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*Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums,
Letters to the Editor, etc.*

Views and Opinions.

The Poor Parson.

THERE is at least one subject on which there exists a splendid agreement amongst the members of God Almighty's official army. This is that they should all receive a salary which would enable them to live free from any sort of financial worry. They may dispute as to which of them should be invited to attend a Royal Drawing Room, or take an official place in a public ceremonial, but on this question of the parson being paid more money, they are solidly at one. The Bishop of London with £10,000 annually, and the Archbishop of York with £15,000, agree that the layman ought to shell out more for the upkeep of God's representatives. The better-paid—the over-paid—representatives of God will almost shed tears when they contemplate the small salaries of some of their brethren, and will beg other people to give part of their incomes to a distressed clergy fund. They will give the money of the laity freely, joyously, extravagantly. Their generosity with the incomes of other people knows no limit. They must give with open hands and joyous hearts. They are advised that they are giving to the Lord. The parson is merely the collector. But how much reaches headquarters and how much remains with the collector is another question.

* * *

The Natural History of the Parson.

The Rev. B. G. Bouchier writes with some bitterness on this question in the *Leeds Mercury*. He complains that in some mysterious way the belief has arisen that a clergyman belongs to a species other than that to which the ordinary man belongs, and that this is to some extent responsible for the "scandalous under-payment of many clergymen." Suppose that were so, who is to blame? The clergy have always claimed that in some way or another they were different from other people, even if they did not belong to another species. The primitive parson—he of the paint and feather variety, frankly claims that he is different from other people. He is endowed with

powers that mark him off from the rest of the tribe, and it is because of these powers that he stands where he does. And his descendant—who has replaced the paint and feathers with a distinctive coat and collar, and the drum with an organ and choir—has never quite given up that claim. They all pretend that they get their jobs in a way different from that in which an ordinary man gets his. No parson would dream of saying that he had applied for a situation in such or such a parish, and no committee of deacons would write to a parson to tell him that they could offer him a situation, etc., etc. The parson is "called by the Lord," he is "moved by the Spirit," etc., etc. He is not paid wages, he receives an "emolument." He is not a workman, he is "a privileged labourer in the Lord's vineyard," specially commissioned to reveal the Lord's will to man. For centuries he claimed special rights in virtue of this divine commission. Some of these he still claims. During the war he managed to evade the obligation of military service. He dodges the payment of rates and taxes in his place of business; and he has always professed to be superior to the more material claims of life. There is no wonder then if "in some mysterious way" ordinary folk have come to regard a parson as being different from themselves. They must either think so, or tell him that he is a liar or a humbug. Evidently what the parson wants is to be above ordinary folk in matters of privilege, but to be assured a full share of whatever material luxuries are going.

* * *

Are the Clergy Underpaid?

Most of this talk about the underpaid clergy is rank nonsense. Mr. Bouchier says that it is common to find parsons with salaries of £150 to £300. That may be so, but is it any different from that with other people? There are underpaid men in every trade and in every profession, and some who get very little indeed. There are lawyers, doctors, writers, and others, on whose training much more has been spent than has been spent on that of a parson, who get barely enough on which to live, but we do not find them whining all over the country about the need for money being raised to see that they are free from financial care, and can live with a certain degree of comfort and refinement. Why should a parson claim to be placed upon a level different from that of other men? A claim that all men should have an income large enough to enable them to live with comfort, and to bring up their families with decency, has something to commend it. It is at least general, and applies as much to the labourer as to the aristocrat. But why single out the parson? In other trades when a man finds he is not doing well, he works harder, or he sits and waits, hoping for better times, or he gets into another occu-

pation where he may strike on greater good fortune. Why cannot the parson do the same? If the parson will not act as ordinary men act, and take cheerfully and uncomplainingly the risks that ordinary men take, why grumble if "in some mysterious way" there grows up a conviction that he is different from other people. Why does he not tell his congregation that when he says "The Lord will provide," he does not mean it to apply to himself, but only to them? It really looks as though, when he teaches that it is our duty to fix our mind on higher things, it is really of higher salaries he is thinking.

* * *

Souls and Salaries.

Mr. Bouchier writes as though the number of parsons getting very small salaries is very large. I doubt this very much. Taking the whole body of the clergy there are fewer below what may be called the comfort level than is the case with most other occupations. The vastly larger number of the clergy get very comfortable salaries, some of them very large salaries, and many get sums of money for which they do nothing at all. For years the present Bishop of London was receiving £1,000 a year from St. Paul's Cathedral, which involved no work whatever. And there are a vast number of "plums" to be picked up in the clerical business. It must also be remembered that it is on these plums that the eyes of most are fixed. And it is the plums of every profession that attract. When a young man commences to study law, he does not think of the large number who remain month after month, happy to pick up a few stray guineas, or of those who continue to the end hopeless failures, and never get a really comfortable income. What he thinks about is the fortune and fame that will enable him to secure £15,000 or £20,000 a year, or the judgeship that may come his way. It is the same with every other profession. It is the successes that allure. The failures come, and are taken, as a matter of course. And in some sense these failures and successes are selective. Some fail because they have not the ability to succeed. It is only the clergy—a profession in which a lower level of ability is called for than in any other of the professions—who ask that there shall be no selection whatever, that if "plums" cannot be given to all, a full competency shall be secured for each one of them. When one remembers that there is not a single other trade or profession in the country which makes this claim, one wonders whether, after all, the clergy are not members of a different species from that to which the rest of us belong. It is about the only thing that would justify such a demand.

* * *

What is the Use of the Clergy?

Let us look at the matter from another point of view. Is there any special reason why the community as a whole should be seriously alarmed because a small number of parsons are not getting more than £300 a year? There are a small number of livings which either cannot or will not pay more. Well, in that case, why not do what would be done with branch establishments of any other business—either run them at the expense of the paying branches (as a means of keeping the "pitch" out of the hands of competitors) or close them altogether. If there were enough clients to keep them going and pay the required salary, it would be paid. But why should the community feel alarmed to find that a parson is not getting more than five or six pounds a week, than it would be if it found that a lawyer or a doctor was in the same position? One reply to this would be that

if the number of the clergy is not kept up people will drift away from religion altogether. I admit that this danger exists. Religion is so imperative a necessity of human nature, that unless a man is continuously dosed with it he is apt to find that he is better off without it. And that is a very serious thing for the clergy. The grave danger fronting the clergy to-day is that people are discovering that they can get on very well without them.

The other reply would be that the functions discharged by the clergy are of so great a value that the community cannot afford to be without them. Is that the case? Is there anything that a parson does—as a parson—that anyone could not do equally well as a simple citizen? He certainly has nothing to tell us that cannot be told us, and is told us, much better by informed laymen. It is not from the parsonic side of life that the great advances in knowledge of the last couple of centuries have come. Even in the case of religion our knowledge of its origin and evolution has been gained apart from the clergy. The general improvement in the social and economic status of the mass of the people has nothing to do with the functions of the medicine-man. The marked development in the sense of social responsibility that exists owes nothing to him. If the clergy could only summon up courage to declare a general strike till the things of which Mr. Bouchier complains no longer existed, Society would not be a penny the worse. There was a time when a strike on the part of the clergy—in the shape of an edict of excommunication—did seem a very serious thing, and it has brought more than one people to their knees. But it is extremely likely that to-day, if the clergy were so ill-advised as to declare a strike, the public might be found contributing liberally—to keep them at it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"An Unction from the Holy One."

It is a notorious fact that Christians claim to be not merely different from but positively superior to all other people on earth, and that their superiority is the direct result of their union with Christ. Of course, if the New Testament is or contains the Word of God, they are fully justified for harbouring so lofty a claim. In the second chapter of the First Epistle of John, we read of anti-Christ and false teachers who had forsaken the Christian fold. The author characterises them as follows: "They went out from among us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us." That is perfectly orthodox teaching. Non-Christians are outsiders; they are of the world which is passing away, and dwell in utter darkness. That is not true of genuine followers of the Lord Jesus; they are insiders, who dwell in the glorious light of God. The apostle John states the Christian claim thus: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it. . . . The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you." Now such being the claim which Christians make for themselves, the question naturally arises, is there any truth in it, or the ghost of justification for it? In other words, how can the "unction" or "anointing," spoken of, bring such unlimited knowledge to those who have it?

In "the Correspondence of Rev. Prof. David Smith, D.D.," in the *British Weekly* of August 25,

an attempt is made to solve that misty problem. Dr. Smith introduces his solution thus:—

This little epistle is the "covering letter" which accompanied St. John's Gospel when, in extreme old age, no longer able to teach or attend the assemblies of the brethren, he sent to his churches in the Province of Asia that precious record of the testimony which he had borne to the Incarnate Saviour, "the Word made flesh," during his long ministry of some thirty years among them.

