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Views and Opinions.

Myth and Miracle.

Readers of Gibbon will remember a famous passage in which he comments on the ignorance of the Pagan world concerning the wonderful happenings which are said to have accompanied the rise of Christianity. The passage is at the close of the fifteenth chapter, and with tremendous effect it follows one in which he depicts the credulity and the lack of learning of the early Christians. Then he goes on to say:—

But how shall we excuse the supine inattention of the pagan and philosophic world to those evidences which were presented by the hand of omnipotence, not to their reason, but to their senses? During the age of Christ, of his apostles, and of their first disciples, the doctrine which they preached was confirmed by innumerable prodigies. The lame walked, the blind saw, the sick were healed, the dead were raised, demons were expelled, and the laws of nature were frequently suspended for the benefit of the Church. But the sages of Greece and Rome turned aside from the awful spectacle, and pursuing the ordinary occupations of life and study, appeared unconscious of any alteration in the moral or physical government of the world. Under the reign of Tiberius the whole earth, or at least a celebrated province of the Roman Empire, was involved in a preternatural darkness of three hours. Even this miraculous event which ought to have excited the wonder, the curiosity, and the devotion of mankind, passed without notice in an age of science and history. It happened during the lifetime of Seneca and the elder Pliny, who must have experienced the immediate effects, or received the earliest intelligence, of the prodigy. Each of these philosophers, in a laborious work, has recorded all the great phenomena of nature—earthquakes, meteors, comets, and eclipses—which his indefatigable curiosity could collect. Both the one and the other have omitted to mention the greatest phenomenon to which the mortal eye has been witness since the creation of the globe.

No one has ever put in a more telling manner the downright absurdity of the Christian story as told in the New Testament. The only possible alternative to dismissing it as so many absurd legends is that the events recorded were of such a commonplace and usual character that no one troubled about them any more than they would about the rising of the

sun. The idea that such events could happen in a province of the Roman Empire without having the eyes of the whole world fixed upon them is only one degree less absurd than the Christian story itself.

* * *

The Fallacy of "Evidence."

As a matter of fact, as mere stories they were very common, and their telling could excite no greater comment among the educated Romans or other civilized people, than would the belief in lucky or unlucky days, or in fairies among ourselves. There were quite a number of killed and resurrected saviours, there were virgin births galore, miracles were worked by travelling fakirs wherever ignorance was great enough to give them a livelihood. Why should a Roman philosopher record an alleged event as occurring in Judea, when he could find similar events alleged to have happened in almost any part of the Empire? It was only in after years when Christianity had gained full control, that the question of the production of evidence could arise. And then, as every student knows, Christian writers were faced with the position stated by Gibbon, namely, that a series of events which should have challenged the attention of the whole known world were passed in almost complete silence. And the "almost" is in itself a concession, for there is hardly one of the very few alleged testimonies—outside the New Testament—which have not been challenged as either having been deliberately manufactured by the Christians themselves, or as referring to existence of a name and a sect that had existence apart from, and even prior to, the New Testament story. No sane person can really believe that any actual evidence for these stories could possibly exist. What evidence could there be for such a thing as a virgin birth? The only one who could know was the mother herself, and her testimony is hardly conclusive. Does anyone really believe that the dead were brought out of their graves, or that the other miracles of the New Testament actually happened? And if one believes, with the whole of science, that the laws of nature are uniform and constant what is the use of debating whether there is or is not evidence of their actuality? The civilized, educated mind should have got beyond that stage.

* * *

Josephus and Jesus.

Among the evidences of the actual existence of Jesus Christ is the much-discussed passage in Josephus, and readers of the press will have noted of late a number of articles dealing with the discovery of an alleged hitherto unknown manuscript of the *Antiquities of Josephus*, which is said to cast light upon the life of Christ, and to support the authenticity of the passage which has been very generally surrendered as an interpolation. All that has appeared in this country up to the present are articles dealing with the discovery, and whether when the text is published and it has been submitted to close

criticism it will turn out to be one of the many "discoveries" that have been made, only to be dismissed as worthless, remains to be seen. On the face of it, it is puzzling to see why, because a MSS. written in a Slavonic dialect of the Middle Ages differs from the accepted Greek version in certain passages, it should be taken as an earlier and a more authentic version. Why not a later one? We know beyond the possibility of question that Christians have never hesitated to interpolate and falsify passages when it was to the interest of their religion to do so, and it may well be—granted the genuineness of the MSS.—that we have here only another example of the Christian art of "Lying for the greater glory of God." Besides, the rejection of the famous passage in *Josephus* does not rest merely upon the score of its late date, but also upon the consideration that the whole passage as it stands is so impudently concocted that it bears its spurious character upon its face.

* * *

"An Impudent Forgery."

From letters received from readers we gather that a few words on the *Josephus* passage would be of interest to many. Here, then, is the whole passage as it stands:—

About this time was Jesus, a wise man, if at least it be right to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, on the information of the first men among us, had punished him on the cross, those who loved him from the first did not cease to love him. For he appeared to them again the third day alive; the divine prophets having spoken both these and numberless other wonders about him. The Tribe of Christians so named from him, have not ceased to exist until the present time.

It is an indication of the small critical ability that was permissible in Christian ranks that such a passage could ever have been accepted as genuine. The first man to cite that passage is Eusebius, and his quality as a truth-teller is of the poorest kind. *Josephus* was a strictly orthodox Jew, and for a strict Jew to refer to Jesus as the Messiah verges on the impossible. It would have stamped him as one of the followers of Jesus. The expression, "Have not ceased to exist until the present time," marks the passage as having been written some considerable time after the alleged date of the death of Jesus. But *Josephus* wrote before A.D. 70, and the phrase, while impossible to a man writing so near to the alleged death of Jesus, was quite natural in the mouth of a clumsy forger, such as the Christians so often showed themselves to be, and writing in the third century. And if anyone will take the trouble to connect the passage in *Josephus* immediately preceding the one quoted, with the one immediately following, it will be seen that the suspected passage has no connection with what has gone before or with what comes afterwards. There is small wonder that a critic such as De Quincey described the passage as an "impudent forgery."

* * *

A World of Myth.

There is another, and an important aspect of the subject with which we will deal next week. But for the present it is well for Christians to bear in mind what is the extent of the references to Jesus Christ among his—if he ever lived—Pagan contemporaries. A few lines in Pliny, Tacitus, *Josephus*, etc., the whole of which might go into a column of the *Free-thinker*. How does the Christian account for it? Mind, we are not dealing with a mere man, a teacher who might well have been ignored, as in our times

teachers have been ignored. On the theory of orthodox Christianity we are dealing with a person who came into existence in a miraculous manner, about whose life and death wonderful events gathered. To destroy him, while even an infant, a massacre of children was ordered. At his death the world was plunged into darkness, and after he had been publicly executed he arose again from the dead. And yet no one knows anything about the man and the events except a Church which came into existence some time afterwards. How a Christian can reflect upon these things and not realize that he is in the region of pure myth puzzles one. The most striking character the world has ever known, his birth, life, and death, accompanied by such wonders and miracles as the world had never before seen, and yet those who were in intimate touch with the place at which these things are said to have occurred are quite ignorant of them! That outdoes all that religion has ever placed before us in the name of miracle.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

Plain Speaking in the Pulpit.

ON Wednesday, June 2, the Dean of St. Paul's delivered a most outspoken discourse in St. Anne's, Gresham Street. The very title he adopted is exceedingly arresting, namely, "What does Asia think of Christian Europe?" It is such a sermon as scarcely any other clergyman would have dared to preach. Dr. Inge admits, however, that he took up this "very difficult subject" in response to a definite request, and he supposes that it was suggested by "the World Call to the Churches," concerning which we have been reading and hearing so much during the last few months. Of course, all well read and unprejudiced people know perfectly well that the so-styled World Call to the Churches is nothing but the vain dream of the Churches themselves. Dean Inge affirms that "the first thing we have to realize is that the East is not calling to Europe for more light. We sometimes suppose that it is, but it is not so. On the whole, the settled opinion in the East is that the less they have to do with Western ideas, Western thought and Western policy the better for the East." Naturally, the Dean is not quite free, though much freer than most of his brethren, from the usual Christian prejudice. He, too, imagines that the West has something to give eminently deserving of acceptance by the East, which may be true of something other than its religion. The Dean is as fully aware as the Bishop of Durham that Christianity has met with the very opposite of a brilliant success in the West; and yet he advocates the sending of Christian missionaries uninvited to the East, and that in spite of the following grave statement in his sermon: "We had better get it firmly into our minds that at present we Europeans are not wanted in Asia, neither our customs nor religion." If, therefore, we, unasked, send missionaries to the East it only signifies that we intend to force our religion upon Eastern people, however gently and politely the attempt may be made.

