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Views and Opinions.

Evading the Truth.

Slowly moving in the rear of the Freethought world Dean Inge some months ago reminded his brother clerics that the establishment of the Copernican astronomy had cut away the foundations of some of the orthodox Christian beliefs. There could be no geographical heaven in a universe where the world was a whirling globe travelling through space at a speed that makes an express train look as dilatory as a hay waggon. Neither could we talk intelligently of Jesus ascending up to heaven when "up" and "down" were changing points in all sorts of relations to space. The Copernican astronomy wipes out the basis of such beliefs, and Dean Inge calls upon his fellow clergymen to face the truth they have evaded generation after generation, to cease "shuffling," and so relieve the strain imposed upon the intellect and conscience of the Christian world. This is very thoughtful, and the light cast upon the quality of the Christian intellect and conscience, which can go on professing a belief in incredible things until the Bishops and others give it permission to disbelieve, is illuminating. But the Christian conscience has shown itself quite able to bear quite as heavy a strain as the one involved in the beliefs selected for condemnation, and I have no doubt it will survive the burden. Even the Dean has been in no great hurry to call attention to the contradiction. It certainly needs no abnormal degree of intellectual discernment to see that the whole Christian scheme was based upon a discarded view of the world, and one would be more impressed by an appeal made in the name of intellectual honesty if it had appeared before the holding of certain beliefs had become unprofitable, if not dangerous.

* * *

Fastidious Credulity.

But why stop with the Ascension, or the geographical heaven? For example, this is Easter week, and one of the most important dates in the Christian year. Officially it commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, at a certain time and place. And we should like to know from Dean Inge in what respect this particular piece of the Christian faith is intellectually more reputable than the specific beliefs about which he advises the clergy should be honest?

I agree with him that Christian preachers cannot continue to profess belief in a geographical heaven, and the ascension of Jesus without exposing themselves to the charge of dishonesty and stupidity, although we do not think that counts for so much in a world where educated people appear to take either the dishonesty or the stupidity of the Christian clergy for granted. Still, one must remind the Dean that it is not merely a new physical world in which the modern man lives; it is also a new world intellectually—new, that is, to even the Christian, whom one expects to be at least a couple of centuries behind the rest of the world. To what world does the belief in a divinely born, miracle-working, crucified, and resurrected saviour belong? Certainly not to our world of to-day. Is the ascension a bit more ridiculous than the resurrection? Is the event celebrated at Christmas more believable than that commemorated at Easter? If we could believe that a man actually was born without the co-operation of a father, that he was truly killed, and after being dead for three days came to life again, if we could believe all this of any one person we should be quite prepared to believe that he came to life again and ascended up to heaven. Such a person might well be expected to accomplish all sorts of impossible things. And so far as believers are concerned, there ought to be consistency in even absurdity.

* * *

Why Not the Truth?

Is Dean Inge really unaware that these beliefs belong to a world that is as dead as the Ptolemaic system? Is he unaware that this story has as little to commend it as an historical narrative as the belief in "Jack the Giant-killer"? Is he unaware that the whole story of Eastertide has its origin in magic and mythology? It is hard to believe that he is not quite aware that he knows all this, and one can only assume that he is waiting till things get a little more favourable, and then he will once again tell his brother clerics to act honestly and tell the truth instead of leading the way in telling the truth about the great spring festival now. It is so easy, and so cheap to disown such things as belief in a literal hell or a geographical heaven, but the disclaimer is not very impressive when it is made in order to conserve belief, for a little longer, in things that are upon the same cultural level, and of the same intellectual value. The origin of Easter is well known, even its name is not Christian; why not tell the whole truth about it? We are not so much concerned with the conscience of Christians—always a very elastic and conveniently adaptable quantity—as we are with the intellectual life as a whole. And the effect of men who pose as leaders on questions of conduct, retaining exploded beliefs so long as they can, and when it is no longer safe to hold them, making the minimum of concession, in order to retain other beliefs quite as absurd as the ones rejected, is demoralizing all round. Will Dean Inge tell us why, if preachers are wrong in professing certain beliefs because of the establishment of the Copernican

astronomy, they are right in going through this Easter performance, which is either the record of an actual historic event or the perpetuation of a piece of a world-wide mythology?

* * *

Mythology.

If Christians really thought where their religion was concerned they would soon realize that Easter is no more than a piece of mythology. We do not even pretend to celebrate it as we should an historic event. Its celebration is determined, not by a specific date, but by the spring equinox. Even the name is not Christian—it is probably derived from the Saxon Eostre. In any case there is no doubt as to its being a form of a universal spring festival. With mankind taking its first steps in civilization the great, the important thing is the rebirth of vegetation. Spring is to man the real beginning of the year. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter represent the vital cycle. It is indeed extremely probable that the calendar itself is based upon the cycle of vegetation. At any rate all over the world primitive man created customs and practices connected with the superstitions that gathered round the resurrection of nature from the death-like sleep of winter. In the ancient world Attis, Adonis, Osiris, Dionysius all had their death and resurrection celebrated at the annual spring festival. Jesus Christ is only another variant on a very old theme. The egg, the loaf marked with the cross—a very common symbol of fertility and of the sun, with other customs, mark the prevalence of the fertility idea. Mr. C. J. Lawson, in his *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion*, points out that among the Greek peasantry it is still believed, as was the case with the ancient cult of Demeter, that the Easter festival has an important bearing upon the growth of crops. On one occasion, he says, being much struck by the emotion shown by a peasant woman on the day following the Good Friday service, she explained that she was very anxious because "if Christ does not rise to-morrow we shall have no corn this year." There is no doubt whatever as to the real character of the Easter festivities. This knowledge need not be confined to a few, it is quite open to all. And we repeat the query—If Christian preachers should drop the profession of beliefs rendered absurd by the establishment of the Copernican theory, why should they not also drop beliefs that are equally absurd in the light of present-day knowledge?

* * *

The Reign of Cant.

In the case of religious belief with a civilized people humbug calls to humbug with insistent clamour, and the absurdity of professing to believe in a piece of world-wide mythology as the record of an actual historic event is paralleled by the stereotyped nonsense talked at Easter proceedings. One does not need to read the reports of Easter sermons to know beforehand their general tenour. There will be all the usual talk of the Easter sacrifice bringing to a starving world the glad tidings of love and brotherhood, and it will be listened to with all the unreasoning attention which people give to an oft-told tale with as little relation to reality as one of Hans Andersen's fairy tales. Few who listen will reflect that the triumph of the Christian Church gave the finishing touches to the operation of forces that brought about the downfall of a whole civilization, and inaugurated the reign of an ecclesiastical system which for many centuries paralysed almost every attempt at progress. None but a priesthood with whom mis-statement and exaggeration had become a daily habit could repeat the chatter about Christianity and peace in face

of the fact that it is the Christian nations that to-day stand in the way of the world's peace, and which show themselves in face of a situation that threatens irreparable disaster to such advancement has as been achieved, to agree upon the simplest methods of securing the peace of the future. It was not a period of peace, honesty, brotherhood, and progress that is symbolized by the alleged resurrection of Jesus, but an epoch of the gravest disaster to the better elements of civilized life. And at present all that the Church succeeds in is burying what might be retained as a harmless piece of nature symbolism under a mountain of false statement and stupid superstition.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Bishop of Durham on Education.

(Concluded from page 195.)

We have now seen beyond the shadow of a doubt that his lordship of Durham makes, in a positive and dogmatic manner, the most tremendously significant admission conceivable, namely, that the Christian Church has been and is a colossal failure. Near the beginning of his discourse, it is true, he asserts that "the Cross surmounted the crown of the Cæsars, and the Roman legions marched behind it (the italics are ours). Then follows this deeply ironic statement: "Christendom grew slowly into historic form as a social order, confessedly governed by Christian principles and subject to the law of Christ." No wonder he dare not "trace the history, even in outline." We boldly challenge any Anglican dignitary, or any other minister of the Gospel, to honestly trace the history of Christianity during the first six centuries of its reign as the official religion of the Roman Empire, and then proudly exclaim, "Behold, of what infinite benefit it has been to the world." The undeniable truth is that during the whole of that period Christendom kept sinking lower and lower into moral degradation, until it reached what has been characterized as "the Pornocracy," that is, government by harlots. With signal discretion the good Bishop skips the Middle Ages altogether, but condescends to the sorrowful confession that "we cannot ignore the formidable fact that the masses of the people have never been Christian in any definite or effective sense." Surely, that is tantamount to an admission that the crucified Christ has dismally failed to fulfil his own promise to draw all men unto himself. After nineteen centuries "Christianity is but the profession of a small minority of the population." This is really the keynote of the Bishop's sermon at the Westminster Congregational Chapel. The Church has distinctly not won the world to Christ.

As he proceeds, Dr. Henson grows more and more emphatic. In a Nonconformist pulpit he makes a special appeal to Nonconformists, and in this appeal he boldly indulges in the following astounding declaration:—

What are the facts? I submit to you an incontrovertible proposition that neither the home nor the Church is any longer equal to the task assigned to it; that there are great multitudes of English children, probably the majority, who lie outside the effective handling of the churches, and that many of them, especially in the crowded industrial centres, know nothing of anything which in the propriety of language could be described as home.

