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Views and Opinions.

Hell.

Once upon a time the working motto of all go-ahead Christian preachers, when dealing with the ordinary people, was "Give 'em hell." Sinners were figuratively dangled over the mouth of an open hell and threatened with its torments unless they mended their ways and came crawling to the feet of Jesus. And the hell given them was hot and strong. Some of the most popular and the most powerful preachers exhausted their descriptive powers in depicting the intensity of the flames, the duration of the torture, and the misery of the damned. A hundred years ago there was hardly a Christian doctrine less doubted than this of eternal damnation, and many of us can remember the indignation roused in Christian circles when Dean Farrar ventured to suggest that perhaps the damnation of sinners might not be eternal, but that ultimately they might get to heaven. The objectors could not permit the weary sinner to depart this life feeling that he was not going to burn eternally in hell. To leave him there for a paltry thousand years or so was not enough. There was no comfort in that. It was a half-hearted kind of thing that the Christian conscience could not tolerate. It had to be hell for ever and ever. Children were brought up on it, their lives were made terrible by it. If good people saw Jesus and angels when they were dying, the bad ones saw hell and smelt brimstone. And the one vision was just as reliable as the other. There is as much reason for believing in an eternal hell as there is for believing in an eternal heaven, just as there is as much reason for believing in the devil as there is for believing in God. Both are bred in the same ground, and both die from substantially the same causes.

A Journalist on Hell.

For some reason or the other hell has been very much on the carpet during the past week or so. Several highly-placed parsons have been discussing it, and Mr. J. K. Jerome has been letting himself go at a meeting commemorating St. Francis of Assisi. Mr. Jerome is a novelist, and his excursion into the realms of theology is such that one thinks at once of the saw about the cobbler and his last. He is full of good feeling, but intellectually incoherent. He wants his "ecclesiastical superiors" to "clear

hell out of the way," which is what many of them would like to do, but do not exactly see how they can do it. Mr. Jerome also says that the doctrine of hell is an invention of the devil, who has saddled Jesus with the responsibility for it. But if the devil is there, hell seems to follow, unless the devil is also in heaven. That would certainly raise the quality of the place, although it might shift the centre of attraction so far as newcomers were concerned. Mr. Jerome does not find it possible to harmonize the goodness of Christ with the teaching of hell fire. This does far more credit to Mr. Jerome's feelings than to his knowledge of human nature or of theological history. There is simply no opposition between general kindness of nature and the belief in eternal damnation—so long as a man is a genuine Christian. The people who stood to watch a man or woman being burned for heresy were not more brutal than others. It was their religion that overrode their goodness. A Christian who hates an unbeliever, and who will stop at little to shut him out of human society, may be the same person who will go to great lengths to help a fellow believer or to perform acts of kindness to those who need them. It was not bad nature that led to the doctrine of hell; it was wrong belief, and once established, it helped to corrupt even good men by making them commit brutalities in the name of God. And one of the plainest lessons of history is that there is hardly a vice which cannot be sanctioned by that. Mr. Jerome is better in *Three Men in a Boat* than he is as an instructor in theology.

* * *

Enter the Bishop.

The Bishop of Liverpool also dealt with the subject of hell. Like "J. B.," he is "sly, devilish sly, sir," and his slyness might be very effective to anyone quite ignorant of Christian theology, historical and doctrinal. Hell is just a symbol, only that and nothing more. And even that is to be got rid of, "For us the old symbol is gone." What remains is the "reality behind," which is that God hates sin, and the "immutable law," is that he who does evil must reap the consequences. And the Rev. E. W. Mowll, the organizer of the Church Congress, says flatly, but not quite truthfully, that "not a single clergyman of the Church of England would advance the idea of eternal punishment." Suppose that were so, it hardly removes the fact that the Church of England represents but a small part of the total number of Christians, and they may also have their say. There are the hordes of professional evangelists who are all busy preaching hell. There is the Salvation Army whose preaching would be nothing without hell, and there is the great Roman Catholic Church which has abated nothing of the temperature of hell. Roman Catholic theology is still full of it, even though it has a half-way house in the shape of purgatory. And if all that Jesus meant when he talked about the fires of hell was merely that actions brought their consequences, why could

he not have acted with the common sense and the humanity of the Buddha, who did teach this doctrine, but taught it in a sensible and fairly scientific manner? What a poor figure these Churchmen do make of Jesus Christ! He always meant something right, but he always managed to teach it in a wrong way. Never did he succeed in saying a thing so that people could not misunderstand him. If the Bishop of Liverpool is right, there never was so incapable a teacher as Jesus Christ. A world teacher who does not fulfil the elementary condition of being able to make men and women understand him, and who, in consequence, actually misleads all who claim to follow him, is the last word in incapacity.

* * *

All Honourable Men!

The Bishop of Liverpool is an honourable man. The Rev. Mr. Mowll is an honourable man. So are they all honourable men! And yet we do not know which to admire most in these honourable men—their manifest and unbounded confidence in the gullibility of their followers, or the way in which they can go on teaching a lie year after year, and then, when it no longer pays to teach it, calmly turn their backs on it and denounce it as though they had always been opposed to it. There is no question whatever to any candid reader of the New Testament that Jesus taught the doctrine of a literal hell. As Dr. Orchard says, in a recently issued pamphlet, "The idea of hell is too constantly found, and firmly intertwined in the recorded teaching of Christ for any valid criticism to sanction its excision." There is no doubt that the immediate followers of Christ believed in hell. The great Christian fathers all believed in a literal hell. It was said by one of the most famous that the floor of hell was paved with the bodies of children scarce a span long, and the great St. Jerome used as one of the arguments in favour of the belief that the dead would be raised with flesh and bones, that otherwise they would not be able to gnash their teeth in hell. All the leaders of Christianity, down to the most recent times, Catholic and Protestant, have taught the existence of a literal hell. However much these Christians might disagree with regard to humane things, they were quite at one when it came to a question of the most brutal, the most demoralizing, and the most indecent doctrine the mind of man has ever conceived. And yet the Bishop of Liverpool does not get up and tell his hearers that during its whole existence the Christian Church has been teaching a hideous and demoralizing lie, and has done that because Jesus Christ did not express himself in a clear and proper manner. What he does, what they all do, is to say nothing of the way in which the Church fought for this doctrine, and punished those unbelievers who had the courage to speak against it, but calmly tells us that it is a mere symbol. Yet they are all honourable men—as honourable as the burglar who preaches honesty when he is no longer able to follow his customary profession.

Real Christianity.

* * *

It is all to the good that some Christians should be ashamed of this doctrine of eternal damnation. It would be better if they disowned it in the name of a disgusted humanity instead of using the disclaimer as a means of perpetuating a superstition, of which it has always been an essential part. And it is certainly well to remember that the still greatest Church in Christendom can give official sanction to this picture, issued in a pamphlet for children, and depicting a *little boy* punished because he has displeased God: "His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two

long flames come out of his ears. Sometimes he opens his mouth and blazing fire rolls out. But listen! There is a sound like a kettle boiling. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy. The brain is boiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is boiling in his bones." There is plenty more of the same kind of thing, which could be paralleled from the teachings of great Christian leaders from the earliest times down to to-day. And a Church that could go on teaching that, generation after generation, marks itself as the last word in the systematic demoralization of a people. Nothing like so vile a teaching, elaborated with such detail and with such ingenuity appears in any other religion in the world. Other religions have had their after-life with punishments for such as do not believe. But most of them have left it to the imagination of believers to elaborate. The Christian Church ran no risks in this direction. The half-crazed imagination of the medieval monk, the frenzied thought of the religious fanatic, the ill-concealed brutality of the Salvation Army convert, the untruthful tongue of the professional evangelist, were all pressed into the service of the most horrible teaching that has ever defiled human lips. To the majority of people brought up on such teachings one of two things was certain to happen. Either a steady brutalization of character or the development of a profound hypocrisy. Brutalization was indeed the chief escape from insanity in the face of a teaching that made the Christian a coward in the face of death and a hypocrite in dealing with life. And the crowning development is that of Christian bishops ashamed of the teaching upon which their Church has been built, and yet without the moral courage to repudiate an institution that has been responsible for so great an evil. But, after all, hell and heaven, god and the devil, hang together. The reasons that condemn the one damn the other. No devil, no God, no hell, no heaven. Christians of to-day may be less brutal than those of previous generations, they can hardly lay claim to greater honesty or consistency.

* * *

A Brutalizing Creed.

If one wished to draw up a damning indictment of the moral character of Christianity, we do not think a better text could be found than this doctrine of hell. It is true that Christianity did not originate the belief of an after life in which doomed souls underwent some amount of suffering, but it did elaborate it to a degree of cruelty and brutality beyond that reached by other religions. And of what value is all the slobber about Christian love if that love is set in a background of almost incredible and eternal brutality? Imagine the degree of refinement produced by a religion that not alone taught the eternal damnation of the larger part of the human race, but actually that they who were saved would, from their place in heaven, enjoy the contemplation of the sufferings of the other people, and that upon the authority of Jesus himself. Christianity makes a stronger appeal to the narrower form of selfishness than is made by any other of the great religions. And its social reactions have been great and dangerous. It familiarized the minds of men and women with the idea of mere punishment as a corrective for wrong-doing. It made the main motive for right-doing the desire to escape the fires of hell. It was altogether the greatest distortion of the moral sense with which history is acquainted. It moralized brutality and sanctified torture. And hell still forms part of the belief of the majority of Christians. One is sometimes tempted to hope it is true—for their sake.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Nature and Human Ideals.