Curiously enough the Dean's sermon, as reported in the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 10, abounds with extremely puzzling expressions. He asserts, for example, that Indians do not dislike and despise the Christian missionaries, and as proof of the truth of the assertion, states that "a Hindu gentleman said the other day to a missionary: 'Sir, we Indians are all agreed that the missionary is the least objectionable type of European.'" Surely, that cannot be

regarded as equivalent to an admission that all Indians like and admire missionaries. As a matter of fact, Dr. Inge is by no means ignorant of the truth that in the East generally they are looked down upon and in many instances vigorously denounced, as the following passage clearly shows:—

The missionaries are accused of certain faults. They are accused of showing airs of superiority, of general sympathy with their own countrymen, with the ruling race; and of great ignorance of the old Eastern religions. Those three faults have all existed in the past, they all exist now, but they are much less than they were. Take one example. What does the Indian think of our denunciation of the Hindu caste system, when he knows that in South Africa an Indian is not allowed even to enter a white church? Of course, we have listened to very severe indictments of our whole civilization from educated natives. They have seen that Europeans are the most pugnacious, the most aggressive, the most autocratic people in the world. They have seen them come from their own country, trample on the rights of natives, take away their liberty, and establish their own form of government. They have seen them quarrelling fiercely among themselves. The lessons of the Great War have not been lost upon them, when Christian nations attacked and tore each other to pieces with organized and scientific fury, which is quite unknown in Asia. They also have the unedifying spectacle of our religious divisions—Christianity split into a dozen sects, all distrusting and disliking each other.

That is plain speaking with a vengeance; but the most surprising thing about it is that it occurred in a Christian pulpit in the so-called Christian city of London. The Dean significantly adds: "Those things, I think, are quite enough to make us understand why it is that Christian missions are not more successful in Asia." And yet, marvellous to record, the very reverend gentleman, after making such damning admissions, is still a believer in and advocate of Christian missions to the East. He wishes to see all the nations of the world brought to the foot of the Cross, but forgets that it cannot honestly be said of any country in Christendom that it has ever arrived at or been brought to that mythical spot. The story of Abbé Pierre Froment, as related by Zola in the famous *Trilogy of Lourdes, Rome, and Paris*, is suggestive of many things, but chiefly of this, that Christianity utterly fails to satisfy the needs of any thinking person's entire being. Pierre started well in Paris, and was greatly admired and loved for his glowing saintliness and uprighteousness of character as he performed his priestly functions. But ere long his reason rebelled against his faith, which he completely lost. With what ardour he wished and sought to recover it! He went to Lourdes and Rome an unbelieving priest, and returned to Paris still an unbeliever, and still discharging his duties at the altar, but enduring the torments of the damned for his hypocrisy. At length, through the influence of Marie, the young woman to whom his brother was engaged, he found courage to discard his priestly garment and appear among his fellows as an ordinary human being. One day he happened to meet a much older priest who had always been his devoted friend, but who now, seeing him without his cassock, was horrified, and exclaimed: "Oh, my son, so you have fallen into the awful state I feared! I never mentioned it, but I felt that God had withdrawn from you. Ah! nothing could wound my heart so cruelly as this." Pierre was unspeakably grieved at losing his elderly friend, but Abbé Rose was powerless to win his young friend back to the faith he had lost. The old man said, "If dogmas worry you, content yourself with the Gospel, and even of that retain merely the promise of salvation

through charity—" Whereupon Pierre launched out into the deep of his new-found faith in humanity, and declared with vehemence:—

The trial has been made, human salvation cannot be effected by charity, nothing but justice can accomplish it. That is the gathering cry which is going up from every nation. For nearly two thousand years now the Gospel has proved a failure. There has been no redemption; the sufferings of mankind are every whit as great and unjust now as they were when Jesus came. And thus the Gospel is now but an abolished code, from which society can only draw things that are troublous and hurtful. Men must free themselves from it.....The theory of original sin, that terrible heredity reviving with each creature born into the world, made no allowance as science does for the corrective influences of education, circumstances, and environment. There could be no more pessimistic conception of man than this one which devotes him to the Devil from the instant of his birth, and pictures him as struggling against himself until the instant of his death.....For eighteen hundred years Christianity has been hampering the march of mankind towards truth and justice. And mankind will only resume its evolution on the day when it abolishes Christianity.

Thus we see that Christianity has done infinitely more and worse than fail to redeem the world, it has also committed incalculable crimes against the human race. When it first came to power in the Roman Empire it ruthlessly stopped the clock of progress, and then for many centuries kept on turning it further and further back, "killing the flesh, killing reason, destroying some guilty energy in each and every passion."

The above facts Dean Inge cannot disprove, for they are found written down on the undisputed page of history. Dean Milman did not hesitate to acknowledge the historicity of many of them in his well-known *History of Latin Christianity*, a work which undoubtedly robbed him of every chance of further promotion in the Church. Dean Inge is an exceptionally able and resourceful writer, and, when he likes, an equally clever critic; but we are persuaded that he is wholly mistaken in the following passage:—

There is a common ethical and religious ideal influencing the whole civilized world, and each people tries to find it in its own religion, and does find it there. Uncongenial elements are quietly dropped.

It is true that a humanizing influence is at work throughout the civilized and semi-civilized world, but the religious element in it is slowly but steadily weakening. Except in the Catholic Church and among the Anglo-Catholics in this country, belief in the supernatural and the miraculous is certainly on the decline, and the gradually rising common ethical standard is the result not of religious influence, but of the spread of scientific knowledge and literary criticism. The overwhelming majority of the population of this country has become thoroughly non-religious without lowering in the least the ethical standard of its life. People are learning to attach its due value to bodily health, and without a doubt good health has a morally uplifting effect upon those who enjoy it. Without health there can be no true happiness, and without happiness life is an intolerable burden. Health also tends to engender the spirit of justice and fair play among all sections of the community.

J. T. LLOYD.

The hired assassins of truth and enlightenment can easily be recognized despite their wrapping themselves in gowns and cowls.—*Schopenhauer*.

The Sham of a State Church.

Religion, everywhere present, as a warp running through the woof of human society.—*Herbert Spencer.*

The Bible is that great cord with which the people are bound. Cut this, and the mass will be more free to appreciate facts instead of faiths.—*Charles Bradlaugh.*

At a recent bye-election a Church of England parson made a speech in support of the Labour candidate, who happened to be an extremist. Speaking by the card, the clergyman expressed his sympathy with the miners, and his detestation of the ducal royalty owners, and finished up by saying it was the duty of every Christian present to support the candidate. At the end of the speech, a Freethinker, who was present, pointed out that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of the Anglican Church were among the biggest royalty owners in the country, and it was hypocritical to denounce the dukes and ignore the bishops. Further, that the parson did not really represent his own State Church in this matter, and that only a mere handful of the 25,000 Anglican clergy were sympathetic to Democracy.

The clergyman hotly denied the charge against the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and hurriedly left the platform. The chairman refused any further discussion, and the meeting was left in blissful innocence regarding the political activities of the so-called National Church.

One expects innocence of such matters on the part of the average elector, because so many of them complete their elementary education at their fourteenth year. But such filmy-eyed innocence on the part of a priest concerning the income of the Church of which he is an official is certainly astonishing.

The Church of England draws £300,000 yearly from the County of Durham alone in mining royalties. The Church is also a landlord on a large scale, owning an enormous amount of property in different parts of the country. The Church also takes tithes, and gets special relief from rates. A Parliamentary Blue Book, issued in 1891, showed that the Church is a capitalist, and that the annual value of ecclesiastical endowments was £5,469,171, exclusive of modern private benefactions, which then amounted to £284,000 a year.

Doubtless, the Archbishop of Canterbury had all these things in mind when he waved an olive-branch in the thick of the General Strike. Not quite realizing which way the cat was going to jump, His Grace thought, being a North Countryman, that it was his bounden duty to safeguard the Church's interests, and his own bread and butter. Unfortunately for the canny successor of Saint Augustine, there were no newspapers, and the ecclesiastical wire-pulling did not receive the notice it deserved. Few people noticed the Church's belated gesture towards Democracy, and fewer cared. It was too much like a child trundling a hoop among the soldiers on the outskirts of a battlefield.

The plain, blunt truth is that the Church of England is an anachronism and a misnomer in the twentieth century. True, it still remains the official form of religion, and occupies a very favoured position. But its Free Church rivals are numerous and powerful, and together can count more worshippers than the Established Church. If the Anglican Church were disestablished and disendowed, it would sink to a lower level than the Wesleyan body.

Elsewhere one knows what a Church stands for, but not so with the so-called Church of England. You say this obeys implicitly the Pope of Rome and the College of Cardinals; that is faithful to the Westminster Confession; and others yield homage to the

title-deeds of their particular Church. But ask what the Church of England stands for and who can tell you. One section is Protestant, and another is Catholic. One points to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, whilst another laughs in his dainty lawn sleeves at the simplicity of laymen.

The Church of England is different from all the other Churches. It concerns us all, for the legal theory of this country makes us all parties to the constitution of the Church. If it were in the United States, or the British Colonies, where no such thing as a State Church exists, we need not care a pin what humbug or hypocrisy went on in a particular church, for it would be none of our affair. But the legislation of Parliament makes us all partners in this Church of England, and compels us to be, as it were, privy to its chicaneries and dishonesty.