A more discreditable and humiliating proposition could not possibly be submitted to any congregation, Anglican or Nonconformist, and yet it is the truth.

proposition that has ever been issued from a Christian pulpit. All along the line, from the beginning until now, the Church has been morally and socially impotent, and is becoming more and more so every year. More than that, not only has it been impotent for good, it has also been potent for evil. Under its ægis not only has "progress halted on palsied feet," as Tennyson puts it, but progress has been repeatedly opposed tooth and nail. Why, the English Bishops were not in favour of the emancipation of the slaves as advocated by Wilberforce. Again and again the House of Lords turned down his proposals, and Wilberforce himself vigorously opposed all attempts to emancipate the working people in this country. Indeed, Bishop Henson pertinently asks, "Can Christ's religion make good in the civilized world of the twentieth century the exclusive claim which it advanced so boldly in the civilized world of the first?" and he has already answered that question in the negative. He frankly admits that "the Church, acknowledging defeat, draws apart from modern society into the ever-shrinking area of its own membership," and cannot possibly touch the teeming crowds outside.

Thus the Church is seen to be in a most parlous condition, and Christianity itself seems doomed. The Bishop says:—

You will pardon me if I seize the opportunity of fastening the attention of Nonconformists on the grave situation into which English education is steadily moving. I submit that the education of the English people is gradually, half-unconsciously, but even more quickly, becoming altogether de-Christianized; that by consequence the education provided in the State schools of England is becoming dangerously lop-sided; intellectually, ever richer and more stimulating; morally, ever poorer and feebler.

The Bishop entertains an exceedingly low opinion of the educational value of Sunday schools. Being voluntary institutions they cannot make regular attendance compulsory, nor can they secure the services of many trained teachers. Consequently they "are not adequate to the purpose of taking over from the State schools the training of character." We are informed by the President of Columbia University that in the United States of America the Protestant Sunday schools are, "as factors in religious education, almost negligible." What then? Can anything be done to prevent the Christian religion from completely dying out in the land? The Church has done its best without achieving any marked success. Sunday schools are slowly becoming antiquated, both teachers and scholars being increasingly difficult to find. All this the Bishop of Durham recognizes as verily true. In desperation he falls back upon an extremely ancient idea, namely, that of compulsion, foreshadowed in the saying already quoted: "The Cross surmounted the crown of the Cæsars, and the Roman legions marched behind it." That is the inner meaning or core of Christianity in all its nakedness. Let the State by legislation make it compulsory upon teachers in all its schools to cram religion down the throats of little children long before they are capable of thinking and choosing for themselves. Such is the Christian principle of exclusiveness. "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled." Boniface compelled people to accept Christian baptism at the point of the sword. The Rev. Frank L. Jennings has just published a book well worth reading, entitled *In London's Shadows*, from which we learn that the author spent six weeks in East London disguised as a veritable tramp, in order to realize what it means to be "down and out" in this vast

Christian city. For six weeks Mr. Jennings was a derelict, dressed as a vagrant, with no money, and many of the experiences he shared with the genuine "down and outs" were terrible in the extreme. But the most ghastly of all revelations made in this unique book is that whatever charities are administered in the underworld the wretched recipients thereof are subjected to persistent attempts to make them Christians. Their passive endurance of such mean efforts was generally the condition of obtaining shelter and food. What the Bishop of Durham wants is the legalization of compulsory religious instruction in State schools. It is wholly immaterial to him that there are many thousands of parents in the land who are confirmed anti-Christians, and who object on principle to the compulsory impartation of religious instruction to their children. He forgets that on his own showing Christians form but a very small minority of the population of this country, and that "on the accepted principle of democracy that small minority has no right, no power, to impose its own beliefs and standards on the nation." Although seventy-five per cent. of our population are anti- or at least, non-Christian, yet he takes it for granted "that there is no substitute for Christ's religion, and that effective moral training is, to my mind, inconceivable apart from religious teaching." We contend, however, that the Bishop's judgment is vitiated by his blind Christian prejudices. Although Christianity has totally failed to redeem the world he still clings to and advocates it as the only religion capable of accomplishing that task.

The Bishop hates Secularism with all his heart and cannot command language strong and bitter enough to denounce it as the supreme enemy of the human race. Why does he fulminate so furiously against Soviet Russia? Simply because Soviet Russia is actively hostile to Christianity. It is its professed Atheism, its secularizing enactments, its punitive measures against a recalcitrant and defiant orthodox Church, it is these things which anger his lordship and the *Church Times*. Both would forgive and possibly approve of Communism if only it were put into practice on so-called Christian lines. Dr. Henson has surely forgotten all about the unspeakable atrocities and horrors which had been constantly perpetrated for countless generations, and on a most alarming scale during the opening years of the twentieth century, under the cruelly despotic reigns of many Christian Tzars. Has his lordship ever read a little book entitled *The Terror in Russia*, by the late Prince Kropotkin? If he has, we would ask him in what conceivable respect was the Christian government of Russia better than the existing Soviet Government? It must not be forgotten, either, that not a few of the founders of the Soviet Government were men and women who had been flung into overcrowded and horribly dirty prisons, without a trial, or transported to Siberia, and treated as worse than slaves, and that it is not at all surprising that they assumed an attitude of uncompromising hostility towards the Christian religion, or have been guilty of unjustifiable acts of vengeance upon their former persecutors.

Our conclusion is, not only that effective moral training is more than possible apart from religious teaching, but also that religious teaching has never resulted in effective moral training. It is under Secularism alone that effective moral training can be secured. Christianity has obviously fallen short of making the world either highly moral or deeply religious.

J. T. LLOYD.

Is it not knowledge that doth alone clear the mind of all perturbations?—Bacon.

Fallen Leaves.

The things that are sacred to the generation that is passing are not necessarily sacred to the generation whose day is now.—*General Booth.*

Nought may endure but mutability.—*Shelley.*

MUCH is made of the constant output of books, of the glut of the literary market, of the rise and fall of reputations. With all this steady activity of writers there is one department of literature which shows a continuous falling off. During the past sixty years a steady decline has taken place in the production of religious books. To what is this decline due? There are several reasons; the first, and the most potent, being the growing indifference of the reading public to religion, and to theological discussion. The tide of religion is now at the ebb, and we only hear its withdrawing roar.

In his day, Macaulay noted the singular periodic manner in which the British public broke into hysteria upon questions of religion and morality. John Bull no longer remembers that he has a soul to save. Indeed, he is largely indifferent as to whether he has a soul or not. Meanwhile he reads novels, books of travel, light literature, magazines, and newspapers, especially the last mentioned. Another reason is the lower mentality of the present-day clergy. Commerce and science attract the best brains of to-day, and only third-raters, and worse, go in the churches. There are no longer any great ecclesiastics, there are only clerical notorieties. It certainly cannot be said that the Churches show intellect in the production of religious books. Not for present-day theologians are the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the chastened utterances of Newman. They cannot even echo Baxter or Bunyan. With the honourable exception of Dean Inge, there is not an original writer in their ranks. Everything is secondhand and threadbare in the theology of the day, and the paucity and poverty of the prose emphasises the emptiness of the writers' head, and the decline and fall of the Christian Religion. Let there be no mistake on this particular point. A very potent cause of the decline of religious literature is the diffusion of Freethought. Ordinary men and women are no longer content to be led blindly by the priest, who is seen to be no better educated than themselves. The force of Puritanism has spent itself after four hundred years of effort, and echoes of old controversies no longer inspire but only irritate.

The decline had set in half a century ago. About that time there was a real and unmistakable interest in devotional literature. The Rev. J. R. Macduff rivalled the foremost novelists in popularity. The sale of his works was to be reckoned in hundreds of thousands of copies. He was, in fact, the Dickens of the Devotional world. For years Dean Goulburn's *Thoughts on Personal Religion* had an annual sale of many thousands, and Bishop Oxenden's works were equally popular. Newman Hall's publications ran into a sale that present-day theological writers never dreamt of. Spurgeon's weekly sermons sold like hot rolls, and were preached, without acknowledgment from many pulpits. Dr. Joseph Parker not only sold his sermons, but his books were in demand all over the country. A bookstall at the City Temple was always thronged with eager purchasers. The public was greedy for theology. Even such wild guesses at prophecy as Baxter's *Forty Coming Wonders* sold steadily for a whole generation, and the wide-awake author altered the date of the end of the world as edition succeeded edition. In looking through the old publishers' catalogues one is surprised at the number of works of a devotional and

religious nature. Familiar as household words a generation or so ago, how many of these are known even by name to the present-day readers. The Victorian era was a serious one, and was, indeed, a golden age for religious books, which are very serious, not to say stodgy.

Not only was there a steady and constant demand for the works of individual authors, but for such libraries as *The Biblical Cabinet*, *Sacred Classics*, *The Christian Family Library*, and many another series. The most ambitious, perhaps, was the re-issue of the writings of the Christian Fathers, edited by the Abbé Migne, and others. It was in course of publication when I was a boy, it continued throughout my early manhood, and lasted until I became a grandfather. It was a monument of misdirected energy, and wasted scholarship, and yet it must have had many subscribers to have lasted so long. The taste for such stodgy reading has passed. Nor is it to be supposed that fresh life can be given to works such as Gladstone's *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, which served a temporary purpose, and, having served it, has passed from men's minds. Indeed, the very title of the book showed Gladstone's plentiful lack of humour, for, if the Bible be really impregnable it was simply waste of time to defend it. There are no books now like Farrar's *Life of Christ*, which a saucy critic described as "a Cook's excursion through the Gospels." The taste for it has gone like the weakness of citizens in Shakespeare's day for beer at breakfast.

