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Views and Opinions.

The Great Lying Creed.

A Manchester parson wrote recently complaining that we seem to prefer the orthodox Christian to the "advanced" one. We plead guilty, but add by way of justification that it is because we prefer clear convictions to indefinite ones, and straightforwardness—even when it is wrong—to evasion and opportunism. In the first case there is some hope of converting the strength devoted to error to the service of truth. In the latter one can only plead inadvisability, and then one is left with the feeling that the opportunism which has induced more liberal views may at any moment lead back to the old position. Some recent articles we have been reading on Jesus appear to provide proof of this. They all hold up Jesus as a supreme example of all that is excellent, but no two of them agree on precisely what we are to follow. There is agreement in the use of the name only. It brings two such opposites as Lord Hugh Cecil and Mr. George Lansbury into the same camp. It embraces the Roman Catholic with his magic and incantations, and Bishop Barnes, who says it is all nonsense. It includes some of my friends who are good Christians, and who would lend a hand at the destruction of the Blasphemy Laws and the establishment of Secular Education, and others who would, if they could, suppress us and our opinions altogether. Yet they all call themselves followers of Jesus; they are in cordial agreement here—so long as they refrain from saying what it is they agree on. Instead of the rose smelling as sweet by any other name, if one forgets the name, one might easily mistake it for a cabbage or a cucumber.

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Truth-Telling and Belief.

There is a good illustration of this contained in a recent article in the *Daily News*, written by Dr. T. R. Glover. Dr. Glover belongs to that class of theologians who first of all determines what ought to be, and then straightway discovers that it was taught by Jesus Christ. If a certain view is wrong Jesus cannot have taught it, even though it looks as though he did. If it is right then he must have taught it, even though no one can point out just where he did so. And it must have been the spirit of satire that led Dr. Glover to give his article the

title of "The Intellectual Virtues." It is the last thing in the world that any candid student would credit Christianity with, but Dr. Glover is quite sure that they belong to Christianity. He says: "You cannot tell a lie and stick to it and be a Christian, or allow another man to remain misled as to your belief. The fact is that you cannot go very far with Christianity without running into the intellectual virtues." To use a colloquialism, that's done it. Dr. Glover has left all other claims made on behalf of Christianity far, far behind. The claim that Christianity abolished slavery, or emancipated woman, or encouraged toleration, or checked warfare, are all mild at the side of the claim that you cannot go very far with Christianity without running into the intellectual virtues. The proof, too, is characteristic. He finds that in natural science truth is held to be a paramount virtue, and as, he says, God made both the world of science and the world of religion, the rule must be the same in both cases. It must be so because it ought to be so. That is the sum of Dr. Glover's reasoning. It does not matter if all the available evidence is in quite the other direction—it must be so because it ought to be so. Dr. Glover is a living disproof that Christianity may co-exist with a marked disregard of at least some of the intellectual virtues.

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Lying for God's Sake.

Heine called Christianity the "great lying creed." It was a complete summary of one aspect of Christian history. It would be possible to fill many columns of this paper with admissions from ecclesiastical historians to the effect that century after century one of the most striking manifestations of the Christian life was the complete disregard for truth. The readiness with which lies were told, documents or passages in documents forged or interpolated, stories manufactured, opponents misrepresented, or slandered, whenever it was thought that the interests of the Christian Church might be promoted is constant. If anyone will go carefully through the New Testament—Dr. Glover admits that one can find no great encouragement to the intellectual virtues in the Old Bible—he might have added that the conduct of the intellect, save so far as the exhortation to blind belief is concerned, plays no part in the New Testament. In this respect Christianity is much lower than Mohammedanism, and infinitely lower than Buddhism. Mosheim admits that very early in the history of the Christian Church it was an accepted maxim that it was quite lawful to lie and deceive where the interests of the Church might be promoted. Lecky also points to the "indifference to truth which is the most repulsive feature of so many Catholic writings," and "the very large part that must be assigned to deliberate forgeries in the apologetic literature of the Church." It is not too much to say that there is not a single document which has come down to us from antiquity, and which it would

have been to the interests of the leaders of Christianity to falsify, which does not lie under suspicion. Lecky properly points out that "the search for truth was regarded as an important element of virtue" with both the Greeks and the Romans, but there is no place in early Christian literature where that is so stressed. It is never truth that one is urged to accept, never more than *the truth*—a synonym for a ready-made set of monstrous and incredible propositions.

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A Privileged Platform.

It would be stupid to pretend to assume that Dr. Glover does not know this aspect of Christian history as well as we do. And it is safe to say that he feels secure in making these statements only because they are made in the columns of a Christian paper, which follows the usual lines of Christian policy in not permitting a reply to be made. If Dr. Glover doubts the small hold that truth has on the average Christian consciousness where religion is concerned, I invite him to see whether the *Daily News* would dream of permitting a drastic criticism of either his article or of Christianity within its columns. And what is the value of anyone's profession of concern for the truth if he will not permit the opposite side to be heard? But all this is quite in line with the best Christian tradition. Right through its history every body of Christians has felt it to be its duty to prevent the world hearing arguments against its beliefs. This has been done by executions, by imprisonment, and by boycott in various forms. There is no need to enlarge here, it is well known to all. And if Dr. Glover is really in earnest in what he says, one would like to know what he has ever done, or what he is doing, or what he is ready to do, to see to it that the elaborate system of boycott of all Freethinking information comes to an end? Would he have the courage to inform the *Daily News* that its admission of an article in favour of intellectual virtues is no more than the most elaborate humbug, so long as it prohibits articles that tell the truth about religion and about Christianity? I do not believe for a moment that he will do so. And so long as he will not do this he is simply assisting by his silence at the game of preventing Christians practising the "intellectual virtues" as little as possible.

* * *

The Stream of Tendency.

Look at the stream of lies associated with the history of Christianity. There are the number of documents deliberately forged and attributed to the Apostles or to Jesus. The falsifications of Josephus and Tacitus and other pagan writers; the forged Decretals upon which the Roman Church bases so much of its claims; the lies that Roman Catholics tell about Protestants, and the lies which Protestants tell about Roman Catholics. Look at the long list of infidel death-bed lies manufactured and circulated by Christians—still circulated by various evangelistic agencies. What Christian protests against them? When the infamous Dr. Torrey was in England, and when his slanderous stories about Ingersoll were such as to make the late W. T. Stead attempt to get the prominent Christian leaders who were supporting his campaign to publicly disown him, he could not find one who would do so. Torrey was lying for the glory of God; there was the authority of St. Paul for that. And how many Christians have ever publicly repudiated the filthy lies about Voltaire or Paine or other Freethinkers, or have reprimanded other Christians for doing so? Has Dr. Glover ever publicly done so? And what kind of merit may one claim if one does not actually tell the lie oneself, but stands ready

to get whatever profit may result from others telling it? And we are not yet so far away from the Angels of Mons legend for it to have lost its significance. In this case we had an imaginative tale told of how some angelic bowmen appeared in the sky and saved the retreating British Army. The story no sooner appeared in print than quite a number of well-known religious leaders testified to its accuracy. It was all in vain the author protested that he had written the tale as a pure piece of imagination, and that it never occurred. Men like the Bishop of London and the Rev. R. F. Horton were ready with their witnesses and their proofs. They were determined to have the lie at all costs, and even when it was finally given up, not one of them had the common honesty to admit he was wrong. There was a complete epitome of the relation of Christianity to the intellectual virtues in that incident.

* * *

True to Type.

I do not know a religion that has ever paid less regard to the intellectual virtues than has Christianity. Its primary virtue has been credulity. "Blessed are they that believe" has been its fundamental teaching. Lying occurs, of course, in connection with other things than Christianity. Men lie in business, in art, or in connection with anything that it is in their interest to lie about. But Christianity is the one thing in which it is considered a virtue to lie, or to prevent knowing the truth. If, says Dr. Glover, "a man is not honest with other men, and honest with himself in things of the intellect, he cannot be making much contribution in a world where intellectual honesty counts more and more." Quite so, and one is pleased to know that that amount of Freethought teaching has influenced Dr. Glover. But it would be far more to the point if he acknowledged the source of that lesson, and had the courage and the straightforwardness to point out how much Christianity had done to debase the intellectual currency. What help has Christianity ever given a man to be honest to himself and to others when it has consistently made a candid expression of opinion against religion the occasion of the severest punishments it has been able to inflict? It has done what it could to make mental straightforwardness the most expensive of luxuries, and the consequence of this is seen in the large number of people who are afraid to say what they believe because of the terrorism the churches exert. What it could do to create intellectual cowards and hypocrites Christianity has done. And Dr. Glover's laudation of intellectual courage in the name of a religion that has always made it the greatest of offences is not the only symptom of the success it has achieved.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Bishop of Durham on Education.