The Anglican Church is undemocratic, and is entwined in our national life like a poisonous plant. Consider the watchwords of Democracy: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The Church stands for very opposite things. Their clergy are a caste apart from their fellows, with different dress and still more different ideals. Ecclesiastical law is a survival from the Middle Ages, yet Church canons are still in force, except they conflict with the laws of the land, and the courts have decided that they are binding on the clergy. These canons are out-of-date and undemocratic. The first dozen canons are aimed at Non-conformists, who number more than half the religious population. All but one of these canons ends with a curse, a distinguishing mark of vertebrate Christianity. If you deny the royal supremacy in Church affairs you are cursed. If you deny that the Anglican Church teaches the doctrine of Christ you are cursed. If you say that the Book of Common Prayer is out of harmony with the Bible you are cursed. And so on, and so forth, in the true and historic spirit of Christian charity, which has caused human suffering wherever it has been preached. But that the law of the land overrides these canons, everybody who refused to attend church should be cursed, and their names read out in churches.

Priests are like the Bourbons, they learn nothing and forget nothing. And Anglican priests are just the same as the others. All have the taint of the medicine men of savage countries. It is a grievous and a bitter thing that in a civilized country boys and girls, silly women, and ignorant people, should be taught such nonsense in language which leads them to believe, and is carefully calculated to that sorry end, that millions of their fellow countrymen are outcast. It is an affront not only to the spirit of Democracy, but to humanity itself. For no one can be a loyal churchman without renouncing his mental and moral freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of a petticoated priest, trained in the traditions of the sixth century. Priests, from His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury to the youngest and greenest of curates, claim to be a caste apart, and sacred persons. Unless a man accepts them and their dogmas, without doubt he is accursed and shall perish everlastingly. That is Anglican Church teaching for the masses, tempered with polite reservations for the classes. Is not this church a survival from less civilized times, and a hindrance to the wheels of Progress?

MIMNERMUS.

After we are dead it matters not to the life we have led in ourselves what people may say of us, but it matters much to the life we lead in others, and this should be our true life.—*Samuel Butler.*

Negro Spirituals.

THERE is a quaint charm in the silly language of old negro songs. There is fascination in some of the old tunes. The mere repetition, very wearisome to a musical ear beyond a certain limit, is in itself an all-sufficing joy to the African love of elementary rhythm.

From time to time during the last hundred years these old tunes were certain of a passing popularity. To the young they breathe the air of novelty. To the old they bring back past memories. The pitiful piety of the choruses, the unchanging childishness of the theology of the verses, and the crude intellectual conceptions of the ideas must have made irresistible appeal to the evangelical denominations in England as well as America.

It is a little surprising, however, to find a tendency in certain circles to-day to link together these "Negro Spirituals" and the struggles for the emancipation of negro slaves. The connection is, of course, solely in the imagination of the present-day sentimentalist. There is, of course, room for sentiment in contemplating a race in chains, and realizing, as the student of history must realize, that while efforts from without were strenuously made for the abolition of slavery, the slaves themselves were sunk in superstition and submission.

The sentimentalist might well weep remembering that the negro slaves mostly "belonged" to the very churches which opposed abolition and persecuted and boycotted abolitionists. The great Methodist denomination with which so many negroes were connected was one of the worst enemies of emancipation. George Whitefield was as eloquent in justifying the sale of human bodies as he was in converting souls to Methodism.

Mrs. Beecher Stowe records that the Georgia Methodist Annual Conference resolved: "It is the sense of this Conference, that slavery as it exists in the United States is not a moral evil." Actually, she says, Methodism was a greater enemy to emancipation than even Presbyterianism!

In the Northern States alone there were over 100,000 slaves, and 10,000 slaveholders worshipping as regular members of the Methodist church. It is not necessary to discriminate between the churches, there were no Christian churches at all on the side of emancipation. The Friends, or Quakers, deserve every credit, and if they can be called a church, persecuted as they were by every church that had the power to do so, they are the only exception, the only church that ever raised a voice against this foul trade.

Thomas Paine and William Lloyd Garrison were the real authors of the liberation of negro slaves in America. "American Christianity," said the children of Lloyd Garrison in their biography of their father, "American Christianity is the main pillar of American slavery."

Thomas Paine wrote so convincingly in March, 1775, against slavery, that a few weeks later the first American Anti-Slavery Society became an accomplished fact.

Mr. Cohen's handbook on *Christianity and Slavery* contains many details of what slavery meant, and how religion, not merely stood helplessly by, but actively defended and supported the institution as a divine ordinance. If the Bible is true, they were justified in their slander on deity.

"Negro Spirituals" are in essence religious songs taught and sung for the express purpose of keeping men's thoughts fixed on a spiritual world. Not only was education denied the negro (Mr. Cohen's book

quotes proofs that to educate a negro was a felony), but, in addition, religious forces were requisitioned to drug him into a state of contentment.

To die fighting for freedom is infinitely nobler than submitting to enslavement. The chains of law and property might be examined till a weak link were found, but the natural superstitions of the negro-soul made easy the task of the parson in adding spiritual shackles, inescapable because intangible and mystical.

There are, of course, amongst these songs a few beautiful human touches: "Swing low, sweet chariot," for instance, but very seldom do they take one away from a barbaric religious atmosphere. Several of these "spirituals" refer to the Israelites in Egypt:—

Tell ole Pharaoh
Let my people go,

and the well-known

You want your sins forgiven
You'd better be prayin'
To turn back Pharaoh's army.
Hallelu!

To anybody steeped in religious fervour the mere fact that certain of these songs relate in a sense to the traditions of an Egyptian slavery akin to their own, has no bearing at all on any material conditions. Everything is "spiritualized." All the pious slave-owning ruffians chaining, selling, and flogging men, women, and children, could sing, preach, or pray with sanctimonious sincerity about the good Moses and the wicked Pharaoh. Religious "proprietors" could even beget sons and daughters to be branded and whipped and sold, while they prated prettily about "Our Father," and "Love one another." The main point about the slave songs of "Pharaoh" was that the "spiritual" Israelite would win against Egyptian slavery in another world than this. It helped the oppressed to submit to oppression in this world because the "Golden Chariot" and the "Golden Slippers," etc., are like all parables, "a heavenly story with no earthly meaning."

"All God's Chillun got a Robe," no doubt, but it is only to be worn when the harps and the crowns are distributed "hereafter."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Sermons in Germs.

It is related of Michael Bakunin that "he found it increasingly more necessary, every year, to neglect the social revolution in order to attend to his asthma." A somewhat similar reason accounts for the long absence of any article from my pen in these columns—a matter for commiseration or congratulation according to how you view it. For my part it has been uncomfortable to say the least. To lose—in the grim battle with invading bacilli—all desire for self-expression, is, for the mentally active, as disconcerting as would be sexual impotence in the full-blooded; but having recovered in some little degree the "itch to write" I think I may take it that the bacilli are not having it all their own way. In spite of the well-meant efforts of several physicians—all of them Scotsmen—I am still here. I haven't the slightest doubt about it. So completely do I rely upon the testimony of consciousness in the matter, that I would scorn the practical test of the old lady in the nursery rhyme who doubted her personal identity when her petticoat was feloniously abstracted, and who reflected:—

If I be as I think I be,
I've a little dog at home and he'll know me.

Yes! I am undoubtedly here. "I, myself, I," as Balfour would say. It would be quite idle of me to

pretend that this is a circumstance at which I do not unfeignedly rejoice. Assuredly, there may well come a time when I shall bid myself good-bye with the utmost relief, but at present—like the old French Marchioness in Anatole Frances' novel—"I have no desire to see if God improves upon acquaintance."

Great as is my aversion for germs, I, nevertheless, have no wish to ignore certain beneficent aspects of their work. Justice—even for baccilli. There is really no knowing what poor Bakunin might have got up to if it hadn't been for his asthma: he might have established another *Internationale*, or drawn up an ethico-political scheme for the regeneration of humanity. There is a certain grim comfort in the thought that even a Mussolini is liable to be attacked by the germs of pleuro-pneumonia on the eve of a *grand coup*. For my own part I protest that I haven't the remotest desire to set anybody's affairs in order—not even my own. And here, it seems to me, the germs lacked discrimination. Now there's a fellow in the flat above me—

But soft awhile! Did I not purpose a little while ago, writing a series of profound (or what were intended to be profound) articles on the Materialist Conception of History? Did I not further toy with the idea of writing what the journalists term "another powerful article" on The Task of Secularism? Surely, the germs did better than they knew. It is inconceivable that a gentleman of my notorious modesty—I, who in all my life have never done anything more dangerous than cultivate a few million baccilli—should start expounding human history and pointing the way of life. In the days of adolescence it would have been a different matter entirely: then—like Bottom the weaver—I would have roared so that it would have done your hearts good to have heard me. But now— At any rate, the germs were taking no chances.

I should like to say by way of explanation that I still regard the Materialist Conception of History as brilliantly illuminative. As a method among methods of studying social history it is still the most fertile in results, if it be not applied too narrowly. Again, I have few doubts as to what constitutes the Task of Secularism, nor have I any doubts as to the urgent need for the message of Secularism in our day and generation. But I also have a lively sense of the cussedness of human nature. I no longer subscribe to the optimistic view of what may be termed my pioneer days that if only we can get people to *think* all the rest will be added unto us. What if they have no desire to think? Or what if, having got them to think, they don't think as you want them to? I recollect, in this connection, once meeting a gentleman whom I regarded as a likely convert to the Cause. He was a chemist: a man of education and undoubted intelligence, who was turning his attention to the religious problem. I lost no opportunity of expounding Secularism to him; I bombarded him with facts and figures, and nearly submerged him with eloquence. So delighted was I with the effect I had made upon him that I lent him a parcel of Free-thought literature guaranteed to turn him into a thoroughgoing Atheist with knobs on. When eventually I called for the return of my literature, he thanked me warmly, said they contained much that was quite new to him, and added, "The more I think about it, the more I think what a lot there is in *faith*, don't you?" Fortunately, he had some *sal volatile* on the premises!