It will be remembered that in the famous Questionnaire issued recently by the *Nation* and the *Daily News*, one of the questions asked was, "Is Nature indifferent to our ideals?" In the *Christian World Pulpit* for October 7 there appeared a sermon by the Rev. G. E. Darlaston, M.A., a well-known London Congregational minister, dealing with that question. Mr. Darlaston speaks of it as "a very difficult question and one that has engaged the greatest minds." Its difficulty is mainly due to the ambiguity of the terms employed. What are we to understand by Nature? There is, of course, a sense in which man is part and parcel of Nature; but evidently in the Questionnaire the word does not include man. In the *Origin of Species*, p. 99, Darwin says that "it is difficult to avoid personifying the word Nature," but that he means by it "only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by natural laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us." This is probably the signification of the term in the Questionnaire. Again, what is the meaning attached to the phrase, "our ideals"? In *Webster's Dictionary* "ideal" is defined as "a mental conception regarded as a standard of perfection; a model of excellence, beauty, etc." Mr. Darlaston enlarges upon Webster's definition in the following manner:—

The crux of the matter is in that word "ideal." An ideal is a moral thing. An ideal is not the same as an idea. An idea is a mental thing, a concept of the mind. But an ideal is moral, it is our sense of the perfect. It has to do with conduct and the feelings we get when conduct is right or wrong, the satisfaction, or "the blessedness" as Jesus used to say, of being in harmony with the reality of goodness and truth. The chief things in an ideal are, firstly, rightness, not merely correctness, but rightness in the sense of which ought to be, or oughtness; and, secondly, goodness, which cannot be defined save as that which the noblest characters feel to be worth while for its own sake.

We do not entirely agree with Mr. Darlaston when he declares that ideals are moral and have to do with conduct. All ideals are not moral, nor are all related to conduct. Some ideals are purely intellectual, such as the desire to acquire ideal knowledge or to find ideal beauty.

Now we recur to the question, "Is Nature indifferent to our ideals?" In other words, does Nature take any account of, or is it wholly unconcerned about our ideals, whatever they may be? There are those who ascribe moods and attitudes to the natural order of things. For example, as Mr. Darlaston puts it, "two generations ago people were obsessed with the idea of Nature 'red in tooth and claw.' Her law was the law of cruelty. Everything feeds on everything else, and only the strongest survives." But that is as true to-day as it was fifty, a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand years ago. Life in the jungle is now so sorely marred by suffering and heartless ferocity as it ever was. The course of evolution is a river red with the blood of the slain. This fact completely damns for ever the belief in a God of love, said to have devised and been throughout in charge of the evolutionary process. Such a being would have been unspeakably contemptible, utterly unworthy of anybody's respect. But Nature, governed by physical and chemical forces, cannot legitimately be described as either cruel or kind, just or unjust, moral or immoral. It would be more correct to call Nature blind, working blindly, under its stern laws. Its products could not have been different from what

they are. Therefore there is no ground whatever for the assertion that Nature is in any sense on man's side. There is no justification for Mr. Darlaston's declaration that "Nature is on our side when we want something to eat." All living beings need food, and the need drives them to search for it until they find it. Is Nature, then, indifferent to our needs? The preacher admits that "appearance, with a great array of undeniable facts, says it is, that the sun rises on the evil and the good"; but being a preacher he adds, without rhyme or reason, "and faith sees that sunrise ministering to the purposes of the Father in heaven, his providence about the life of man." Yes, faith has an amusingly dramatic eye; it can see the invisible, even that which has no demonstrable existence.

Curiously enough, Mr. Darlaston recognizes and states the facts exactly as they are. As an example take the following passage:—

It would not be right to slur over this seeming indifference. A troop of Boy Scouts were at the seaside last month. One boy got into difficulties while bathing, and a splendid young officer swam out to rescue him, and both were drowned. The sky was a cloudless blue, and the waves were glittering with a magical beauty. There you have the most appealing form of the human ideal, and the thing that stands out is not merely the beautiful strength of a youthful body battling with the irresistible power of the sea, but a young man's ideal of service which brought him to that placeWhen human help could not come, none will come, and for all the majesty of that moral act Nature pursues her course with no interruption, as though nothing had happened.

Here is a more graphic and startling statement still:—

A much more general thing is that element of struggle and pain which seems to run through the very constitution of Nature's life. And that nature-tragedy is carried up into human life. The first struggle for existence of primitive man was with the wild beasts, and it is only a later chapter in the same story that the fight against disease is to a very large extent a fight with the wild beasts within the organism.....And all around this human order which is being so slowly and painfully established, the great untamed forces of Nature are sweeping, and in the form of earthquake, famine, plague, and flood rush in from time to time as though to swallow up all that we have built. This very week, for instance, there was that appalling disaster in Florida.

Such are the facts, and no one can reasonably deny or even ignore them. There is no instance on record of Nature as such befriending and furthering human ideals. The fact that during the long process of evolution the law of the mother and the instinct of the herd arose, while true enough, has no bearing whatever upon Nature's supreme indifference to human interests. Mr. Darlaston is clearly mistaken when he alleges that we are fed, clothed, housed, and sustained by Nature. The truth is that man is, as Sir Ray Lankester calls him, "Nature's insurgent son," and that as such he has succeeded in defying it to its very face, and now compels it to serve him. But there is absolutely nothing to show that Nature is in an attitude of friendliness and support towards man's ideals and aims. In fact, Mr. Darlaston virtually admits this when he says that "Nature cannot think, cannot love, has no conscience, is not free."

Poor Mr. Darlaston is completely baffled. He is honest enough to concede with the utmost candour that Nature as we know it is not man's friend. He says: "She is mother to man and then appears as his enemy. Little wonder if we doubt whether Nature is indifferent to our ideals." Face to face

with this acknowledged paradox what is he to do? Reason knows of no door of escape, but the preacher calmly takes his flight into unreason. He says, without the slightest trace of a blush: "Religion has invariably insisted that we do not see the whole of reality when we only look at the world of Nature either in its sinister or its lovely moods. It asserts that Nature is only a part of a greater whole. Enveloping the world we see, overlapping it, permeating it, is an unseen world." From this point to the end of his discourse, Mr. Darlaston finds his only refuge in Supernature, of the very existence of which he supplies no evidence of any sort. Religion insists upon it that the invisible world is a greater and grander reality than the world we see and know. The sole duty which religion enjoins is that of believing. "Believe," it says, "and according to your faith be it done unto you." On the face of it, this is sheer nonsense, and it is no wonder that the majority of people resolutely decline to accept it as truth. It is a vicious superstition which is gradually dying out.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Bigot's Bonfire.

Fierce outrageous animals, for want of the man who has escaped them, lacerate and trample his cloak or bonnet. This, although the work of brutes is not half so brutal as the practice of theologians, seizing the man himself, instead of bonnet or cloak.—*Laudor.*

BONFIRES have not been associated largely with the Christian Religion since the days of James the First, that padded and half-forgotten buffoon who has such a fulsome dedication on the fly-leaf of the Authorised Version of the Christian Bible. So extravagant, indeed, is the language of this lick-spittle dedication that, as a small boy, I concluded somewhat hastily that the Christian God's front name was "James."

In the United States of America, however, they like to keep up the grand, old barbaric traditions of Orthodoxy. The Rev. Mr. Black, a hard-shell Baptist, of the town of Harlan, Kentucky, has resurrected the pleasant custom of Bonfire Day. He is quite impartial in his official capacity, being judge, jury, inquisitor, and executioner. He is quite ready to burn at sight any literature that he thinks conflicts with the Christian Bible, and in his memorable auto-da-fe he has publicly burned Wells' *Outlines of History*, a novel by an American author; and, strange to say, a pack of ordinary playing cards. Now, there may be plenty of heresy in the two books mentioned, but the highly-coloured designs on playing cards do not appear to carry sufficient heresy to damn a microbe. There must be another explanation for this. Perhaps, Brother Black is a rigid Republican, and the awful sight of so many "kings" and "queens" unnerves him. Or, maybe, the reverend gentleman is an indifferent player of whist. And, lastly, the cards might remind him of the days when he was human!

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Feudal England such uncivilized things were done by Christian priests. The bonfires of faith burned men and women as well as books. And, curiously, the ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic and the reformed Anglican Churches would not have had the slightest hesitation in consigning Brother Black to the flames, had he been living in those dreadful days of Faith. The priests of both Churches were cocksure that Baptists were worse than wild beasts, and should be treated accordingly. Heresies change in the course of centuries, but Mr. Black is a lineal descendant of those petticoated tyrants of five centuries ago who sent men and women to an awful death simply because they differed from them in opinion.

Presumably, Mr. Black is sorely afraid that the simple citizens of Kentucky, who look to him as a pastor and master, may hear of the dreaded theory of Evolution, and that some of the more brainy members of his congregation might get an idea that such theory was in conflict with the "rib-story" in "Genesis," and that the Biblical yarn was but a rib-tickler after all. Brother Black's brilliant idea is to burn and destroy utterly the offending book of Mr. Wells. But all of us, except the clergy, live in the twentieth century. Burning a solitary copy of a book is merely to advertise it, but Mr. Wells' wicked book is in print, and if Brother Black reduced a thousand copies to ashes the printing machines could produce a hundred thousand in reply. Most probably, if asked nicely, Mr. Wells' publishers would let Mr. Black have as many copies as he cared to burn publicly in sight of the camera. Publishers are not of the stuff of which saints are made, but they are very keen business men, and know which side their bread is buttered.