On Sunday evening, March 7, Dr. Hensley Henson occupied the pulpit of the Westminster Congregational Chapel, and thereby proved that he is not a narrow-minded, bigoted Churchman. He chose for his text the well-known saying, "In none other is there salvation," in which the exclusiveness of the Christian religion is for the first time confidently asserted. The saying is attributed to the Apostle Peter, who, though a comparatively ignorant man, had the audacity to affirm most dogmatically that Jesus Christ was the only Redeemer of the world, without faith in whom the whole human race was irretrievably lost. Bishop Henson candidly admits

that this exclusiveness of Christianity, "when exhibited in connection with a creed which commended its acceptance, no more than the small and universally odious nation, the Jews, with whom at first the followers of Jesus were naturally associated, was not merely repulsive but also absurd." Then he adds: "As the world came to see more of the new religion and discovered that its morality was as little compatible with the accustomed practice of society as its creed was consistent with the current beliefs, the repugnance and contempt deepened into actual hostility, and the epoch of persecution opened." Here the Bishop is clearly mistaken. The Pagan hostility to Christianity was not based on moral and credal considerations at all, but rather on the fact that the early Christians were mostly Jews, who were generally regarded as enemies of the Roman Empire. There is no evidence whatever that Christians were, on the average, morally superior to Pagans, and we know to a certainty that intellectually they were generally inferior. Be that as it may, it is a fact which cannot be ignored that Christianity fought its way over innumerable obstacles to a position of authority in the empire, and no sooner was power in its hands than it began to utilize it for the forcible suppression of all other cults. Intolerance was its very breath of life, and the more it persecuted the more powerful it became. Throughout the Middle Ages Christendom was ruled with the rod of brute force and cruelty.

It was impossible, however, that such a state of things could be allowed to continue with impunity. Dr. Henson says:—

When at the dawn of the modern epoch the framework of medieval Christendom was violently shaken and finally broken up by the successive and connected movements which we are wont to distinguish as the Renaissance and the Reformation, the process released into activity the latent forces of the long-suppressed but ever-living Paganism; the ancient world rose from the grave with its philosophy and morality, as well as with its classical literature and incomparable art. An acute Paganizing of Christianity set in, expressing itself first in the habit of the cultivated classes and then slowly penetrating the mass of society.

That is perfectly true, and much more might have been said which a Bishop would never dream of uttering in a sermon, though he may talk about it with a friend in private. The resurrection of ancient literature, philosophy, and art, the Renaissance, as it is called, in reality sounded the death-knell of all forms of superstition. Christianity has not been quite the same since the New Learning made its appearance, and it is decidedly on the down grade at the present day. Even Bishop Henson grows somewhat gloomy as he contemplates the prospects of the religion whose advocate he professionally is, saying:

No doubt the authority of the Christian tradition, rooted in the centuries and embedded in the institutions, literature, and monuments of Christendom will long operate as a restraining force in modern democracy, but that force must necessarily grow weaker as time passes, and cannot possibly be maintained if Christian faith and morality fall out of popular acceptance. When we consider the probable character of democratic action in the future and speculate on the prospects of Christianity within historic Christendom, we cannot ignore the formidable fact that the masses of the people have never been Christian in any definite or effective sense.

That also is unquestionably true, and its truth cannot but have a depressing, humiliating effect on any sincere minister of the Gospel. Most keenly does the Bishop of Durham realize and bewail the existing situation. "Now we are discovering," he mourn-

fully declares, "that Christianity, *eo nomine*, is but the profession of a small minority of the population, and that on the accepted principle of democracy that small minority has no right, no power, to impose its beliefs and standards on the nation." That sentence is of immense significance, though unfortunately Dr. Henson does not seriously take it to heart. Democracy signifies government by the people, as distinguished from aristocracy. It does not mean a "demoralized communism." Furthermore, the Bishop is entirely blind to the fact that Christianity and morality are two radically different things. Confucianism almost wholly ignores the supernatural, but it sets morality of the noblest kind on the throne; and in all ages the Chinese have been a highly moral people, insisting upon exalted standards of individual, family, and social life. The same observation applies with equal truth to Buddhism and Buddhists, and also to Secularism. As the Bishop knows full well, Christianity and morality have not always gone hand-in-hand. Every honest student of history is painfully aware that the Ages of Faith were not distinguished for the purity and unselfishness of their morals.

The Bishop goes out of his way to make the bitterest and most vicious attack possible upon Soviet Russia concerning which he is of necessity deplorably ignorant. We hold not a scrap of brief for Communism in any shape or form, but we do hold one for justice and fair play. Listen to this minister of the God of love:—

It is, I think, regrettable that the atrocity and horror of the Russian Revolution have largely obscured for English people its sinister significance. The madness they see, but the method of the madness they miss. Since the first, they think, is inconceivable in England, the last has no importance. They are mistaken. Principles are tied to their practical expression by a link which cannot be broken. Secularize the schools, not in curriculum merely, but in tone and discipline, and you have laid the axe to the root of civilized order. The Soviet Government has been thorough in its Secularism. It says to the Russian people, as St. Remigius said to Clovis, "Burn what thou hast worshipped. Worship what thou hast burned." It is not enough that the children of Russia shall know nothing of Christianity; they must be taught to hate and despise it. A new humanity shall be created, fashioned on the negation of Christian faith and morals.

Bishop Henson is guilty of totally misrepresenting the philosophy of Secularism. If he has read the works of any accredited Secularist, such as Bradlaugh, Foote, Robertson, or Cohen, his misrepresentation must be pronounced wilful. It is a lie of the deepest dye to say that to secularize the schools would be to lay "the axe to the root of civilized order." Secularism places rationalized morality on the highest pinnacle in its philosophy, and would insist, if it had the chance, upon its being so placed in all schools.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be Concluded.)

The presence of our fellow-men should not rob us of self-respect, should not restrain us—restrain the will from energy, the intellect from bold and freest thought, the conscience from prescribing highest duties. We must be palsied by no fear to offend, no desire to please, no dependence upon the judgment of others. The consciousness of self-subsistence, and disinterested conformity to high principle, must communicate an open unreserve to our manners. We should never distrust the power of a great truth fairly uttered. To act on others there must be decision of intellect as well as of affection—a resolute energy of the whole man.—*Channing*.

Sweetness and Light.

Christianity has never lost the instinct of universal dominion.—*Bible Society Report.*

Broad ideas are hated by narrow ideas; that is, in fact, the struggle of progress.—*Victor Hugo.*

MATTHEW ARNOLD, the most urbane of critics, in one of his essays in which he was endeavouring to infuse "sweetness and light" into his slow-moving and commercially-minded countrymen, criticized the aggressive manner in literature and journalism. He called it the manner which "aims rather at an effect upon the blood and senses than upon the spirit and intellect, and loves hard-hitting rather than persuading." Arnold himself, be it remembered, could hit very hard, but he generally wore the velvet glove over the steel gauntlet, although it was sometimes difficult to persuade his opponents that he was a Bayard rather than a bonny boxer.

The apostle of "sweetness and light" could be the reverse of sugary. He never tired of the pleasant pastime of bishop-baiting, and he made iconoclasm almost one of the fine arts. How Arnold used to banter the then Bishop of Gloucester for his publicly expressed desire to do something "for the honour of Almighty God." How he fluttered the doves of Orthodoxy by lightly comparing the most awful Trinity of the Christian Religion to "three Lord Shaftesburys." His smiling apology that he had no wish to "cause pain to so distinguished a philanthropist" was as delightful as the original profane jest. This light-hearted banter was, however, "pretty Fanny's way." Like the curse directed against the famous jackdaw of Rheims, nobody was a penny the worse for it. Religious animosity, on the other hand, has always been responsible for much that was really brutal in speech and in action. Roman Catholics burned Protestants, and Protestants killed Catholics. Both Papists and Protestants tortured and murdered Freethinkers. Even the austere and otherwise high-minded John Milton left the green slopes of Parnassus, and descended to the mud and filth of Billingsgate when he attacked Priestcraft. The genial Sydney Smith could no more speak civilly of Methodists than Mr. Hilaire Belloc, or the editor of the *Morning Post*, could write decently of Jewish people. William Cobbett was more than usually brutal in his treatment of Quakers. That all Freethinkers must be either fools or rogues is a pleasant postulate of Christian Evidence lecturers. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has denounced Materialists with unsavoury rhetoric, a form of speech he disdained before he embraced the evangel of Spiritualism.

Old Doctor Samuel Johnson was not a bad-hearted man, but Oliver Goldsmith was right when he said: "There is no arguing with Sam, for when his pistol misses fire he knocks you down with the butt-end." Johnson was at his worst concerning sceptics. He calls Bolingbroke "a scoundrel and a coward." Yet the Doctor never read the author he so savagely pilloried. "I have never read Bolingbroke's impiety," he remarks with the ingenuousness of a spring curate. To Johnson, Freethinkers are vermin, which his rhetoric would fain exterminate. Hume, Gibbon, and Voltaire are all scoundrels to him. Men like Priestly and Price were not only an offence, but an abomination. Boswell says that when Dr. Price came into a company where Johnson was, the latter instantly left the room. Rousseau, one of the pioneers of Revolution, was to Johnson but "one of the worst of men, a rascal who ought to be hunted out of society."

Two generations later things were just as bad. Shelley's known Atheism incurred the hatred of Christians, and no enmity is more relentless or more

venomous. The abuse which was supposed to have killed Keats was the pink of courtesy compared with the assault and battery made upon Shelley by the enlightened press of a Christian country. Here, for example, was what the so-called *Gentleman's Magazine* had to say when the news of Shelley's untimely death reached England: "Percy Byshe Shelley is a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying speech than a lauding elegy; for the muse of the rope rather than of the cypress." That was what a periodical edited by a Christian gentleman for Christians had to say of the young Freethinker who had devoted his short life of twenty-nine years to the service of Humanity. Not long before, another representative of the "religion of Love," we recall, met Shelley in the post-office at Pisa, called him "a damned Atheist," and knocked him down.