I am occasionally asked by pathetic souls anxious to be at peace with themselves what I think is the meaning of life. I don't know why I should be presumed to be in the confidence of the universe. I feel like the gentleman with the stutter who was asked

the way to Wembley: "Why—out of all the crowd—do they pick on me?" Perhaps it is that, having been assured that my days are not likely to be long in the land which the Lord my God hath given me, they regard my proximity to the inevitable as, in some occult way, lending weight and dignity to my thoughts. Herein, they are disappointed; for my answer is invariably a lemon. If there be a meaning to life I haven't the foggiest notion what it is. If I *had*, I doubt if I should be the happier—holes would still continue to come in my socks with the same unflinching regularity.

Really, there is a plentiful lack of humour as well as modesty in the intense eagerness with which these earnest souls question the universe. Mr. Gerald Bullett, for instance, cannot even visit a night club without meditating on life and its meaning. I confess that I, too, find the atmosphere of night clubs depressing, and I suggest that if Mr. Bullett would spend his evenings nursing the baby he would not be tortured by the desire to know exactly what the universe intended doing with him. The most obliging universe would have a difficulty in satisfactorily disposing of Mr. Bullett, whilst a really intelligent universe would have hesitated before introducing him. Nevertheless, I delight in his aberrations, but, like so many other of life's pleasures, would not think of attempting to justify them.

I fear I am one of those individuals who are largely content to take life as they find it, and no questions asked. I have yet to discover that they who are for ever knocking at the door of ultimate reality ever gain anything but bruised fingers—and I am woefully tender about the knuckles. And if ever I grow ambitious and desire to lead humanity into the promised land, the germs in their wisdom remind me of my limitations, of humanity's limitations, and thus do they feelingly persuade me what I am. But fortunately, like Anatole France, I do not desire to be a God, I do not feel within me the stuff of which a God is made, and "I cling to my imperfections as to the very essence of my being." There is much sound philosophy in taking things as one finds them. And what things one finds, to be sure! Have we found friendships, interests, sympathies—Love? Then have we found the keenest delights that human life is capable of realizing—a God could not offer more. But what if we find germs? Aye, there's the rub! But here again nature has its compensations: for whilst the weak and foolish in their desire to place illusion 'twixt them and reality, are stung into asking for the meaning of it all, the wise man is content. He smiles. And his smile, though a trifle sad, is expressive of a deep inward peace; for he sees in germs, as in all nature, the happy omen of his own mortality.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

To Christians.

HERE, in the health and vigour of my mind,
Let these, my thoughts sincere, now represent
Well pondered views, which have my firm assent:
God is a chimera by priests designed
From primitive inventions, ill-defined
In brains unsuited to the argument.
Continuous change is ever permanent—
Necessity the master, deaf and blind.
Now when Death's kindly opiate has dulled
My groping, feeble senses in decay—
Do not construe whate'er I then may say
Into some flimsy form of recantation
Nor claim, with Christian lies, I have annulled
This virile, atheistic affirmation.

THOMAS C. FALCONER.

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of Bradford is a whole-hogger. He will have nothing to do with the modern Sunday, and condemns right out the publication of Sunday papers, motoring, golfing, excursions, walking, opening shops and concerts on Sunday. He advises Christians to work for extra State or Municipal powers in order to enforce the sanctity of the "Sabbath." If Bishop Perowne had his way there would be no business done outside his own Church, and everyone would be driven to attend there and trade. Men like Bishop Perowne are generally held up as good men. To our mind they are always a public nuisance, and often a public disaster. They represent a genuinely demoralizing influence, far worse than the recognized wrongdoer—who is often a comparatively harmless individual.

A man who follows an unusual profession has arrived in England. He is Mr. William Weston, the famous "spook" catcher of America. His occupation is that of "laying" ghosts that haunt stately mansions or ordinary houses. Mr. Weston, who claims to have run down hundreds of spooks, declares he does not believe in ghosts—they usually turn out to be practical jokers. The *Freethinker*, too, is a bit of a spook-hunter. During the past forty years it has freed the mind of thousands of people from fear of a celestial spectre. Its chief purpose is "laying" the triple-headed Christian Holy Bogey. That is why we think our Endowment Trust Fund is worthy of all our reader's attention.

Unhappily, the slum-dweller, the unemployed, and the sweated, do not appear to know that the Church is their champion, writes the Metropolitan Secretary of the Anglo-Catholic Congress. When they see the Church is really out to try to secure them homes, work, and a livelihood, perchance they will recognize her as such. Ah, when—there's much virtue in a "when." The Church has had nearly two thousand years to become the champion of the underdog. And she is still in the state of becoming. She has been too busy promising the people a heavenly mansion to spare time securing them a roof and four walls on earth.

A reverend gentleman, apparently hitting obliquely at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's proposed Betting Tax, declared that he feared there had been a revival of the doctrine, "The end justifies the means." That, said he, was a devilish doctrine, not a Christian one, for there were some means which no end would justify. After this gentleman has spoken let us listen to the Rev. R. C. Gillie pleading for Sunday observance. Sunday, said he, should be devoted to God, not man, and it should be everybody's day of rest. But, he added, Christians could not get the day of rest without restrictions as well as permissions. They did not wish to coerce other people; they left others free to do what they liked with their day of rest from the week's labour. But Christians did want to protect spiritual opportunities. Now, if that is not an argument based on "the end justifies the means," we should like to know just what it is. Note, too, the muddled logic. Everybody is free to enjoy Sunday as he or she may think fit; nevertheless there must be restrictions and prohibitions! And these Mr. Gillie justifies on the ground that they safeguard his Church's opportunities for business. It is a sad sight to see a shining light of Nonconformity turn Jesuit.

The Primitive Methodist Conference at Manchester before starting one session sang Whittier's hymn:—

Dear Lord, Father of mankind,
Forgive our foolish ways.

Our Christian friends certainly have cause to ask the Lord to forgive. And no doubt he will—"it is his trade," says Heine. But rational-minded men will find

it hard to do so. What our pious friends ought to ask the Lord to do is, to prevent them from having foolish ways. But if he did that they would cease to be Christians.

The Sunday-school, says the Rev. F. B. Meyer, is the Church caring for young life. In her schools the Church is endeavouring to fulfil the Lord's command, "Feed my lambs." Yes, but what fodder is she using? Feeding with the rank weeds of Christian doctrine may produce good Christian sheep, but what the world requires most is not mutton-minded humans. Its need is for lion-hearted thinkers.

There is much neglect among us (Anglo-Catholics) of the appeal we ought to be making to the minds of children in particular, complains a reader of the *Church Times*. Children are reasonable beings, and unless their minds are satisfied, they will ultimately throw off the practice of religion imposed upon them in the days of compulsory obedience. The result, he adds, of this neglect of teaching the young intellectually is that the adults have lost all desire to learn. This complaint comes ill from a defender of Catholic doctrines whose strongest appeal is to unreasoning belief and to authority. His notion of satisfying the intellect of the Faithful, both adult and adolescent, is to fill it with pseudo-logic and specious explanation. But whether our Anglo-Catholic and Romanist teachers prime the child's mind thus, or whether they neglect to do so, the one thing will result. The mind stuffed with Catholic "truth" loses all desire to learn quite ordinary truth. And here again we can see nothing for a priest to complain of.

At the Sunday Defence Congress Mr. Charles G. Ammon, M.P., who claimed to put the case for Sunday from the working man's view-point, spoke of the present discontent and unrest in the country. The ordinary man and woman, he said, was putting in a claim for an improved and rising standard of life. They were claiming a larger share in the distribution of the products of their labour, and were also claiming a larger share of leisure and of opportunities to give their attention to something beyond that which concerned the earning of their daily bread. The problem before the Churches was to teach people how to use their leisure to the best advantage of themselves and the community. It is really very good of the churches to concern themselves with the affairs of ordinary men and women; their concern, however, begins at the wrong end. Bearing in mind the fact that the churches have played no part in inciting the workers to make these various claims, and that they have done nothing whatever towards the achieving of what has so far been gained, the Churches' claim to teach the workers what to do with their hard-won leisure seems particularly impudent. If working men and women have had intelligence enough to secure what they have, we should say they have sense enough also to know what to do with their spare time. They will dispense with the officious advice of the parsons.

The Lord Chamberlain's declaration, at the Trocadero gathering of theatres, says the Secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society, "is an encouragement to all of us who love the quiet and sanctity of the Lord's Day." The good man's joy, however, has a dash of sorrow in it. For he lugubriously confesses that the Lord Chamberlain was immediately followed by two speakers who pleaded for Sunday theatres, and that there is no gain-saying the fact of there being a strong movement favouring the opening of amusement halls on Sunday. This encroachment on God's Day, says our godly friend, should be resolutely resisted by God's people. Behind the pleaders for Sunday theatres are powerful vested interests whose incentive is monetary gain. It therefore behoves us who realize this, he adds, to have the courage openly to say so, lest our fellow-countrymen be deceived into surrendering the hallowed day which has been such a blessing to our land.