In the many volumes on Victorian literature which have appeared, no mention is made of numberless religious or devotional books, "thick as leaves in Valombrossa," which were once thought indispensable in tens of thousands of homes. The circumstance is highly significant, and illustrates with startling clearness the changed attitude of the reading public towards religious literature.

The real meaning of this truly enormous change is that the Christian Superstition is crumbling. Never was there so little religion, never so much Secularism as at the present time. Never have men attended places of worship so little; never have they attended hospital and philanthropic meetings so assiduously. The Christian Religion is in the melting-pot, and Secularism is slowly permeating everywhere. The Christian Superstition no longer satisfies, for no faith can satisfy which is found out. Men, nowadays, no longer accept upon mere trust the religious misbeliefs of their remote and ignorant ancestors. Over the pulpits of the fast-emptying churches is inscribed, "To the Glory of God." That is the voice of the past. Secularism sounds the vibrant and triumphant note of the future, "To the Service of Man." Based on fables, supported by dead men's money, trading on ignorance, the Christian Superstition at length finds the mind of the race rising above and beyond it.

Not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly!
But, westward, look, the land is bright.

MIMNERMUS.

ROBT. BURNS.

Singly he faced the bigot brood,
The meanly wise, the feebly good;
He pelted them with pearl, with mud:
He fought them well—
But ah, the stupid million stood,
And he—he fell!

—William Watson, "The Tomb of Burns."

Christ in Armour.

The Fight for Man, by Rev. Prebendary Gough.
(Boswell, 3s. 6d.)

IN no other age has "stuntism" flourished so vigorously as in this our time. The mass of the people are reading more than their grandparents ever did, they are far better educated in a general-knowledge sense, and they are becoming even politically and economically conscious, yet nothing appears so easy as to divert men's attention from the vital issues of life. Sooner than do a little cool thinking on their own account they will suffer and encourage every species of political, literary, artistic, and religious cheap-jack who touts his particular intellectual quackery in book form.

Stuntism is an aggravated form of monomania that possesses egotists who, having failed to establish a genuine title to public esteem, determine to be in the limelight at any price. It constitutes an eternal refuge for those sixth-raters who confuse originality with freakishness. Literature, we know, possesses its due quota of quacks who fondly imagine that their ridiculous follies will startle posterity into acclaiming them immaculate geniuses. Art, Music, Science, too, include among their professors dull creatures that seek to trump up notoriety for themselves by producing rubbish and labelling it "impressionism" or "Psycho-this-that-and-the-other." But these poor clowns do not disturb the even tenour of our ways overmuch. Sometimes we will turn from life's busy round to glance at them and then, with a shrug and a smile, pass on. There is, however, one kind of stuntist that cannot be termed silly but harmless; that stirs us not to contempt but to indignation, that affronts not only our commonsense but our most delicate sensibility. I refer to the religious stuntist.

Never before in history have the churches, which hypocritically profess to afford mankind a moral "uplift," been so flabby and torpid as they are to-day. Wrapt up in false dreams and concerned solely with worshipping mystical shams and simulacrums, they have held themselves always aloof from life. They have ever given their countenance to Cæsar, and the more brutal and repressive Cæsar has been the more complacently they have regarded him and aided him. Never has any church come out into the open and offered humanity a practical solution of its ills or a practical principle upon which decent communal life might be based. The ecclesiastics know that they hold their tenure of existence solely on account of popular ignorance and superstition, and so they have wisely confined themselves to worshipping their alleged founder's corpse, and terrorised unlettered populations by tales of burning-fire, ghosts, torments, and trumpery rewards.

And now when sensible folk turn from them disgusted, when their breach of trust to humanity can no longer be concealed even from themselves, clerics of all denominations are continually rushing upon the public stage, brandishing gimcrack fiery crosses, in order to confound what they are pleased to call the religious apathy of the masses.

The latest "call" comes in a strange and fearful manner from one, Prebendary Gough, a clerk in Holy Orders. It is not quite clear what this godly gentleman's book sets out to prove or illustrate for us, but, at any rate, he appears to labour under a particularly sore grievance. This grievance seems to have arisen from the misguided activities of his brother priests. They have, says he, attempted to affix "a bastard humanitarianism" to Christianity.

That, he stoutly repels—maintaining that humanitarianism and Christianity have no legitimate relation one to the other. This is certainly refreshing, and doubtless will soothe the consciences of those clerics who passively tolerated the presence of a field gun in St. Paul's Cathedral and those other ministers of "Peace" who blessed the hideous artillery memorial in Hyde Park.

For nearly two thousand years, says this candid parson, mankind has stupidly mistaken its Christ. "The Lord is a Man of War," make no mistake about that: no meek and mild arbitrator, but a bellicose bruiser ready at any time to batter the unfaithful into submission! Pacifism and disarmament, declares our amiable Prebendary, are alien to the beautiful Christian faith. Let us have none of them, therefore; let us have blows and blood and good healthy strife upon earth. Waxing wrath with those false prophets who have laboured the poverty of "the man who knew not where to lay his head," Mr. Gough artlessly points out for our especial enlightenment that two of Christ's apostles were capitalists, because they employed fishermen to labour for them!

How paltry, childish, and purposeless is all this wordy stuff with its weak undercurrent of shoddy politics and false economics. In what possible manner does Mr. Gough imagine that such books can enhance his church's drooping cause? Would any South Sea Island cannibal turn from his dirty idol to worship so ugly a fetish?

The astonishing thing is that such flamboyant ranters should have the brazen effrontery to stand up and pose as teachers and guides of intelligent folk. They profess (with their tongues in their cheeks) that tawdry dogmas and illogical theology—out of date even in the East—are the only canons by which a proper conduct of life can be determined in twentieth-century Europe! One virtue at least (and a rare one with clerics) Prebendary Gough does possess. He is frank, and he is absolutely right! The Christian Church has never been a missioner of Peace. Its savage wranglings have caused more bloodshed and misery in the world than have the bickerings of all the princes and politicians put together. It has ever espoused the side of political tyranny and lent a willing hand to repress democracy. In no single historical instance has the Church made a definite stand for humanity, and when the world went mad twelve years ago it villified pacifists, blessed the guns and egged on the war-dogs.

And because the mass of men have been content to adopt a *laissez-faire* attitude and take no heed for the morrow, living in a state of intellectual coma, this parasitical institution still exists in an age when true knowledge may be had for the asking and books are cheap. It is high time that the masses woke up and took their share of thinking and enquiring, if only for self-protection. No deep reading, arduous study, no sitting under professors is necessary—only the exercise of a little elementary common sense. They will then ask the reason why hundreds of thousands of pounds per year are drawn from their pockets to support a gang of quacks who render the community no useful service. Why they have been such fools as to be gulled by clap-trap that would discountenance a market-place huckster? Why they, labouring under severe economic distress, have mutely tolerated the fat ecclesiastical dole-takers who—while smugly preaching peace and goodwill—derive large incomes from slums and have shares in armament firms? "Ignorance" is the answer to these questions. With knowledge lies the obvious remedy.

LEWIS WYNNE.

"Play the Man."

SIR ROBERT BADEN-POWELL in an article recently took for his theme, "Play the Man." One portion of his advice was that men, especially the younger, should stand up to life, face it boldly, and make that attitude a habit. He declared too that looking after one's own interest and safety tended to obliterate the spirit of bold venture, initiative and helpfulness. In the schools, he said, there was too little instruction in playing the man; education was often but a scramble to give children a surface scholastic knowledge.

One may, however, agree substantially with what Sir Robert here says, yet disagree with the title of his theme. Why "play the man"? The qualities he stresses are not confined to the male. Women can, and do, exhibit in their own particular sphere all these qualities.

Again, he declared that civilization tended to soften young men and make them lean on other people's direction. That may be so in some respects; many things are now done by the State, things that our forebears were wont to do for themselves. But in other respects, men are ceasing to lean on other people's direction. For instance, they no longer lean on the priests, but decide certain matters for themselves. This would appear to indicate a degree of self-reliance and initiative not common to our Christian forerunners. And in doing thus, they are exhibiting just those qualities which Sir Robert admires. But they are not "playing the man." Neither are they when they are no longer so very solicitous for their own soul's salvation, and when they are thinking more of others. They are "playing the Freethinker."

Sir Robert also declared that the three elements—body, mind, and soul—are needed in combination to complete the make-up of a man. The nature of the first two must be guided by the third. And here Sir Robert is distressed by the fact that men are becoming less of churchgoers. But are they, he enquired, less of Christians?—that is the point of the matter. He thinks that the man who directs his daily activities in the spirit of religion and who cultivates a sound mind in a sound body is one who is best fitted to be a good citizen and to play the man.

Now all that, we think, is rather muddled. In the first place, the man who cultivates a sound mind in a sound body is not necessarily being religious. Indeed, if Christian history reveals anything at all, it is the fact that Christians have striven to do exactly the opposite. For centuries the truly pious made a point of neglecting the care of the body—their miserable souls were what they were concerned with most. And only as the more healthy pagan ideals filtered through have we seen any improvement. Furthermore, the religious emphatically have not striven to acquire a sound mind. To do that they need to have access to the best thought of the best thinkers. But Christians consistently banned in early days those pagan books which, above all, taught the ideal of a sound mind in a sound body, and which contained some of the highest "spiritual" ideals the world has yet known. In later years they banned the works of thinkers other than pagan. Indeed, the largest Church, the Roman, still adopts the same tactics. The Christian idea of making a sound mind was to fill it with the barbarities, the superstitions, the inconsistencies, and narrow fanaticisms of the Bible.