The assumptions of the Professor are amazing in the extreme. He assumes, without a single scrap of evidence, that the First Epistle of John was a "covering letter" which accompanied St. John's Gospel." He totally ignores the fact that the authorship of the Fourth Gospel and of the three Epistles that bear John's name, is a subject of endless controversy among Biblical scholars. Matthew Arnold composed a long essay in disproof of the Johanine authorship of the Gospel tradition ascribed to him. Even among those who regard John as the author of the Gospel, there are multitudes who are convinced that the three Epistles did not come from the same hand. The First Epistle is obviously an attack upon false teachers, and its conception of Christ is fundamentally different from that found in the Gospel. On this point Schmiedel, in his article on "John, son of Zebedee," in the *Encyclopædia Biblica* writes very emphatically:—

Above all, in the Epistle Christ is represented much less than he is in the Gospel as intervening between God and man. The conception, based on the Logos-idea that it is Christ alone, not God, who can come into direct relation with the world, is absent. In the Gospel the relation of God to Christ is like that of Christ to believers (x. 14f. xiv. 20 xv. 9f.); God gives salvation to him, he imparts to them (xvii. 8 etc.); Christ alone is the way to God (xiv. 6 x. 7, 9 xv. 5), while in the Epistle (iii. 21) we can have boldness directly towards God; in the Gospel it is Christ who is the light (i. 4, viii. 12), in the Epistle it is God (1, 5) . . . These divergencies are explained much more easily on the assumption that the two writings come from different writers, though belonging to one and the same school of thought.

In itself, this is a wholly unimportant point, but we wish to observe that Dr. Smith's statement of his view is such as to lead ignorant readers to infer that no other opinion exists.

Taking it for granted that John wrote the Epistle, the Professor affirms that "there are two reasons which prompted him to the task":—

One was that his life was so nearly spent. He was the sole survivor of the Apostles, the men who had accompanied with the Master in the days of his flesh; and when he was gone, none would be left to testify "what they had heard, what they had seen with their eyes, what they had looked upon, and their hands had handled, of the Word of Life." And the other reason was that a mischievous heresy had taken root in the Province, especially in the capital, the brilliant, intellectual city of Ephesus, where the aged apostle had his home—the same heresy which had already made its appearance there in St. Paul's day . . . and which subsequently developed into the system known as Gnosticism.

Here again Dr. Smith's statement is extremely misleading. He seems to look upon Gnosticism as a heretical Christian sect which had its origin at Ephesus when Paul lived there as a missionary. This appears to be a common error. In the *New Standard Dictionary* Gnosticism is defined as "an eclectic system of religion and philosophy, existing from the first to the sixth century." Turning to Professor Gilbert Murray's *Four Stages of Greek Religion* (p. 143) we find a radically different view of it. He says:—

The Gnostics are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics. In reality there were Gnostic sects scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after. They must have been established in Antioch and probably in Tarsus well before the days of Paul, or Appollos. Their Saviour, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men's minds before the Saviour of the Christians. . . . He occurs notably in two pre-Christian documents, discovered by the keen analysis and profound learning of Dr. Reitzenstein: the *Poimandres* revelation printed in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the sermon of the Nassenes in Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omorium Hæresium*, which is combined with Attis-worship.

No wonder the apostles hated and denounced Gnosticism, for it robbed their Gospel of its alleged originality. After all, Christianity was not exactly a new religion, but rather a reconstruction or amalgamation of several older ones. As Harnack describes it, Christianity is a syncretistic religion. "Unconsciously it learned and borrowed from many quarters." Directly or indirectly, even Paul was deeply indebted to Plato for some of his chief ideas. The condemnation of Gnosticism in the Pauline Epistles is scathing enough, and yet it cannot be denied, as Edwyn Bevan points out in his valuable work, *Hellenism and Christianity* (p. 91), "that already in the Apostolic Age the infiltration of Pagan belief and practice into the original Gospel had begun." In the First Epistle of John the Gnostics are called Antichrists, but it must not be forgotten that the writer sets up a Gnosticism of his own. To his fellow Christian he says: "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." He thus differs from Paul in that he exalts *knowledge* above *faith*.

Now Gnosticism, whether Pagan or Christian, is an absolutely false system. It is true that some Gnostics held the view that God in himself is unknowable and unapproachable, but it is equally true that they believed in him and taught that "all existences, material and spiritual, are derived from the Deity by successive emanations, or eons." In relation to the existence of God and all other so-called spiritual existences we are deep-rooted, obstinate Agnostics. What we maintain is, not that God is unknown and unknowable, but that we have no knowledge whatever of such a being. In other words, we are Atheists—without God. We hold that no conception of him is or can be self-consistent or rational. The Gospel Jesus states that "God is a Spirit," a statement that explains another, that no man hath seen God at any time. What is a spirit? It is defined as an immaterial invisible being, and it follows that God, being a spirit, is both immaterial and invisible. Now read Genesis i. 26: "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness." How on earth can an immaterial, invisible being have an "image, or likeness"? The Anglican creed informs us that God is "everlasting, without body, parts, or passions," which is tantamount to admitting that he neither does nor can exist. Therefore we conclude that the "Holy One" is a myth, from whom no "unction" or "anointing" has ever been received. If we desire knowledge we must acquire it by hard and patient work, and the only knowledge procurable is of this world and its affairs. No other world has ever been discovered.

J. T. LLOYD.

You see—to me, life and work are the two things indivisible. It's only by being true to life that I can be true to art. And to be true to life is to be good, sincere, simple, honest.—Kathleen Mansfield's "Journal."

"Darwin Was Right."

"We have superstitions which we share with the most primitive of humans."—*Aldous Huxley.*

"We shall never enfranchise the world without touching people's superstitions."—*G. W. Foote.*

"Let us have to deal with real men and women, and not with skipping ghosts."—*Emerson.*

"DARWIN was right," declared Sir Arthur Keith in his Presidential Address at the opening of the Annual Meeting of the British Association at Leeds, when he supported the theory that man has ascended from a lowly place among anthropoid apes to that which he now occupies.

It was a fitting climax to a controversy which has agitated scientific circles for three generations. Seventy years ago Charles Darwin demonstrated that man has attained his present state through a gradual process of evolution from a lower and less perfect state. The general admission of this truth sweeps away at once the old Biblical legends which men have been taught by the priests to consider a sufficient explanation of the genesis of the human race. The legend of a fallen race at once disappears, and with it goes the myth of the devil, and all other strange and monstrous explanations that were necessary to harmonize the theological theory put forth. With it also goes the Bibliolatry which, like so many other idolatries, has served to enchain and cramp the human intellect. The Bible of the Christians must descend from its lofty pedestal and take its rank on the library shelf among the sacred books of many ages and many nations.

Nothing more momentous has taken place since the Renaissance. And, strangest of all, this intellectual lever which will finally overthrow all existing creeds, has come among us so silently that many have scarcely noticed its approach. Opposition there has been, as there is to all new truths; but, compared with the momentous issues at stake, the opposition has been bitter but unavailing. Silently and steadily for seventy years Darwinism has been resistlessly pushing its way till few educated men or women now attempt to contravene it. There has been no "bridal birth of thunder peals," while this "great thought has wedded fact." To the clergy and their congregations, whose innocence will not permit them to follow intelligently the course of scientific thought, the new theory must appear like Banguo's awful ghost to the surprised Macbeth. They look up suddenly from their crosses, candles, and their prayers, and see the awesome shadow in front of them. Adam and Eve, Jehovah and the Devil, are driven out from the Garden of Eden, not by an angel with a flaming sword, but by Charles Darwin with a steel pen.

Since Darwin's death the clergy, who formerly denounced him with the whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence, have, hypocritically, claimed the great man as one of their flock. They actually buried this black sheep in Westminster Abbey, in the sure and certain hope of a saviour he rejected whilst living. Without blushing, they pretend that the teachings of Evolution are wholly in accord with that of their Church and their Bible. Only two out of the large number of religious bodies have been at all honest in this matter. Poles asunder in many respects, the Roman Catholic Church and the Salvation Army have remained ever faithful to ignorance and superstition. On no condition will they part with Eve and the apple and the talking snake of Eden. Roman Catholics and Salvationists hate one another like poison, but they both share the belief that Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and their colleagues, are suffering the tortures of the damned. These uncultured folks no more believe in

evolution than they understand the rudiments of science. But those who are trying to effect a compromise between the irreconcilables, religion and science, from the Archbishop of Canterbury to the glib spouters on Pleasant Sunday Afternoon platforms, are not suffering from the illusions of ignorance. They know that the battle regarding evolution has been lost by the supporters of the Bible, and they desire to be on the winning side. Their fluent assurances that the truths of evolution are all in harmony with the Christian Bible, and that scientific discoveries are of real assistance to religion is simply a smart ruse to save the Church of Christ from falling into intellectual and financial bankruptcy.

All this Christian camouflage might succeed were it not for the fact that men have so many other sources of information than the pulpit utterances of their "pastors and masters." Darwin himself was only one of a group of men who not only removed the stigma of insularity from their own country, but who helped to make the nineteenth century illustrious by throwing a new light into every corner of human thought. The very names are an inspiration: Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Lyell, Hooker, to mention no others. These men were the champions of the theory of evolution, already so potent a force, yet only, in its modern form, seventy years old. In the history of evolution a century is a little thing. A few centuries ago women were put to death publicly in this country as witches. A few centuries earlier the Druids were burning their human victims by the hundred, as sacrifices in "Merrie England."