The solemn cant of it all! There are not, of course, any powerful vested interests, with one eye on the collection-plate takings, at the back of this opposition to Sunday theatres—oh dear no! And how is there any courage needed to say what our friend has said? All that is required is a chunk of Christian bigotry large enough to make a narrow mind more intolerant than nature created it. Given that, the natural outcome will be protests against and prohibitions of other people's liberty of action. It is not courage which drives the bigot to protest and prohibit, but fear—primitive fear that somehow or other a jealous God will visit his displeasure upon the whole nation, so that the godly will inevitably suffer alike with the ungodly. Thus the modern Christian is seen to be not a whit superior mentally to his barbarous spiritual ancestors.

The President of the International Press Association of Japan, Mr. Matosada Zumoto, told the Rotary Club of Tokyo some plain truths about Christianity in a recent address, which is published in the March issue of *The Young East*. He said:—

I am a plain-spoken man, and so permit me to say frankly, without meaning offence to anybody, that a religion is not necessarily or always a factor making for peace. Unfortunately this is peculiarly true of Christianity. How many cruel wars have been fought in the name of Christianity? You will perhaps say that religious wars are already things of the past, even in the Occident. That may be so, at all events we all hope it is so. I am also ready to admit that there are a large number of religious people in Europe and America, some of them my personal friends, who are working hard in the interest of peace and understanding among nations. But when Christianity steps out of Christendom and comes into contact with people of other creeds, the result is not always conducive to peace and harmony. I mean by Christianity not the original teaching of Jesus, but the creeds and dogmas that now go by that name in Europe and America. Christianity, then, comes to Asia in a spirit of arrogant superiority and an attitude of narrow exclusiveness. Missionaries are sent out by the thousand and at great expense. So long as they confine themselves to language teaching, as so many do in Japan, their services are not unwelcome. But as religious teachers their presence is an implied insult to the great moral and religious forces that have built up our noble civilization.

It is too much to expect the supporters of Christian missions to appreciate this dignified rebuke to Christian arrogance and insolence, but others may not be quite so obtuse.

The following passages from the same address is also worth attention:—

They take it for granted that theirs is the only religion worth believing in. The Prophet of Arabia said: "Take my religion or I will kill you." The Christian missionary says in almost so many words: "Accept my God or perish." The missionary fails or refuses to see that the East has its own faith and philosophy which compares not unfavourably with those of the West, so that the East can get along very well in matters spiritual without any guidance from the West. Consequently the attempt of the West to thrust its religion upon us cannot fail to breed discord, ill-feeling, and strife.

It is, indeed, very unfortunate that the religion of the nations that now dominate the world happens to be a masterful, exclusive and imperialistic type. That religion, consequently, cannot be counted upon as a force making for harmony and peace in so far at least as the relations between the East and West are concerned.

On balance we should say that the Eastern nations would not have lost had they never heard the name of Christianity.

If the same energy used for Spiritualism had been concentrated on the invention of a sanitary dust-bin or a cure for hay-fever or sea-sickness no one would grudge it a medal. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has made a reputation as a writer of detective stories. He has called

creatures from the vasty deep of his imagination and they have come for the delight and amusement of thousands of readers. That was when he was using his imagination as an instrument. In the *Occult Review* Sir Arthur now writes as follows in a manner suggesting a mixture of Jeremiah and Cassandra: "I have every reason to believe that the human race is in danger, and that some great trial is coming to the world." Sir Arthur might guess again for a prophet must be a good guesser; in the meantime we suggest that the trial is not to the human race; it is a case where imagination is the master and on top of the writer.

The Bishop of London, whose walking exercise in Hyde Park has been so freely advertised, will have to hurry to overtake the Bishop of Birmingham. And as they say in the North, he "will an' all." Dr. Barnes runs his eyes over Church recruits and says: "Among our recruits there are too many youths of crude and unimaginative piety." And, as the following picture fits in the Freethought frame, we raise our voice to a butterfly's whisper and say "Hallelujah!" "Confident appeals of the ignorant to the ignorant and of those who like to toy with superstition to those who are greedy for it—such will continue. But the slow pressure of educated opinion will prevail against them." Precisely what has gone to bring about educated opinion is another story; we trust the Bishop's library is big enough to hold the lives of those whom, for bed and board at their Majesty's expense, paid for the liberty of daring to have anything to do with educated opinion that was once in the sole hands of the Bishop's predecessors.

Mrs. Annie Besant's "Messiah" is repudiated by the Theosophical Society. She has made the mistake of producing the man; she should have taken a lesson from Madame Blavatsky with her management of "Koot Hoomi." "Write more, louder, about the Theosophical Society; rouse their interest, and 'create' Koot Hoomi Russian letters. I will give you all the materials for them," she counsels V. S. Solovyoff. The formula is simple; these saviours must be heard but not seen by those whose eyes are closed with faith—another name for credulity.

The Y.M.C.A. has been making enquiries among the youth of England, and, as the Association's attitude towards Christianity is understood, the result is somewhat disappointing. Replies are to the effect that the country has little need of organized religion, and youth's eyes have apparently seen the wide gulf which separates Christian profession and practice. That is what strikes the casual adult observer, and it is to be hoped that youth will not rest in that opinion, but pursue enquiries further; it will find that organized religion supplies something that could not by any means be described as a necessity.

It is a brave thing to be on the side of the angels. Writing in the *New Age*, N. E. Egerton Swann opens his article in a characteristic manner by stating: "Secularism, or ineffectiveness must religion needs fall into one of these mires?" It is a favourite trick and will only deceive those who take words as coin instead of counters. Thus: Christianity or wife-beating, must Secularism needs fall into one of these mires? And if any Secularist stated his case in that manner he would deserve to be made to spend the rest of his life in reading Fox's *Book of Martyrs*. One could write a lot on the howler above, but Mr. Swann, to say the least of it, would do better if he cultivated a little fairness in intellectual matters.

"I am no friend of secret diplomacy," declares Sir Austen Chamberlain. More are we when it takes the form of slyly influencing local councillors and magistrates to oppose the opening on Sunday of public parks for games and of concert halls and cinemas.

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 FUND.—C. Clayton Dove, £10.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Your letter arrived too late to be answered last week. Christian writers conveniently ignore the fact that in antiquity there was not the need for hospitals that existed under Christianity, and that the temples of Æsculapius, Hygea and Serapis served the purpose afterwards served by hospitals. The articles on Christianity and medical science were written some years ago by Mr. Cohen, but have never been reprinted.

L. MARTIN.—We agree with you. Speakers on N.S.S. platforms should confine themselves to the set purposes for which the Society exists. The N.S.S. has no concern with any political party.

M. WALTERS.—Naturally we do not agree with your point of view. What you call the "bread and cheese question" is important enough, but reflection may show you that in restricting attention to bread and cheese you may quite fail to secure it. The, apparently, longest way round is often the shortest way home. Why not learn something from those you are opposing, and note their policy in securing control of the educational influences of a country as a means of getting what they want.

M. WOODFIELD.—What does interest us in your letter is the unalloyed egotism which asserts that unless the universe acts up to your expectations it must be a huge failure. As things existed before you were here, we see no reason for expecting anything dreadful will happen if at death you cease to exist.

J. W. W.—So far as we are aware, exemption from Church service in the Navy is entirely at the officer's discretion. It is a pity that all officers are not inclined to see that liberty of conscience is something that makes a man more worthy of any post he occupies.

R. H. YELDHAM.—Sorry we are obliged to hold over your letter till 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Our contributor, Mr. William Repton, did "his bit" during the late war, but he managed to look at it with the same independence of view that characterizes his articles in these columns. He has gathered together his impressions of the period in a booklet, *The Fourth Age*, which he now issues through the Pioneer Press at the price of one shilling. His reflections are those

of one who has read widely, thought carefully, and expresses himself easily. We hesitate to use the much worked phrase, "a human document," but in this case the expression is deserved, and there is more in these nine very brief chapters than one may get in many a bulky book. We get a glimpse of the gruesome side of his war experiences, but there is the human note all through, and we have found the booklet psychologically interesting. As a record of what a thoughtful, educated man thought of it all, we commend the work to our readers, and we feel sure they will read it with as much interest as we have done.

Quite recently one of our readers wrote us complaining that there seemed a too obviously expressed sympathy with Socialism in these columns, where we should hold aloof from all phases of politics. With the latter sentiment we quite agree. Politics is not our business in these pages, and we have always prided ourselves on keeping distinct things separate. What convinces us that we have managed to do so, in spite of this friendly complaint, is that we at the same time received letters from other readers complaining that while we permit certain contributors to have a dig at Socialism, we do not permit those who would champion it the hospitality of our columns. So when we have both these complaints, we are led to the conclusion that we have, after all, managed to maintain a quite impartial attitude. We cannot, of course, prevent a writer letting others see on which side his political sympathies may lean, but we do not hold that the *Freethinker* is the place for their advocacy. We have our own work to do, and, apart from this common point of view, Freethinkers hold all sorts of views on other questions. And a tolerant recognition of this is an indication of the genuineness of our Freethinking.

We are asked to announce that the West Ham Branch has fixed an excursion for members and friends for July 4. Richmond will be the place of destination. The train will leave Bow Road Station (District Railway) at 9.30. Tea has been arranged for at Dysart's Hotel, Petersham. Now that summer has at length made its appearance, we hope it will continue, and enable the members to have their usual enjoyable day.