From all this it seems clear that the ideal of balancing the three elements—body, mind, soul—is not Christian, but Pagan. And it is a significant fact that with the decline of Christianity, this pagan ideal at long last is coming into its own again; and people like Sir Robert Baden-Powell, who ought to know better, are asserting that it is a Christian ideal.

Again we ask, what is all that Sir Robert asserts to do with "playing the man"? The ideals he stressed are consistent with womanhood as well as manhood. "B. P." should get a new slogan. We suggest a better—"Play the Freethinker!" It connotes the best of what Sir Robert advocates in his article—and more besides. It connotes such things as breadth of mind, tolerance, fearlessness in asserting opinions and in opposing injustice,

oppression, and exploitation. It is applicable alike to men and women. "Play the Freethinker!" That is an excellent slogan, not only for the British, but also for all good Europeans who have to erect on the ruins of over-Christianized Europe a new order of things.

D. P. STICKELLS.

Acid Drops.

The most uncomfortable corpse the world has ever seen must surely be Atheism. It is always being killed, but always manages to turn up, apparently alive, to go through the same process of demolition. The latest murderer is the Rev. Elvet Lewis, the new President of the Free Church Council. In his presidential address he told the Council that "blatant Atheism" has passed away in Britain, which means that Atheists are dead, and that this paragraph is being written by a corpse. No further proof of communication from the dead to the living should be needed.

The *North Mail* is a little more cautious in its editorial comment. It would not do to deny what the parson says; that would look as though the paper sympathises with Atheism, and there is not a newspaper in Britain that has the courage openly to do that. So it says there is "vastly less" "blatant Atheism" (we do not know what kind of Atheism this is) than there was in the nineteenth century. But it says we have with us a greater number of Agnostics, who are more reasonable, because, says the editor, they admit they do not know. That, of course, is more pleasing. If a man says, "I do not know," with the implication that the Christian may be right, he is much easier material to tackle than the Atheist with his disconcerting directness of thought and speech. And the editor knows that on matters of religion, given an opportunity to avoid the charge of not being "respectable" by the use of a misleading, or even nonsensical term, the majority will rush for it.

Meanwhile we may assure the editor of the *North Mail* that the Agnostic in relation to the God idea is not less definite about the absurdity of believing in the existence of gods than is the most "blatant" Atheist. Where the Agnostic is not an intellectual "dunno" where he are," there is no real difference between him and the Atheist. They are both without the belief in deity, they both believe that the God idea has originated in primitive ignorance, and both are ready to flatly deny the existence of any of the Gods that are set forth for our adoration by all of the religions of the world. It is a sign of the low standard of intellectual integrity set by the Christian world that it can regard the use of an evasive term as being preferable to a straightforward expression of opinion. If there is a religion that has done more to breed hypocrites than has Christianity we should be interested in knowing where it exists.

"Don't kiss the Book; that superstition is done away with," said Mr. Mead, the Marlborough Street magistrate, to a witness. A sign of the times, that. And as the Book has never yet prevented a Christian witness from lying, to kick the old fetish out of the courts would dislodge another superstition.

Chance often-times furnishes a bit of humour better than that of the professional fun-merchant. Outside a chapel a while ago was to be seen a *Wayside Pulpit* poster with the happy message: "Prepare to meet Thy God!" A few yards further the passer-by encountered another poster which cheerily announced: "Don't worry! It may never happen!" This happy accident would, we think, have raised a smile from the Man of Sorrows. But it is only the Freethinker who can appreciate its humour to the full.

My first Sunday in London was spent in hearing Dr. Parker in the morning, Canon Liddon in the afternoon, and Mr. Spurgeon in the evening, confesses Mr. Lloyd George. We don't think an ex-Premier ought to boast about his mis-spent youth.

Henry Ford says that God made fleas to keep dogs busy. Unfortunately there are other kinds of fleas beside those that attack dogs. There is the variety that pays its attentions to man. And if Henry Ford is right, what a blasphemous firm that of Keatings must be!

Mr. Ford also thinks that man is in this world in order to gain experience for the next one. Perhaps, as Vale Owen is looking out for a Church in the next world, Henry Ford can see himself in charge of a works for turning out motor-cars for the heavenly hosts. In that case we would remind him that the traditional machinery of locomotion "over there" is wings. On the whole we should imagine that Mr. Ford would do better if he would confine his attention to motor-cars. And reporters might be more sensibly employed than in gathering the opinions of successful business men on what they are clearly unfit to talk about.

Mr. Bertrand Russell has made the discovery that for children, flogging on week-days and sermons on Sundays do not constitute the ideal technique for the production of virtue. In the good old days of fifty years ago when religion occupied a very comfortable position, no bishops were known to break their necks in their efforts to abolish flogging: only a few years ago this form of punishment found favour in the eyes of one of our present-day exponents of meekness, humility, charity, and Christian love.

The magistrates at Coalville, Leicestershire, gave permission for the cinemas to open on Good Friday. They said they did so because they had a good influence in keeping young people off the streets. We congratulate the magistrates on their good sense, and in following the lead set by many police officials in their testimony to the good effects of providing Sunday entertainments. If the parsons were really aiming at the same end they would join the police in encouraging reasonable opportunities for education and recreation, and amusement on Sunday. But that is, of course, not what they are concerned with. It is an increase in business in their own performance they are after, and to them the museum and the cinema and the library and the playing field are all so many rivals to be suppressed where it is at all possible.

All the same, we must again point out that the magistrates have no power to sanction or to permit the opening of cinemas so long as there is a charge for admission. And we are still waiting for some cinema proprietor who has enough courage to open and then see what is done. But it is foolish to imagine that magistrates have the power to make an illegal thing legal by their sanction. The moral of the situation is that these absurd Sunday laws ought to be wiped away, and if this country were not so priest-ridden that would soon be done.

Episcopal impertinence was well in evidence at Bradford the other day when the Bishops rebuked the National Union of Teachers as being only concerned with the interests of teachers. We have not an exaggerated opinion of the N.U.T., but we are strongly of opinion that it has far more genuine interest in education than has the Bishop and his kind. Their concern is for religion only, and their professional interest is naked and unashamed. While the Church controlled matters education was scandalously neglected, and it was the neglect of the Church that forced the State to take over the task of education of the nation's children. And since then the fight of the Church has been to see that the State trained customers for its own special goods.

The Bishop asks, "Is it right that in a Christian nation the teachers should be exempt from religious tests of some kind or another." Well, we agree that if religion is to be kept in the schools it is only logical that those who teach it should be efficient. And to this extent the N.U.T. places itself in a false position while supporting religious instruction, but refusing tests. The two things go together. The logical position would be for the N.U.T. to support Secular Education as the only logical and honest position. The Bishop admits that all the subjects in the syllabus can be taught without religion. The teacher should insist that this should be their sole work, and their whole concern. It might help the Bishop to realize that in this country Christianity is only one of many forms of belief, and that its maintenance in State schools is an act of gross political injustice.

The courts are now called upon to decide who owns the copyright of communication from the "Summerland." A lady claims to have received from a spirit, one Cleophas, a continuation of the Acts of the Apostles. Someone else has published some of the work, and the "medium" has now brought an action for infringement of copyright. It looks as though the court will have to decide who is the author. If it is the spirit the lady would have to produce proof that she was acting in the interests of the spirit. But, then, the spirit does not reside within the jurisdiction of the court, and how can an English court legislate on property belonging to someone in another world. On the other hand, if the court allows infringement of copyright it looks like a declaration that the lady medium is a fraud. The position is quite Gilbertian.

The prospect of re-union among the Christian sects gets brighter. We infer this from the following facts. Gipsy Smith has arrived in Australia and has started a campaign to revive the Protestant faith. Thereupon the Catholic Truth Society, anxious as ever about the truth, is instituting a counter-move. Both parties, we may add, believe implicitly in the Brotherhood of Man; but that doesn't prevent each from regarding the other as an enemy, doomed to hell-fire for preaching false doctrines.

The Manchester Education Committee has discovered that "sin" in children is not, as the parsons have led us to suppose, the original old Adam revealing itself, but is merely the result of the child's not having wholesome occupation for his energies and his busy little brain. The Committee has learnt that by organising play-centres, providing summer camps, and developing music and folk-dancing in the schools, juvenile crime has steadily diminished. In 1916, 889 young people were before the courts; but in 1924, there were only 258 cases. Perhaps our "sin" zealots and pious temperance fanatics will learn a lesson from this experiment, and cease to denounce wholesome amusements and recreations on Sunday which several police authorities declare diminish crime, drunkenness, and immorality.

All recreation, declares Canon Sinker, vicar of Blackburn, should be morally right, morally healthy, and genuinely recreative. The *Sunday School Chronicle*, commenting on this, says that this test would rule out a good many forms of modern amusement. All amusement, it declares, should send us back to work refreshed in mind and body; and if it does not do that it stands condemned. "One of our strongest objections," it continues, "to Sunday games and excursions, etc., is that instead of refreshing, they very often weary and bring a person to meet the duties of Monday morning in a frame of mind which feels work to be distasteful." What disgusting cant that is! The chief objection, the traditional Christian objection, to Sunday games or other amusements is that they destroy the sanctity of the Lord's Day. All other objections are but pious excuses for enabling the kill-joy to enforce his silly taboo upon other people. What our sanctimonious contemporary wishes us to believe is that frequenting playing-fields

unfits people for work, but that sitting in sunless and draughty chapels refreshes them; which, as Euclid would say, is absurd.