The Rev. Mr. Black has done nothing but make an exhibition of himself and his congregation, and in the promised rebuilding of Madame Tussaud's Exhibition he deserves a tableau in the Chamber of Horrors. It must be plain, however, that books cannot be killed in this fashion, or any other. Paine's *Age of Reason* was, perhaps, the most heretical book ever written, and the united strength of the English Churches and the civil power combined failed to suppress it. Men and women were sent to prison; stocks were seized and destroyed; heavy fines were imposed, and the result was that the book had magnificent sales for over a hundred years, a very remarkable instance of literary vitality. The very policemen sent to seize copies often carried a furtive volume away for home reading.

In the matter of heresy hunting the nineteenth century carried on the terrible traditions of its predecessors. With this difference, that the later persecutions were all directed against Freethinkers, whereas the earlier heresy hunts were directed against all forms of heterodoxy. As regards Freethinkers all the centuries were pitiless, and to-day in England one of the blots upon a Statute Book, civilized in so many other respects, is the continued existence of the old, old laws directed against iconoclasts.

Consider for a moment! Why were Mr. Wells, and the minor novelist, not burnt with their books? Neither could fight an organized priesthood and civil power. The answer is that the pioneer Freethinkers, by their sacrifice of self, broke down the walls of bigotry sufficiently for lesser folk to-day to enjoy that ampler liberty which was denied them in their time. They endured the fiery death, and the horrors of the prison cells, not for material gain to themselves, but that we might be free. The mildness of Mr. Wells' attack is as water to wine compared with the frontal attack of Paine and other Freethinkers on the Christian Superstition, but even its mildness would never have saved him from a fiery damnation in the Ages of Faith.

The Rev. Mr. Black has brought Tarlan, Kentucky, U.S.A., into contempt. The idea of Evolution is no novelty, for it was very ancient before America was discovered. It is older even than the Christian Religion. Yet Brother Black chooses to play these fantastic tricks, and remind the world that Baptist ministers of the twentieth century are of the same breed as the inquisitors of the fifteenth century. Like the Bourbons, priests learn nothing and forget nothing. There is no actual mental difference between priests of the older faiths and the youngest clergyman of the newest fancy religion. It matters not whether the priests belong to the Greek, Roman,

Anglican, Muggletonian, Swedenborgian, or any of the multitudinous sects of Christendom, they are all trained to perpetuate ancient ignorance. Further, their bread and butter depends upon such perpetuation. And they have never hesitated, when powerful enough, to employ brute force to further their propaganda. In the Ages of Faith priests bribed the weak and murdered the strong among their opponents, and they would do it again to-morrow if they had the chance. The reason they do not murder Freethinkers to-day is not a humanitarian one at all. It is simply that there are too many Freethinkers to slaughter.

Organized priestcraft is a business and a profitable one in most cases. The dress of an Anglican Bishop costs £250; he lives in a palace; and his income runs into thousands of pounds. There are forty of them in England who sit in the House of Peers, and a larger number outside. There are 25,000 priests of the Anglican Church, a large number living in cosy vicarages and comfortable rectories, and there are about 25,000 priests belonging to the Romish Church and various Free Churches. In America they have their own methods of organization, but if the Kentucky parson is a fair sample there is much justification for the jest concerning the Benighted States.

Perhaps the Harlan book-burning was only a spectacular piece of melodrama to impress the unsophisticated natives. The educational standards of Baptist seminaries is very, very low. In this case Brother Black may be regarded more with amazement than anything else. He may be as innocent of science as the old Californian gold-digger was of theological teaching. When asked to attend a service on Good Friday because the "Son of God" was killed on that day, he drawled: "Gosh! Did you say 'son'?" For forty years I thought it was the Old Man Himself, and not one of the boys." MIMNERMUS.

The Making of the Gospels.

III.

(Continued from page 603.)

No stories of miraculous works of healing or wise sayings appear to have been in circulation respecting Jesus in the days of the authors of the Palestine Epistles and the Revelation. In none of these first century writings is any knowledge of the Gospel fictions displayed—and a score of reasons can be adduced to show that many of them must have been referred to had they been known. It was not until a later generation that sayings and doings attributed to Jesus, came to be fabricated and committed to writing.

The originators of these stories were Christian teachers and others, who were well acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures. Their *modus operandi* was the simplest in the world, and the source of their narratives the most natural imaginable. They knew nothing whatever about their beloved Lord and Master, but that small matter was not of the least consequence. Was not Jesus Christ the one great subject of prophecy in the Hebrew Scriptures? And would any devout Christian dare to deny that those predictions had been fulfilled? Was not Isaiah liii., for instance, a series of prophecies dictated by the Spirit of God, foretelling the treatment of Jesus by the Jewish nation? And was it not, then, a matter of absolute certainty that all the indignities described in that chapter must have been inflicted, and had, in fact, actually been borne by the Jewish Saviour? Many important details of these sufferings were, no doubt, lacking in this chapter; but the full accounts might be found in other portions of the ancient Hebrew prophetic writings. This was the kind of

reasoning that led to the writing of the Gospel "history."

In one of the Gospels, Jesus is represented as saying:—

These are my words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, how that all things must needs be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, concerning me..... Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day, etc (Luke xxiv. 44-46).

It is scarcely necessary to say that there is not one word in the Old Testament which refers to Jesus Christ. Hence the writing the "history" of Jesus from "prophecy"—in the second or third generation after his death—was a work of pure misrepresentation, and could only have been done by men of some education who had spent considerable time in studying the Hebrew Scriptures. This pious work of distortion was long and arduous; but it was finished at last, and we possess three very much revised and improved copies in the Gospels "according to" Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

That the method of "history-writing" here outlined is not fanciful, and was that actually employed by the original Gospel-makers, is the next point to be elucidated. The fact stated becomes clearly evident from a comparison of the New Testament writings with the earliest Christian documents extant. In the Gospels, for instance, it cannot escape notice that the writers were acquainted with a number of Old Testament passages which, they assert, were predictions concerning Jesus Christ, and such being the case, were bound to be fulfilled. The following are a few examples from the First Gospel:—

1. The Virgin Mary was "found with child by the Holy Ghost.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying"——.
2. Jesus was to be born in Bethlehem because "thus it was written by the prophet"——.
3. The child Jesus was taken to Egypt "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying"——.
4. A massacre of babies took place in Bethlehem in fulfilment of "that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet saying"——.
5. Jesus "dwelt in a city called Nazareth.....that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets"——.

If the Old Testament passages which are referred to in the foregoing examples had never been written, then Jesus or his parents would not have had to act so as to fulfil them. We know, moreover, that not one of the passages quoted had any reference to Jesus Christ. Consequently, that much-misrepresented individual, if possessed of ordinary intelligence, would not have acted as recorded of him in the Gospels. The original Gospel-maker, however, was not possessed of ordinary intelligence, and the fact that he had his eye on the passages he cites raises the presumption that it was a distorted view of those passages which suggested to him the acts he has attributed to Jesus.

Apart from the books of the New Testament, the earliest Christian writing of which we have any knowledge was the "Preaching of Peter." This was a kind of romance something like the "Recognitions," in which Peter and the other apostles were represented as going about promulgating the new Christian religion. The book was "lost" at an early period; but Clement of Alexandria has preserved some extracts from it. The following paragraph indicates pretty plainly the source whence the history of Jesus was derived. Clement says:—

Whence also Peter in the "Preaching," speaking

of the apostles, says: "But we, unrolling the books of the Prophets which we possess, which name Jesus Christ, partly in parables, partly in enigmas, partly expressly and in so many words, find in them his coming, and death, and cross, and all the rest of the tortures which the Jews inflicted on him, and his resurrection and assumption to heaven.....Recognizing them, therefore, we have believed in God in consequence of what is written respecting him.....For we know that God enjoined these things, and we say nothing apart from the [Hebrew] Scriptures" (Strom. vi. xv.).

There cannot be the slightest doubt that had there been no such passages in the Old Testament as those distorted by the early Christians, we should have had no history of Jesus Christ. This system of perversion was common to all Christian teachers of that age. Even Clement of Alexandria, who has quoted from the "Preaching," was guilty of the same practice. He says (Strom. v. vi.):—

It were tedious to go over all the Prophets and the Law, specifying what is spoken in enigmas for almost the whole Scripture gives its utterance in this way.

To take a more relevant example, Clement says in another place:—

And that the Lord [Jesus] himself was uncomely in aspect the Spirit testifies by Isaiah: "And we saw him, and he had no form nor comeliness; but his form was mean, inferior to men" [Is. liii. 2]. Yet who was more admirable than the Lord?