We make it a rule never to comment upon the advertisements displayed in these columns, concerning ourselves only with seeing that they are genuine ones. But we are inclined to make an exception in the case of the lady and gentleman who advertise from Hampshire. The writer is a frequent and welcome contributor, a man of wide reading, and genuine attainments. And those who care to reply may do so with every confidence.

Mr. F. Corrigan will lecture in Victoria Park to-day (June 27), at 6.30. East London Freethinkers will please note time and place.

We are glad to learn that in spite of rather unfavourable weather the Glasgow Branch had an enjoyable trip to Crookston Toll on Sunday last. Crookston Toll has many interesting and beautiful features, natural and antiquarian, and the large number of members and friends enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Another excursion, this time to Bardowie Loch, has been arranged for Sunday, July 4. Mr. A. Shanks, of the Natural History Society for Glasgow, is to act as guide, philosopher, and friend. These excursions do much to keep Freethinkers together and to interest them in the work of the Society, and we wish them every success.

We are asked to announce that the *Freethinker* and all Pioneer Press publications can be obtained at the Hyde Park meetings from Mr. Le Maine, of the Metropolitan (Non-Political) Secular Society. Back numbers of the *Freethinker* can also be secured in the same quarter.

The Intruder.

IN 1919, two things came to birth in which I am immensely interested. Not a drama in all literature so entrances my spirit. Both typify the best mind of the age. Both bear, in the most intimate manner, on the order and progress of the human race. That is why I want the priest kept out of both. One is the Social Credit movement, initiated by Major C. H. Douglas in 1919. The other is the League of Nations, proposed by Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States, in the same year. Both are so representative of essential humanity that a "man of God" who seeks to control either must be looked upon as an intruder.

As to the general aim of the Social Credit movement, it will suffice to state that it implies the exclusive issue of paper-currency (gold-money disappearing in all forms) by the national authority, in a measure corresponding with the ever-increasing power of the community to produce goods and services; it implies the regulation of prices by public authority; it implies dividends for all citizens. The basis of the scheme is the doctrine that to-day's power of production is, in overwhelming proportion, derived from the collective secular wisdom and wit of our fathers through the ages, with the addition of a collective contribution from the wisdom and wit of to-day. Than this view of the historical and social origin of wealth and credit nothing can be more human. That is why I regret to observe, in the organ of the Social Credit movement—the weekly *New Age*—signs of theological intrusion. If Moslem mullahs, or Hindu Brahmans, or Jewish rabbis, or Christian clergy adopt the Social Credit idea I am honestly pleased. What I object to is any suggestion that the priestly tribes, as such, have any special claim to lead the propaganda; or, indeed, to place themselves at the head of the great industrial insurrection. As private saints, they are welcome. As public priests, they have no business to offer themselves as captains.

Recently, we had a General Strike which constituted a national crisis. A writer who frequently appears as a Social Credit disciple in the *New Age*, argued, with strong emphasis, that England has an Established Church, that bishops of the Church sit in the House of Lords, that this fact lends a State significance to the Church's opinions, and that, therefore, the Prime Minister and his Cabinet ought to receive, with official respect, the official Church judgment when presented by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Here is the divine revelation:—

The Archbishop of Canterbury contributes to the State the national expression of Christianity in its bearing on the particular matter in question. The suppression [in the Government's *British Gazette*] of his appeal for peace and his definite suggestions of terms constituted a gratuitous affront to the Church.

The divine revelation even hints that Stanley Baldwin had a touch of madness:—

When a Government either believes or pretends itself on the edge of civil war—war with its own people, whom its duty is to protect—it can suppress the voice of the Church if it is mad enough. But there are no moments in history when it is more important that the Church should be heard, when every man and woman in the land should be able to listen to the authentic voice of the national Church treating the crisis in the light of the universal religion.

By "universal religion" the good man means the simple social doctrine of a handful of artisans and enthusiastic poets of the period 100 to 150, moulded into a creed by mediæval priests and "school-men"

(learned code-makers). It was never a universal religion, and never will be. The temples of China, Japan, Burma, India, Persia, Arabia, and Egypt forbid; the science and humanism of Europe forbid. The Archbishop of Canterbury is quite incompetent to solve the economic problem of the British proletariat. Nor does he even sit in the Upper House of Parliament as a representative of all British Christians.

I will go a step further. Suppose mankind possessed a universal religion—represented by a sort of Guild of Reason, Science, and Vision. The proper office of such a Guild would be to appeal to common sense, to goodwill, and to the lessons of history, but never to intrude into the political machinery and responsibility. Administrative skill is one order of human faculty; philosophic and scientific insight is another. Administration must employ law and police; the Guild of Reason must only educate and persuade.

The other social activity from which I would exclude the priest—Christian, Jewish, Brahman, or any other—is the League of Nations. I have often drawn attention to the fact that the League's Covenant has no reference to God. It alludes to religion when (Article 22) it directs that all the Powers who govern mandated territories (inhabited by less civilized peoples) shall "guarantee freedom of conscience and religion." That provision is, of course, solely political. The Covenant makes a lofty appeal. It opens with the words:—

The High Contracting Parties.—In order to promote international co-operation and to achieve international peace and security, by the acceptance of obligations not to resort to war.....agree to this Covenant of the League of Nations.

The American people class themselves as a democracy. Their eighteenth century Declaration of Independence points to God. In the twentieth century, a more important document creates a society of nations (now numbering fifty-five) and omits God. The remarkable omission has been uneasily noticed by a variety of observers. I have heard a well-known writer and ex-M.P.—not a Roman Catholic—express the wish that the Pope might be officially represented in the League's deliberations. Not a few public meetings associated with League propaganda open with hymns and prayers. Some zealous advocates of the League's objects are in the habit of affirming that the spirit of the League is Christian.

I wish to avoid misunderstanding. Not in the slightest degree do I criticize theological persons or churches for their support of the Covenant's ideals; indeed, I rejoice at such manifestations. What I condemn is the association of an ordinary public meeting, called in furtherance of the work of the League, with church and chapel recitations and observances. I also condemn most strongly any expression which implies any dependence of the League's programme upon the Christian faith. The League is for the whole world; and the world is not Christian. I deem it sheer disloyalty to the League to utter any views that imply the superiority of the Christian creed or Christian nationalities, to the Moslem, Confucian, or other creeds, or to non-Protestant and non-Catholic communities. It is, in any case, difficult to maintain the "open, just, and honourable relations between nations" which the Covenant prescribes. The difficulty is miserably increased if any set of people, who pretend to uphold the League's aims, insist that their peculiar "Divine Revelation" is a better one than that possessed by their neighbours, or that their theology raises them above the moral level of "heathens" such as Hindus, or Persian Sufis, or Arabs. The League is drawing mankind towards political unity. This unity can only

rest on the universal conscience. The universal conscience can only evolve out of the co-operative feelings and thoughts and efforts of a self-respecting humanity which has learned to discard the conflicting systems of the Gods.

F. J. GOULD.

Subman, Man and Superman.

III.

(Continued from page 379.)

FINALLY, we come to the last epoch of the Cainozoic Age, called the Pleistocene. This epoch is estimated to have lasted 500,000 years. The greater part of it is also known as the Early Palæolithic Age. The majority of the species that lived in this age exist until the present time; and the rocks abound in records that cannot be mistaken or misunderstood.

During this period there were four glacial epochs; four times the ice barriers crept southwards towards the equator, until half the Northern Hemisphere was covered in glacial ice that piled up against the great mountain barriers of the Alps, Himalayas, and Pyrenees. And then for an equal space of time the ice receded, inch by inch, year after year, but always between each glacial epoch, man advanced a little—took one step forward—stood a little more erectly.

It took a hundred thousand years to perfect the unpolished beaked flint and tie it to a stick, and in the next interglacial epoch it required another hundred thousand years to acquire the skill to polish the flint. And, again, it took still another hundred thousand years to make a hole through the polished flint and insert a handle.

At this point the Palæolithic epoch gives place to the Neolithic, but during the whole of the Palæolithic Age no remains have been left that have been willingly and universally accepted as those of the true ancestral man.

But the people who have laughed loudest at the pithecanthropus erectus, who have ridiculed the Heidelberg jaw, known as Homo Heidelbergensis, and the Piltdown skull, known as Eoanthropus, or the Dawn Man, and who were even prepared to cast doubt on the Neanderthal man, were quite ready to foist on the gullible public the Biblical tale of the Garden of Eden as solemn truth and to endeavour to persuade us that man, perfected and fully equipped, mentally and physically, was turned loose on the world some eight or ten thousand years ago by an all powerful deity.

It is only when we arrive at the Neolithic Age, which follows the fourth glacial epoch, that we find an abundance of the remains of *homo sapiens*, remains that are unmistakably and unquestionably human remains.

Even then the evolution of man proceeded exceedingly slow. It required twenty or twenty-five thousand years for Neolithic man to begin to cultivate the land, to use domestic animals, and to make written inscriptions.

With the first written inscriptions, prehistoric man begins to give way to historic man; and from that time to the present the evolution of man has been accelerating and gaining momentum, with occasional spurts and occasional retrograde movements, until within the last century or two man has made gigantic strides in science and invention; and has also progressed in a slightly less sensational degree both mentally and morally.