The story of evolution dwarfs into insignificance the "old, old story," told by the priests, and embraces the history of the universe from formless stuff into solar systems, the process being the advance from the simple to the complex, from the indefinite to the coherent. The same process is shown to be in operation in the life-history of the earth. No break between things inanimate and animate being assumed, life, mind in the lower animals, and man, man's social and intellectual development are in unbroken sequence shown to be part of the eternal order. The triumph of Darwinism is the triumph of the theory of evolution, a victory of science over superstition.

Slowly, with lapses into its "lov'd Egyptian night," civilized humanity is shaking itself free of the last desperate clutches of superstition. Bewildered by the new light, missing at first the guiding hands of the priests, it stands amazed on the threshold of the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wide acceptance of evolution has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead mankind to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals.

MIMNERMUS.

Aristotle said that children should not be taught politics because they have had no experience of life. I think that is mainly true. We ought not to desire to teach children politics, but we ought to be able to give them at school those large ideals of political obligation which are part of common applied morality.

The Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher.

I enjoin you to the service of the nations and to the pacification of the world.—*Works of Baha 'Ullah.*

'Twere all as good to ease one beast of grief
As sit and watch the sorrows of the world
In yonder caverns with the priests who pray.
Edwin Arnold.

"Materialism Re-stated."

READING an unwarranted meaning into "Materialism" is one of the chief weapons of the militant Christian; the same thing is also the means whereby a timid scientist seeks to ensure an easy life for himself and the work he has to do. For it is inconceivable that any scientist does not know and appreciate the importance of the principle on which the whole fabric of science depends. He will go on his way applying to his problems the law of causation, as if the idea of an undetermined effect had never entered his head, but out of his laboratory and among the "respectable" portion of society, he will assent to scientific Materialism being defined as something gross, and hold up his hands in horror at the supposed demoralizing effects of it. It is generous to assume that the trimming scientist has peace as an object in assenting, by his silence or otherwise, to the misrepresentation of theologians and others; it is probably true to say that lack of courage is the cause in nine cases out of ten—the long ascendancy of Christianity having, as one of its effects, the belittling of mental courage in its adherents or in anyone over whom its influence extends.

With the class-conscious theologian it is different. He is honest, if slim, in his attack. Nature has endowed him with a flair, a sort of instinctive knowledge of what will ultimately destroy his belief. He does not need to understand it; enough for him to sense that under a seeming harmless scientific demonstration there lurks the germ of an idea that has been in at the death of so many gods. And then the tradition of infamy that comes down through the history of his church regarding opponents of the Christ, does the rest.

There is another class of objector who, professing to have naught to do with the official religion, hankers after that mystic region made so plausible and attractive by men like Jeffries and George Russell. But whereas Jeffries in his *Story of My Heart*, and "Æ" in the *Candle of Vision*, were content with stating, with a wealth of artistry, an unusual personal experience, and never assuming it was outside the realm of nature, these mystics—last-ditchers would be a more appropriate name, for they only apply their idea of non-causation to what they term the spiritual side of man—seek to discredit the Materialist conception by a fantastic misuse of the meaning of the terms used in stating the problem. For instance, "R.M." writing on "Mechanism," in *The New Age*, took full advantage of the poverty of the language in seeking to establish a case against Determinism. There was no great endeavour to prove the assertion that the mind of man was not subject to the same principle that operates in other spheres of life; he simply took the most convenient definition of the terms used, and had no difficulty in slaying the caricature of Determinism set up. Determinists, he says, decry feeling as something unworthy; he identifies the imagination of the artist with creation, in the Bible sense, something out of nothing, and then posits freewill as deciding which special creation is best. "Will" in another place is apparently an entity and the objection to "Free"-will applies also to "Free"-thought.

The answer to these and others of a like kind is contained in Mr. Cohen's latest book, *Materialism Re-stated*, where the general question is treated concisely and clearly. The same vigour that characterized his handling of the law of causation in *Determinism or Freewill* is here in evidence. It is an excellent introduction to Science; keeping in mind, as Mr. Cohen points out, that the accumulation of scientific facts is of much less value than a clear conception of

scientific procedure. And that is worth some trouble to understand.

Materialism is simply the application of the law of causation to all natural phenomena. It is no new conception. The Greeks had the idea of law, and Mr. Cohen quotes in confirmation an apt statement from Hippocrates, who sought to apply the common formula to the sacred disease of epilepsy. They had got away from a god-determined origin of human ailments, and included all in the reign of law. Through the Middle Ages the principle was seen at work in the discoveries of Copernicus and Kepler, and down to the more modern times of the Royal Society. All the more enduring work in science emphasized Laplace's statement that God was not necessary in a scientific hypothesis.

As in *Determinism or Freewill*, Mr. Cohen is at pains to see, and state exactly what the terms employed mean. Fallacy upon fallacy has been piled up on the arbitrary meaning of such words as matter, soul, self, etc. Although the principle of Materialism can be expressed in a sentence, the exposition of it requires a logical mind of the first order, and in the chapter dealing with the problem of personality, to take one only, the author of this little book shows that along with profundity, he possesses a gift of clear and simple utterance, seldom seen in conjunction.

Personality, self, the elusive something that stands apart from the physical side of us and yet dominates it; the mythical entity familiar to spiritualists and savages; the "soul" of the salvationist; the immortal "I" of the bumptious; "the psychological blunder of the primitive savage," Mr. Cohen takes and reduces it to what in Hume's phrase is "a bundle of perceptions." "Self" is the co-ordination of experience. The sense of "self" is as real as the book itself, but when the sensations are removed by sleep or death, the personal identity is as good as annihilated in one, and actually so in the other. This "self" varies with the physical conditions of the body it inhabits, and when that is dissolved it has no more existence than has loyalty or any other of the human virtues apart from man.

One has to tread warily in summarizing the chapter on "Cause and Effect." The English language is a wonderful medium, in the hands of a master, for conveying ideas, but where philosophers have stumbled I am acutely conscious of the possibility of breaking my neck. Not that the author is obscure; he is never that, but there is a keenness of reasoning in the chapter that descends on one like a cold douche. Still, being put right in the company of David Hume should have some compensating quality, and I take the plunge. Causation then is not simple succession, the sequence of events that philosophers even of modern times have spoken of. Neither is it the manifestation of some occult principle; it is the convergence of two or more factors. Mr. Cohen illustrates his reasoning on this point by inviting us to observe what happens when a billiard stroke is made. The balls are not related in any way until the moment of impact; then the momentum of one overcomes the inertia of the other. On the face of it, one factor is the "cause" of the other, but really they occur simultaneously in time. There is no precedence. There is no room for that "something" which causes things to happen. The happening is causation. The author suggests that much of the haziness surrounding the question would be dissipated if we thought of "cause" and "effect" simply as forces. "It might have been then realized that while the identity of cause and effect is fundamentally an illustration of the indestructibility of force, the changes in phenomena, due to a combination of factors, is an illustra-

tion of the equivalence and convertibility of forces. But in thinking of cause and effect as two separate things, room was given for speculation as to what united the two. The metaphysician found room for his occult 'principle,' the theologian for the action of deity. Also, there ensued the discussion as to whether we could ever know causes in themselves—which again left room for the existence of an unknowable factor in causation."

This unknowable factor is the sheet anchor of the modern superstitionist of all grades, from the mystic who dwells somewhere between heaven and earth, to the bawling Salvationists of the market place. The knowledge that modern science, rightly understood, is fatal to all these supernatural schools of thought should be at every Freethinker's command, and this book is a notable contribution to that end.

I have said that Mr. Cohen's work is an excellent introduction to the study of Science; it will, in addition, enable the reader to scan the reviews of scientific books in the *Nation*, and kindred journals, with a considerable amount of malicious pleasure, which alone is well worth thirty pence.

H. B. DODDS.

A Message of Hope.

THERE has recently been a World Conference at Lausanne on "Faith and Order." As far as one can tell, it seems to have been an effort on the part of the various Protestant sects to arrive at some sort of a compromise—Roman Catholics, be it noted, never join in at these round games; they stick to their own craft and are prepared to sink or swim with it, for which we cannot but admire their courage. The steady watering down of religion, a process which has been carried on now for some hundreds of years, and which was vastly accelerated in the Darwinian era, is a most interesting study. It is like a man with an expanding suit-case. He is continually finding fresh articles to be included in his belongings, so he stretches the case a little further every time.

In this particular case some little difficulty seems to have been experienced owing to the many axes which had to be ground on the same stone. Some idea of the varied views expressed will be gathered by the mention of three of the names of the delegates. There were present, Dr. Soederblom, Archbishop of Upsala; Dr. Morehouse, of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America; and a representative of the Church in China, who bears the name of the Rev. T. Ting Fang Lew.

After a discussion, which at times grew somewhat heated, the following report was drawn up:—

That in a united Church there must be: (1) A common Faith and a common message to the world; (2) Baptism as a reincorporation into the one Church; (3) Holy Communion as expressing the corporate life of the Church; (4) Ministry accepted throughout the Universal Church; (5) Freedom of interpretation about Sacramental Grace and ministerial order and authority; (6) Due provision for the exercise of the prophetic gift.

About Nos. 1 to 5 we make no comment. It is the usual sort of jargon which is always talked at these conferences, and to which we are thoroughly accustomed. But No. 6 is certainly a new and startling line, calculated to raise no little interest and speculation. They do decidedly seem to have made provision for every eventuality. In fact it reminds us of the White Knight in *Alice in Wonderland*. His horse, it will be remembered, wore spiked anklets, and Alice enquired the reason, to which he replied "to guard against the bites of sharks." Alice remarked that this was hardly likely to happen, and the reply was "Perhaps not, but I like to be prepared for everything."