One of the earliest of the Christian writings which have come down to us is the "Epistle of Barnabas," a document composed by a primitive Christian teacher some time before the appearance of the canonical Gospels. I have space for but one sample of this pious writer's distortions, but this will amply suffice to show to what lengths Christian misrepresentations were carried. In this extract, Barnabas ascribes to Abraham a knowledge of the Greek language and a foreknowledge of the coming of Jesus. He assumes that the mythical patriarch named knew that I and H were the first two letters of the name Jesus, written in capitals—IHSOUS—and that, as numerals, the Greek letter I stood for 10, H for 8, and T for 300. This ancient Christian instructor says:—

Learn then, my children, that Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practised that rite having received the mystery of the three letters. For the Scripture saith, "And Abraham circumcized ten and eight and three hundred men of his household." What, then, was the knowledge given to him in this? Learn the eighteen first, and then the three hundred. The ten and eight are thus denoted: ten by I, and eight by H; you have thus the initials of "Jesus." And because the cross was to express the grace of his redemption by the letter T, the Scripture says also "three hundred." He knows this who has put within us the engrafted gift of his doctrine. No one has been admitted by me to a more excellent piece of knowledge than this; but I know that ye are worthy.

For consummate impudence and unscrupulousness in the distortion of a simple passage of "scripture," the pious Barnabas beats all modern commentators hollow. Nevertheless, it was probably Barney's "excellent piece of knowledge" which suggested to the author of the Fourth Gospel the mendacious statement he has placed in the mouth of his fictitious Jesus (John viii. 56), who is represented as saying to the scribes and Pharisees:—

Your father Abraham rejoiced that he should see my day; and he saw it, and was glad.

Of course, the imaginary Jews in the story did not deny the impudent falsehood here cited; that would

not have done: yet only belief in some such crudity as "the mystery of the three letters" can account for the ridiculous declaration put in the mouth of the Fourth Gospel Jesus.

Some decades later than Barnabas appeared Justin, called "the Martyr," who followed the same fraudulent system of Old Testament interpretation. One luminous sample of this ancient apologist's method of reading the Hebrew Scriptures may be given. In contending that Psalm xxii. was a series of predictions referring to Jesus Christ, Justin says (Dialogue 103):—

And the expression, "Fat bulls have beset me round" [xxii. 12], was spoken beforehand of those who acted similarly to the calves, when Jesus was led before the Jewish teachers: and the Scripture described them as bulls.

And the expression, "For there is none to help" [xxii. 11], is also indicative of what took place [at the arrest of Jesus]: for there was not even a single man to assist Him as an innocent person.

And the expression, "They opened their mouths upon me like a roaring lion" [xxii. 13], designated him who was then king of the Jews, and was called Herod.

The apologist Justin, it should be borne in mind, was acquainted with a large number of Gospel stories, and was adducing what he deemed the most convincing evidences of the truth of those stories.

Further examples of the system in such general use among the early Christians—that of deducing the "history" of their Lord and Master from Old Testament "predictions"—are, I think, unnecessary. This was undoubtedly the method by which the unknown history of the Saviour was invented and compiled, and only by some such process could the Gospel narratives have been written.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be Continued.)

Acid Drops.

Bishop Barnes has been treading on the toes of a number of sentimental religionists who have been letting themselves go on the subject of St. Francis of Assisi. He says the anniversary has been largely used for religious propaganda, and he has been repelled by the superficiality and calculated bias exhibited. He also says that "an examination of the probabilities of St. Francis involves medical details that are somewhat repulsive."

Sir Francis, from an ascetic sense of duty, wore no linen, but rough woollen garments, and he seldom washed. His attitude toward body vermin was not ours, and we are told that he sometimes begged his friends to scratch him.

In his last illness he was in a state of semi-ecstasy and semi-delirium.

He was obsessed by the thought of imitating Christ, and he would touch his side, his hands, and his feet, thus irritating his already irritated skin. A modern nurse would have bathed him in warm water with which a little antiseptic was mixed.

We do not suppose that this will have much effect on the St. Francis worshippers. Besides the truth is that if we had to deal with most of these medieval saints today they would either be forcibly disinfected or confined in an asylum. We would commend to Bishop Barnes Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex*. He might then see what a light upon religion in general is thrown by a study of it from the standpoint of mental pathology.

With the assurance that could only be fitly presented by a newspaper, a leader in the *Daily News* informs us that "the religious bigot has had his day." This is a downright lie. He still exists in all his glory and a

newspaper article has not snuffed him out, but it is something worth living for to hear the same writer shovelling this sort of stuff overboard: "It is probably true to say that the old technique which appealed largely to the sense of fear, and took for granted an eternity of physical suffering as the direct consequence of human sin, has been abandoned if not in theory at least in practice by almost all the Christian Churches." If the appeal to the sense of fear is taken away from Christianity there is nothing left except professional interest, and perhaps it may be a too difficult task for Nonconformists to teach the value of social duty without hope of reward as heaven goes with hell. At any rate, it is not too late to try, and an acquaintance with Freethought literature will be of assistance.

One of the speakers at the Church Congress roused the ire of the *Church Times* by saying that the Middle Ages were "barbarous and beastly." It comments that at any rate the Middle Ages built the cathedrals, while the twentieth century has produced the gramophone and the loud speaker. Of course, to the *Church Times* to build cathedrals compensates for a lot, but one may point out that even if the twentieth century had given us only the gramophone and the loud speaker they have served to bring music within reach of millions, without exploiting either the physical or mental well-being of the people. The cathedrals were built while the people were plunged in inconceivable ignorance, while the mass of the people dwelt in hovels that were indescribably filthy, and the general manners are mildly described as "barbarous." What modern civilization has had to do is to get rid of the major part of the heritage handed to us from the age of the cathedral builders, and is all the better for doing so. The Middle Ages were barbarous and beastly. The speaker would have been more helpful had he pointed out that they were dominated by a beastly and barbarous religion.

Now that the brave lads of theology have thrown hell overboard—about two hundred years too late—Miss Helen Hope, in the *Daily News*, is relaxing in the following style: "Of what use is religion if it drives happiness out of the home, concentrates on clocks and bells, rigid rules, and regulations, and turns five minutes lateness into a crime of the first magnitude." The lady must be encouraged, for she is saying in a whisper what has been spoken from the housetops by those who have no religious axe to grind.

Professor Percy Deamer, as is natural, is not lacking in modesty about his profession. A nice little donkey-headed statement that the object of art is not to brighten religion, but to express it, should keep us warm with laughing now that coal is scarce. The only answer to this would appear to be that it is ridiculous to feed elephants on boiled eggs, and that aesthetics are better when fried.

Sir Oliver Lodge, in his Halley Stewart lecture, has been giving good advice. The efforts of statesmen in every nation, he said, should be concentrated on an effort to curb and control the tendency for patriotism to run riot. The world as a house with Christians as cocks of the roost is a familiar story; perhaps Nurse Cavell put the case better when she said that patriotism was not enough.

God save me from my friends might well be said of a letter signed "Catholic" in the *Daily News*. It is late in the day for such crude ideas to be at large, but here they are: "What needs to be rubbed in is that God exists just as much in worms, fleas, spiders, and the lowest kinds of human beings as in the more obviously beautiful creations." This is a familiar chestnut, and has all the marks of reasoning that would be expected from a set of fire-irons. The wicked Atheist has never stood up for God in that apologetic fashion, and troubles him least of all with half-baked excuses.

In large type, "An Outline of Christianity" is advertised as "a challenge to the world of thought." Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, and Mr. H. G. Wells will no doubt make the usual acknowledgment. This series especially invites and offers a friendly challenge "to intelligent and educated people who are not connected with any religious denomination." Now this is very badly put; are we to believe that stupid and illiterate people are claimed by Christianity? And it is safe to say that when once intelligent and educated people have parted company with Christianity there is no return; and in the great race for the cheap shelf we venture to predict that "An Outline of Christianity" will be there long before the *Outline of History*. The Bishop of Durham gives the "Outline of Christianity" his blessing, and writes that it will have rendered a great service to the Church, and therein specially to the clergy, and on the same page as the advertisement the cynical reader will be able to read about our fleet at work in peace-time reported by a moulder of public opinion as follows: "A few seconds after picking up this grey shadow five miles distant in the driving rain we were pumping 80lb. shells into her at the rate of 36 a minute, which I figured out at nearly a quarter of a ton every ten seconds." Why go to the music-hall?

A large part of our present industrial troubles, declares a Wesleyan parson, is due to the cowardice of those, masters as well as men, who though they know the right course to be taken, keep silent about it for fear of the consequence of upholding it. They shrink from expressing their honest convictions if these are likely to be unpopular. For our part, we are astonished that the reverend gentleman is surprised at this state of affairs. If he will bear in mind the fact that his Church, like all other Churches, has always discouraged the courageous expression of opinions in respect to religion, he may be able to understand that mental cowardice inculcated in reference to one thing invariably reveals itself in connection with other matters. The Catholic and Protestant Churches, he should remember, when at full power, systematically butchered or banished the outspoken; and therefore the race has been breeding for centuries from the mental cowards. The wonder, then, is not that the cowardly man is so common, but that the courageous one is in evidence at all.

A lion or tiger makes a bite that severs the vertebrae of its victims exactly where a wound is fatal, points out a natural history writer in a weekly paper. The stoat seizes the one spot of its victim's anatomy which will paralyse the animal's action and so make it a meal. We commend this aspect of nature to the gentleman who, in a daily paper, asked the reader if he wished to assure himself whether there was a God, to go to the open spaces, gaze at the sun, listen to the whispering breeze, and peer at the dainty vegetation, silver birches and delicately fronded firs. According to this gentleman, only a God could have created nature's beautiful things. Well, if he looks a little closer and sees the bloodshed and cruelty which is also there, he may tell us later that only a God could have created these too. But perhaps he will be less ready to ask us to worship a creator who could plan all such revolting cruelty and yet claim to be a loving heavenly father.