If man continues to advance in the same sensational manner as at present it is almost inconceivable to what heights he may ultimately climb.

What are the lessons that we should learn from the facts of evolution? Having traced the ascent of man from remotest time—having observed the direction from whence he comes—we ask, whither goest he? Is he a helpless pawn on the chess board of time? Or can he help himself? Can he to any extent shape his own destiny? Why does man advance? Or why does he remain stationary? Why does he sometimes even regress?

If we look back across the silent ages of antiquity, across a thousand million years, and visualize the pageant of life throughout that long and even changing panorama, we will look in vain for one glimpse of anything resulting from supernatural power—for one act or one whisper of an omnipotent God.

There is one lesson that is plainly discernible; the co-mingling of races and nations means human advancement. On the other hand, a race that becomes isolated from the outer world stagnates and remains stationary. The struggle for existence is the primary factor in all advancement—in the evolution of all living creatures.

Australasia was cut off from the rest of the world at a remote period, probably after the fourth and last glacial epoch. All the animals that remained there were of a peaceful nature. There was nothing comparable to the lion and tiger, or the cobra and rattlesnake.

And what do we find? The Australian, or Australasian aborigines, generally speaking, were almost the lowest types of savage in the world. They needed no clothing and no shelter. Food was not difficult to obtain. Even the birds had no necessity to fly and many of them lost the use of their wings. The emu, and many other large birds, now extinct, had long ago become quite unable to fly.

The various great civilizations of the past grew up around the natural meeting places of the nations, such as the mouth of the Nile, the coast of the Mediterranean, and the valley of the Euphrates.

China was at one time the converging point of many nations and became the most advanced country in the world; but when the great Chinese wall was erected, rigidly shutting out all outsiders, China ceased to advance, and remained stagnant and stationary for a thousand years.

England only made great strides when she became a maritime nation, and lately Japan has begun to follow in her footsteps.

Every country in the world has poured its tribute of knowledge into the melting pot of America.

Remove the artificial barriers of language, religion, and frontiers and man will advance.

Every time that man makes any considerable advance the gods perish, and their temples crumble, and new gods with slightly improved characters are substituted for the old.

The ignorance of a people may be known by the extent of the powers which they attribute to their gods. As man's knowledge and enlightenment increase, the gods must dwindle and fade away, because God means the sum total of human ignorance.

ONA MELTON.

(To be Continued.)

The sovereignty of man lieth hid in knowledge; wherein many things are reserved that kings with their treasure cannot buy nor with their force command.—*Bacon.*

A sense of humour is the love child of the intelligence.—*Sir Herbert Tree.*

An Agnostic Outlook.

IN these days of ever-increasing knowledge it is as well to bear in mind the inevitable limitations of human faculty, for not only will this clear up a good deal of the confusion now existing concerning so-called "religious" issues, but it may also help to give us a capacity for tolerating and appreciating another's point of view. And tolerance, good humour, and fairness of outlook are even more necessary to the Freethinker than to the Christian. We have really no right to call Christians liars or hypocrites, no right to be offensive or rude to those who still cling—largely from force of habit—to what most sensible people in their heart of hearts know to be an exploded and decaying superstition, and no reason whatever for regarding Christianity as a gigantic conspiracy on the part of priests and popes to enslave humanity. Christianity only exists because people believe in it, because—whether it be true or false—its conception of the universe inspires a goodly number of generous, kind but simple souls to carry on their lives in a spirit of cheerfulness and courage. Of course, *some* Christians may be conscious hypocrites, *some* parsons may only perform their functions for pecuniary gain (one feels that, from an economic point of view, most of them would do better in other walks of life—imaginative fiction, for example). But, on the whole, my experience of Christians leads me to believe that most of them, at any rate, are as honest and sincere in their outlook on life as I am—though, I make bold to believe, not quite so rational! I had far rather associate myself with their views than with the "Freethought" of some "Freethinkers" whose outlook on "religious" matters seems only a mere corollary of that revolutionary and destructive spirit which manifests itself in the unwholesome and baneful activities of Bolshevism.

Reason, charity, fairness, patience—an eagerness to grasp and comprehend the other fellow's viewpoint—these are essential. Controversy would become intolerable were our polemic policy that of being as offensive as possible to our opponents. For years, Christian apologists have damned their cause as far as honest, fair-minded people go, by such tactics. Slowly and painfully they are beginning to realize its futility. A small, pioneering minority of Freethinkers, committing the same blunder, would smash its chances for ever.

Fundamentally, the Agnostic diverges from the orthodox Christian standpoint on one point. The Christian has arrived—or thinks he has arrived—at certain conclusions concerning life and the universe; certain positive results which he claims to be the truth. On the other hand, the Agnostic asserts that he can find no good evidence in favour of these beliefs, but that he sees many facts which point to the conclusion that modern Christianity is simply the latest stage of evolution of one branch of a train of "religious" thought that had its origin in savage and barbarous superstitions, often accompanied by ghastly and unclean practices unworthy of mention. It is further asserted that the Bible—the chief "evidence" of Christianity common to all sects—is absolutely worthless, from an historical or scientific point of view. Of course, few would deny the great literary value and the high ethical worth of many parts of the Bible—though, be it sternly added, there *are* passages in the Bible whose moral and literary aspects may not unfairly be summarised as dubious! But scientifically—historically—as a record of alleged facts—the Bible cannot hold a candle to any modern newspaper, even the *Daily Mail*. It contradicts it-

self whenever and wherever it gets the chance. It calls upon us to believe highly improbable events—miracles, etc.—for which the evidence proffered is worse than worthless. As literature, it may be intelligible; as fact it is—well, "also ran," I believe, is the polite term used in racing circles!

But all these considerations scarcely touch upon what, to my mind, constitutes the real *fons et origo* of Agnosticism. There are two propositions at least which no man will dispute. One is that no man can know everything; the other that every man can, and does, probably, know something. To these two propositions the Agnostic adds a third—that there are some things which, in the present stage of mental development, we cannot ever know, or hope to know, and that among these are the matters with which the Christian theologians are wont to bore ordinary people to tears. Of human immortality, the existence of the Christian or any other God, or any of the primary Christian doctrines, there is, and can be, no real proof nor disproof. Certain facts may seem to point to them; others seem to point against them. But there is no finality, no conclusiveness, and very little coherence in the ratiocinations of those who either defend or dispute these doctrines on polemic grounds. And we are as far off to-day from a rational conclusion as mankind ever has been. Only the Agnostic sees a way out of the immense, bewildering jungle of conflicting creeds and entwiningologies. The theologians are occupying themselves with completely vain speculations concerning subjects about which they know as little as I do; that is, nothing. They are immersed in a sea of words fondly imagined to be an ocean of reality. Why bother about them? Confronted with any theological proposition, the Agnostic position is: "You say this and that. If you can offer me reasonable grounds for your belief, I will accept it. Until you do, I beg leave to suspend my judgment until sufficient data have been amassed to warrant a serious and considered conclusion."

This, in short, is the attitude which every scientist must take up, and, in approaching scientific problems, at any rate, *does* take up. To have only theories which fit the facts, and not "facts" which fit the theories, is the pith and kernel of both Science and Agnosticism. The Agnostic simply asks that we shall approach all matters of fact, whether they be the question of the validity of the Gospel narratives or of the economic value of costermongers, from a purely scientific and exclusively unemotional standpoint. Because of its methods, science is the most successful thing on earth. Comparatively, the Christian religion is a ghastly failure. In nineteen centuries Christianity hardly made life any better for the common people; some it may have benefited, others it undoubtedly harmed. If it produced a Shaftesbury, it also produced an Inquisition—and, of the two, the Inquisition was a much more distinctively Christian thing. Shaftesbury's great work was inspired by a moral idealism common to all enlightened and civilized men, whatever their religious views. And nothing is clearer in history than that the oft-boasted connection between Christianity and morality has been mainly fortuitous. It is not morality that has gained so much from Christianity, rather it is that Christianity has gained far more from morality than ever it gave in return. I repeat, then, that the record of Christianity, to say the least, is uninspiring—to me, at any rate. But take science! In a short century, modern scientific discovery has revolutionized life—made it infinitely more tolerable and pleasant for the great mass of the people. And it is generally agreed by most people that in science lies the hope of the future;

the key to the solution of all our industrial and political problems, though, of course, "respectability" still demands perfunctory obeisances to the God of Christianity for His divine blessing on it all!

Emotionalism, fanaticism, and intolerance are the real Trinity of many modern Christians. They think that their feelings are the voice of *their* God; they are right! their feelings *are* the voice of *their* God, but their God *is* their feelings! They worshipped a Church, then they worshipped a Book—now they deify their emotions and ludicrously prostrate themselves before incarnate imbecility! If there were only one kind of religion, it were a plausible thing to say that our emotional upwellings represent the voice of an objective Deity, calling to the beloved children he has neglected so long (for even Jehovah has a conscience, one supposes). But there are dozens and dozens of different dogmas, all mutually impossible. God seems to speak with many voices! What are we to believe? If we abandon reason and prostitute the higher functions of the mind to the rationalization of intensive revivalist ecstasies, what is the criterion to tell truth from untruth? After all, both the Church and Bible are wiser. The Catholics insist on the renunciation of individual judgments and on submission to authority.¹ That is better than the intellectual anarchy that modern Christianity demands. And in the Bible, one reads of a certain Tower of Babel.....