The question is, who is going to do the prophesying, when are they going to start, and what are they going to prophesy about? We do sincerely hope that they will not begin one of those "End of the World" campaigns. We are really rather tired of the continual alteration of dates with regard to this event. There is certainly any amount of scope for a prophet at the present time. Earth-

quakes, floods, wars and rumours of wars, all provide ample material to work upon, and anyone proceeding on these lines would indeed be welcomed as a boon and a blessing to mankind. But we have grave misgivings. The prevention of wars and disasters does not seem to be the Church's long suit. During the last war one witnessed more flag-wagging and denunciations of the Kaiser on the part of the followers of Jehovah than any other section of the community.

However, the members of the Conference seem to be quite certain that there is going to be some prophesying in the near future, and that they are the people to do it. Whatever their other differences of opinion may happen to be, they are evidently unanimous on this point.

We are pleased to note that there is also another matter on which our friends are agreed. At the end of the meeting all united in singing "O God our help in ages past." Well, "each for himself and God for us all," as the elephant said when he danced among the chickens. In other words, by all means let our religious friends sing about this "help in ages past"; but as regards the ages to come, we prefer to temper our enthusiasm with the discretion of experience.

B. S. WILCOX.

Acid Drops.

When dealing with Sir Oliver Lodge and others and their criticisms of Materialism, we have had to remark that their whole trouble consisted in not realizing that if things are different they are not alike, and if they are alike they cannot be different. We are reminded of this by an article in the *Church Times*, on the current evolution controversy. The editor admits that there are great resemblances between the body of man and that of the anthropoids, but it is the mind of man that establishes a difference in kind, because when we find a drawing of a reindeer, we do not say this is almost too good to be drawn by an ape, we know that only man can make a picture or enjoy one. "When you have explained that man has descended from sponges you have not explained what man is," etc., etc.

Now this is rather a good exercise in confusion, the complete disentangling of which would take more space than we can afford to give to it. Man cannot be identified with the apes, because he does things which an ape cannot do. But we do not know that anyone wishes to identify man with the apes; only to prove a common descent. And it might strike the editor of the *Church Times*, that if the ape could do all that man can do, there would really be no necessity to put them into different classes. In other words, if things are different they are not alike. Ever since boyhood we have been amazed at the mentality which tried to prove that man cannot have descended from the animal world because he has marked differences from the animal world. It would seem that the only case in which the religious mind will admit difference is where there is identity. And that leaves us wondering just as much.

Another example from the same article. Naturalism, we are told, breaks down because it seeks to explain man by assuming that everything that occurs is potentially there from the beginning. We take "potentially" to mean that, given the existence of certain forces, all that happens afterwards is due to the interaction of these forces. Either this is the case, or we must assume the existence of two worlds, one the world of science and another world of which science knows nothing whatever, and, apparently, never will know anything. We must also assume that at some particular point this unknown world penetrates the known world, and although subject completely to the conditions imposed by the known world is yet independent of it. To state it in this way is to make it clear enough for anyone to appreciate its absurdity. But, once again, the only reason for assuming that the end is not "potentially" in the "beginning" is that the end is different from the beginning. So we have to again remind all and sundry, that unless the end was different from the beginning we could not tell one

from the other. If things are alike they cannot be different. What a hard lesson that is for some people to learn.

There is one sentence in this editorial with which we agree. The editor says that, "If any single happening can be explained, ultimately, without God, then the whole can be explained without him." Now that is an unexpected flash of "horse-sense." But it is admitted that physical phenomena does not need a God. Religious leaders are tumbling over each other in presenting the world of physical science to the Naturalist, if he will leave the world of human thought and aspiration to the Churches. If anything can happen without God, then everything may happen without him. All the simple and all the complex things; all the evil and all the good things; all the ugly and all the beautiful things; it is a case of everything or nothing. Fortunately for the editor, the body of devout believers are not likely to follow this kind of thing out to its logical conclusion. They would otherwise read it that if physics can do without god why not psychology and morals? If we are to praise God when we see something good happening, why not blame him when we see something bad? If we thank God for a good harvest, why not have the courage to pass a vote of censure on him when there is a bad one? In that case our prayers would take the form of, now, "Oh, Lord we thank thee for thy wisdom in doing things so well," and, again, "Oh, Lord we cannot resist saying how much of a bungle thou hast made of this year's harvest, how badly thou hast managed affairs in permitting another earthquake in Japan, and earnestly request that greater care and commonsense will be exercised in the future." God is responsible for everything or nothing. We thoroughly agree with that.

Truth tells an amusing story of a millionaire and a medium. The millionaire desired to raise the spirit of Napoleon, and a chance acquaintance in a Paris Turkish bath introduced him to a medium. She made only one condition. A set of questions must be drawn up and signed in the presence of the spirit. This was agreed, and a seance was held in pitch darkness. The acquaintance produced an electric torch and held it over the paper as soon as the spirit appeared. It was a very satisfactory performance, and the millionaire was perfectly satisfied until he found that in the darkness he had signed one of his own cheque for 340,000 dollars.

Two children, joined together like the Siamese twins, were born in London at the beginning of September. They lived only four days. We have every sympathy with the parents, but the birth and death of the children raises interesting questions. Were their souls linked together? And if their souls were linked together will they have four wings or a pair between them? Four wings or two, we are afraid their flight will be as awkward as a three-legged race. While if they should desire to fly in different directions . . .

In addressing five young missionaries newly ordained at Blackpool, the Rev. E. W. Thompson said that missionaries must be able to say to those who were humiliated and bound by their political state, that even so they were free to live a life that was joyful and free. Exactly. The missionary's concern is not with helping downtrodden natives out of humiliation and bondage, nor with encouraging them to resent it. His aim is to inculcate the slave mentality, to dope the masses into dull acceptance with their lot by a promise of compensation in a Hereafter. At this job the Churches have been pretty successful in European countries until quite recently, for which fact tyrants and exploiters have been duly grateful. But the game is not so easily played to-day, when the masses are forsaking the Churches and rejecting their guidance. Apparently, however, the men of God are still hopeful of making the old dope "take" among the unsophisticated in Asia, Africa and India.

Apropos of hunting barbarities, a reader of a daily paper says he thinks the protests arising from all

quarters prove that people are becoming "more Christian and more civilized." This newspaper reader, who appears to know nothing of Christian history, seems not to have noted that the humane protests well in evidence to-day, coincide with a marked decline in the belief and influence of the Christian religion. We commend to his notice the fact that the Ages of Faith, and the widespread enjoyment of the most brutal sports and pastimes kept in step with each other comfortably. Moreover, the Church never protested against such sports, and the parsons were active participators in them. If he will ponder on these facts, perhaps he may begin to wonder whether the improvement in human feeling now evident, must not owe its inception to some source outside the Christian religion, the Church, and the parsons.

A good deal is being said just at present about a fair number of scholars in our schools being "unteachables," and that therefore education is wasted on them. Some well-known educationalists started the ball rolling in this direction, and of course, certain parrot journalists who are not in favour of the masses knowing too much, are busy with their profound thoughts on this topic. We are inclined to fancy that there are not so many real "unteachables" as the older type of educationalist would have one suppose. The fault lies with the educational system. Despite what the psychologists have discovered about the infinite variety of human material, the system still appears to provide but one method of teaching—one general mode of handling—for all kinds of minds. Naturally, a good number of children do not respond to such treatment, and the educationalist covers up his stupidity with a cry of "unteachables."

Mr. James Douglas says he is never tired of asserting that, whereas "theology is dead, religion is very much alive," which is just one of those pieces of nonsense which the ordinary journalist, with his pose of piety, loves to use in befooling unthinking readers. What we should like to know is: What is religion minus a theology? Those who pay attention to the meaning of words, know quite well that the two things are quite inseparable. Theology is only the verbal form which religion takes. A man may reject one theology in favour of another, but to have a religion without having at the same time a theology is a sheer impossibility. Mr. Douglas had better try again. But perhaps with his audience it will not be necessary.

Dr. Parkes Cadman, an American preacher visiting England, is convinced of the permanence of the Church. "The Church will be here when the British Empire and the American Republic have fallen away like leaves of autumn." This is another way of saying that Dr. Cadman believes credulity and stupidity are permanent features of human nature. For our part, we refuse to credit that. We believe man-kind is on an upgrade.

Yiewsley Methodists have just built a new tabernacle for the Lord, costing £17,814. We presume God forgot to tell them that the money could more usefully have been spent in erecting houses for the many thousands of people existing in one-room "homes."

A sermon by the President of the Wesleyan Conference was broadcast from Wesley's Chapel the other Sunday. A pious reporter, present at the chapel, says it is still quite exciting to sit in a pew and visualize the wireless listeners. He pictures the man-of-the-world after a day's golf; the man who never says a word about religion, and who hates sermons, but who is strangely moved on hearing an old hymn; the worldling "on the brink of disaster," who may hear a word to "save" him; and so on. He thinks the Church and her message is reaching all these various types of people who are indifferent to religion. It seems a pity to disturb this blissful picture. But the blunt truth is that the great majority of listeners don't trouble to switch-on when the broadcast service commences; and they resent the fact that the B.B.C., while taking their money, refuses to give them an alternative item of a more joyful kind.