The value of religion is not apparent in the case of an individual living at Heaton, a suburb of Newcastle-on-Tyne. In a fit of religious mania he tried to destroy his own eyes, and is now in a serious condition in a local institution. "I show them that hell does not exist," wrote Ingersoll, "and they denounce me for destroying their consolation."

With the idea of a maintenance of copyright in the Bible for scriptural quotations on tombstones, a vicar would not allow Browning's lines to be used: "One who never turned his back but marched breast forward." The Chancellor of St. Albans was petitioned, and it was

ultimately allowed, from which it would appear that the clergy have no control over the dead or the living.

"Why Bolshevism remains in Russia" was the title of an address given at Bournemouth by Pastor William Fetler, director of the Russian Missionary Society. Thousands of Christians, said the pastor, wondered why—in spite of the prayers of Christian people that Bolshevism should come to an end—the awful Satanic system still prevailed. Why was there this delay? he asked. Pastor William knows why. God has permitted the awful state of Russia to continue in order that all the other nations should have an object lesson of what paradise is without Christ and the Gospel. God was waiting until that lesson had borne its fruit. God was permitting the tenets of Bolshevism to have their full time until people realized that these tenets did not satisfy their needs; he wanted the people of other lands to find out that social improvement without Christ was nothing but an empty dream.

In arriving at these conclusions Pastor William would appear to have been doing some very hard thinking. What, however, seems to have escaped his notice is this. If God is permitting the present anti-Christian régime in Russia to serve as an object lesson, a reasonable inference is that God must, in the first place, have planned this anti-Christian régime in order that there should be an object lesson to be permitted to continue. In that case, the Soviet leaders are mere cats'-paws of the Almighty; and being so, how can they possibly deserve the condemnation and vilification Christians are hurling at them? Again, if God is permitting the present state of Russia to continue, why does not Pastor William tell his flock that their prayers are merely waste of breath?

The country is still going, piecemeal, to the dogs. Blackpool Parks Committee has decided to allow Sunday golf in the municipal parks. And the Lord has no doubt received a few more thousand prayers requesting him to save England from its coming decline and fall.

One hundred pounds is being offered by a daily paper for a real life story from its readers. The experiences required must be true; they must not be a catalogue of trivialities, but the outstanding incident a series of incidents of a man or woman's life story. What is wanted is the unusual, romantic, exciting or even ghostly experience. What a pity Jesus and some of the Bible worthies are not alive to-day! As their recorded life stories fulfil all the required conditions, they would quite easily walk off with the prize—unless, of course, the adjudicators had their doubts as to the truth of the stories.

Crowland Abbey, in the Fen district, has been restored and re-opened. A weekly paper recalls the fact that the first Crowland Abbey was erected in 716 in honour of the saint whose special task was to drive away the demons of the fens with a whip of three lashes. This, we take it, was in the hey-day of Christianity when the faith was sweetly pure and simple, and before it had become contaminated with gross superstition.

With regard to our "Views and Opinions" in this week's issue, a letter appears in the *Daily Express* from the Rev. Sampson Cowley, who will not be deprived of his hell at any price. He takes his stand upon Jesus Christ, who said, "And in hell he lifted us his eyes in torment." The quotation is to the point, and we should really like the Bishop of Liverpool to tell us just what room there is for hell as a mere symbol in this.

Truth (Wellington, New Zealand) publishes a very biting criticism of the well-known evangelist, Gypsy Smith, in its issue for August 26, just to hand. It says "the Gypsy is a clever, egotistical, sleek, well-nourished

joke," who is estimated to have taken from Australia £10,000. It points out that the Gypsy gives his services to the Churches without payment beyond his expenses, but the "Free Will Offerings," in special envelopes manages to bring in a comfortable sum. *Truth* estimates that £2,000 was taken from Melbourne, £3,000 from Sydney, Brisbane gave £1,500, and the balance from other places. "Gypsy Smith," it says, "is a comedian, the comedian of Christendom, who, on the boards, would have been 'inimitable'.....Gypsy himself knows he is a joke, but, dear and beloved brethren, the joke's on you. The Gypsy laughs not with you, but at you." We are not surprised that Gypsy Smith declined to answer any of *Truth's* enquiries about his expenses. Why should he? The heads of the Churches doubtless know their Gypsy quite well, but it suits them to use him as it suited them to employ the notorious Torrey. Anything to keep the religious game alive.

According to Gypsy Smith's director of evangelising operations in Australia, the entire undertaking has been a triumphant success. Over 80,000 decision cards for Christ have been signed, and financially the movement has more than paid its way. Seemingly there must be a very large number of Christians in Australia. The evangelist's statements, however, do not seem to square with the statement of an Australian writer, also pious, who recently deplored the fact that the majority of the people "down under" were devoted to pleasure-seeking and were giving the churches the go-by. If this good man is right, the Holy Ghost must have muddled the Gypsy's calculating apparatus.

During the coal shortage the vicar of Priory Church, Christchurch, promises ten-minute sermons if his congregation will do their best to keep warm throughout the cold weather by singing more heartily. The vicar, we suggest, could help matters a bit by devoting his ten minutes to some good old hell-fire doctrines. There's nothing to beat a sermon on such a topic for raising the hearer's temperature; and it might warm up the collection plate also.

Speaking on "the worth of science," at Eccleston Square, Guildhouse, London, Sir Richard Gregory, B.Sc., said it was now known that disease was often the result of ignorance and laziness. In the old days when plague came, people went down on their knees and offered up prayers against the disease, when they should have been on their knees cleansing their dirty floors. What Sir Richard might have added is that God must have known what his ignorant people ought to have been doing, instead of praying; yet he said nothing. He left them to discover the truth for themselves and to take many hundreds of years to do so. Our Father has a curious way of revealing his love and tender care for the creatures of his own creating. Yet Christians still go on praising and worshipping him. Queer people are these Christians.

Speaking at a deaconess anniversary service, the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury declared that to bring about the great revival in religion Christians were looking for, it was essential that the ordinary man and woman should be "set on fire." No doubt. But now that most people no longer fear the prospect of being set on fire in the next world, the "spark of Grace" of Charles Wesley which is to kindle them into a religious blaze has almost as much effect as a very damp firework.

A delegate of the League of Nations said recently: "The League was not sent down from heaven ready-made. It is an experiment by human beings, by men who make mistakes." Well, if the Christians of Europe had been less filled with the "spirit of the Lord" they might have been more willing to listen to the Freethinker, Thomas Paine, and they could have started the experiment of a League of Nations and an international court of justice a hundred and thirty years ago.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust and Sustentation Fund.

THERE has not been much time for readers all over the country to respond to our appeal on behalf of the above Fund, but a start has been made, and we hope to see the subscription list lengthened considerably next week. We cannot, of course, expect the record-breaking first list of acknowledgments of last year to be repeated this year, and we have to deal with the appalling state of trade all over the country. Still, there is no reason for discouragement. The start is a substantial one, and we have until December, 1927, to raise the £3,000 required to take advantage of Mr. Peabody's offer. That offer ran as follows:—

September 11, 1926.

Provided the sum actually paid into the *Freethinker* Endowment Fund shall have reached the sum of Seven Thousand Pounds (£7,000) by December 31, 1927, I promise to pay to the above Fund the sum of One Thousand Pounds (£1,000) to be expended by the Trustees in the manner directed by the Trust Deed of the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, dated August 25, 1925, the certificate of a qualified Accountant to be conclusive as to substance and fact, such payment to be made within thirty days of formal notification thereof.

(Signed)

PHILIP G. PEABODY.

Mr. Peabody's sole aim in making the offer in this way is to encourage others to complete the Fund as soon as possible. Last year's subscriptions had the result of giving the *Freethinker* a permanent endowment of over £150 annually, and reduced the sum to be asked for this year to clear off the deficit to £250. That is a very notable step. And, assuming that we shall get the £3,000 we are now aiming at in the prescribed time, the amount acknowledged this week represents a total of about £420. Subscriptions thus bear interest in a double way. It is an important thing to bear in mind that every £100 now given ranks as £133 6s. 8d.—provided the £3,000 is subscribed.

Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, one of the Trustees, writes that he is ready to give another £100 on the same terms as Mr. Peabody; that is, when the total subscribed reaches £7,000. Others may feel inclined to help in the same way.

This is an opportunity for all to help, and it will be necessary for all to do so if we are to achieve our end. And when once this business of getting rid of the yearly deficit, which one must always reckon on when running a paper such as the *Freethinker*, is ended, the way will be clear for exploring other methods of making the paper play a still greater part in the fight against superstition, and on behalf of progress than it has done hitherto.

I cannot deal at length with the letters written me concerning the Fund and the paper, but senders will take this as a general acknowledgment of them. The *Freethinker* makes enemies, but it makes sterling friends. And a man or a cause that is worth anything usually succeeds in doing this.