Where are the Men? is a question which is worrying our reverend "fathers in God." But, it would appear that another awkward query is presenting itself. A correspondent to the *Church Times* declares that before long the Church will need to enquire, Where are the Women?—the modern women of to-day. She, writing from the address of "The League of the Church Militant," declares that the University woman and the girl of higher education are rarely to be found in the Churches. The feminine element in the congregations, she says, are usually middle-aged or elderly women to whom church-going has become a habit; and "too often the Church has in the past fed them on sentimental hymns and administered dope from the pulpit." From what this correspondent says it would appear that education and religion are two things that do not combine any too well. If that is so, the Church's only hope of preventing the decline in church-going is to noble education and to prevent the spread of knowledge. But to do that she no longer has the power—how she must envy her sister Church, the Roman, which is still able to exert this benignant influence! She, then, is compelled to fall back on the old wheeze which has served her so well in the past. She can reinterpret Christ's teaching and trim her doctrines to fit modern thought in the hope that the pretty new silver-plating on the old wares will deceive the newcomers into thinking here is something very choice indeed.

Will this manoeuvre work? We do not think so; for, if we may believe Canon Francis Underhill, the mentality of the new generation is vastly different from the preceding ones. Speaking of the public-school class, he declares that at the Universities the religious teachers are wholly baffled by the young men whose fathers and mothers have had little religion. The religious terminology familiar to older generations, he asserts, has no meaning for these young people. Of other classes, he says the facts are somewhat different; the children of the industrial and clerk classes are better instructed in religion. Yet here he has to confess that comparatively few young men have any conscious religion; thousands lapse every year from the practice of their faith. On only a very small number does religion make any impression. He declares:—

It is not merely that Christianity, as a distinctive form of religion, ceases to hold them. It goes much deeper than that. The existence of God, or, if he exists, the question of His goodness, His justice, His power; the question of the efficacy of prayer: whether it be anything more than mere auto-suggestion; the question of personal survival after this life—all these are questions which to-day, among the young men, are more than open; which are answered by an enormous number of them in the negative. This, I say, is the great difference between the mass of young Englishmen of to-day and those of the past.

From this one can see the extent to which Freethought permeates life; for the questions these young men and women are asking are essentially Freethinking questions. And it would seem that the new generation is not satisfied with the sophisticated answers of Christian apologists, nor attracted by doctrines adroitly furbished to suit modern thought. Hence, the old wail, "Where are the men?" is likely to be heard for many a long day yet.

Mr. Sean O'Casey, Dublin labourer and tenement-dweller, and now author of the play, "Juno and the Paycock," to whom the Hawthornden Prize for literature has been awarded, evidently does not allow his success to swamp his sense of values. He told an interviewer that a newspaper reporter asked him: When you go back to Dublin now you are successful, will you live among the best people? To this Mr. O'Casey retorts: "I have *always* lived among the best people. And I have chosen them myself. I have always had as my friends Shakespeare and Goya and Balzac and

Anatole France and Shelley, and many another. But, of course, I don't know who you may be calling your 'best people' over here!" We congratulate Mr. O'Casey on his choice of friends and on including a few Freethinkers among his "best people."

The Deputy Chaplain-General is still telling his funny fairy tales about the men who fought in the War. They were, assures a Fellowship gathering, more religious than they appeared to be. He was often astonished to find that among "the most uncouth and even unclean" there was a reaching out after the highest—he rarely met a man who did not believe in God. The men believed too in punishment of sin, and they believed in Christ and in prayer. In times of stress they all prayed; instinctively they turned to prayer. We have no hesitation in asserting these statements of the reverend gentleman are silly inventions. Any ex-Service man not a Bible-puncher can tell him that three-fourths of the men were utterly indifferent to religion or Christ or prayer, and that they shunned Chaplains as they would a plague. Plenty of our ex-Service readers, who were in a better position than were the Chaplains to know what happened in the fighting line, can give the lie to the reverend gentleman's assertion that the men prayed in times of stress. At such times they behaved much as they did at times less strenuous. All the "religion" the average soldier had was a kind of stoic fatalism. And is it not obvious that if men turned to religion, to prayer, for consolation or strength in times of stress, they would not now be indifferent to it after having proved its efficacy?

Everything depends upon the point of view. During the time that the Dayton case was attracting attention here we repeatedly called attention to the extravagance of those papers which were writing as though Dayton represented the general level of culture in the United States. It was quite absurd, but the desire of many writers appear to be to attract attention only, and if that is achieved accuracy counts for nothing. Now we see from an American paper to hand that this country is excited at the account of a ghost of a lady that has appeared in the South of England. We can assure our contemporary that England is quite calm, and the appearance of a ghost would excite but few. They are always turning up, but generally they are well behaved enough to retire when they have secured the attention of our "psychic expert," Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. And the rest of the country is quite unaffected.

It is a vulgar form of the common fallacy which meets us in the form of "French opinion," or "German opinion," or "English opinion." There is no such thing if by it is meant an opinion common to the whole of the people of any one country. There are wide varieties of opinion in every country, and there is no opinion that we know of that can be taken to represent the country as a whole. If only people would bear this in mind they would be less at the mercy of periodical scares, got up by this or that newspaper, and which unthinking readers are gulled by. There is generally a far greater measure of excitement over a football match than there is over many of the things with which papers fill their columns.

A Mr. Deaville Walker is just back from a five months' trip to West Africa. He declares to an interviewer: "I have often found that missionaries who are rendering fine service are silent about it." We had noticed that, too. The silence of the missionaries and their friends here is almost painful, not to say uncanny. When appealing for mission funds, they never by any chance mention what missionaries have achieved—that sort of advertisement is simply "not done." And this shrinking from publicity seems all the more praiseworthy when one thinks of the large amount of cash that might be collected from the devout were our missionaries less reserved. We raise our hat to these modest missionaries.

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.—J. W. Marston, 2s.; Violet Murray, £1 5s.; G. A., 3s. 6d.; P. J. Quinn (Toronto), £2.

C. F. WESLEY.—We have not heard of other cases of Christian tracts being placed in the copies of the *Freethinker* in West Ham libraries. We imagine it is the act of some quite irresponsible person, and is quite out of order, although we cannot imagine any serious-minded person being influenced by such rubbish.

W. KENSITT.—Thanks for reply. Will use it for distribution.

G. A.—Life in an agricultural district does not, we imagine, make for an interest in intellectual matters, but there is even there a vast improvement during recent years. We have many very earnest subscribers in agricultural areas, although the church and chapel can exercise a more decisive influence there than elsewhere.

P. J. QUINN.—Thanks for contribution to Fund. Verses amusing, and a quite suitable reply. But much of it would be lost on English readers, particularly in the absence of the provocative doggerel.

CINE CERE.—Thanks for papers. Quite useful. See next week.

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.

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

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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.

The series of lectures arranged by the West Ham Branch were brought to a close on Sunday last with a lecture by Mr. Cohen. The hall was quite full, and a number of questions, with some little opposition, followed the address. The chair was occupied by Mrs. Venton, who discharged her duties with ability and decision. The Branch is hoping to carry on a continuous propaganda in this district next season.

The Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws has arranged a demonstration in support of the Bill now before the House of Commons, to take place in the Essex Hall, Strand, on Friday, April 23, at 8 o'clock. The Rev. Canon Donaldson will take the chair, and Mrs. Seaton Tiedeman, Rev. Copeland Binnies, Rev. W. G. Moll (Rector of Barnet), Mr. Ernest Thurtle, M.P., Mr. George Lansbury, M.P., Dr. Alfred Salter, M.P., and Mr. Cohen will be among the speakers. We rely upon

London Freethinkers giving the meeting their fullest possible support.

A number of members of Yale University are starting an Atheistic Society to "The Damned Souls." The title is not lacking in courage, and we can imagine it giving serious offence to those Freethinkers who are unduly sensitive to what Christians think about them. Prof. Tweedy, of the Divinity Faculty, says that the members have a perfect right to form any society they please. They should be given a free hand. It is well to remember that America is not made up of Daytonites, and there seems more courage and more freedom in this incident than would be found in one of our own Universities.

Several of the Lancashire Branches—Manchester, Bolton, Ashton-under-Lyne, with the friendly co-operation of the Failsworth Secular Society—recently banded themselves together for the purpose of carrying on Freethought work during the summer months. These bodies are co-ordinating their efforts under the title of the Lancashire and District Federation, and are looking forward to a good season's work. A start was made on Sunday last at Failsworth, Mr. Monks taking the chair, and Messrs. Newton, Sissons, and S. Cohen speaking. We are glad to hear that the meeting was a good one, and the collection made towards the expenses of the Federation cheering. The Secretary is Mr. C. Newton, of 94 Victoria Road, Dukinfield, Cheshire, and he will be glad to hear from anyone in the district who is prepared to help, financially or otherwise. There should be plenty of helpers in that thickly populated area.

We are pleased to hear that Mr. Rosetti gave a very interesting and much appreciated address in the Brassworkers' Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday last. When the Branch is able to obtain a more conveniently situated hall, which we hope will be the case in the near future, there should be rapid developments in that city. But a good hall, in a good position, counts for much in getting at the general public.