Miss Florence Hunt: We must not have women as Sunday-school leaders who say, "We can't bear those short skirts." So Sunday-school teachers are being asked to dump one or two of their narrow Puritan prejudices. A sign of the times, that. If things progress at this rate, ordinary mortals will begin to find the company of Christians quite tolerable.

Speaking about the early days of "The Old Vic," Miss Sybil Thorndike relates the following:—

A rough-looking man said to me one night: "I never miss my Monday nights, ma'am. I'm getting my missus to come regular, too. She used to go to church meetings on Mondays, but, as I says to her, 'Better far come to the Old Vic—you'll get a good cry like you do at the meeting, but you'll get a good laugh, too.'"

Excellent advice that. And we feel sure that, if the "missus" followed it, she was all the better for it—mentally, morally, and spiritually.

The *Daily Sketch* says:—

The modern daily paper is a mirror of the age. The public, in fact, gets the Press it wants. If at any time it shows that it wants an entirely different kind of newspaper, there will be any number of enterprising journalists ready to see that the demand is supplied.

Our contemporary says the public gets the Press it wants—the journalists are merely supplying the present demand. What have our educationalists to say to this? They are responsible for training the public that demands the kind of garbage and piffle the journalists supply.

The Church of Christ in China will remain, declares the Wesleyan Missionary Society, for it is built upon a Rock. By the way it is wobbling about just at present, one might be pardoned for fancying that it was built upon a rocking-horse. Anyway, most of the European manipulators seem to be being shaken off or out of it.

An *A. B. C. of Psychology*, for Sunday-school teachers, is being advertised. The writer, we learn, indicates a way of approach by which teachers can win the confidence of their scholars. Being more candid than the publishers, we say that the book indicates the way to lull at rest the intelligence, exploit the credulity, and abuse the confidence of youth. No Christian interested in the mistreating of the young should be without a copy.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Central Church, wants to form a "League of Worship" that will further the League of Nations and the peace of the world. His dream is, he says, "a truly human Catholic Church composed of earnest souls, who are glad to offer friendliness and hospitality to all comers. . . . We have no time to denounce and excommunicate." Just how much this wonderful League will help the cause of peace can be discerned in the fact that "the only condition of membership is faith in Jesus Christ." So there's to be no friendliness and hospitality handed out to men and women of other creeds. Mr. Phillips' League is evidently a league of Christian believers. And most students of Christian history know exactly the kind of peace that sort of league has brought into the world. What Mr. Phillips appears to be most concerned with is catching clients for his particular church.

Writing about the Bathing Beach at Locarno, Dr. Saleeby says that the little waitress wears a bathing dress; the youth at the entrance gates wears the briefest bathing slips. Everything is open, above-board, public, decent. A safer place for a young girl could nowhere be found—safer in body and mind and feeling she could nowhere be. In this antiseptic sunlight, he adds, no physical epidemics can spread; but it has also an antiseptic power against the vices and infections of the soul. No one is pretending, no one is showing off, no one is

prowling. The Doctor tells this to *Daily News* readers. We wonder what the Puritan gang who read that paper thought of it; and whether they noted the Doctor's implied suggestion that if all that goes on at the Locarno Beach is pure and wholesome, then those who think otherwise about it must be impure and unwholesome. Dr. Saleeby is to be congratulated on his efforts to educate his pious friends into cleaner thinking. We feel inclined to warn him, however, that he has taken on a big job.

At Southwark Cathedral, the other Sunday, a man, with three fashionably dressed women, attending the morning service, put a half-penny in the plate for the four. This gentleman evidently believes in paying for his entertainment on an *ad valorem* basis. He seems to have been over-generous. A meaner-minded—or more business-like—man might have taken something out of the plate.

Church of England people, says a cleric of Southwark Cathedral, have not been taught to give generously like Nonconformists. The good man is plaintively rebuking ungenerous patrons. Perhaps the reason why Nonconformists give more freely is, that they have been better trained to respect the Devil's bonfire. Whereas the Church of England people seldom are told about this celestial treat. If that is the case, the cure for ungenerous giving is obvious. The parsons must talk less about God's love and a good deal more about fearing God, not forgetting discreet mention of the Holy Furnace.

The Protestant Truth Society has published a pamphlet on *The Popes of the Nineteenth Century*, by the Rev. C. H. Salmond, D.D. It is, we are told, written with fairness and with great restraint. To be able to write like that on such a subject must be a gift. We wonder whether the Protestants' brothers-in-Christ, the Catholic Truth Society, appreciate the gift. Christians of one sect so seldom do value the talents of their brethren of other sects engaged in truth-speaking.

The Rev. Benjamin Gill, of the Unitarian Church, Stockton-on-Tees, is instituting a number of Sunday morning discussions in place of the usual service. He says he hopes to "stimulate earnest enquiry into truths of Christianity." We have heard this kind of thing before. But if Mr. Gill really wishes to make a serious and genuine enquiry into the truth of Christianity we should be quite willing to provide him with a speaker who would throw some light upon "Christian truths." Or, why not circulate the *Freethinker* among his congregation? We shall be pleased to send copies free, and we exist to stimulate enquiry into Christianity.

Every day, in this country, pedestrians and cyclists are being slaughtered or maimed on the streets and main roads. Drivers of motor vehicles may be epileptic, sufferers from heart complaints, or defective in limbs or hearing or sight, but they have no difficulty in obtaining a driving licence. Between the two facts there would seem to be a connexion of effect and cause. But our newspapers, busily engaged in imploring readers to "help the hospitals"—which road accidents are increasingly keeping employed—appear not to see the connexion. Or possibly the journalists have been warned not to offend the motoring interests, the pose being to affect to believe that the humbler users of the highways are fools deserving all they get. The problem has aroused one genius to make a helpful suggestion. A parson recently implored his hearers to bear in mind that the dangers of the road, and the risk of being suddenly hurled into eternity, made it particularly important that each man should "get right with God." One can safely trust a parson for seizing an opportunity of furthering his business interests.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

We go to press on Tuesday, and the acknowledgments made on behalf of the Endowment Trust only run to the first post on Tuesday morning. In addition to the donations actually received, we have received a promise of £100 from an old friend, Mr. McCluskey, and £10 from "Keridon." Both these sums are promised conditionally on the £7,000 being subscribed, which secures a further sum of £1,000 from Mr. Peabody. Other friends of the paper may feel inclined to make promises on a similar basis.

It will be seen that there has actually been contributed the sum of £5,388 11s. 3d. £1,000 is promised as soon as the total reaches £7,000, and £560 to make up the £7,000 provided the rest of the money is required.

This means that we have to raise another £1,051 8s. 9d. in order to secure a further sum of £1,560, making a grand total of £8,000. Unless the £1,060 9s. 9d. is forthcoming by December 31, the £1,650 promised will not materialize.

That ought to nerve every friend of the paper to do whatever he or she can to help. There are plenty to do it with ease, if each one lends a hand. It is no use some waiting to see what others will do, all should do something. No other such opportunity has ever been before the party, and I hope all will make the most of it. For my part I shall be heartily pleased, and relieved, when this very distasteful job of appealing for funds ends. It is about the only unpleasant feature of my work, and I dislike unpleasant things.

Space will permit but a brief notice of the letters I have received. One of the first subscriptions came from Mr. John Sumner, who in forwarding his cheque for £100 writes:—

Your persistence in raising funds for the creation of the Trust is as admirable as its object.

That certainty helps to remove the feeling that I am worrying the friends of the paper too much, much as I dislike the job.

Mr. J. W. Wood says:—

How often are we militant Freethinkers told that our work is over! We have only touched the fringe of superstition, as witnessed by a recent experience of mine. Consulting a physician I was given a crude "Blood and Murder" tract, and found him in religion a cave-man of the most ignorant type. If this is so where one would expect to find some culture, what of the masses? No, much remains to be done, and every Freethinker and hater of superstition should support our *Freethinker* and you in your able conduct of our journal.

Miss Vance forwards a pound as one of the thousand readers who might each do his or her bit in providing the required sum. Mr. H. Scudder sends a "quid," feeling that no other sovereign he is likely to spend will yield so great a return—for betterment in every sense of the word.

Finally, we venture to cite the following from

Messrs. E. & A. Bullock, as being peculiarly suitable to the situation:—

As admirers of the *Freethinker*, we hasten to forward our third mite to the Endowment Trust. We are of the working class, and so have to think of the needs of the inner as well as of the outer man. But we cannot help feeling that some of the working class fail to appreciate the "upper" inner man, and seem to be content to let others do the thinking . . . We poorer readers ought to make a strain in such an important project, and let your wealthy readers see that we are willing to do our bit. It should be easily possible for at least a thousand readers to come forward with a shilling or two. Perhaps it would help to establish official collecting agents in certain districts.

It is the spirit shown in this letter that we wish to impress upon all.

The following is a complete list of acknowledgments to date. One postal order for 2s. 6d. reached us without name or address of sender. We have placed that under the head "No Name."