Below will be found a list of subscriptions to hand.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

	£	s.	d.
J. Calm	250	0	0
H. Jessop	10	0	0
T. Robertson	10	0	0
R. Brown	10	0	0
G. Lunn	10	0	0
G. Pariente	5	0	0

	£	s.	d.
J. F. Hampson	5	0	0
A. W. Coleman	5	0	0
S. Gimson	5	0	0
W. Griffiths	5	0	0
V. H. Smith	5	0	0
G. L. Alward	2	2	0
A. W. Davis	2	2	0
J. W. Wood	2	2	0
T. H. Thomas	1	5	0
J. Foot	1	1	0
J. Seddon	1	0	0
D. C. Drummond	1	0	0
W. Walker	1	0	0
E. H. Hassell	1	0	0
E. Truelove	0	10	0
"In Memory of Charles Bradlaugh"	0	10	0
A. Deacon	0	10	0
A. R. Wykes	0	10	0
"Kapuladi"	0	10	0
E. Donat	0	10	0
T. Dunbar	0	5	0
J. Roberts	0	5	0
C. Gray	0	5	0
J. Burdon	0	2	6
TOTAL	£336	9	6

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and addressed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4. Every contribution will be acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*.
CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

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

H. YOUNG.—Glad you are so pleased with the works on Psycho-analysis. We do not advertise remainders unless, in our judgment, they are books that are well worth reading. People have got obsessed with the matter of sex when dealing with Freud's views, and have ignored the fact that, apart from "sex," a rather unfortunate term for Freud to have used, his general theory is one of the most important contributions ever made to a genuine science of psychology.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Thanks for contribution, and for promise to help further. We are aware that it is a very bad time to make financial appeals, but it is unavoidable, and the debts are incurred before help is asked.

W. MORGAN.—As there is a limit to our stupidity we never said or imagined that economic and social questions were not of consequence. But we are doing a work that other people will not do, and those who talk most about the importance of economic justice often show little inclination to do anything that by any chance will offend the religious interests, easily the most sinister of all vested interests. Perhaps one day you will see that to develop in the mass of the people the habit of forming independent opinions, and expressing them fully and fearlessly is the most important work of all.

J. BRESSE.—Pleased you like the Birmingham article. It remains now for Birmingham Freethinkers to see that the Education Committee get the full benefit of their bigotry. We do not supply these newsagents direct. They get it through their wholesale agent, and we cannot compel them to take returns. We can only say again that they get the paper from us on sale or return, and we are ready to supply any newsagent in the country on those terms.

G. L. ALWARD.—It is good to find so old a reader of the *Freethinker* as enthusiastic as ever in its praise.

J. F. HAMPSON.—We are much prouder of our movement than its members could possibly be of anything we have been able to do.

D. C. DRUMMOND.—Thanks for good wishes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 17) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Broughton Town Hall, Duke Street, Manchester. In the afternoon, at 3, the subject will be "The Press, The Public, and the Farce of Faith." At 6.30, "What is the Use of a Future Life?" The hall is available by tramcar from all parts of Manchester, and we hope to be able to report it well filled on both occasions.

Mr. John M. Robertson reaches the seventieth anniversary of his birthday on Sunday, November 14. The date is to be made the occasion of a complimentary dinner to him at the Trocadero Restaurant, Piccadilly, and Professor Graham Wallis will preside. The price of the tickets will be 12s. 6d., and may be obtained from the Secretary of the Rationalist Press Association, Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C. Mr. Robertson has spent the larger part of his life in fighting the battle of Freethought and deserves well of Freethinkers, both in this country and abroad. There is no man for whose ability we have a greater admiration, and on whose work for Freethought we place a greater value. A provincial engagement will prevent Mr. Cohen being there, otherwise he would have been pleased to have been present to show his high appreciation of Mr. Robertson's work.

We continue to receive letters from the Liverpool district expressing a hope that lectures will be delivered there during the coming winter. All we can say is that it is useless unless those on the spot are prepared to do the local work. There is no doubt as to there being a good audience ready. We already have the names of two or three who are willing to do what they can to help, but we want more. Now, will those who wish to see work being done, send on their names and addresses here, and we will put them into communication with each other? Then we will see—what we will see.

Johnny Jones; Guttersnipe, by J. M. Stuart Young (Daniel & Co., 7s. 6d.), is only lacking in a declaration to pass for genuine autobiography. It is a realistic story of a Manchester boy brought up under the most depressing conditions, which helps one to realize how much degradation may exist side by side with our boasted progress. Had Johnny Jones been born in the middle of savage Africa, he would have lacked the knowledge of many things that Manchester gave him, but

he would also have escaped many of the brutalities it inflicted upon him. The story is set out simply and forcibly. Mr. Stuart Young never preaches, but his lines are so clearly cut that the lesson cannot but be noted. The effect of a brutal environment on a naturally sensitive nature, with a craving for a wider knowledge of the world is well portrayed. Some of the pages are brutally, but not unnecessarily frank, but there is no straining after effects, either with language or situations. Above all, the author impresses one with a sense of his absolute sincerity and his power of artistic restraint.

Another novel that lies before us, *The Temple of Truth*, by Arthur Craven (Watts & Co., 5s.), is frankly propagandist, and here the aim of the author overshadows the art of the novelist. The character drawing is quite subordinate to the presentation of opinions concerning religious beliefs, morals, etc. But we can commend the book to all who wish to see in conversational form the various arguments for and against Christian belief. Mr. Craven, through the mouth of John Howard, states his objections to current religious beliefs in a clear and temperate manner, and the work may interest some in the subject who are warned off by the more formidable article or formal essay.

In an unsigned article in the *Baptist Times*, possibly written by the editor, the writer deplores the fact that his church has great difficulty in getting social workers. He adds:—

There is one man in our town who always makes me thoroughly uneasy and unhappy. He is a complete and thorough-going Atheist. He neither believes in God nor devil, heaven or hell. He has no use for churches or sacraments, and thinks the Christian religion is a pious myth. But he believes in men and women, and little children and unwanted babies; and every hour of every day he is devoted to their service and the amelioration of their lot. It is too terrible to think what his opinion is of the multitudes of professing Christians who seem to live for themselves alone.

For this unsolicited testimonial, much thanks. Evidently the "blatant Atheist" is, on close inspection, not quite so black as he is usually painted. What is amusing is that the writer of the testimonial should be terribly apprehensive of what the Atheist may think of him and his godly fellows. It is something new to find a Christian sorely anxious for the good opinion of an Atheist. Possibly this is one of the unhappy results of the age now being pagan.

Freethinkers in East Ham may be interested to learn that Mr. J. G. Marshall, an old member of the National Secular Society, is contesting the Little Ilford Ward as an independent candidate in the municipal elections. His Committee Rooms are 826 Romford Road, Manor Park.

We can heartily recommend Professor Westermarck's little booklet on *The Goodness of Gods* (Watts & Co., 1s.). It is a short summary of the relation between moral ideas and practice and the belief in supernatural beings, serves to illustrate the play of social forces on religious ideas. The goodness—and the badness—of the gods are reflections of human qualities, with the distinction that the goodness of man generally outstrips that of the beings he worships. Naturally so. For as the humanization of the gods is dependent upon the humanization of man, it is only as the latter is effected that man begins to revise the moral qualities of the beings he worships. That is why the gods act as a drag, never as a spur, to moral development. We are glad to see Professor Westermarck emphasizing the essentially selfish character of Christian moral teaching.

It is the law of Fate that men shall live in part by their own efforts; but in the greater part, by the help of others.—*Ruskin*.

The March of Materialism.

III.

(Continued from page 630.)

DR. MCBRIDE holds the fundamental law of Materialism that matter cannot be destroyed, and that energy can never be lost. And, further, he adds: "No doubt this is scientifically true also of living things, including man, and we have no evidence that from the physicist's point of view there is more in the body and brain of the most talented human being than matter and energy, each of which is undergoing perpetual change. In other words, the scientist cannot demonstrate the vital spark."¹

The Doctor devotes some part of his book to a consideration of those great champions of God and the soul, Dr. McDougall and Professor J. S. Haldane. Like the theologians, they dwell upon the unknown. All the known phenomena belong to science; all the unknown, the unexplainable, belongs to religion; you have only to mutter the word "God," or "Soul" when an explanation is required, and you are saved all further trouble in the matter. Just as Ali Baba only had to use the magical word "Sesame" to cause the door of the treasure cave to fly open. As Professor Wildon Carr has recently remarked, "The reproach which has been, and still is, levelled at religion, that it is ever retreating from one position to another before the victorious advance of science, and that it is now preparing to die in its last ditch, is not undeserved, nor is it entirely untrue."²

After a careful examination of McDougall's arguments, Dr. McBride comes to the conclusion:—

On the whole, then, we suspect the careful student of McDougall's work (*Body and Mind*) will not consider it an unjust criticism if we suggest that it savours of special pleading, and even if its main contention—the soul—be granted, that it binds us to find this soul in all living things, including, for example, vermin, germs, and even in white blood corpuscles. Lest we may be thought to exaggerate, we give a quotation (McDougall, *An Outline of Psychology*, 1922, p. 134): "He (man) is only one of her many marvels, though the greatest of them; and in the structure of his mind, as in his body, there are no elements and no principles that she has not used again and again in those less exalted achievements which we call animals."³