This feeling still exists, and penmen are to be found to-day who prostitute their talents in the service of reactionary Churches. Gilbert Chesterton is a noted example. He has nothing but abuse for the great "intellectuals." To him Thomas Hardy is "a sort of village Atheist," and all the leading Freethinkers of the Victorian period have had their memory befouled by his pen. This, be it remembered, is the man who challenges the dogmatism of the Agnostic; convicts science of ignorance; and pretends to find Liberty inside the barred cells of monasteries and nunneries.

The late George W. Foote, the first editor of the *Freethinker*, had more than his share of Christian charity. His waste-paper basket was seldom without an insulting letter or postcard sent to him by orthodox folk. "I have been accused of all the crimes in the calendar, except murder," he once remarked. "That solitary exception is due to the difficulty of finding a corpse." Charles Bradlaugh was subjected to similar treatment, and he was excluded from the House of Commons for thirteen years simply on account of his known Freethought opinions. Annie Besant, who gave fifteen years of her life to Freethought, had lime thrown at her, a stick broken over her, and the vilest epithets hurled at her. A refined and cultured lady, she had a Niagara of insult, and a Mississippi of falsehood directed towards her simply because she proclaimed herself an Atheist.

It was just the same across the Atlantic. In the United States prejudice barred Robert Ingersoll from important political positions. A friend, seeing a set of Voltaire's works in the Colonel's library, asked him how much it cost. With a twinkle in his eye, Ingersoll retorted: "That row of books cost me the Governorship of Illinois." It was no idle and vainglorious boast. A man of his immense ability and consummate gifts might easily have attained the proud position of President of the Great Republic of the West. Fortunately for us, Ingersoll esteemed duty before dollars, and truth before preferment.

The youngest soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation can have little conception of the intense hatred and antagonism which the pioneer Freethinkers roused in the Christian camp. To-day, if there be not a greater tolerance, there is, at least, less bitterness, due as much to increasing religious indifference as to more civilized manners. Present-day Christian apologists, who never tire of boasting of the tolerance of their most intolerant creed, need to be reminded of these things.

MIMNERMUS.

If Christendom should lose everything that is now in the melting-pot, human life would still remain amiable and quite adequately human. I draw this comforting assurance from the pages of Dickens.—*Prof. George Santayana.*

Our Modern Wizards.

GRAFT, CREDULITY, AND SHEER LUNACY.

POPULAR thought, no doubt, is more "free" to-day than when Paine wrote *The Age of Reason* and Carlyle was convicted for publishing it; or when Foote was sent to gaol for publishing Yahveh's portrait (see Exodus xxxiii. 23). But it is doubtful whether there is much more sanity of thought, even among the supposedly "educated" classes.

It is true that the great majority of people go to no place of worship. But this is rather because they do not think at all. The average man or woman who prefers the pictures and the pub. to piety and prayer, would doubtless plump solidly for "gawd" if it came to a referendum on the question. Not that they know anything about "gawd," or ever use his name save by way of an oath. As for those who make up the congregations in the various churches and chapels, there is probably not one in a hundred of them who knows anything of the religion he professes.

For example, I have often asked members of the Church of England what is their opinion of the Thirty-nine Articles? Most had never heard of them, none had ever read them! A few clergy were embarrassed and gave evasive answers. It was still worse with the Catholic laity and the Nonconformists concerning their "fundamentals." The first simply did not know, and referred me to the priests. The priests would not discuss the matter with a "heretic," and an "infidel" at that. The second were as vague as the word nonconformity itself. But the things they recite and sing, and the majority of the sermons they hear, in their places of worship, all go to the obfuscation of reason. This is why there is so much confusion of thought in all secular affairs. The popular religion is thoroughly mindless and utterly at variance with common sense. Yet when the Freethinker gets up and tells these people that they are as much under the spell of the "wizard" as any African savages, and that their religion is a disgrace to their civilization, they are prepared to do him as much injury as the police will allow.

The persecuting proclivities of religion are just as much alive as ever. Apart from the "Monkeyville" trial and occasional heresy hunts, the Freethought propagandist always runs considerable risk unless he is in an independent position. It is true that he is not disposed of in the spectacular manner of a few centuries ago; he is not often gaoled, at any rate, in England; but if he has a job to lose he has to be careful.

This attitude is quite understandable on the part of the priests and the clergy—our modern wizards. The Freethinker is attacking their means of livelihood. It does not matter whether they believe the dogmas to which they theoretically subscribe, or whether they practise "mental reservation." It is not very difficult to believe in anything that provides a livelihood. The churches represent big vested interests. That is the real issue. The Freethought propagandist is up against this in his campaign on behalf of sanity and honesty of thought. Hence the venom of the wizards, from the archbishops and bishops (who certainly know better) to the ignorant buffoons of the Billy Sunday variety.

Gibbon said of the augurs of ancient Rome that it was difficult to understand how one of them could meet another without smiling. It is just as difficult to understand the same thing of our modern "augurs."

The big noise in Tibet is the Dalai Lama. He is more so even than that other holy hullabaloo, the

Pope of Rome. The Dalai Lama possesses both temporal and spiritual power. He can make a serf into a prince, or reduce a prince to a serf; he can have either, or both, executed forthwith. He can translate anyone to the Tusita Heaven of Boundless Delight, or thrust him down into the hells where he is hot and cold by turns, with no punkahs or ice in the one and no fires or fur overcoats in the other. The Pope, likewise, can give one a through pass to Paradise, or relegate him to the Bottomless Pit—for particulars see the works of J. Milton and Dante Alighieri.

All the lamas, from the Dalai Lama downwards, can work miracles, cast out devils, impose curses, control the weather and the crops, and generally "play up all round" with the natural order of things. So can the Roman Catholic priests, so can the Anglican and Nonconformist parsons—though the latter seldom do more than pray for rain, for fine weather and good crops, or against sickness, calamity and disease, in the hope that something may come of it. So do the Hindu brahmins, and so do the wizards of Central Africa.

Yet the "intelligent" people in this enlightened land will listen with solemn faces to the one, whilst they would guffaw with unrestrained merriment at the other. I have seen them. I have been present at the pseudo-cannibalistic performance where Christian priests pretend to conjure bread and water into flesh and blood, and not noticed a smile. I have observed the unconcealed amusement of Christian spectators when they have witnessed the Buddhist "mass," and the gyrations of what was supposed to be a very solemn religious dance.

What is the difference between the savage "witch doctor," dressed up in rags and bones, feathers and paint, gesticulating before his wooden fetish, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, in full canonicals, celebrating Holy Communion within the altar rails of his cathedral? None whatever. Neither knows any more of the things he pretends to know than the other. Both are equally ignorant of these matters. They both belong to the same trade; the difference between them is only one of degree, not of kind.

The lama of Tibet, reciting his endless "On Mani Padme Hum," or dancing in the guise of a devil; Father Athanasius Verisopht genuflecting in St. Stupidity's Church, Bayswater; the Rev. Boanerges Leatherlungs hawling in Little Tophet Chapel, Brixton; Pundit Hurree Hoosh, smeared with red paint at the Holi Festival; Ismael Mohammed flourishing a sword or a blazing torch during Muhurram; Pimba Pomba, leaping and howling before the image of Rimbo Rambo; all these are playing the same old game of holy humbug in different ways.

In addition to this, the regular, time-honoured and established tomfoolery, there are the scores of freak cults, from Theosophy down to the latest American product, the "Eurekists." Christian "Science," Spiritualism, Neo-Buddhism, Bahaism—to enumerate them would take a whole column, or more, of the *Freethinker*.

Then there is the cult of "mascots," black cats, "fums up," and the rest. Recently I saw an advertisement in one of the monthly magazines of an ugly little object like an African fetish-image. Its purpose was to avert misfortune and to bring success. And there were given extracts from testimonials from business men (!) to its efficacy. Its price was half-a-crown, and it must have sold, otherwise it could not have carried an expensive advertisement.

In this welter of graft, credulity, and sheer lunacy, how is the voice of reason to make itself heard? Not by serious articles and lectures. The baffle-headed imbeciles will not read the one or listen to the other.

The Freethought and Rationalist bodies have been doing this for years, and their success has become less marked as they grew more "respectable." The most effective weapon is ridicule. But this is not decorous, says the old rationalist sober-sides. Yet the only people who will give him a hearing or read his scholarly, well-informed articles are those who already think that way. We must be courteous, and respect the views of those whom we know to be either intellectually dishonest or incapable, and set them an example in broadmindedness and toleration, we are told. This, although we know that nothing of the sort will appeal to them, or touch the finer feelings which they do not possess.

The honest, religious, addle-pates, no less than the grafters and fakirs who make a living out of them, claim the right to say just what they choose, not only about the "infidel," but also about other religions, and to treat them with ridicule and contempt. They do not hesitate to lie most damnably about both. They care not a jot about the feelings of either, and they consider it as an offence if their insolence is resented. Give them a dose of their own medicine, plenty of doses—bar the lying!