FIRST LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

£ s. d.		£ s. d.	
J. Sumner	100 0 0	Miss D. Coleman	5 0 0
"Cestrian"	2 2 0	A. W. Coleman	5 0 0
J. W. Wood	3 3 0	No Name	0 2 6
D. Mapp	1 0 0	W. Wilson	1 0 0
"An Old Friend of the Cause"	20 0 0	E. Bullock	0 10 0
S. A. Gimson	5 0 0	A. Bullock	0 10 0
T. Robertson	10 0 0	"The Flea"	0 5 0
D. Lecky	0 3 0	"Grateful Black- friars"	0 5 0
C. D. Weston	1 1 0	J. S. Maclean	0 1 0
W. Higham	0 2 6	J. Hayes	0 2 0
Mrs. I. J. King	10 0 0	G. H. Gronn	0 12 0
H. Scudder	1 0 0	S. Olsen	0 5 0
E. M. Vance	1 0 0	J. G. H.	0 2 6
W. J. Lamb	1 10 0	P. W. Hoasdyk	1 0 0
C. F. Simpson	2 2 0	Miss Wilson	0 10 0
J. Brown	10 0 0	T. B. Hutton	1 0 0
J. Breeze	5 0 0	A. O. Richard	1 0 0

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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.

W. J. LAMB.—We have never been in the United States. Your praise of the country is certainly "warm."

C. D. WESTON.—It would be unwise to deal with any such case on the mere account as given. So many things are usually left out, and so many little exaggerations unconsciously creep in, that one seldom gets an exact statement of the facts. One would want to know, how many times had the girl dreamed of similar things with nothing happened? Had the girl a dread of fire? Had such things been the subject of conversation in her presence? etc., etc. Working where she did, and exposed to the danger of fire, it would be rather strange if the thought of a fire had not been always more or less present.

J. BROWN.—Thanks for donation to Fund. We appreciate your wishes for our continued health and strength. We hope to have many years' work before us, and to see the strength of superstition considerably diminished before we lay down our pen.

M. WHITE.—Thanks for translation, which we hope to use later.

A. B. MOSS.—We are glad to have your appreciation of *Materialism Re-Statd*. You have gone through enough Freethinking books in your time for your opinion to carry weight. We hope this one will do the good you foretell.

H. IRVING.—Our compliments to Mr. Bayford. Regards also to yourself and wife.

A. W. COLEMAN.—Thanks for good wishes for the success of the Trust. It will succeed, we have no doubt, if all do their part.

G. R. JOHNSON.—It appears to make very little difference what political party a newspaper supports. They are all alike, afraid of doing or saying anything that will offend the Churches. And no clear criticism of religion is permitted.

W. WILSON.—We note your promise to send again to the Endowment Fund. Thanks.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

The Birmingham Branch made a good start with its meetings in the Bristol Street Schools on Sunday last. Every seat was filled and the standing room fully occupied. Mr. Cohen's address was received with very obvious appreciation, and there was frequent applause. Many other meetings will be held there during the winter.

The South London Branch is holding a Bradlaugh Demonstration at Clapham Common, to-day (September 18). The speakers will include Mr. Cohen and Mr. Corrigan, and will commence at 3.0 p.m.

A good notice of Mr. Cohen's *Materialism Re-Statd* appears in the *New Age*. The writer says that the book is written in the author's "incomparably lucid manner," and concludes by saying "To the present reviewer the

dominating value of Mr. Cohen's book is not so much in its specific argument as in its numerous incidental exposures of tricks of argument, which controversialists on all subjects employ in most cases unconsciously. Many readers of this book may never want to take part in the "Materialism" controversy, but by reading it they cannot fail to become more efficient in the art of controversy itself, and apply it in directions which may appeal to them to be more immediately beneficial to the world." Well, if the book has the effect of clarifying the process of thinking in any direction, and teaching readers to be on the watch for fallacies and mere assumptions, the author will be quite satisfied, quite apart from its bearing on a particular question.

When *Materialism Re-Statd* was announced, our contributor, Mr. Cutner, expressed a desire to write a review. We told him to go ahead. Then we received a review of it from another of our ever-welcome contributors, Mr. Dodds. Both writers examine the book from their own personal point of view, and so we have decided to publish both. We daresay most of our readers will be interested. Mr. Dodd's article appears in the present issue, Mr. Cutner's will follow later.

Here are a couple of passages from a recent article by Aldous Huxley, in the *Daily Mail*, which sounds not unlike much that has recently been said in these columns:—

Because we have radios and motor-cars we are apt to regard ourselves as radically different from and superior to our ancestors. We compliment ourselves on our enlightenment, we smile at their gross superstitions. But we are, in hereditary make-up, the same as our fathers; the instincts and feelings which made them superstitious persist in us. We call ourselves enlightened; but there is probably as much superstition now as there was in the past. The manifestations of superstitions may have changed, but the tendency to be superstitious remains unaltered.

The necromancers of other times are represented by our spiritualists. Indeed, the occult sciences are so well established among us that they have been put on a sound business footing. In papers dealing with the occult you will find advertisements of crystals for gazing, of trumpets for spirits to talk through, of planchettes and many other kinds of apparatus for communicating with ghosts.

In America, as I learnt from a prospectus recently sent me, they publish a "Who's Who in the Occult World." And we think ourselves more enlightened than the ancients, because they kept augurs, consulted oracles, shaped their actions according to the flight of birds!

It is this vast mass of superstition in our midst which constitutes the severest threat to whatever of genuine civilization we have achieved. We suppose it is too much to expect Mr. Huxley to press home the obvious moral that the great forcing house for all these superstitions is the Christian Church.

Pastor Jeffries is busy in the North of England with his fantastic miracle cures, and the Chester-le-Street Branch of the N.S.S. seems to have paid him special attention. One case reported in the *Sunderland Echo* as a cure, led to letters being written asking for name and address. A correspondent of the *Echo* visited Pastor Jeffries and asked for the address of the cured person, but was told that he had not kept a record of this case as he is so busy curing he has no time to make records of the cases. Apparently he only remembers them sufficiently to talk about them on the platform. With such preachers and so many fools about, one is almost inclined to believe that Christianity will really live for ever.

The *Freethinker* is read all over the world, and a reader writes to say that of all places, it is read with evident interest by some of the inhabitants of Pitcairn Island. Pitcairn Island, it should be remembered, is peopled by the descendants of the mutineers of the "Bounty." We seem to actually put a girdle round the earth, even though it may be only a slender one.

History and Growth of Spiritualism.

(Continued from page 588.)

In the days of my nonage I was often the victim of that master imbecile—the drawing-room magician. Times without number, to the intense disgust of friends and acquaintances, tinctured I am inclined to believe with pity for my colossal stupidity, have I, with the faintest show of interest, given up some banal puzzle or stupid card trick. My simple assertions that the thing did not interest me, and that I had not the slightest desire to know the secret, were put down by consentient opinion as plain acknowledgments of mental deficiency or lack of manipulative ability. To-day, when in between the mah-jong and the radio concerts, the local prestidigitator shows his gaudy tricks, with less respect for the feelings of fools, I express my opinion more bluntly, and in the process earn for myself a considerable amount of personal dislike.

Now the seance where physical manifestations are the only phenomena to be witnessed is very like the drawing-room magical exhibition. The sitters, unless absolute imbeciles, know well enough that they are being tricked, that whatever to them is mysterious and inexplicable is so simply by virtue of the skill or sleight of hand of the medium being sufficient for the bewilderment of his sitters. That the spirits of departed persons should choose such puerile means of communication as tilting tables, playing musical instruments, producing ghost arms, is too gratuitously silly to convince anyone flourishing the amount of mental matter granted to the average Laplander. Were I not fully acquainted with the fact that outside his own narrow path the scientist is as credulous and emotional as any neurocratic girl, the spectacle of half a dozen professors of international fame gravely pronouncing that because they failed to see through a few conjuring tricks witnessed in semi-darkness, an illiterate Italian girl was possessed of abnormal powers, would be plainly unbelievable. As it is, the whole thing is merely silly. The unread Eusapia must have cracked her diaphragm with concealed laughter at the harlequinade of the short-sighted Sir William Crookes, in darkness, portentously measuring her supposedly elongated form before she stepped off her footstool or distended bladder, and Sir William Barrett solemnly ascertaining by means of a weighing balance her loss of weight through ectoplasmic effusion, apparently oblivious of the fact that such loss is easily simulated by means of a simple trick.