One of our readers, Mr. W. G. Walter, has the following pertinent letter in the *Westminster Gazette* of March 27:—

In your issue of to-day (March 25) you say that "One of the functions of a modern newspaper is to reflect every phase of modern life." If this is true, why do you, in common with the rest of the press (with the honourable exception of the *Manchester Evening News*) persistently ignore the great Freethought Movement?

To this the editor replies: "The *Westminster Gazette* claims to hear all sides, which is surely the best form of Freethought." This is a rather clumsy evasion of the question asked. It is not whether the *Westminster Gazette* hears all sides, but whether it permits its readers to hear all sides. We should like the editor to say when and where views were given concerning the Freethought Movement, or where space was allotted for Freethinking criticism of the established religion. Religious news it publishes freely. Anti-religious news receives the usual treatment.

DUTY.

Our duties are the claims which others have upon us. How did they acquire these claims? By assuming us capable of engagements and of reprisals; by thereupon entrusting something to us, by educating, directing, and supporting us. We fulfil our duty—that is, we justify the idea of our power in consideration of which all these things were bestowed upon us, and we return them in the same measure in which they were meted out to us. It is thus our pride which bids us do our duty. In order to re-establish our self-esteem we do something for others in return for what they have done for us; they encroached upon the sphere of our power, and would always be concerned in that, did we not by means of "duty," practise reprisals, and thus encroach upon theirs.—Nietzsche, "The Dawn of Day."

The Story of Evolution.

VI.

(Concluded from page 204.)

VESTIGES AND RUDIMENTS.

THESE terms are often wrongly used, even in textbooks, as though they were interchangeable. A vestige is a remnant of an organ which has almost died away, either through disuse or change of conditions. It may be a muscle, nerve, bone, or a mental impression. A rudiment is the beginning of an organ which develops when it gives an advantage or meets a need of the owner. Numerous vestiges are found in advanced species, and rudiments are found in low forms of life. This branch of science is very extensive, but we must confine ourselves to a few instances of each kind.

If you look into the eye of an acquaintance you will see a little red lump of flesh in the corner next the nose. This is called the *caruncula* (flesh mass), and it covers, or rests on, a fold of membrane, the edge of which is laid against the eyeball. That fold is the vestige of a third eyelid, more distinct in many mammals than man. It is a structure which sweeps across the eyeball to clear it. Nocturnal birds, like the owl, find it very useful, but we have no use for it, and it is disappearing in mankind.

A vestige well known to surgeons is the *vermiform appendix* (wormlike attachment), a cul-de-sac about the size of a thumb, at the entrance of the large intestine: the colon. This is all that remains of the second stomach of the cud-chewing animals, and, should a grape seed or other indigestible thing enter it, inflammation may lead to an abscess, which may cause death unless an operation to remove the appendix is performed.

At the base of the backbone in all anthropoids, including man, we find four small bones called the *coccyx* (cuckoo), because it is shaped like a cuckoo's beak, the vestige or remnant of a tail. Doubtless the far-back predecessors found a tail useful, but it has shrunk to its present proportions.

Another visible vestige is in the outer ear of most persons, although in some it is hardly distinguishable. A small hard point in the rim of the cartilage shows that mankind had an ancestor with a pointed ear like most of the lower animals. In man and the higher apes the ear is folded inwards, but the nerves and muscles still remain, which used to move the ear to catch faint sounds, like horses and other animals do now. Some young men can twitch their ears, and do it for amusement, but the nerves and muscles are quite useless for their original purpose.

Other vestiges are the pineal gland or remnant of a third eye; the fine hair on the arms and certain muscles of the face. If a person feels a dislike to something he will draw back the upper lip and sneer, what is called "turning up the nose." This is a vestige of the animals' snarl, when he bared his canine teeth to attack an enemy. These teeth have shrunk in man and are of little use, but, as has been shown in the orang, they were the principal weapons of destruction in the event of a fight.

Many civilized people have mental vestiges from the more advanced savages and early civilizations. The lowest types of man had no supernatural beliefs, afterwards came the idea that all things had life and contained spirits. Sorcery was widespread, and the fear of demons arose. To account for the existence of the world a great Spirit was imagined who made it. Everything was believed to be subject to incantations. The vestige is seen in the idea that a supernatural being maintains and controls the universe. Of course nothing of the kind is found in

nature, which is clearly self-contained and independent, and takes no notice of prayers or sacrifices.

In respect to rudiments we need mention one instance only. A cuttle fish possesses the simplest form of ear. This consists of a sac of cartilage in the neck, supplied with nerves, filled with fluid, and containing some loose particulars of hard substance. Vibrations of sound are communicated to the fluid in the sac, and, according to the law of sound, are strengthened by beating against the solid particles contained in it, and they stimulate the end of the nerves. Similarly the complex organs of sight, smell, taste, and feeling can be traced back to very simple rudiments.

RELICS OF APE-LIKE MAN.

It is popularly supposed that there is a break in the chain of evidence connecting man with the ape-like precursor, and foolish jokes are made about a "missing link." There is no such break. Quantities of evidence have been unearthed in various parts of the world, and we will glance at a few of the finds.

In 1886, in a cave at Spy, Belgium, were found, sixteen feet below the surface, two nearly perfect skeletons (man and woman) with numerous weapons or implements of the very earliest type. Their faces were ape-like in having a retreating forehead, massive jaws, and a rudimentary chin; divergent curvature of bones in the forearm; tibia (shin) shorter than any other known race, and stouter than in most; tibia and femur (thigh) so articulated that, to maintain equilibrium, head and body must have been thrown forward, as seen in the large apes. The teeth approximate to the orang-utan. With the skeletons there were bones of the cave bear and other extinct animals.

A nearly similar skeleton was found in 1895, at Gravel Hill, Kent. It was nearly perfect, and remains of extinct animals were close by. The skull is long, narrow, and depressed, brow ridges prominent, forehead somewhat receding, very large molar teeth, height about five feet.

Many parts of skulls, jaws, and bones have been unearthed in other districts, and, on examination, proved to be a medium form between the ape and primitive man. The most noted is the top of a skull and part of the skeleton of a man-like individual discovered in the Feldhofen cave of the Neander valley, near Dusseldorf, Prussia. That is called the Neanderthal cranium. But a still more interesting find was made in 1891 at Trinil, Java, by Dr. Eugene Dubois. This was the roof of a skull and femur which showed characters intermediate between the gorilla and Neanderthal, but distinctly human; low cranial arch, very low frontal region; "the lowest human cranium yet discovered, very nearly as much below the Neanderthal as this is below the normal European"; femur quite human but found twelve or fifteen metres from the skull, hence may not belong to the same individual; same remark applies to an upper molar tooth lying near, very large and more human than simian (ape). From these remains Dubois formulates a family which was the precursor of primitive man, standing in the direct line of divergence in the genealogical tree, and considerably lower than any human form previously discovered.

In every museum may be seen stone and flint daggers, arrow-heads, spear-heads, scrapers, etc., produced at different ages. The earliest are very roughly made and were merely used for striking and stabbing, being held in the hand. As time passed they become fashioned to be attached to handles of wood and bone, and the more recent are highly polished. Finally copper and then bronze implements of the same form

were made. To distinguish the different periods of evolution they are called Eolithic (dawn-stone), Paleolithic (early-stone), Neolithic (new-stone), and, lastly, the bronze age. It is quite impossible to say how long a period elapsed from the time when a distinct species arose from the ape-like precursor, but it must have been hundreds of thousands of years ago. Man has an "immense antiquity" according to Dr. Robert Munro, and in that time all bones in exposed situations would break up and disappear. It is only in very dry places, such as dry gravel deposits, and in sheltered caves that any relics would remain for some ages. It is from the caves and rubbish heaps (called kitchen-middens) made up of shells thrown away after the contents had been eaten, and bones of animals, that the stone implements are obtained.

The progenitors of the first man-like species were doubtless driven from the forests by the spread of polar ice over the temperate zones, and were necessarily obliged to become flesh-eaters. They therefore pursued animals to their caves for food. There were two or three such glacial periods with intermittent warm periods, during which the changing conditions produced great alterations in the habits and frames of the species. The struggle for existence destroyed such as were least cunning, ruthless, robust, or virile, and traces are found of several stems or types, which later were over-run by more advanced ones. It is certain that neolithic man spread over the whole world and gradually wiped out less intelligent hordes of primitive man.

CONCLUSION.

In the preceding chapters an endeavour has been made to state only that which is agreed by all scientists. One or two points, however, require some expansion. I am asked the question: Seeing that the orang and chimpanzee are related to mankind so nearly, how is it that they have not evolved into man? This is a very proper question on the subject.

The answer is two-fold: lack of adaptability and unchanging conditions. Or, to use scientific terms, hereditary breeding and environment. At one time, in the long past ages, and probably during glacial periods, conditions arose which compelled a tree-living, ape-like animal to change his mode of life. Those individuals who were, by adaptation, able to survive the change, continued to exist; the others died out. But this only affected part of the surface of the earth. The change did not reach as far as the equator, and there were large tracts of land in which the original stock could continue to live and reproduce the species. They were unaffected by the change. This is the more likely as lemurs, monkeys, and anthropoid apes are native only to the tropical, or adjacent, districts.

A similar question may be asked respecting flowers. It is well known that all the varieties of roses have been cultivated from the wild-rose of our hedge-rows. Surely the original has the power within itself to become a highly-scented garden rose? Yes, but the gardener has changed the conditions and by selection (that is by saving only such as showed improvement) has cultivated many new strains. Similarly with pigeons, which have all been bred from the common blue-rock. Nature acts in the same way; by eliminating the "unfit," new species arise; but, where conditions remain the same, the old stock persists.