On this earth where we are now, for better or worse, we must fight for what we hold to be just or right. Our task, as Freethinkers, is to persuade our fellow-men to abandon outworn superstitions and hollow theologies. In a spirit of charity, dignity, and patience we must approach it, hitting hard but avoiding offence, being persistent without being importunate, candid without being cantankerous. If we thus play our part as honest men, some day we shall gain an honest success, and the great principles for which pioneers like Thomas Paine, Huxley, Bradlaugh, Haeckel, and Spencer stood, will at last guide humanity out of the lunatic asylum into which theologians—blind leaders of the blind—have led it.

ΕΠΙΦΑΘΙΑ.

Correspondence.

THE DEVIL AND THE DELUGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I must thank Sir W. W. Strickland for his kind reference to my theory, and I will attempt to answer his queries.

The traditions of a universal deluge are found in the myths that have been collected from various parts of the world though each original narrator could naturally only speak of his own particular locality. I do not think that recurring events, which take place at specified seasons, can ever become the coign stones of epic poems; only important and non-recurring events are probably so celebrated. The stand taken by scientists appear to be: "We cannot explain how a universal deluge occurred, therefore, it never happened." Unfortunately each scientist works in a watertight compartment, and makes, in some cases, but little or no attempt to correlate his knowledge with others working in, what may be to him, non-related branches of information. Thus, neither the geologist nor the astronomer has given any attention to mythology, and the mythologist apparently knows but little of astronomy and geology. I will now give a few extracts which bear upon my theory, mostly from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

¹Cf. Mr. G. K. Chesterton in *The Superstitions of the Sceptic* (pp. 3-5).

Is he—the serpent—a pale form of the Babylonian chaos—Dragon or the serpent of Iranian mythology, who sprang from heaven to earth to blight the good creation? (*E. B.*, 1-168). In Chili the Araucanian Indians made a serpent figure in their deluge myth (*E. B.*, 2-52). They have a confused tradition respecting a deluge from which some persons were saved on a high mountain (*E. B.*, 2-321). From Teutonic mythology we learn, that, Sigurd slew Fafnir the Dragon near a pool in Glittering Heath. An early Indian name of the milky-way is the path of the serpent. Evidently these two names are synonymous and the serpent had clearly a celestial origin. The serpent was the universal devourer of everything, like Kwai-Hemm in Bushman mythology (*E. B.*, 19-139). Next Ahriman sent a deluge from which one man escaped. Finally a fire desolated the earth and only the creatures of Ormazd escaped (*E. B.*, 12-622). Foremost among them is the myth relating to the battle of the Sun-God against a powerful serpent Ahi, Azli, or Vrta (*E. B.*, 21-204). A conspectus of illustrative flood stories from different parts of the world would throw a great light on the problems before us, especially the North American tales, which show clearly enough that the deluge is probably a second creation and the serpent is as truly connected with the second creation as the first (*E. B.*, 7-976). An old cuneiform text appears to call the year of the deluge, the year of the raging or red-shining serpent, and certainly North American myths distinctly connect serpents with deluges (*E. B.*, 7-978).

The falling of masses of matter from the sky to the earth is common in all myths. Destruction by deluge is the most favourite myth, but destruction by fire and wind and the wrath of God are common in Australian, Peruvian, and Egyptian tradition (*E. B.*, 19-143). These beings—Titanic—modified the face of the country, and, in Arunta belief, rocks and trees mark the place where they finally "went into the ground" (*E. B.*, 19-135). The tales of the gods from the sky who sank into the earth account for the numerous graves of Osiris in Egypt, and also the numerous graves of the God Tsui-Goab in South Africa. These masses of matter were probably responsible for the formation of the diamond mines, as the intense heat developed on impact would be sufficiently high to liquidise the carbon contained in any vegetable matter enveloped by the aerolite. This carbon would subsequently crystallise out on cooling. Such a theory has been tentatively advanced in writings dealing with the formation of diamonds.

The Arizona meteorite is interesting in connection with certain experiments that have been made. When a bullet is fired into mud, whether vertically or even almost horizontally, a hole is made, and in the centre of this hole or depression there is a small pimple which has been forced up by pressure when the walls of the hole rejoin. In the same manner there is a big upward splash after a person has dived into the water and disappeared. With water this splash falls back and a level surface is maintained. With a viscous substance, like mud, the up splash remains as a pimple in the hole. These central pimples are common in the craters of the moon, and there is also a pimple in the Arizona meteorite.

The hairy coats of the mammoth elephant may or may not indicate a polar habitat. Flannel is put around ice in summer to keep out the exterior heat. We use flannel in winter to keep out the exterior cold. Lions, tigers, and other animals of the tropical zone are supplied with hair or fur to retain their internal heat or to keep out the rays of the sun. "The geographical range of the mammoth was extensive. There is hardly a county in England in which its remains have not been found in alluvial gravel or in caverns, and numbers of its teeth have been dredged in the North Sea. In Scotland and Ireland they are less abundant, and in Scandinavia and Finland they appear to be unknown. Tusks are found along the whole shore line between the mouth of the Obi and Bering Strait, and the further north the more numerous they become, the islands of New Siberia¹ being one of the favourite collecting

¹The mean annual temperature of New Siberia is 0F, that of Finland is about 37F.

grounds. The remains are found not only around the mouths of the great rivers, but are embedded in the frozen soil" (E. B., 17-531).

The teeth of the mammoth indicate that it lived on a vegetable diet. A short time ago it was reported in a daily paper that, a herd of elephants in Africa had destroyed in three days the crops in an area equal to half the size of Sussex. Evidently these animals require large quantities of food. The islands of New Siberia are about 74N and 140W. The July isotherm is 38F, the January isotherm is -40F., or 72 degs. below freezing point. Scotland was too cold for them to exist in great numbers, but in those islands they were apparently at home. They certainly did not have pineapples for lunch and probably trumpeted in chorus: "Yes, we have no bananas to-day."

It is absurd to believe that the natural home of this animal was in such an arctic climate, and we can explain the presence of the mammoth in those places only by assuming a sudden rotation of the earth's crust, or a deluge, or by a combination of both. A slow rotation would have exposed the carcasses of the dead animals to attacks from beasts, birds, and insects, the destructive action of bacilli, and the disintegrating forces of wind and rain. In such circumstances, neither hair nor skin would have been left for us to see. We are, therefore, forced to the conclusion that, as Sir H. H. Howorth remarked, the change of climate must have been sudden and remained permanent. It would take many millions of years for the islands of New Siberia to come within the tropical zone, but Palæolithic man lived in France with the mammoth, and this animal, in my opinion, was washed out of existence about five thousand years ago. The incised drawings on bone from the caves of Dordogne are too sharply defined to be of much greater age.

Whether the earth is growing warmer is, I think, best ascertained by observations on the latitude of the snow line at sea-level. Glacier results may be complicated by unknown factors. Generally, the facts seem to show that, the sea-level snow lines in both hemispheres are approaching the poles.

I have not read your correspondent's *Great Divide*, but I shall make a point of doing so.

WILLIAM CLARK.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE IN ARMY AND NAVY.

SIR,—Some years ago I put in about four years (Royal Engineers). It was a common thing for men to notify their C.O. (Commanding Officer) that they "wished to change their religion" from whatever it was to Roman Catholic. The notice was alone sufficient to do this—but why?

Because the time for R.C.'s was 8 a.m. to 9 a.m., they were then *free for the day*, which was the *real object desired and no other*. It was quite a common occurrence and plainly stated with lurid embellishments in the barrack room.

T. F. (Exeter).

Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission.

Mr. Whitehead writes: "We have held six good meetings so far at Newcastle; the rain in the early part of the week interfering with the others. A local vicar, from our platform admitted his own inability to deal with the arguments advanced, but thought he knew a man who could. The man who could has, so far, failed to appear, although a Socialist with more bad manners than knowledge, undertook to prove that the N.S.S. is an enemy to the working-class, and the usual rubbish about flogging a dead horse was served up in justification. Mr. Khan made a donation of £1 towards the expenses of the mission, which I hope to see acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. Now the weather has changed for the better and Race week is here, we should get fine meetings on the Moor."—G. W.

"THE HYDE PARK FORUM."—A Satire on its Speakers and Frequenters. Should be read by all Freethinkers. Post free, 6d., direct from J. MARLOW, 145 Walworth Road, S.E.1.

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Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.—INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "Russia's Western Neighbours."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): Every Tuesday and Thursday at 7.30; Sunday at 11, 3.30, and 6.30; Lecturers—Messrs. Hart, Howell Smith, B.A., Hyatt, Le Maine, and Saphin.

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 3 and 6, Mr. A. D. McLaren will lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside the Technical Institute, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7, Demonstration. Speakers—Mrs. Venton, Mrs. Rosetti, Messrs. W. G. Walter, A. C. High, F. G. Warner, F. C. Warner, H. C. White, W. Hicks, R. H. Rosetti.

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (19 Lowerhead Row): 3, Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Square): 7, Mr. L. Davis, "The Ten Commandments."

HULL BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead's Mission, June 28 to July 4. Watch local papers for particulars *re* time and place of meeting.

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

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