Religion is the one great obstruction to the acceptance of Materialism to-day as it has been in the past. Fifty years ago Professor Tyndall declared: "Were not man's origin implicated, we should accept without a murmur the derivation of animal and vegetable life from inorganic nature. The conclusion of pure intellect points this way and no other. But this purity is troubled by our interests in this life, and by our hopes and fears regarding the life to come."⁴ Dr. McBride is anxious to conciliate this hostility, by concluding that the Materialistic theory is not necessarily Atheistic, and cites an article by Broad, in the *Hibbert Journal* (October, 1925), who accepts the Materialists' claim, that "organisms originated from inorganic matter." And that "an organism really is nothing but a complicated machine." Mr. Broad assumes the existence of a God, or a mind, which endowed matter with the faculty of producing mind; and he claims that the materialistic theory furnishes a strong argument in

favour of Theism! This, of course, is only a disguised acknowledgment of the victory of Materialism, which the better instructed and more astute believers see is now inevitable, and are preparing to absorb it, as their predecessors did the Copernican astronomy and the Darwinian theory. "Certainly," says Dr. McBride, "many clever and thoughtful men believe that as to these matters we can never have definite knowledge and must, for this reason, remain agnostic," and concludes, for his own part: "We may sum up the argument by the proposition that to assent to the mechanistic theory as to mind is by no means incompatible with holding religious beliefs. On the other hand, it cannot be claimed that there is any scientific fact which gives definite support to any religious doctrine or dogma."⁵

We do not think this olive leaf will bring much comfort to those seeking for a solid foundation for their faith. It is not the gradually diminishing figure of God—who, even to the eye of the average man, shows a tendency to vanish from the heavens, as he has already vanished from the earth. It is not the loss of his God that distresses the average man; his faith in God was always more of an affliction than a comfort, with his spying upon all our thoughts and actions, and his rod kept in pickle for Judgment Day. As Bernard Shaw remarked long ago, most people believe in God because they are afraid he will strike them dead if they do not.

What the average religious man is interested in is the future life, a continuation of life after death, which is unthinkable to the Materialist, who holds that mind cannot exist apart from brain, and therefore the mind and personality end with the death and dissolution of the organ which produced it. Upon this point there can be no compromise with religion. Of what use would a God, or Gods, be to a believer without the prospect of a future life? The average man would not value them at three a penny.

To conclude with *The Riddle of Personality*, Dr. McBride, its author, is the eminent authority on Diseases of the Throat, Nose, and Ear, his book, under that title, is a standard work on the subject.

Almost simultaneously with Dr. McBride's book there was published another work, also by a doctor, dealing with the same subject but from a different point of view, entitled *The Personal Equation*, by Dr. Louis Berman (Allen & Unwin, 8s. 6d.). Mr. Berman does not hold out any olive branches, or seek any compromises with the enemy. The note is struck by the motto on the blank page at the beginning of the work, viz.: "The living being is a chemical mechanism, and perhaps it is nothing more." Further on, he declares: "One of the great achievements of modern science has been the release of thought from the theological dogma, even now accepted as a gospel truth by hundreds of millions, that the personality consists of the manifestations of a 'soul,' a reality which is made of 'spirit,' opposed in its nature and activities to 'matter,' and consequently to the 'body' palpably flesh and blood" (pp. 73-74). Since the beginning of this century an enormous amount of research work has been carried out upon the glands of internal secretion, known as the ductless glands, or endocrine glands. While the Metaphysicians have been arguing the Scientists have been working. With results utterly disastrous to all the metaphysical fictions of soul and spirit.

These glands are eight in number, consisting of the pituitary, in the floor of the skull; the pineal, in the brain—Descartes declared this to be the seat of the soul—the thyroid, in the neck; the four parathyroids at the side of, or near, the thyroid; the

¹ Dr. McBride, *The Riddle of Personality*, p. 47.

² II. Wildon Carr, "Truth and Tradition," *Nature*, July 24, 1926.

³ McBride, *The Riddle of Personality*, pp. 41-42.

⁴ J. Tyndall, *Fragments of Science* (1876), p. 352.

⁵ McBride, *The Riddle of Personality*, p. 50.

thymus, in the chest; the adrenal, one on each side above the kidneys; the pancreas, which produces the pancreatic juice for digesting the food; and the sex glands, known the the gonads. Each of these glands produce chemical substances known as hormones, peculiar to themselves and differing from all the others. The pituitary gland really consists of two glands, one behind the other, and each produces a different secretion, entirely distinct from the other, both in chemical composition and function. They are known as the pre-pituitary and the post-pituitary. The function of the first-named is the promotion of growth. Says Dr. Berman: "The secretion of the anterior lobe or pre-pituitary was recently obtained in soluble form, and by means of it giant rats have been created. In human pathology giants have been found as the result of its overacting before puberty. This is because of its stimulating effect upon the growth of the bones, especially the long bones."⁶ But more important than this is the effect of these chemical products upon the mind. W. MANN.

(To be Continued.)

A Royal Commission on the Clergy.

It appears to have escaped general knowledge that some time ago the Government appointed a Royal Commission to enquire into the condition, earnings, and status of the English clergy. The Commission duly set to work, made a number of enquiries, heard a large number of witnesses, and finally reported thereon. This report has not yet been issued to the public—there is, indeed, reason to believe it never will be; but having, by a curious chance, come into possession of a copy of the report, I am thus able to place the principal portions thereof before my readers.

In a kind of preamble the report says:—

The subject of the appended enquiry deals with what was once unquestionably—if we exclude the military—the largest and most flourishing occupation in the British Isles. Although of foreign origin, its growth in these islands was very rapid, and for generations it gave employment to a large number of people—how large, there are no reliable figures upon which a calculation may be based. For many years, however, owing to the competition of an increasing number of new occupations, there has been probably an absolute, but certainly a relative, decrease in the number employed. New occupations do not, however, account for all, since it appears that the home industry has suffered severely through importations from Italy in an earlier period, and later from Germany and France. These importations consisting of ideas totally at variance with the best interests of the clerical profession, have worked irreparable havoc among those on whom the clergy depended for support; and your Commissioners are convinced that, could a more rigid system of protection have been maintained, what is now a decaying industry might have been in a far more flourishing condition.

Under the head of "Occupation," the Commissioners report:—

Considerable difficulty has been experienced by your Commissioners in arriving at an exact estimate of the number of persons engaged in this profession. Although those so engaged are banded together on the usual trades-union lines, yet, owing to these being split up into a number of more or less autonomous societies, and also to the animosity existing between them, we have been unable to obtain exact figures. Still, we are convinced that

between 70,000 and 80,000 would be an approximate estimate—the larger figure being probably nearest the truth. The difficulty of an exact calculation is enhanced by the fact that this particular occupation has associated therewith a large number of practitioners who have no official or trade rank. These seem attracted thereto by various motives—love of gain, dissatisfaction with more laborious methods of employment, sheer vanity, or the mistaken idea that they are specially fitted for the work. But your Commissioners have observed that there are few occupations so easy to follow, or that demand less preparation for those who adopt it.

While on the whole this occupation seems to be a fairly healthy one, we yet find associated therewith diseases and disorders of a well-defined character. These affections, while not confined to this profession, certainly manifest themselves to a quite abnormal extent. Your Commissioners feel themselves justified in assuming, therefore, that while these diseases may not be produced, they are certainly and generally aggravated by the occupation in question. These maladies are very largely of a mental character, but one may cite among the more noticeable ones the great prevalence of myopia and other forms of ophthalmia. The majority seem quite incapable of seeing things in their right proportions or in their true relation to other things. Aphasia is also common. Under this head may be noted the prevalence of amnesia, there being a marked inability in a large number of cases to find and use the right word in describing people or things. In a series of experiments conducted by your Commissioners, in which the subjects of investigation used such words as "Faith," "Miracle," "Inspiration," "Providence," etc., it was found that there existed nothing like a common agreement as to meaning, and indeed in a large number of cases meanings quite at variance with the legitimate ones were given to the words in question. Mental disorders are deplorably common, notably various kinds of egomania. The delusion that they are called to their work by a supernatural power seems to be held by most; and although your Commissioners pointed out to these unfortunate people that their trade was generally selected for them by parents or guardians, that they served an apprenticeship as in other trades, the delusion seemed unshakable. An inflated egoism leading men, often of less than mediocre attainments, to publicly declare the belief that their existence is essential to the national well-being, with the refusal to look at national concerns from that of any other point of view than of their own sub-union, demonstrate the existence of mental disorders of a most distressing kind.

Your Commissioners also desire to record their conviction that most of these people appear to have brought their disorders into the trade, if these were not the actual condition of their adopting it. In this way there appears to have been a process of selection at work, by means of which people of weak or disordered intellect are deliberately kept from other professions and placed in this one. In this direction the clerical profession certainly serves a useful function, since it provides an opening for people afflicted in the manner described, and who might otherwise lower the general character of other trades, or become a burden on their friends or on the public purse. But in the course of its investigations your Commissioners have come across not a few cases where the more brilliantly endowed members of a family have been selected for other callings, leaving the less endowed for this one. It may also be noted that the conditions of the occupation tend to aggravate whatever weakness the subject starts with. The system of apprenticeship seems elaborated to this end. During the course of training to which they are subjected independent thinking is strongly discouraged, the official textbooks with which the students are supplied are mostly of an antiquated kind, the students are

⁶ L. Berman, *The Personal Equation*, p. 108.

shut off from all advanced knowledge having a bearing on their profession, all of which combine to produce a degree of weakness and helplessness painful to behold, and fatal to their helpful efficiency in after life.