The history of spirit photography, the acme of physical phenomena, is one long list of trickery. This is simply the appearance on a photograph of the sitter of a more or less shadowy outline purporting to be the ghost or spirit of some departed relative or friend. By means of substituted plates, in the early days of the phenomena, this was easy enough, but with increased precautionary measures on the part of sitters, new tricks have taken the place of worn-out ones. It is not, of course, a simple matter, but an expert photographer can, with a little trouble get over the difficulty. Spirit writing, painting, *et al*, where the medium professes to receive messages from the spirits of the sitter's relatives or friends, or paintings of them, are invariably either substitutions of previously prepared messages, or are written or painted surreptitiously by the medium or by an accomplice. In every case the medium is a skilled conjuror, and has a dozen different tricks at his finger tips. Slade, who specialized in this kind of jugglery, after being pronounced genuine by Pro-

fessors Zoellner, Weber and Fechner, was exposed and prosecuted, suffering imprisonment, in 1876, by Professor E. Ray Lancaster.⁷ Carl Hertz the magician, tells how by showing in the court the trick by which the spirit writing was produced on a blank sheet of paper under the eyes of the sitter, he secured for Madame Diss De Bar, the noted New York medium, a sentence of two years imprisonment.⁸

Amongst the most successful of the earlier physical mediums were the Eddy Brothers, peasant farmers of Vermont, and as precious a pair of frauds as ever duped mankind. As usual Sir Arthur Conan Doyle bestows on them his whole-hearted praise, but the main point connected with the Eddy seances is not the materializations themselves, which in interest exceeded not at all the jugglery of half a hundred others, not as a further indication of the colossal credulity of Sir Arthur, but the fact that they brought about the historic meeting between Colonel H. S. Olcott, a newspaper investigator, and Madame Helen Petrovna Blavatsky, which resulted in the subsequent founding of the Theosophical Society and the setting-up of a theurgic cult which for a time seriously threatened the very existence of spiritualism. A pretty simple soul appears to have been this Olcott. At any rate there is abundant evidence that he was thoroughly taken in by these Eddy Brothers. In Madame Blavatsky, however, we have a woman of entirely another brand, and there is not the slightest doubt that her mental astuteness led her to realize that if such jejune foolery as the conjuring tricks of a couple of ignorant peasants could prove so vast a success, the same thing spiced with Eastern mysticism might, with nice handling, prove an even greater *coup de main*. There is evidence that she had dabbled pretty considerably in spiritualism before her interest in the Eddy seances, and indisputably she had at her very capable finger-ends the whole of the tricks of the trade. Anyway, in partnership with the Colonel, she set up an opposition shop in 1876, and in a matter of months the leading spiritualists were flocking to enrol themselves in the Theosophical Society, with its gospel of reincarnation, its secret wisdom learned by Madame Blavatsky from the lips of Koot Hooml Lal Singh, on the occasion of her six months' stay in the mountains of Tibet in 1856. What precisely the astute Helen learned in Tibet (if ever she was within a hundred miles of that country, which I greatly doubt) matters little. Certainly there was the smallest need to go outside the walls of a good occult library to gather the rubbish which in her wisdom books she inflicted on a small army of worshipping tools. Theosophy, as stated, is a mixture of the fantastic nonsense of Paracelsus, Renchlin, Boehme, Levi, *et al*; it transcends in its ridiculousness the sewage of the sacred Hindu books and the worst filterings of the mush of Elephas Levi. But Madame, the pet of London and New York, went on merrily until, in 1884, Dr. Hodgson, investigating on behalf of the Society for Psychical Research, proved her a fraud. By this time, however, theosophy had taken its place as a religious cult, and although exposure clipped the wings of the precious Blavatsky woman herself, it did not destroy or even seriously discredit

⁷ Despite the fact of Slade's exposure, his tricks are still cited as proofs of the supernormal. Says Conan Doyle in the *Morning Post*, June 19, 1925, "Next, I would take Zoellner's experiments with Slade as recorded in *Transcendental Physics*. They are merely on the lower phenomenal plane, but they hold the field against all criticism."

⁸ For full details of this case see *A Modern Mystery Merchant*, Carl Hertz, 1924.

the movement. Mrs. Besant fanned it once more into vigorous flame, and to-day there is scarcely a town of any considerable size in England or America that does not boast its Theosophical Society, though I very much doubt if many of the frozen-brained believers in re-birth know the true history of the audacious adventures to whom they owe the digging up of one of the oldest and most primitive of religious beliefs.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

(To be continued.)

Christianity in the Open.

"H. M.," a devout Methodist who specializes in reporting missions and revival meetings, has been visiting Hyde Park, in order to tell his public the truth about the "People's Forum." The good man appears to be none too pleased at what he found there. For one thing the pious are not having things all their own way, because Freethinkers are rather too active. "H. M.'s" patience has been sorely tried with "much that is provocative, abusive, and positively offensive." He thinks that since the war there has developed a license which is as disconcerting as it is dangerous. "Everybody knows the law against blasphemy is considered to be out-of-date and is laughed at. In the Park, however, things have come to such a pitch on Sundays, that unless they go for some definitive purpose, decent folk had best give this particular area a wide berth."

The writer continues: "We are often told that Atheist meetings have been driven from the Park. If you go there on Sunday evening you will find on the grass, and not in that more congested area on the gravel where the West London Mission platform is, two large crowds around Secularist platforms. I heard a Secularist speaker say that 'Methodist old ladies, who subscribe to the Christian Evidence Society think we have been broken up, and we are more active than ever.' They are. Active not in sound reasoned argument, but in provocative burlesque and parody, and mis-statement, designed to tickle the ears of a crowd that has gathered for a bit of sport at the expense of the Church."

"H. M." gives his Christian friends a bit of advice: "Beware of traps," says he. "There is nothing the Secularist loves so much as to provoke a Christian to reply, to offer him the platform, to pull him down just as he is bringing the crowd to reason, and then to pour ridicule on what he has said." Our Methodist friend says a Secularist challenged a parson in the crowd to read a selected chapter of the Bible. "I need hardly say what fun the crowd got out of the good man when he fell into the trap, for he was given no opportunity of explaining that crude ideas of God in the Old Testament were part of a progressive revelation."

We are told that the crowd laughs a good deal, but it is hollow laughter, with a sort of deep pathos in it. They believe in God all right; only a few poor lunatics who run around asking questions they themselves cannot answer, deny the existence of something greater than themselves. All the same, the widespread toleration of mere flippancy is distressing.

Why is it that things we hold so dear, says "H. M." are held so cheaply in the Park? His answer is that too many professing Christians are doing their case harm. Certain Christian Evidence "Chairmen" indulge in offensive personalities and are almost as bad in their way as the Secularists. The various Protestant platforms give, at times, a perfectly awful exhibition of bitterness and hatred. Down-at-heel itinerants, who are merely out to get a copper or two by preaching—bring the Gospel into disrepute. Cranks and faddists are there in plenty. They deserve our pity, especially when in their weakness they are baited by the gangs of aliens who get to the Park to make sport of them.

Why write on this subject? "Because the deterioration of what is called free speech in such an arena is not generally known. The license now allowed to young hooligans of both sexes is deplorable."

There is one bright spot, one consoling feature: "almost

every night some people begin to sing hymns. I am amazed at the readiness with which a crowd gathers and shows its knowledge of not only tunes but words. Hundreds of the singers learned the hymns years ago in Sunday-school, but now never darken the doors of a Church. There is no argument about those hymns.

"The very difficult work of the Christian Evidence Society has to be done. The Gospel should be preached—not interrupted. I believe, however, that if one of Mr. Wiseman's gifts mounted a high platform to do nothing but lead hymn-singing, the effect would be more far-reaching than any of that disputation in a circle that goes on until nearly midnight. Arguments get nowhere. The old Gospel songs touch nearly every heart. The wild, young savages who roam around in search of fun, and the brilliant heckler who loves the sound of his own voice, would have no chance here."

Lastly, Hyde Park is only representative. There is the same kind of crowd in the Bull Ring at Birmingham, on the quay at Newcastle, in the square at Leeds, in Stephenson Square at Manchester, in Finsbury Park—in heaps of places. Those who waste time and breath over differences inside the Church ought to spend a little time in the crowd, and form their own conclusions as to what is going on outside. They do not realize how serious the position has become; young people of a certain type, including many mere girls, are making fun of religion in a way that we optimists too often ignore. . . . They (Christians) know very little of the cunning, insidious propaganda against the faith which is going on. . . . It is so much worse than when Dr. Ballard replied to men like Mr. Blatchford—for in those days the younger folk were not so much contaminated, and people generally were more shocked—that I wonder and wonder again whether in a few years there is going to be a very terrible awakening. Well, perhaps you cannot spend a Sunday in Hyde Park. You can pray for all men of sound judgment and good temper, who stand there in defence of the Faith in these critical days.

From all of which we gather that in the eyes of at least one Christian writer, his religion is in rather a bad way.

D. P.

Correspondence.

COLONEL INGERSOLL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Early in 1880—nearly fifty years ago—I became acquainted with the late Robert G. Ingersoll, whose friends never spoke of, or to him, as "Bob," and knew all the members of his family, and was much with them, until long after his death; travelling tens of thousands of miles with him and them; and, at all times, enjoying his confidence.

About the year 1898, not long before his death, when we were together at a hotel in New York, he spoke to me, in substance as follows:

"I do not think it is possible for me, or in my nature, to loathe, abhor, and detest the Christian religion more than I do at this moment. It almost seems as if I hated it more, the longer I live."

On several occasions—notably, at the Grand Union Hotel, in Chicago, Illinois, the Scott House in Butte City, Montana; and the Parker House, in Boston, Mass., he spoke to me to the same effect, and in very similar words.

Of the tens of thousands of those who knew and loved the mighty Ingersoll, I am one of the few survivors; and I write the above, in view of the article on page 588— which I am glad to note is to be put into permanent shape. To those who knew him, the suggestion that he ever recanted, or regretted, the intensity of his detestation of the Christian religion, seems too silly for criticism.

PHILIP G. PEABODY.