It is useless to try and reason with the Catholic about the imposture of transubstantiation. But call him a cannibal, and it "gets there"; it may even make him think. If a Nonconformist talks about "washing in the blood of the Lamb," ask him if he does not think that would be rather a messy kind of a bath to take? If an Anglican refers to the Atonement, ask him what the god was thinking about to let the snake into the garden, and whether the devil didn't get the better of him by that little stratagem?

In any case, it is time we brought our campaign down to the level of popular intelligence, but the question is: Who is to do it? It is a dangerous game to poke fun at old Yahveh, to throw cock-shies at the Trinity, to make an Aunt Sally of the Virgin Mary, to tell a Wesleyan that his god is as big a fool as himself, to say to a Baptist that it is a pity he didn't drown himself when he was about it. Such a Freethought advocate might take the risk of occasional violence, and probably give as good as he gets. But the religionists will follow him home, get to know all about him, and then set to work with the weapons of slander and calumny; and, unless the Freethinker is economically impregnable, they will ruin him. I have known it happen. I have "had some" myself.

E. J. LAMEL.

Acid Drops.

The Roman Catholic Church is out to fight Spiritualism, not because it is false, but because it isn't. It explains that the communications are with the wrong kind of ghosts, demons and not angels. A properly conducted angel would never dream of contradicting the Roman Church, and the ghosts that wander round Spiritual meeting-places do so. The English Church is more accommodating. Many of its preachers see no harm in Spiritualistic investigations so long as they are conducted in a proper reverent spirit. That is, so long as they do not discover anything which is against Christianity. And, very obligingly, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's ghosts are quite Christian in tone and temper and information. It is quite interesting in its way. The Roman Church will have no competitors in the ghost business, the English Churches do not mind so much, so long as there is co-operation. But neither will tolerate competition.

But the Roman Church's decision that the ghosts that hover about Doyle, Lodge, and Company are demons is

quite in the line of Christian teaching and tradition. Readers who turn to the New Testament will find St. Paul explaining that the Pagan Gods are real enough—it never dawned upon this "great" man with his very childish capacity for reasoning, to deny their reality—he explains that they are demons. That remained the Christian explanation for many centuries. It was not, indeed, until towards the end of the seventeenth century that Christians denied the actual existence of the Pagan Gods. And that is really to their credit. A genuine believer in the supernatural will not lightly deny its existence with other people. It is when one's professed belief is more or less a sham that one looks upon the belief of other people with suspicion.

"Man's Search for God," written for the *Daily Express*, has been followed by another article on "God's Search for Us." It looks like a game of hide and seek, and it seems as though the prizes are very small on either side. We can understand man's failure to find God, but what on earth is the matter with God, if there is one, that he cannot find man. Martin Luther once spoke of "poor half-witted God," and a great many of his friends present him as something of an imbecile. If a Freethinker said as much it would be declared blasphemy.

The British tendency is supposed to be that of making things out to be worse than they really are. A Methodist writer seeks to find in this tendency some consolation for the fact, admitted frankly nowadays, that the churches are smitten with dry-rot. It is an accepted notion to-day, he says, that things are going very badly with religion. But, he continues, one has only to read history to see that, judged by contemporary opinion, religion always has been in a bad way. Even in ages when religion seemed highly prosperous there were these lachrymose recitals of decline in religion. The writer thinks that the present-day lamentations may be explained by the above-mentioned British tendency. If people would meditate on that, and correct their outlook accordingly, he believes they would gain a truer perspective. We are afraid, however, that good Christians will derive little consolation from this suggestion that the tales about the decline of religion are exaggerated, and may be attributed to national pessimism. The facts are too plain. There is a shortage of candidates for ordination, and of Sunday-school scholars. The churches record serious shortage of members, and what is still sadder, an unhappy shrinkage in collection receipts. People are to a lesser degree dominated by priest and parson; and the Sabbath is being treated as another Saturday. A large proportion of the younger generation are indifferent to religion and never enter a place of worship. These are stubborn facts for Christian leaders to meditate on. And they cannot be disposed of by the simple plan of asserting things are less black than they seem. The brutal truth is, the Cross of Christ is worn-eaten through and through, and even the nice new coat of modern paint cannot prevent it from rotting away.

According to the *Daily News* the collapse of the Geneva meeting of the League of Nations is entirely due to the intriguing of the Vatican. The Vatican wished to have representatives on the League Council, and as this was defeated it made up its mind to try a wrecking policy. The *Daily News* may be right, but we remember pointing out at the time of the formation of the League that it held out the minimum of hope in the fact that its constituents were made up of the old gang of politicians. As these were unable to keep Europe out of war, and as there seems little in the space that should be occupied by brains but ideas of alliances for the purpose of making war, we suggested that the League should be formed of prominent men of all countries who stood aloof from all political parties, and that every nation should be represented, whether it happened to be "first-class" or otherwise. Such a body making known its views on international questions as they arose would constitute a body of opinion that no government

could afford to ignore, and which would command respect because of its impartiality.

At present all we have is the same old groups at work, each one striving to snatch an advantage over the other. The very division of first-class and second-class powers is a classification that ought to be abolished. For the division is based mainly upon fighting power—the one thing that should count lowest in the consideration of a genuinely judicial tribunal. If we are to take either numbers, or fighting strength, or wealth, as entitling a nation to be considered a first-class power, then we should give up all pretence of considering the League as in any genuine sense a judicial tribunal. For none of these things are considered by a genuinely judicial body. Party considerations, international advantages, and the like should have no part in the judgments of men who aim at commanding the respect of the world. And it is only a tribunal that can create that respect which can hope to avert war in the future.

Not satisfied with making America ridiculous over the question of evolution, there is now being promoted a Sunday Bill for the District of Columbia, and ultimately for the whole of the States, which will revive the good old days of the Puritan Fathers. There are to be no amusements of any kind, no trading of any kind, no kind of work, save that associated with the carrying on of churches, no gardening; in fact, no nothing, no-how, nowhere. And the penalty for infraction of the law is to run up to five hundred dollars fine with six months' imprisonment. But when one comes to think of six months in gaol it might be a welcome holiday from the company of one's Christian neighbours.

There is much confusion of thought concerning the Hereafter, thinks the Rev. Charles Herbert. "The amount of speculation which takes place over the matter is ingenious and just as unsatisfactory." He might well have added—"and useless." He contends that a good deal of clear light can be gained without any speculation at all. We agree. Once we understand how the notion of a Heaven came to arise, speculation as to the probability of such a place is so much waste of mental energy and time which more profitably could be employed in solving the very real problems of this world.

Mr. Herbert, as befits a gentleman who keeps the wolf from his door by conjuring pennies out of the pockets of the credulous, refuses point-blank to discuss the question of whether such a place as Heaven exists. He *knows* it does. "The existence of the Other Life can be taken for granted," he informs us. Hence, all that then remains is to speculate on what kind of life exists there. As our personal identity persists throughout the bodily changes from infancy to old age, he believes it also persists after the bodily change called death. But, mark you, it is only the *real* self that passes over; the self we reveal when the eye of our fellows is not on us. And this real self, "by a process of elective affinity" (!) will be drawn to our own things, our own folk, our own kind.

That is cheering news for Freethinkers. In the hereafter they will be certain of congenial company, the company of some of the finest characters that ever breathed. And they will be spared, we presume, the society of various pious criminals and self-righteous but mean-minded Puritans. The next question therefore is, what kind of world is it to which these real selves of ours are hastening? It is a *thinking* world, Mr. Herbert declares. And we know that because this world here came out of it; there is a plan behind its very nature, and a method in its development. We presume he refers to the pretty plan, "Nature red in tooth and claw." An excellent plan that; to the highest degree a "thinking" plan. And as it came out of Heaven, we infer that it is probably in operation there also. So it looks

as if the faithful's cheering picture of a place of rest for the toil-worn won't materialize later. According to what Mr. Herbert says, Heaven is not at all likely to be a great improvement on this world. For he thinks that we shall use our experience gained here. We shall know "our own folk" and we shall use our earthly experience to benefit them, and they us. We shall use it, too, to benefit the undeveloped such as children and those converted on the eve of passing over. And thus there are "marvellous possibilities" for progress in Heaven, he declares.

From all this it would appear that Heaven is very much akin to earth. The same old progress with its trial and error and ignorance. The same old characters, and temptations, back-sliding, and repentance. The same old toil and experience-gaining; the same old sorrows and regrets. Altogether Paradise does not seem a place worth troubling much about. And we fear Mr. Herbert's new picture of it will not commend itself to the majority of Christians. They are looking forward to a kind of superior Riviera where the principal occupation will be harping and singing Hallelujah choruses. They are anticipating a feather bed and perpetual rest, and Mr. Herbert offers them a plank and continued toil. They are longing for cake, and they are told there is only stale bread. We suggest the reverend gentleman keeps to the old and well-beloved picture of Heaven which cheered our forefathers, if he wants to retain his customers. They will not take kindly to his new description of Heaven as another school of experience.