Some scientists contend that there were several stocks, or stems, of the human race. Since there are light, dark, yellow, black, and red-haired monkeys and apes, so there are similar coloured divisions of mankind, and other characteristics agree. Relics of many extinct hordes of men have been traced, such as the "spider-men" of Japan; the cave-dwellers of

Europe; the aborigines of Mexico. These disappeared before races which had more quickly advanced. The Redskin of North America has been decreasing from several causes, one being that the pure-blooded woman is less fertile than the half-caste. Environment plays a great part in the evolution of species, and breeding as much, or more. Any change in the individuals of a race, which gives it an advantage in the struggle for existence, would be stamped permanently upon the race. By the law of heredity, discovered by the monk, Mendel, a mixed species will average three to one in favour of the dominant stock. Therefore, in natural conditions, the weaker will disappear in the course of time.

Gardeners and breeders know that occasional "throw-backs" are found in the stock. This also occurs in humans, but in highly civilized countries they are not destroyed, but protected. So we find in towns and cities some persons which are lower in intelligence than the ape, then there are better equipped ones, and all grades up to those who are as far above the normal as the last are above the "reversions."

Lastly, I am asked, what good is there in studying this matter, and what benefit is gained by the discovery that mankind had evolved from a low type of life to its present proud position? My reply is that, apart from the fact that all knowledge is, or may be, useful, it is only by a knowledge of the past that we are able to understand the present, and to shape our actions to bring about an even better state in the future. It is a race-instinct to endeavour to make a better and happier life for those who come after us. When we are acquainted with man's origin, this instinct is supported by reason, and our work is strengthened. All thinking people find the greatest happiness in making others happy and anticipate the time when, by our exertions, the children of the future will inherit a better world than we have done, is a satisfying consolation for any effort we may make.

E. ANDERSON.

Mr. Belloc and Discovery.

SOME years ago, when I was in the Far East, an old Chinese friend, a learned man and a philosopher, fell into discussion with a Christian missionary who was very rude to him. My friend's conclusions were summed up in the words: "Your religion is not worthy of your civilization; it is only fit for coolies." He ventured to speak thus plainly to me because he was fully aware of my views in the matter; otherwise being a "mere heathen," we would have been averse from giving offence after the manner of the missionary.

Although it is true that the general run of missionaries are people of inferior mentality and education, it is also true that the religion presented by the higher ranks of our clergy is more suited to ignorant coolies than to an educated people. This is always made evident when that versatile champion of medieval obscurantism, Mr. Hilaire Belloc, favours us with his views on the subject.

On March 9, Mr. Belloc delivered a lecture in Manchester on the causes of modern scepticism, at a meeting presided over by the Bishop of Salford (Dr. Henshaw). Mr. Belloc said that what had been lost was "the unquestioned acceptance of a certain group of those fundamental doctrines which were transcendental." By transcendental he meant, "not to be appreciated or proved by the senses, or demonstrated to the reason of the ordinary man by the ordinary processes of plain proof." In other words, the

ordinary man refuses to accept what is manifest nonsense, not only incapable of proof, but contrary to plain common sense. In this he approaches the standpoint of my Chinese friend who would have said: "Nothing can be true which does not conform to reason and experience."

Mr. Belloc defined the leading doctrine of the Christian superstition when he said that "the conception of a Trinity, and the incarnate Second Person of the Trinity, and especially the conception of eternal beatitude and eternal loss of beatitude, were gone." The cause of this disappearance he attributes, first, to "the weakening of the forces of authority and example," so that "people are no longer prepared..... to accept religious truth from authority," and, secondly, to "discovery." But before one can accept authority it must justify itself as such to reason and experience at the very outset, and this neither the Church of Rome, the Church of England, nor any other body of priests who claim such authority, can do.

It is precisely discovery that has provided the solvent for this authority, and has destroyed the ideas which were associated with what Mr. Belloc, and the clergy behind him define as "fundamental truths." The plain man disbelieves them because he has come to regard them as fundamental untruths. It is discovery which has revealed the physiological fact that a man, whether he be the "Second Person of the Trinity," or not, cannot be conceived without the agency of a physical father; that religious miracles are impossible; that the sacred relics, holy water, and so forth, which are agents in these performances, are pious frauds; and that the attempts of the priests to base their authority upon divine sanction involve nothing short of sheer imposture.

Discovery, said Mr. Belloc, "had made men more interested in things that were not the matters of chief interest to mankind." But the question is: What are the matters of chief interest to mankind? It would seem that "men had become so deluded by the game of discovery that they were more absorbed in the question whether there was water communication between the Congo and the Nile basins, than whether the soul was immortal; more eager about a document of antiquity found on a papyrus than as to whether those we had loved might be recovered in another world; more excited about the age of a fossil skull than whether it was right to marry two wives."

In this we have an example of that confusion of thought for which Mr. Belloc has become famous; due, no doubt, to his religious obsessions. It would be better expressed to say that men have come to take more interest in the affairs of this world, and in those things which tend to increase their welfare here and now, than in the unknown and undiscoverable hereafter. The discovery of water communications is valuable as indicating ways and means to turn some undeveloped part of the earth's surface to a useful, material purpose. The papyrus may throw light upon past history, more likely than not a light unacceptable to that authority of which Mr. Belloc is an upholder. Matrimonial problems are a question of secular morality. Whether a man shall marry two wives, more or less, is answered variously at different times and places. Why should it have been right in the eyes of Mr. Belloc's god that the Hebrew patriarchs and kings should have as many wives as they chose, whilst the modern Englishman may have only one? It is a matter of social usage, that is all.

"The answer to the question, Have I an immortal soul?.....could not, in its very nature, be solved by experiment." People are trying to prove the im-

mortality of the soul by experiment. "They are always at it. They did it in the dark; the method was contemptible." In this we quite agree. But we go further, and say that it cannot be proved at all, and that the statements made in this connection by Mr. Belloc's church, and by all the other Christian churches are beneath even contempt, they are fraudulent attempts to impose on the credulity of the ignorant.

When Mr. Belloc uses the word "faith," he means this credulity. The era of discovery, he says, "suggested that nothing could be held which could not be proved. The suggestion was a logical contradiction of terms. No man could prove the faith." Exactly! We are invited to believe a farrago of nonsense, and when we ask for the evidence we find that there is none. We reply that a truth is capable of proof, whereas no man can prove a manifest falsehood.

Mr. Belloc and his clergy would doubtless tell us that this depends upon the will to believe. But, if we grant the will to believe, we must equally grant the will to disbelieve. There is no logical contradiction here. What is the will to believe but the will to hold something certain which one feels to be uncertain, the determination to beguile and hypnotize oneself in such a way as to accept as true what is clearly perceived to be error? The will to believe is nothing else than the will to deceive, first oneself, and then others. It is only a euphonious word for hypocrisy, which may be good for a church or a Jesuit, but not for the seeker after truth. It may do for Mr. Belloc and his mitred and biretted charlatans, but it will not do for honest men.

Mr. Belloc fears that the spirit of Paganism will return, and with it will come his pet bogey, "the servile state." We retort that it is he, and those who think with him, who are the pagans, the irrational and benighted heathen, who would have men return to that state of mental servitude from which they have been happily freed by discovery. Mr. Belloc's lecture provided further evidence of the decay of the Christian superstition, which, as my Chinese friend said, is worthy only of ignorant coolies. In whatever else he may fail, Mr. Belloc certainly succeeds in proving this.

E. J. LAMEL.

Controversialia: An Essay in Positions.

It has always seemed to me that if Freethought is likely to fall into any error whatsoever, it is the error of supposing that mere rejection of the Christian mythology is a sufficient hall-mark of rational thought. But it is essential that we should be *right*-thinkers as well as Freethinkers—surely the one implies the necessity of the other? This being taken for granted, I was rather disconcerted to find in a recent issue of the *Freethinker* two articles in which the writers—both able and sincere Rationalists—appear (to me, at any rate) to commit two errors which are the fundamental property of everyday Christianity. The first article I have in mind is Mr. J. T. Lloyd's article on "Prayer," in which—after a very acute analysis of the absurdities of the orthodox position—he proceeds to remark: "Our position, however, is.....that *no God exists*.....and we maintain that is it infinitely more *honourable to deny the existence* of a Supreme Being than to believe in that of the Christian Heavenly Father." Now, in the first place, what right has Mr. Lloyd to restrict our choice to these two alternatives? And,

in the second place, do not his words imply the essentially Christian fallacy of supposing that we have—or can have—enough knowledge of things to be able confidently to affirm or deny various propositions concerning the nature of the universe? Is it not so? What does anyone know of the unknowable that he is able dogmatically to proclaim that “no God exists”?¹ Atheism, if in sooth it be not a mere synonym—and not a particularly good one—of Agnosticism or else the opposite pole of absurdity to that of Christian (or other) theism, is to me, frankly meaningless. The Agnostic position is the position that such matters are beyond our intellectual reach; and, it being so, we only make fools of ourselves, in varying degrees, when we say, “Yea, yea” or “Nay, nay” concerning propositions of ultimate fact.