Concerning the earnings of this class your Commissioners have also failed in securing exact figures. Many who complained that their incomes were miserably small were found to have deducted therefrom the cost of clothing, boots, food, rent, riding, etc., and only to reckon as earnings the residuum. Others, again, are comparatively small, although the average for the whole of the industry is certainly not insignificant. But here it is to be observed that the only satisfactory test is to take this industry in relation to other industries, and with regard to its social efficiency. So far as the last factor is concerned, we have quite failed to discover any useful function subserved by this profession. Certainly there are no social functions that would not go on as well in its absence. Moreover, we have had evidence placed before us which goes to show that these persons are largely the agents of other interests in the country, and by their activity during election times, as well as on other occasions, distract public attention from issues that are of vital consequence to the well-being of the nation. And, with regard to the first, the earnings of this industry in relation to others, your Commissioners observe that, while many may possess but meagre incomes, there is no reason whatever for imagining that they would be better paid in other occupations. Thrown on the ordinary labour market, the presumption is that their earnings would be less than they are at present.

The report contains a list of "suggestions," from which I take the following:—

Although your Commissioners are strongly impressed with the conviction that the industry under examination is a dying one, and one impossible of permanent preservation, it does not advise any very drastic action. Much might be done by selecting the younger and healthier persons, teaching them a new trade, and thus surround them with a healthier environment. But obviously this could only be applied to a small number of people. Many having been placed in this trade because their natural qualities did not permit of their adopting with profit any other, it would be unwise to expect that the method suggested above would be of any value except in relation to a few. And, bearing in mind the large numbers engaged in this profession, very serious evils might result from throwing on to the world, destitute of either natural or other resources, a body of men incapacitated by inclination, by training, and by custom, from earning a living in other directions. Apart, too, from the financial aspect, we would point out that, in segregating a certain type of mind, the clerical profession does perform something of a social service. Of the evils resulting when this type of mind emerges in politics there is ample evidence; and therefore the letting loose of some 70,000 men in the political field could not but be productive of much injury. Probably the most satisfactory plan would be the establishment of a fund from which might be drawn yearly incomes for such as are fitted by nature for no other industry or occupation than the one in question. This would serve the purpose of keeping them from lowering the tone of other professions, and, at the same time, the inevitable growth of public education and public opinion might be trusted to make the type less numerous in future.

There are many other important passages in the report, but I have given nearly all that are of interest to readers of this journal. It is to be hoped that some member of Parliament will take the matter up, and press the Government for the speedy publication of the work of the Commission.

SIMPLE SIMON.

The Free Church and Spiritualism.

THE *Manchester Guardian*, September 22, enabled a Free Churchman to discourse for a full column review as to the attitude of his fellows on the subject of Spiritualism. From this review we gather that Dr. Albert Peel, the editor of the *Congregational Quarterly*, put it on record that most Nonconformists have an open mind on the subject, not venturing to assert that communication with the departed is impossible, but holding that the verdict for the present must be "Not proven." This is not quite enough for the reviewer, because he calls to mind Nonconformists who "brush the whole business aside with a contemptuous 'Pshaw,'" and says that he has met those who "silence anyone who dared to suggest that there might be something in it." "Undoubtedly," he says, "there are 'charlatans' who are ready to prey upon the 'ignorant and deluded'; let them be exposed and suppressed without mercy and without delay. But it is worse than ridiculous to use such language where men like Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle are concerned."

Are we to understand by this that there are Free Churchmen who call these gentlemen "charlatans"? Because if Free Churchmen have not used the phrase it is extremely doubtful whether anyone else has. Neither Lodge, nor Doyle, are mediums; they do not practise what they believe in; were they to do so they would be far more interesting. It is correct to say that they are humbugged, and in giving credence to the Spiritualistic humbug they undoubtedly humbug other people. That is quite a different matter from calling them charlatans.

For the reviewer to say therefore: "They are not charlatans, but earnest and honest enquirers; if they are wrong there is no need to anathematise them; it will be enough to show that they are wrong," sounds very impressive and broadminded, but it is not quite the spirit in which to make headway with these gentlemen. The evidence of Sir Oliver Lodge has been submitted to close study and criticism by many able writers and debaters. The same can be said of Sir Conan Doyle. But there is not the slightest sign that these two "experts" have ceased to have weight as authorities on Spirit Phenomena. Obviously it is *not* enough to show that they are wrong. People must be educated up to the point of appreciation that because a man may be an authority in a branch of science it by no means follows that he is therefore qualified to give an accurate account of a seance. Or because a man makes a name writing detective stories, therefore he is capable of detecting fraud in real life. When it is said that they are honest it is important to stress the aspect of their honesty. If it is meant that they don't impose their own trickery on people then they are honest. If it is meant that they don't make money from their work in the spirit world then they are honest. But if it is meant that they act as impartial witnesses and investigators the word is used ambiguously.

For instance, is it honest for Sir Conan Doyle to assert that Julius Zanzig—the male partner of the famous Zanzigs, who made a furore in London some years ago—is a genuine Psychic, when Zanzig himself denies that he is? Here is something more than absurd when we find Sir Conan Doyle vouching for Zanzig's qualifications as a Psychic in the *New York Times*, and Zanzig himself offering for sale in a conjurers' magazine his original system of "Mind Reading," which he advertises as having baffled Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, for fifty dollars. Where was the honesty of Sir Conan Doyle making a claim for Julius Zanzig which the latter most stoutly repudiated?

And with regard to Sir Oliver Lodge, although he is in a different category from Sir Conan Doyle, of course, where was his honesty when he stated that a distinguished biologist shut his mind to the phenomena of which he might be a skilled investigator, referring to Sir Ray Lankester by his degree of F.R.S., and order K.C.B., when Sir Ray Lankester had challenged his statement that telepathy had been discovered. Sir Ray Lankester pointed out in the press that he wanted the demonstration necessary to justify the assertion, and expressed his willingness to investigate this phenomenon. Where is the honesty of Sir Oliver Lodge in not giving his fellow scientist an opportunity to make the investigations?

We merely give two examples of the impartiality of these famous "experts," but many more illustrations could be given. And the deeper we went into the matter the more ambiguous the word "honesty" would become as applied to their researches.

The reviewer not only puts the statement of Dr. Peel of "Not proven" forward, but adds his own. He says: "For myself, I have the smallest shred of experience by which to confirm the conclusions of the Spiritualists, but if God has anything to teach us by them—I am not yet sure that He has—I want to learn it."

Quite! So do we all! But if Spiritualists have been busy for something like eighty years bringing medium after medium forward, only to have them exposed one after the other, then truly "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

But lest the reviewer be charged with committing the sin he charges others with he hastens to refer to two other volumes, one of which explains how a man became reconciled to his wife after she had died, a typical example of hallucination which can be explained on quite other grounds than "Spiritualism"; the other volume being a life story of F. W. H. Myers, from which we gather that he was made happy by his researches in the psychical. Then we are hurried to earth once more and told: "Again let me say I do not mention these things as if they proved the truth of the Spiritualist's hypothesis; it may be that the facts upon which he builds admits of some other and different explanation; but at least let us not be in haste to condemn lest, like others before us, we be found fighting against God."

Unfortunately we live in a "believing" world, and the man who can speak with two voices is deemed the safest. But not thus is truth served, and fearless minded men will want to know. They will not be satisfied with verdicts of "Not proven," or vacillating statements of "there may be something in it." Men who will investigate Spiritualism will find fraud, and beside the fraud they will find its supporters, and, maybe, even *their* honesty will be questioned.

HENRY SARA.

North London Branch N.S.S.

Miss Ettie Rout's extremely interesting and thought-provoking address last Sunday brought a good and interested audience, and was followed by a most animated discussion. Such opposition as was offered was of the most good-humoured and courteous description, and it is greatly hoped that Miss Rout will visit us again next season. To-day (October 17) Mr. George Bedborough is our lecturer, and we hope for a good audience for Mr. Bedborough, whose lectures are always most interesting and enjoyable.—K. B. K.

Proverbs often seem very wise, because they are very ambiguous.—Prof. W. Stanley Jevons.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ESSEX HALL (Essex Street, Strand, W.C.): Friday, October 22, at 8, Mr. Joseph McCabe, "The Evolution of Worlds." (Lantern Lecture.) Tickets, 1s. each, apply, enclosing stamped addressed envelope, to Mr. F. L. Monnaie, 87 Ashbourne Avenue, Mitcham, Surrey.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road and three minutes from Camden Town Tube Station): 7.30, Mr. George Bedborough, "Love and its Implications."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. R. Dimsdale Stocker, "Publicity—Its Possibilities and Perils."

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

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin, "The Church Congress." Thursday, October 21, at 7.30, Mr. Maurice Mowbray, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture; (Brockwell Park): 3.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan, a Lecture.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Hart, and Peacock.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW (Bakunin House, 13 Burnbank Gardens, Glasgow): Thursday, October 21, at 8, Mr. Guy A. Aldred, "Thomas Paine." Questions and discussion invited.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, "A" Door, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. J. Grant, "Is a Scientific Theology Possible?" Questions and discussion invited. Silver Collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe, "Christianity and Evolution."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Broughton Town Hall, Duke Street, Manchester): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Press, The Public, and the Parce of Faith"; 6.30, "What is the Use of a Future Life?"

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