"Woodbine Willie" is still reading the "signs of his time." He has seemingly just discovered that a large number of people to-day believe the present social system to be wrong. He therefore, in order to be in the swim, rushes into print to voice a few commonplaces of Socialistic propaganda. There ought to be no beggars of any sort; the whole business of charity is rotten; there is nothing beautiful about giving to the poor—it is degrading, he declares. The whole social system is wrong if charity is necessary, because it undermines the sense of personal responsibility. Charity and State aid is a fraud, a slovenly put-off. If a man's wage is so small that he cannot pay for his children's education and set them up for life, then the man is not a free man and the wage system is a system of wage-slavery. And what can we do to make things better? "Willie" asks. The cure he suggests is this. Discourage the first evil—reckless and careless marriage and the thoughtless bringing of children into the world for which the parents cannot provide. And cut out the second evil—Charity and State aid as a substitute for a proper living wage.

These are rather queer suggestions to come from a Christian priest. In the first place, his church has all along exhorted people to be fruitful and multiply, and the masses have faithfully obeyed the injunction. But now "Willie" declares they are doing evil! His church has consistently condemned Birth Control. And recently when before Parliament there was a Bill permitting the teaching of birth control methods to working-class mothers, our cowardly M.P.'s dominated by the priest rejected the measure. So that now these mothers cannot obtain knowledge that would enable them to limit their families as Mr. Studdert Kennedy declares they ought to limit them. In the second place, Charity is a thing which Christian leaders point to as pre-eminently a Christian institution. It is alleged to be one of the things which have justified the Church's existence. "Willie" declares it is an evil, degrading and bad. Again, State aid is but an extension of the Christian teaching of Charity. It is based on the notion that if people cannot provide for themselves or their children, they should be aided by taxes levied upon the classes better off. State aid would appear to be a thoroughly Christian method for bolstering up a defective social system. It is a method that seems much favoured by Christian labour-leaders who do seem to realize that, according to Mr. Kennedy, it is a Christian

evil. What puzzles us is how "Woodbine Willie" can be willing to accept a salary from the Church while condemning two of its fundamental teachings—namely, indiscriminate child-bearing and charity—and the results of those teachings.

Here is another gem of "Woodbine Willie's," who has evidently been reading things he does not understand. He says of the feeding of the five thousand with five loaves and two fishes:—

To claim to know a thing to be impossible is to claim that we know the ultimate resources of the universe, and that is not an intellectually respectable thing to do. The intrusion into a law-governed world by a unique personality like that of Jesus Christ might make it perfectly conceivable that laws working in an ordinary way might produce perfectly different results because of the introduction of an entirely different personal factor..... I suspend the law of gravity when I lift a watering-can to water the garden.

All this leaves one with the wonder of what is the limitations of ignorance in the pulpit? (1) The universe is not governed by law, because "law" is not something outside things, but is merely descriptive of the way in which things occur. (2) You do not suspend the law of gravity when you lift a watering-can. Without gravity there would be no "lift" at all. The strength required to lift a can is proof of what is known as gravity. (3) You cannot suspend a natural law. If you could it would not be a law. (4) The miracle of the loaves and fishes is not denied because we claim to know the possibilities of nature, but because to feed five thousand people on two loaves and five fishes, and then have five baskets full of food left, is downright nonsense. It will be observed we are not arguing with Mr. Studdert Kennedy, but simply explaining things that any well educated schoolboy ought to know. But is there any place other than the Christian pulpit where sheer ignorance would command the attention that it does there?

In the *Morning Post*, Mr. E. B. Osborn, writing on "The Preacher's Art," brings stale fish to market in the following:—

In these latter days there is a tendency for the pulpit to become a "coward's castle," for preachers to refrain from touching on burning controversies of the day for fear of offending this or that group of influential persons—to take an hypothetical example, Mr. Jerry Builder and his friends on the one hand, and the Bricklayers' Union on the other.

He might have been similarly as eloquent on the petty tyranny of local religious bodies over tradesmen who might cultivate a little more backbone in dealing with the professional cadgers.

When a parson writes or speaks on the Religion of the Future one knows beforehand what he will say. He will declare that religion is an "indestructible instinct," and that in moments of trouble men will "instinctively turn to it." Therefore religion cannot be destroyed, and as Christianity is the best form of religion known to the world, it is Christianity that will be the religion of the future. All this has been said thousands of times, and each one that says it anew does so with the air of a scientific discoverer propounding to an astonished audience something quite new, original, and assent-commanding.

This is the message and the attitude of the Rev. C. B. Johnson, as shown in an article in the *Northern Daily Telegraph*. And, quite naturally, Mr. Johnson seems blind to the considerations that all over the civilized world men do gradually outgrow religion, that there are less believers in religion to-day than at any previous time in the world's history, that Christianity is only professed by but a minority of the world's inhabitants, and that the followers of other religions are quite certain that their beliefs will ultimately conquer Christianity.

And they have just as much ground to go upon as has Mr. Johnson. But what we should like Mr. Johnson to explain is how men manage to outgrow a universal instinct, why there is so much anxiety lest an indestructible religion should be destroyed by unbelievers, and whether Mr. Johnson has sufficient faith in the unconquerable strength of his own religion to permit his own congregation to hear all that may be said against it? Elaborate bunkum seems to be the proper summing up of Mr. Johnson's two-column article.

The Christian Evidence Society says, in a letter to the *Times*, that there would not be so much scepticism if it were not for the work of organized societies. We thank the Society for the compliment.

A speech made recently by the Bishop of Chichester reads like a comment upon what we have been saying in these columns in dealing with Lord Oxford's articles on "Christianity and the World." The Bishop said:—

A great measure of literal blood-guiltiness is on the Church and the nation for the slave traffic and the multitudes who were killed through it; for the wars of conquest and greed in India and China; for the murdered babies of India and China; for the exploitation of natives, the theft of their land and the sweating of their labour.

Every word of that is true. The surprising thing is that these clerics never ask themselves the simple question as to what value Christianity has when it permits all this to go on, and only discovers it is anti-Christian when circumstances force the Churches to alter their tone and their teaching. If Christians were dealing with another religion they would point out that it gave ground for the assumption that the moral value of that religion was nil. But somehow the worse Christians behave the louder they profess their conviction of the supreme value of Christianity.

The mind of the average parson makes a good study in psychology. It moves on along such crooked lines, and comes to such weird conclusions, that it cannot but serve to throw light upon normal mentality, much as the study of disease has helped us to understand some of the conditions of health. Here, for example, is the Rev. A. L. J. Shields, who writes in the *Manchester Evening News*, that the "old time Atheism" (whatever that may happen to be) is dead because not once in a hundred instances do the questions put to him refer to anything but political or economic difficulties. An ordinary man might draw from this that the ninety-nine per cent. were not interested in religion. Mr. Shields thinks they are because they never talk about it. Mr. Shields also says that "Materialism with its philosophy had a past, and a bad past." That is the way to make the ignorant attendants of church or chapel shiver. Materialism has a bad past. Don't say what it is, simply hint a something too bad for words. And one wonders whether the past of anything could possibly be worse than that of the Christian religion? Finally, Mr. Shields does not believe that working men are Materialists because he knows how truly moral ideals inspire them. Once more the tricky dishonesty of the pulpit. Certain people cannot be Materialists because they believe in morality. Really if there is another place where slander and general blackguardism is more at home than it is in the pulpit, we should be grateful for the information. No wonder that intellectual men and women look down upon the clergy with contempt.

If you are wrong, says the editor of the *Scout*, "don't try to shelter yourself behind a lie. It may shield you for a time, but in the end you will be found out. Speak the truth, it pays in the end." That is a piece of advice that deserves to be hung on every pulpit in Britain. But what a queer thing it would be if the clergy resolved to act on it!

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.

"FREETHINKER" ENDOWMENT TRUST.—Leicester Secular Society: Retiring collection, etc., £2 16s. 6d.; S. A. Gimson, £2 2s.; E. H. Hassell, 10s.; J. Capenerhurst, 10s.; H. E. Anderson, 10s.; D. B. Holden, 5s.; F. J. Smith, 5s.; L. Smith, 5s.; J. Welch, 5s.; A. J. Essex, 5s.; A. Worley, 2s. 6d.; S. G. Woolley, 2s. 6d.; W. W., 2s. 6d.; G. Palmer, 2s. 6d.; J. Hardy, 2s. 6d.; J. Cooper, 2s. 6d.; T. Atkinson, 2s. 6d.; E. Wheatley, 2s. 6d.; R. Brandeth, 2s. 6d.; J. Cliff, 2s. 6d.; C. Odames, 2s. 6d.; E. Banbury, 2s.; H. Bailey, 2s.; F. Cliff, 2s. Total, £9 7s. B. E. Bloemfontein, £1 1s.; A. Davies and M. Humphries, 6s.

H. C. D. CHORLTON.—We have not read the new work on the Migration of Symbols, but gather from newspaper notices that it is a popular account only. Crawley's *Mystic Rose* is quite a good book of its kind, to be read with discrimination, of course, but is only now to be bought secondhand at a fancy price. Whether the debate will come off with Mr. Johnson will depend mainly upon Mr. Johnson himself. Mr. Cohen has agreed to do so, and the local Branch is acting in the matter.

L. THOMAS.—There are many reasons why we cannot answer all the questions asked. Sometimes they are too silly, sometimes an answer within the scope of a few sentences is impossible, sometimes the questions asked are so frequently dealt with that it appears to be useless. But we try to reply to as many as the space at our disposal will permit.

C. NEWTON.—Thanks for cutting. The writer is very premature. Mr. Cohen's reply to the Rev. H. Johnson is in the *Manchester City News* for March 20.