And, in the the second place, I would refer to a passage in “Keridon’s” otherwise masterly analysis of the relations of “Materialism” and Monism:—

If then, the energy that reaches the optic centre, for instance, does not stand in a causal relation, in the truly physical sense, to the sensation awakened, it may be pertinently asked, *what.....is it for? Why did Nature go to such infinite pains.....?* I repeat, if *that was not the sole end and purpose of the contrivance, what is the eye for?*

For “Nature” put “God,” and we have Paley! Surely the implied assumption that “Nature” has evolved the structures of organic life for “ends” of its own is pure post-evolutionist teleology, almost indistinguishable from that expressed by Christian Palyists such as Dr. Frank Ballard? Surely “Keridon” cannot mean what he says—or say what he means? And yet, throughout his article, he almost vitiates the admirable *resumé* of non-teleological mechanism in the first three paragraphs by using such phrases as “It was Nature’s device.....,” “mind is Nature’s means.....,” “It (i.e. Nature) achieves this end in two ways.....,” “Nature has gone to the pains of evolving.....,” etc.² If it be objected that these are mere figures of speech, I answer that no parenthetical repudiation of teleology whatever appears in “Keridon’s” article—and that in view of his prolific teleological phraseology, such a repudiation would appear most necessary. And, after all, are such figures of speech—if they are figures of speech—really required? Is it not precisely this figurative rendering of the facts that has done most to cloud and befog biological thought for the last century and so? As Vernon³ says, teleology is “an error which it was the whole endeavour of the Darwinian theory to avoid.”

The other point on which I presume to differ with “Keridon” is in his assertion that mind is not “an entity” and his disparagement of “metaphysical thimble-rigging.” Metaphysics is an essential preliminary to any rational discussion of philosophical problems. Mr. Robert Arch’s recent remark⁴ that there is “little ground for quarrelling between science, stripped of redundant assumptions, and metaphysics, freed from theological axe-grinding,” is profoundly true. With reference to dogmatic Materialism, like dogmatic Atheism, it is, to quote the greatest of all scientists, “as utterly devoid of justification as the most baseless of theological dogmas.”⁵ And Huxley’s position is as valid to-day as it has ever been—no scientific fact nor philosophic conception can refute it. To make the assumption that matter and energy (and how many knows exactly what these are?) are the sole primary realities

is completely unjustifiable—equally so is “Keridon’s” remark that mind is “not an entity” because it can be dormant during sleep or anæsthesia. Would “Keridon” deny that energy is an “entity” because it can remain for years in a stagnant condition in a dried seed? The mystery of the *ultimate nature* of consciousness and of life is impenetrable—all we can say is that, in our experience, they appear to be attributes possessed by certain extremely complex organic material systems which we are at present unable to analyse. But as to the *ultimate nature* of the molecules that form the units of these systems we are unable to dogmatize. They are merely hypothetical names for the analytic units of certain elements of our conscious experience. And the external wranglings of Materialist and Idealist could be at once settled if we adopt Huxley’s advice to “strike out the propositions about which neither controversialist does or can know anything, and there is nothing left for them to quarrel about.”

I have only one further remark to make, and that is, I regret if I have appeared unduly controversial, or if I have wounded the philosophic susceptibilities of anyone, but it does seem to me that these fundamental matters should be discussed in the honest and straightforward way of open debate, the sovereign antiseptic of light that will surely destroy all the germs of unreason that lurk within!

EPHPIATHIA.

Correspondence.

MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—Could you allow me a few lines in answer to “M. B.,” *vide* his criticism of my letter on “Materialism”? I stated in my letter that I preferred the word “Rationalism” to “Materialism,” and the above gentleman does not agree with me. As from my point of view Rationalism, if it does not express all natural laws or all phenomena, would serve as an apt word and ready current to meet the pending discoveries in the problems of the universe. “Rationalism,” Arthur Buttler says, “attempts to get rid entirely of any alien elements and to exhibit a matter or object opposed if necessary to both mind and spirit.” Or, in a word, to express something revolutionary—when discovered—to our present knowledge and phenomena. I submit there is a something, not yet apparent to the scientific world which has its basis of origin in something too incomprehensible and foreign for our present senses to understand or to investigate, and which is neither energy, mind, nor spirit. Not spirit I said, and of no application to the supernatural. I want a word for this. To-day science is on the verge of a discovery that will startle the universe. An additional sense development in scientific men is evolving for us to perceive and realize this new wonder. To wit, only this expanding vision will solve the problem of ether—if it is something? And as to the word Rationalism to define this new something.....till we find an amendment. A. Buttler says, further, that “Rationalism attempts to explain the world in terms of certain acquired or newly-apprehended truths from which all particular and subsequent modern truths or disclosures are derived.” But I canvas for the coinage of an apt word to express that something, pending disclosures alien to our orthodox ideas of current phenomena. WALTER BIRKS.

SIR,—I am sorry I misunderstood “Medicus,” this no doubt being due to the fact that I take the subject rather seriously, and do not look for subtle wit. My position therefore remains unquestioned, and, I repeat, the impression of an object is identical with that object which I have illustrated by means of a gramophone. The question of identity and similarity is very much

¹ Italics mine.

² Italics mine.

³ *General Physiology*, Lee’s Translation, 1899, p. 318.

⁴ *Literary Guide*, March, 1926.

⁵ Huxley, *The Physical Basis of Life*.

to the point, and more so because it was he who suggested that I was possibly confused with these terms, which I emphatically deny. Will "Medicus" be good enough to show that my argument is unsound, instead of hovering about it, like a fly over a flypaper? When I do contradict myself or become involved, then is the time to offer me advice about it. Reiteration of "sound sense" does not in any way show my point of view to be "unsound sense." Again I will point out that objects in general may be similar and that the impressions of them may be similar. But the particular object and the particular impression of it are identical. I regret I am unable to put the point of view clearer or in simpler language.

It is indeed gratifying to know I have found agreement on fundamentals with "Keridon," and I sincerely hope in a while we shall agree on "Mind"; in fact, I feel confident of this. Let us not forget that *Mind is a word which stands for or represents something*. I will put the definition in different words, but before doing so, I would like to comment on "Keridon's" interpretation of it. I agree that my definition appears to place mind in the environment, but really it does not. If carefully examined, "Mind is the reaction to the action of the environment, etc.," only expresses an action through the medium of mind; it presupposes the existence of Mind. The same applies to the second interpretation, to which I might add, that it appears that mind has priority to environment, instead of *vice versa*.

Mind is the registered impressions of the environment in general. These impressions are possible lines or avenues for the expenditure of internal energy (gravitant energy) when reacting upon the environment in general. All energy takes the line of least resistance determined by the contending energy; and in general with humans, mind is the controlling energy. The greater the experience, the more numerous the lines of reaction, and therefore the finer the quality of mind. It is not the mind that acts, but the internal energy; mind being the avenue for its expenditure.

Mind has evolved; it had a beginning; and therefore is only external from the point of view of the race. Incipient life and mind arose when a compound was originated by the conflicting energies of nature (gravitant and radiant energy) that was susceptible of being affected by the environment in general. Through ages of time, the action of gravitant and radiant energies, or in other words, the law of internal repetition (heredity) and external repetition (variation) upon compounds, plants, and animals, results in man. From now on development is not biological, but psychical, development and proper use of the mind; that is to say, of experience individual and experience of the race, culminating in the most economical expenditure of energy, through social equilibrium. I think "Keridon" will agree that the nomenclature of psychical phenomena obscures somewhat that for which they stand. Different forms of the expenditure of energy are given different names, such as thought, reasoning, abstraction, etc., which makes the matter appear very difficult. These particulars are explicable in terms of the expenditure of energy.

A. S. E. PANTON.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON MARCH 25, 1926.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted and the pass-book produced.

New members were received for Bethnal Green, Plymouth, and West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported that invitations for the Conference had been received from Manchester and Birmingham, but, unfortunately, in both towns, since the invitations had been received, it had become difficult to obtain a suitable hall at a moderate expenditure, and

until further information was to hand, it was impossible to take the vote of the Branches. Further arrangements were left, therefore, in the hands of the President and Secretary, and in the meantime it was resolved that all Notices of Motion for the Agenda must reach the Office by April 19.

Further reference was made to a legacy under which the Society would benefit later, but details at present are not sufficiently advanced to issue a fuller report.

Good audiences were reported at the Century Theatre on March 21, and also at Mr. Cohen's lectures at Ashton, Bolton, and Plymouth.

It was reported that bookings for Mr. Whitehead's tour were nearly complete, and that no further application could be received after April 12.

Other routine matters were dealt with and the meeting closed.

E. M. VANCE,

General Secretary.

N.B.—Branch Secretaries are requested to note the final date upon which notices of motion for the Agenda can be received at this office.

North London Branch N.S.S.

Mr. Leonard Ebury's rather virulent attack upon Birth Control last Sunday elicited a lively discussion in which Mr. Kerr, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Saville, Mr. Eagar, Mr. Cutner, and Miss Daniels took part. There was a better attendance than we have had for some time. This evening Mr. Combes, a member of the Electricity Committee of the St. Pancras Borough Council, will give us some interesting information on electricity undertakings.—K. B. K.

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. Howell Smith, B.A., "The Risen Saviour."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. F. L. Combes, "An Electricity Undertaking—Some Amazing Facts."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY.—No meeting.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Mr. H. Constable, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S.—No meeting. Members and friends please note.

FREETHINKER wants situation near London; life gardener; abstainer; references.—H. H., 5 Hillside Road, Stamford Hill, N.15.

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The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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