "good of good" in itself, but many of them mean well and do well and live good and lovely lives. Other groups of Christians, like certain groups of Freethinkers, this ignorant, that intellectual, are all too prone to the evangel of words, words, words; these as empty and nauseating as those. On a lower plane the loss of "faith" may be compared to the fond tippler's "whusky gill or penny wheep, or ony stronger potion" being cut away; so with his 'baccy, or his potato cure for rheumatism, so he may become a savage for a while; certainly not a happier man! We are too much inclined all to say the same thing, like street-corner conventicles, for God's sake let someone say "No" sometimes, "so there will be two of us." Also, contradicting Shelley, Leopardi has said—the greatest contrary of the beautiful is essentially the true.....that misery results from the perfection and supremacy of wisdom. Mr. Lloyd will understand.

A. M.

SEEKING FOR GOD.

SIR,—I have a penchant for hearing noted preachers, and seeing the announcement that the Rev. Dr. F. B. Meyer was going to speak in the Central Hall, Wesleyan Social Centre, I was one of a very numerous company at the midday weekly service.

The rev. gentleman is very aged—and his evident weakness of body commanded my personal sympathy. He has what I think would be described as a beautiful face, and used very chaste language. His text was: "I am the way, the truth, and the life," and was an attempt to explain why the Agnostic missed the way of belief in Christ. This arose from three reasons. First, because the Agnostic relied too much on the physical basis of being; secondly, because his intellect was critical, and he had been blurred by sin—I nearly shouted out a protest here; thirdly, because spiritual truths were spiritually understood. His is an old-fashioned religion; he knows nothing of the modern method of explaining away difficulties. He is sincere, but most limited.

Incidentally, he gave us a piece of self-revelation—it was to the effect that for some time he lived in hopes of "seeing God" for himself. He prayed and was agonised in mind; it was useless; God was too vague—too far off—too incomprehensible for him. He had to fall back upon "Christ." In him he saw God.

So modern orthodoxy admits that God is unknown; it enthrones its conception of the God in the personality of Jesus. The son has superseded the Father. I left the meeting feeling sorry for good Dr. Meyer. He is weighted with doubt, uncertainty, and falls in faith on Christ as explanation of the mystery of life. Personally I would rather sail the sea of truth than settle in the wrong port.

SEEKER FOR TRUTH.

Obituary.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Ralph Rocket at the age of 69. Mr. Rocket was a very earnest Freethinker, and retained his interest in the Cause till the end. In accordance with his last wish a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside in Burmantofts Cemetery, which was read by Mr. Lew Davis—W. NEWELL.

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.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Debate—"Should the Freethought Movement commit itself to a Political Programme?" Affirmative, Mr. Leonard Ebury; Negative, Mr. T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Middle Floor, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham): 7, Mr. G. Whitehead, "Ethics and Modern Legislation."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, An Impromptu Dramatic Performance—"The League and the Devil." Devised by William Margrie.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Party Politics: A Study in Ethics."

STANLEY HALL (Hallam Street, Great Portland Street, W. 1): 8, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Twelve Tribes and the Camp—Astronomical." With Lantern Illustrations.

STRATFORD (Town Hall): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Evolution and Christianity."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. W. M. Thorn, "Doubts about Evolution in the Light of Relativity." Questions and Discussion. Silver Collection.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. H. Warner, "Modern Imperialism." Admission Free. Questions and discussion invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Hon. Bertrand A. W. Russell, M.A., "What I Believe."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Club Hall, Richmond Street): 7.30, Mr. J. Bazell, "Reason versus Religion."

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