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (March 28) in the Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E., on the subject of "What is the Use of Christianity?" This will be his last lecture this season, and he will not be sorry for it. He has been very busy this winter, and with many extra calls on an already sufficiently full time. Provincial lecturing, with its three days from home, makes a dreadful hole in the week, and it has to be made up somehow. Bromley Public Hall faces the North London station (Bow Road), while trams and buses from all parts of London pass the door. The lecture commences at 7 o'clock. We are glad to hear that there was again a very good attendance at the second lecture of the

course, delivered by Mr. Saphin, and that the interest shown in the lecture was evidenced by the number and nature of the questions asked.

Although the audience at the Century Theatre on Sunday last was not quite up to the first meeting in point of numbers, the theatre was very comfortably filled, and the lecture was listened to with the closest attention. The same band of workers, including Messrs. Harrison, Dunbar, Mathie, Bradburn, Marlow, Cleaver, and Mr. and Mrs. Minett, undertook the work of advertising the meeting and the distribution of lecture notices, and the Society is much indebted to them for their labours. Mr. R. B. Kerr, editor of the *New Generation*, occupied the chair with distinction, and the only fault that could be found with him was the very unusual one of too great a brevity.

Unfortunately so much time was taken up with the questions that there was no room for set discussion. This was partly due to the persistence of several young men, bitten with a few economic phrases, and with room in their heads for only one idea. Perhaps, when they get older, and read more, they may discover that human nature is rather too complex to have all its problems unlocked with a single phrase. "The saving blood of Jesus" type of mind has a habit of turning up in the most peculiar quarters.

It is not yet decided where the Conference of the National Secular Society will be held this year, but we hope to be able to make the announcement in the course of a week or so. Meanwhile we draw the attention of Branches and members of the N.S.S. to the fact that all resolutions for the Conference agenda should be sent in without delay. Private members, as well as Branches, are entitled to send in resolutions, and those who have any useful suggestions to make should avail themselves of the opportunity.

The Rationalist Press Association recently requested Mr. Cohen to address one of its monthly gatherings on "Freethinkers and the Blasphemy Laws." He has agreed to do so, and the meeting will be held at 5 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, on the evening of Tuesday, April 13, at 7.30. The meeting is open to the public, and the lecture will be followed by discussion.

Mr. R. H. Rosetti visits Birmingham to-day (March 28) and will lecture in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, at 7, on "Christianity and Medical Science." As Mr. Rosetti usually has something to say that is worth listening to, we advise Birmingham Freethinkers to do their best to bring a Christian friend along.

The West Ham Branch is holding another of its popular social evenings at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, on Saturday, March 27. The proceedings commence at 7 o'clock, and all Freethinkers are welcome. There will be the usual musical and dance programme.

We are asked to announce that Mr. F. Hornibrook will lecture to-day (March 28) at 101 Tottenham Court Road, on "Cleanliness versus Godliness." The lecture commences at 7.30, and will be accompanied with illustrative native dances, physical exercises, and lantern illustrations. Admission is free.

Evidence, if it be very plain, may be accepted by an educated person, but the convert will be quickly brought back by his unconscious self to his original conceptions. See him again after the lapse of a few days and he will put forward afresh his old arguments in exactly the same terms. He is in reality under the influence of anterior ideas that have become sentiments, and it is such ideas alone that influence the more recon-dite motives of our acts and utterances.—*Gustave Le Bon, "The Crowd."*

Religion and the Unfit.

THE Rev. Dr. Barnes, the Lord Bishop of Birmingham, recently delivered an address before the "Eugenics Education Society," and in the course of his remarks said, "We must not create an environment in which the feeble-minded, the criminal, and the insane can multiply rapidly. Though such persons may have some descendants of social value, it is statistically demonstrable that the average of their descendants will be below the normal." With such a statement most Freethinkers would cordially agree. As a Doctor of Science, Bishop Barnes was quite entitled to make such a statement. But when he went on to say, "The feeble-minded are disastrously prolific and their fecundity is a grave concern to those who desire religious progress," he was speaking as a theologian, not as a man of science; especially when he added, "God has made man to a small, yet an increasing, degree master of his own fate." Man is always a creature of his heredity and environment, and if God has had anything to do with it, he may be truly said to have been responsible for some very grievous blunders.

Thousands of children are born every year in this country who are either physically or mentally defective, and hundreds of such children, who have been born of normal parents, end their days in a lunatic asylum. Dr. Barnes talks as though he knows exactly what his God's intentions are, but if God intended that every man should be, even in a small measure, master of his own fate, nature certainly has frequently upset his plans. In the course of my career, I have had a good deal of experience not only of mentally defective children, but of their parents also. Some of the parents appeared quite normal as far as one could judge without knowing their whole history; but in many cases the children inherit ancestral qualities that have lain dormant for generations. But how anyone but a theologian could say that mentally defective children "are masters, even in a small measure, of their own fate," would puzzle anyone who followed their careers with any degree of accuracy and persistency. Mentally defective children are often very vicious and destructive in their habits. I have known boys who have taken broken glass tied up in a handkerchief to school with them, and while a younger or smaller boy has not been looking, have smitten the latter on the head with this weapon. Many of these children too, are extremely artful. I have known them to get younger boys to break windows of small shops so that they might steal some of the articles exposed for sale. But most of these "defective" children are religious enough; in other words, they believe most implicitly what they are told, and join most lustily in the singing of hymns or the saying of prayers.

The feeble-minded are unquestionably "disastrously prolific"; but Dr. Barnes does not suggest any practical method by which they might gradually be eliminated in a civilized community; for his method was merely a return "to the simple life" on the part of the parents. "A more natural way of living would," he said, "create mental no less than physical health, and in particular, would be of direct religious value." But like old Polonius, who said that Hamlet was constantly harping on his daughter, Dr. Barnes, true to his profession, though talking upon Eugenics, must every now and then bring in the blessed subject of religion. And his Religion, be it remarked, with a big R—which he calls the Christian Religion. And it must be further remembered that Dr. Barnes having thrown over the Bible myth of the alleged Fall of Man and asserted his profound belief in the

doctrine of evolution, as well as his *disbelief* in some of the fundamental teachings of the Christian Faith, is considered by many simple-minded members of the Church to have very little religion left of the kind that his more orthodox brethren regard as of any real value. Nevertheless, Dr. Barnes is anxious that the world should know that in his judgment "man is a religious animal." That may be true enough in some of the early stages of his existence. Man, it is true, in his savage state made all the Gods; he manufactured them to account for the wonderfully varied phenomena which he beheld day by day; but in proportion as he became a civilized creature, he banished his gods one after another, and explained phenomena in the terms of natural forces. The learned Bishop, however, must have a tilt at what he calls "the cranky types of religion now common among certain more prosperous sections of society," which, he says, were evidence of "germ weakening." Whether that is so or not, the Freethinker regards all sections of the Christian Faith as "cranky types," and he is supported in that contention by the Christians themselves—for each of them regards the faith of those who do not agree with them as being irrational and absurd.

Mr. Cohen, in his smart and caustic remarks in "Acid Drops" in the *Freethinker* of February 28, dealt most effectively with Dr. Barnes's statement that "God, by allowing fit and unfit to arise and by using environment to destroy the unfit, has produced in humanity spiritual understanding." But the learned Bishop did not mention that his God, if he had anything to do with it at all, produced fit and unfit among the so-called "lower animals," and that among them were "throw-backs," or reversions to ancestral types, and that these also were eliminated by environment, and the Bishop further omitted to say whether these creatures developed "spiritual understanding" of any sort by the process.

Although environment kills off a vast number of degenerates among human beings, which is the approved method of the kind and merciful God of the Bishop of Birmingham, Dr. Barnes still has to admit that the feeble-minded are "disastrously prolific," and instead of developing even a glimmer of "spiritual understanding," "their fecundity is a grave concern to those who desire religious progress." God's methods, therefore, though wicked and cruel in the extreme, are not even efficacious.

Moreover Bishop Barnes has no practical method for dealing with the feeble-minded and preventing them when they reach manhood or womanhood from procreating their species. Other people have. It happened that a few days after Dr. Barnes delivered his speech on Eugenics, Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane, the eminent surgeon, advocated the sterilization of the unfit, which he thinks is a perfectly practical method of dealing with the problem. Frequently I have heard doctors maintain at "Birth Control meetings" that it would only involve a very simple operation. In any case, it can be truly said that the leaders in the Freethought movement for over sixty years have always been in favour of doing something to improve the breeding of the human race; not to leave it to the present haphazard method—that allows the feeble-minded, the consumptive, the scrofulous, the epileptic, the criminal, and the diseased of all sorts, to propagate their species without regard to the happiness and the well-being of the race. For ages the Christian Church, through its chosen representatives, has said nothing on these important questions, and now at last when Dr. Barnes has spoken, he has been more concerned with getting the elimination of the unfit for the purpose of promoting what he calls

"religious progress" than for the far nobler purpose of getting a more healthy, also sane, and useful, and higher types of human beings than have ever appeared on the face of the earth before. As the great poet, Shelley, sang:—

How sweet a scene will earth become
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling place,
Symphonious with the planetary spheres—
When man, with changeless nature coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work!

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Story of Evolution.

V.

(Continued from page 150.)

ADVANCED SAVAGES.

It is somewhat difficult to decide which of the savage races are the more advanced towards civilization, but, among those who are settled on the land and largely dependent upon agriculture, the Aino race must rank fairly high. This people are found in the most northern of the four large islands of Japan, called Yezo, or Jesso. It is covered with forest matted together with lianas, and with an undergrowth of shrub-bamboo impenetrable except to the axe, varied by swamps equally impassable, which give rise to rivers well stocked with fish. Very little was known of the interior until Isabella L. Bird explored it, and visited the Aino villages. The following particulars are culled from her *Unbeaten Tracks in Japan*, published in 1885:—

The Ainos have no history, their traditions are scarcely worthy of the name; they claim descent from a dog; their houses and persons swarm with vermin; they are sunk in the grossest ignorance; they have no letters; or any numbers above a thousand; they are clothed, when at all, in a coarse cloth made from the bark of trees or in the skins of animals; they worship the sun, moon, fire, water, and animals; they are uncivilizable, and altogether irreclaimable savages; yet they are attractive, and in some ways fascinating, and I hope I shall never forget the music of their low sweet voices, the soft light of their soft, brown eyes, and the wonderful sweetness of their smile.

They have no medicine men, or priests, no knowledge of healing, and their ideas of a future life are confined to a vague fear of ghosts of the dead. There is no religious ceremony or worship, except that they hold it *sake*, a very strong spiritous liquor, made by the Japanese, is holy and, before drinking, they spill a little before their *kamoi*, the nearest approach to a god which they possess. This god is a wand, or pole, peeled from the top, and the shavings left on it, sticking out or curling at different points. These poles are set up in the houses, on the wayside, and in the passes, and are believed to bring luck or safety. Besides the sacrifice of *sake*, a small bird is sometimes placed before the god, and left there until it putrefies.

To drink to the god is the chief act of worship, and thus drunkenness and religion are inseparably connected, as the more an Aino drinks the more devout he is, and the better pleased is his god. They also pour out a libation, or spill *sake* to the sun and moon, the bears, the sea, and, at one time, to the wolf, but the last has ceased of late years. All these things they hold to be beneficial, the sun especially being considered their best friend. The others are useful to them, and therefore they thank them by giving them an occasional libation. The bear is the strongest, fiercest, and most courageous animal known to the Ainos, they therefore admire it and hold an Annual Festival of the Bear. Some of their rude

chants are in praise of it and their highest eulogy on a man is to compare him to a bear, saying he is as strong as a bear, or he is a young bear.

The men are about middle height, broad-chested, broad-shouldered, thick-set, very strongly built, the arms and legs short, thick, and muscular, the hands and feet large. The cast of feature approaches the Eskimo type. The bodies and limbs of many were covered with fur as fine and soft as those of a cat. The skin has an olive tint, but in most cases is thin and light enough to show the changes and colour in the cheek. The average weight of the Aino masculine brain is 45.90 ounces avoirdupois, a weight said to exceed that of all the races of Asia in general. Yet they are mere children in their ways, and, though some young men were taken to Japan and taught letters and crafts, when they returned home they took up the life of the tribe.

The women seldom exceed five feet in height, but they are beautifully formed and well developed, with small hands and feet. They shave their eyebrows, blacken their teeth, and their ugliness is due to art and dirt. They are universally tattooed on the face, arms, and knuckles. This is part of their religion; it is begun at the age of five and continued until they are married.

The Ainos are certainly superior to many aborigines, as they have a domestic life, with a word for home, and another for house, and one word for husband, approaches very nearly to house-band. Infanticide is entirely unknown; on the contrary, they have a great affection for the children, who are unclothed until the age of five. The aged parents receive filial reverence, kindness, and support.

The villages of the Ainos are particularly clean, no litter is allowed to be about, nothing to be seen but water-troughs for the numerous yellow dogs, which are a feature of Aino life. Besides dogs, they have large herds of a small horse. Their time is occupied in hunting, fishing, and making "dug-outs," and building huts which are extremely thatched. The women are never idle. At one place the chief's wife was cooking, while the others were splitting the bark to make a coarse cloth. The chief was a superb but dissipated-looking savage. At another fishing place there were five men who were total abstainers, and the others kept apart from them as they feared that the gods would be angry with them for not drinking.

The traveller says that she met nothing but kindness and courtesy, and quite forgot that she was among savages. Two men ferried the boat across the river, a third wading to guide it safely. They wore no clothing, and only one was hairy. They were extremely courteous, and on leaving extended their arms and waved their hands inwards twice, afterwards stroking their beards, which is their usual salutation.

The chief has arbitrary power over every action of the people, they cannot marry without his permission, or build a house, or sell their bark-woven cloth. They grow millet, tobacco, and pumpkins, but the patches are often very much overgrown with weeds.

So much for the Ainos, a somewhat similar race are the Khonds, of Bengal, which are very completely described in *Primitive Folk*, by E. Reclus. I say similar because their habits and life are so high morally, and they are also living a savage life of hunting and cultivation. They approach the mongol rather than the negro in facial form, and they also distil a heady liquor and get royally tipsy, both men and women indulging at certain times. Reclus says:

If moral qualities really have the advantage over instruction, and over intellectual faculties, our barbarous Khonds are, in fact, highly superior to their civilized neighbours. Vivacious and sincere, they

disdain to escape a peril or gain an advantage at the price of a lie, or even a voluntary inexactitude. Before they had undergone the English conquest, these savages were distinguished by a manly pride, by a joyous independence, rendering account to neither chief nor government.

There are hosts of other races which might be instanced to show how early mankind lived and slowly progressed towards a civilized state of life, but we must be satisfied with one more only to prevent this chapter extending to excessive length. Let us cross to Central America and the islands lying in the Carribean Sea. Here we shall find the Maya race, which occupied Cuba and the Honduras. It is believed that they originally came from the north and over-ran the country then peopled by a cave-dwelling tribe called Zibaldans. They have left a number of ruined cities and monuments and some records of their religion. The language of these people was the Kirké tongue, spoken from the border of Mexico to the present state of Nicaragua, and a dialect of it is still used by the natives of Guatemala. Lewis Spence says: "The only records of the faith of the builders of the mystic ruined and deserted cities is the *Popul Vuh*—the Book of the Mat." This refers to the custom of each family sitting upon a mat, while the teaching was read or recited. The following are quotations from a translation, and it is quoted to indicate the kind of mind possessed by the people of the race, which had attained a low state of civilization many ages before the discovery of America.

The *Popul Vuh* starts very much like the Hebrew Scriptures:—

Over a universe wrapped in the gloom of a dense and primeval night passed the God Hurakin, the mighty wind. He called out "earth," and the solid land appeared. The chief gods took counsel. They were Hurakan; Circumatz, the serpent covered with green feathers; and the Mother and Father Gods. As a result of their deliberations animals were created.

Manikins were carved out of wood and made alive, but they had no reverence for the gods, so they were all drowned, and birds devoured them, after they had been put through severe troubles. And their posterity are the little monkeys, who live in the woods.

After this catastrophe, ere yet the earth was quite recovered from the wrath of the gods, there existed a man "full of pride." His name signifies "Seven times the colour of fire," or "very brilliant."

His eyes were silver, and he was composed of precious metals. He undergoes a long series of adventures and, through the second book, other hero-gods join in the tale. In the third book, Hurakan creates four perfect men, and, while they slept, four women were made, and became their wives. They were the ancestors of the Kirké race. There was then no sun, so these individuals set out to find the seven caves, and to each one was appointed a god. The god Tohil created fire. At last they arrived upon a mountain and rested, and the sun appeared. All the celestial bodies were now established. As the sun rose all the gods were turned to stone. Then was built the first Kirké city.

Since the above was written, Mr. F. A. Mitchell-Hedges and a party of explorers have returned from an expedition to British Honduras, with specimens of pottery, etc., of this race, and Mr. T. A. Joyce, of the British Museum, is going back with him to further investigate what remains of the ancient civilization. We may hope that their researches will throw more light upon the evolution of mankind by discovering other records of this early people. E. ANDERSON.

(To be Concluded.)

Spiritualism.

WHEN once some mysterious fancy has entered the brain of man, it is remarkable how prepared and apt he is to accept it without proper and complete corroboration. This is the case in all so-called spiritualistic manifestations, all of which are neither distinctive and not free from the possibility of fraud from beginning to end.

We know from the electric nature of the whole universe and all its forces, that it is impossible for anything of any nature whatever unless it be electric to affect or be affected by anything material in this world, such as photographic paper, lenses, rays of light, etc. From which it follows that we are first compelled to accept spiritualistic manifestations as entirely translated into an electric sense before their evincement could even become a possibility.

No living spiritualist can, from the standpoint he has haphazardly taken, accept this axiom, because he has allowed his imagination to usurp the place of common sense. The fascination of fancying that he is in a position to handle affairs which are above other men gives him a feeling of superiority, which we often see so amusingly exemplified in men of a religious calling, who are in no sense superior to anyone else, and, as a rule, vastly inferior in mentality.

From this it follows that all manifestations of a "spiritual" nature which belongs to the realms of visibility, must first affect photographic chemicals (in the case of spirit photographs) before we can see the positive result of reflection from any rays of light. It is therefore supposed that spiritual bodies reflect light which produces the photograph and held to be proof positive of the spirit's existence. We have seen scores of such photographs. We will, however, give credit of honesty to the devotees of this weirdly entertaining pastime for only very few of them are "in the know," as to who manipulated these fraudulent productions which are bound to be exposed eventually. The man in the street is no longer to be misled by people claiming truth in such matters of utter falsity.

Upon their own premises, the spirit therefore reflects light, but only therefore as a whole, and therefore as an *entire* spiritual body only, for before photographs of these spirit bodies are possible, they must reproduce naturally the whole of that spirit on the negative. Therefore all spirit photographs which show only part of the body, such as the head (the commonest form) are in their very assumed essence incorrect and fraudulent, because the whole of the spirit must shine, not only a part of it. Such photographs when examined by a person understanding thoroughly the processes of photography, are without a moment's hesitation, classified as fakes. Take the case of a "spirit head" superimposed on the photograph of a man. The man is always against a dark curtain background, and on this curtain the head appears surrounded with what appears to be mist or halo. This halo effect is easily produced by any schoolboy by using thin cotton wool on the negative when printing. Ghost photographs are really very easily produced. The plate is correctly exposed with, say, the subject sitting in a chair. The camera is not moved, and the subject is again photographed on the same plate, with, say, the same figure bending over the empty chair in which he was sitting previously, but this time very much under exposed. On development and printing, the second exposure shows as a ghost through which the background can be seen, bending over himself

seated in the chair. From the fact of spirit absence from millions of photographs taken for the purpose of reflecting the truth by honest men, we never see them.

I have inspected spirit photographs in which the whole spirit figure is seen, of course, in the approved indistinct manner which I have described above how to produce. It will be realized now even by the uneducated that spirit photographs should always show the entire *nude* figure of the spirit, and not the head alone. No man on earth will believe that a spiritual body can clothe itself for the purposes of spirit photography. From where can such a spirit obtain its spiritual suit of clothing, and where does this suit be returned to after the photograph has been taken? Moreover, it would appear somewhat difficult for a spirit to come from nowhere to somewhere, and then within an infinitesimal space of time find a spiritual tailor's shop to supply spiritual clothes which are photographable and yet hide the shining spiritual body. The whole conception is perfectly absurd.

I believe that it has never yet been placed before the public that such an absolute absurdity as a spiritual body of a shining nature could be present, garbed in shining spiritual clothes; the clothes being photographable, but the spirit shining underneath them not! All such men of so-called repute and understanding, to whom we should like to yield our admiration and respect, fail woefully when they unite themselves with a class of ignorant charlatans who presume upon *their* mental weakness and lead them on to believe things which a child of ten with common sense could not. I would suggest that the spirit hands associated with the spirit gloves of Sir A. Conan Doyle (hands whose fingerprints had been carefully erased from the interior) should be asked to refrain from the production of any more such gloves, and their partisans in photography.

Science is the greatest force in the world for the betterment of mankind when properly used, but to speak of the science of spiritual existence in the same breath with it is to cast doubt upon the most noble of truths.

From the spiritual photographs we have seen, the individual guardian angels of the human race will have more than they can possibly do, and are much to be sympathized with for having to look after "free and unbound" spirits, who in their earthly state, as we know, played pranks enough, but in their later freer spiritual state must take a lot of looking after. The ancient Egyptians believed that the earth was flat, and was covered with a steel sheet pierced with little holes through which the light of heaven shone, and the individual guardian angels peered through them to watch over their protégés below. This is the origin of such fables.

The word angel is the same still as the ancient Egyptian for the sign of guardianship. In the hieroglyphic alphabet the G was a K and the L, an R, transforming the word ANGEL into ANKER. We know that this is so and the Egyptian ANK was the sign of eternal life and hope, from which is directly derived our word "anchor." The form of our anchor is still that of the Egyptian cross, with the sole addition of the hook at the bottom for holding the ship safely as the guardian of their safety, life, and hope.

ELECTRON.

"A religion that is jealous of the variety of learning, discourse, opinions, and sects, as misdoubting it may shake the foundations, or that cherisheth devotion upon simplicity and ignorance, as ascribing ordinary effects to the immediate working of God, is adverse to knowledge."—Bacon.

Correspondence.

MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In a recent letter concerning Mr. Panton's "Materialism," I quoted a statement of his, after which he had placed an exclamation mark, and added, "I will grant him this, he certainly puts an exclamation mark after it." Mr. Panton evidently took this to mean that I granted him the statement, not the exclamation mark, and, in view of my having previously described as unthinkable the contention which it implied, he regards my remark as amusing. I thought it was amusing too, only not in the way Mr. Panton meant. It is a cruel blow when the joker has to explain the joke to the jokee. It is not as if I often accomplished a joke, and I feel quite deflated, sir, when one goes west in this way.

But to be serious for a moment, Mr. Panton's conceptions are both interesting and instructive, and far be it from me to make light of the ability with which he expresses them. This correspondence, however, started with a letter of his attributing, among other things, the quality of nonsense to some of Mr. Cohen's remarks. Now I have read Mr. Cohen for a long time, and I have formed the opinion that such is his organic habit of talking sense that he would find it difficult to talk nonsense. Therefore I studied with earnest attention his remark, selected for contradiction by Mr. Panton, that "The world outside of us cannot be the same world that is within," and the more I studied it the more convinced was I that the nonsense lay not in the remark but in the contradiction.

Setting aside the subtlety of "sound waves together with the lines of reaction registered in the brain," or "sound waves impinging upon the ego" (does Mr. Panton mean the ego or the drum of the ear?) or "externality revealing itself to itself," does it not seem clear that when the intellect looks at the world without and then at the world within, even if the one world only appears to be different from the other, and even if the world outside only *appears* to be outside, there still exists some difference through this very fact of appearance. Whatever position you take up in Philosophy, you have two different and distinct experiences, interpret them how you will. The question, not of identity, but of similarity, is another matter, and I return to Mr. Cohen's statement with the comment that, taking it just as it stands, it is sound sense. If Mr. Panton retorts that this is all obvious, and I have failed to appreciate that his conceptions run on a more recon-dite plane, then I can only say that a man whose mind is occupied with things abstruse should be careful lest he become so involved in his reflections that he contradicts a simple statement based on the conditions of thinking, because he has failed to see it in all its naked simplicity, and has read into it implications which it never contained.

MEDICUS.

SIR,—I am pleased to know that Mr. Panton and myself are so much in agreement on fundamentals, and I hope it will not be less when my article on "The Cycle of Energy" appears.

As to the quotation he submits to my examination, I regretfully confess that I am not at all sure of its meaning. To say the least, the wording is obscure and somewhat inverted. The "the" and the "of" in the phrase, "Mind is the reaction of the environment," gives one the idea that Mind is something engendered in the matrix of the environment—a notion which, I feel sure, Mr. Panton would repudiate as readily as myself.

If I interpret the quotation aright, its meaning appears to be: "Mind is a *reaction* to the action of the environment upon a sensitive form of matter, etc." Or if expressed in more normal sequence: "Mind is the reaction of a sensitive form of matter to the environment, to the action of which it is specifically susceptible." As far as the elements of mind are concerned, that would be a fairly correct description, but it leaves the main

problem untouched. It contains no hint how the sensitive form of matter came into being or of its relation to the environment. A mere description, however accurate, is no explanation; to explain is to trace an object, event, or agency backwards along the path of causation, though the path never quits the wood.

Again, it is true only of the *elements* of mind, nothing is said whence the power to abstract, to sift, to classify, and to elaborate these elements into human thought and knowledge.

If, however, I have misinterpreted the quotation, I can only tender my apology for the foregoing remarks.

KERIDON.

North London Branch N.S.S.

Mr. Everett gave a very interesting address on the Poor Law which evoked a great deal of discussion. We were sorry there was not a larger audience, and hope that the attendance to-night will improve. Convinced birth controllers ought to be there in full force to give Mr. Ebury plenty of opposition.—K. B. K.

Obituary.

We learn with deep regret of the death of Arthur Verity Lucas, the dearly-loved and only son of Harry and Ethel Lucas, of 37 Beechwood Mount, Burley, Leeds, at the early age of twenty-two years, on March 14. The interment took place at Lawnswood Cemetery on March 18, when a Secular Burial Service was conducted by Mr. Aubry H. Fisher. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the bereaved parents.—E. M. V.

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.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. Hornibrook, "Cleanliness *versus* Godliness."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. Leonard Ebury, "Birth Control no Remedy for Poverty."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mrs. Stan. Harding, "Should Secret Service be Abolished?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Keeping Body and Soul Together."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bromley Public Hall, Bow Road, E.): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "What is the Use of Christianity?"

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity and Medical Science." Questions and discussion invited. (Collection.)

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. E. Hale, "The Evolution of the Sacrifice." Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection.)

HULL BRANCH N.S.S. (No. 6 Room, Trades' and Labour Club): 7.30, Special Meeting to discuss Summer Propaganda and future working of the Branch. Will all members and Secularists in Hull and district please attend?

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades' Hall, Upper Fountain Street): 7.15, Mr. J. D. March, "Freethought and the Movement To-day." Questions and discussion invited.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Grand Concert, "Arcadian Orchestra" and Local Artistes. (Silver Collection.)

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