SOME DESULTORY REMARKS.

SIR,—Permit me to make a few desultory remarks on Mr. Scott's essay about illusions. The first instalment

was brisk and amusing enough. In the first paragraph of the second half we read: "It was a period when . . . more mush, bilge and poppycock were spilled . . ." I am no misogynist, and fully recognize that all languages change and the English one very rapidly. It is only to refurbish my own tardy ignorance that I would like to be informed of the exact meaning and derivation in their metaphorical application of the three words. Mush may be from the colloquial German *moos* (jam): bilge is probably from bilge water, but "poppycock" is quite beyond me. In any case the composition and rhythm of the sentence are perfectly good and satisfactory.

Mr. Scott finishes his article with a dogma: "The only truth is that there is no truth. This sentence can be converted into "everything is a lie." This is not in accordance with the position of the *Freethinker*: which over and over again (wrongly in my opinion) assumes that some statements such as that two and two make four are absolutely true. Is a truth a lie merely because it is relative? For instance, the statement that a white tablecloth is white is true, for the moment and the condition under which it is seen white, though under different conditions it may appear dusky. Again, if you see a person cut off his finger with a knife, and you say that person cut off his finger with a knife, the statement appears true and its negation untrue. If so, what becomes of the statement: "The only truth is that there is no truth?" There is, however, a sense in which Mr. Scott's warnings are much to the point. Let the cobbler stick to his last. The analytical critic is sometimes much disposed to ultracrepidate.

Analysis simply means picking to pieces, *i.e.*, in many cases to destroy. Being people of a low cranial index, the Germans, Anglo-Saxons, Yankees, and Scandinavians find a great pleasure in murdering animals, and if they can, human beings.

The Englishman thinks himself very hardheaded when he exclaims: "We have nothing to do, let us go out and kill something. A child of one of these ape races delights in picking to pieces its toys and learns nothing thereby. Analysis has only value as *one* method of interrogating nature. This only when reason, observation and *above all* imagination begin to work, that the picking to pieces process begins to have any intellectual and scientific value. Now that the analytical method has become of general use, the ape races to whose idiosyncrasies it is due, are no more essential to human progress, and if they simply revert to their purely destructive instincts, using the analytical method simply to gratify them, and thus endanger the very existence of humanity on the planet, humanity, if necessary, has a perfect right to exterminate them altogether.

Let the cobbler stick to his last; *à priori*, Freethought does not exclude constructive thinking, but if Freethought identifies itself with purely negative criticism, it ought to be extremely careful before laying down negative dogmas. Here it appears to me that the purely Atheistic schools of Buddhism—the Singhalese, Siamese and Burmese—are much more in harmony with modern science than English and American Freethought in not dogmatizing. E. Arnold, in his preface to the *Light of Asia*, emphasizes his notion that "one third of humanity would never have accepted a creed of pure negation." Singhalese Buddhists, recognize the poem as a fair popular exposition of their beliefs and authorize it as such. It seems to me much more scientific to affirm that the illusion of the personal ego, consciousness and the perception of subject and object, disappear with the dispersal of the bodily "compositions," rather than assert that the condition after death is an eternity of dreamless slumber, in other words, that the destruction of the brain results in conditions produced by a function of a particular part of it when alive, and in relation to this is the gropings of modern psychology. They seem to me, nowadays, sufficiently self-evident, in a general sense—but they explain nothing. And when I send actual psychic experiences of my own that don't fit in with this tentative scientific twaddle, to a believer in it, so far from explaining them he rather resents their existence. "Atheism is an excellent Religion," as a tolerant Brah-

min once remarked to me—"perhaps the best of all." After all, the conclusions of the imagination are quite as well worth being taken into account as the dogmas of the analytical reasoner, who is sometimes rather too much inclined to accept them as the mere toys and playthings of *his* superiority.

Between two worlds life rises like a star
 'Twixt night and morn on the horizon's verge;
 How little do we know that which we are
 How less what we shall be, the eternal surge
 Of time and tide drives on and bears afar
 Our bubbles, as the old burst, new emerge,
 Lashed from the foam of ages while the graves
 Of Empires heave out like some passing waves.

We know so little what we are about in
 The world, I doubt if doubt itself be doubting.

W. W. STRICKLAND.

Mr. Whitehead at Nelson and Burnley.

As this was the second visit to Nelson this season, it was decided to vary the programme by including a few meetings in Burnley, a place hitherto neglected. Accordingly, Mr. Whitehead addressed three meetings in Burnley Market Place, and four at Nelson. The Nelson meetings were, as usual, orderly and attentive, and several names were handed in as applicants for membership. The series at Burnley excited quite a deal of interest, and as is invariably the case when new ground is opened, there was a multitude of questions and some platform opposition. Apart from much eagerness and some little excitement upon the part of the hecklers, we had a very fair hearing, and the meetings seem to have left a favourable impression. Mr. G. Clayton, of Burnley, besides officiating at every meeting, undertook to address a meeting on the Sunday following. This may lead to sustained propaganda here. In addition to Mr. Clayton, our thanks are due to F. Metcalfe and others for their help. Mr. Whitehead commences a week's mission in Birmingham Bull Ring, at 3 p.m., on Sunday, September 18. Special attention is drawn to the evening meeting in the Bristol Street Infants' School, at 7 p.m. Subject: "The New View of the Mind."

Society News.

LIVERPOOL, BRANCH.

It would seem very late in the day to make the formal announcement that a Branch of the Secular Society now exists in Liverpool; yet, familiar enough though it be to local Freethinkers, we feel it necessary to remind them that societies cannot long flourish without the active co-operation of their members. It is not sufficient that our membership list should display a series of names and addresses. We are, or should be, a society, not of names, but of persons.

In addition to a series of indoor lectures, we have run, and are still running, an outdoor campaign in Islington Square. Every Monday evening, about 8 o'clock, Mr. Sherwin mounts his rostrum to take up the cudgels for Freethought; but it too frequently occurs that he and his chairman scan the faces of the crowd in vain, for the familiar sight of a supporter. He is not the one to be daunted by this, but it does not help; and we take the opportunity of asking those members who have the evening free, to make an effort to be present at our meetings whenever possible.

One week of outdoor campaigning was conducted by Mr. Whitehead, and we are to have the pleasure of hearing him again when he returns on September 24. Hardly will this be accomplished, when we shall be looking forward to a visit by Mr. Cohen himself, who will speak at Picton Hall, on October 2.

We have not yet succeeded in getting a public debate on a large scale, but in a smaller way we had one in Islington Square, on Monday, September 5. When Mr. Sherwin arrived he was pleasantly surprised to find, waiting to demolish him, a ready-made opponent in the form of a self-styled "Christian tramp parson." In the

course of discussion, he claimed to have debated with leading Freethinkers all over the country. He belonged to the school which prefers the private interpretation of Scripture to the dictation of ecclesiastical authority. His main thesis was that we must "resort, for our religion, to the actual teaching of Christ." Paul in particular was rejected as a religious guide. This appeal to the word of the Master catches the sympathetic ear of the average crowd, but Mr. Sherwin scored his best point of the evening by showing that the Master left no "word" to which we could appeal, and asking how, if Paul was to be discredited, we were any better off in following Matthew, Mark, Luke or John? The "actual teaching of Christ" was the figment of a devout imagination. Point after point was driven home forcefully, and the crowd became so engaged with his argumentation that they actually gave the Freethinker a cheer at the finish.

In conclusion, I should like to mention a business meeting of the Branch on September 17, at 7.30 p.m., in McGee's Cafe. Agenda: 1. Winter meetings. 2. Mr. Cohen's visit. 3. Mr. Whitehead's visit—A. J.

WEST LONDON BRANCH.

HYDE PARK. The attendance from 3 till 9 on Sunday last was surprisingly well maintained, and at times the size of the crowd compared very favourably with that of the great political gatherings. Undoubtedly the people are becoming more and more in agreement with the principles enunciated from our platform, and are realizing increasingly the unwisdom of swallowing without examination the superstitious twaddle of the religion-mongers.

At Ravenscourt Park, a special demonstration of Christians attracted an unexpected influx of visitors. Some of these were diverted from their original intention, and furnished an excellent audience for our Lecturer; indeed, it may truthfully be said that reversing the role of Balaam, some came to bless and remained to curse.

B. A. Le M.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Litt.—"The Psychology of Orthodoxy."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Fred Mann—"Adam's Rib."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Lecture by Mr. J. Hart.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury; 3.0, "Bradlaugh Demonstration." Speakers—Messrs. Chapman Cohen, F. P. Corrigan, L. Ebury and W. Sandford. No Meeting at Brockwell Park. Wednesday, September 21, at 8 p.m. (Peckham, Rye Lane): Mr. F. P. Corrigan; (Clapham Old Town): Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, September 22 (Clapham Old Town): Mr. W. Sandford.

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30, 3.0 and 7.0, Speakers—Messrs. Hart, Baker, Hanson, Botting and Parton. Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. Saphin and Botting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside Municipal College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Lecture by Mr. Samuels.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. Carter and Jackson; 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Hyatt, and Le Maine. (Ravenscourt Park): 3.30, Mr. Campbell-Everden, A Lecture. Freethought lecturers in Hyde Park every Wednesday and Friday, at 7.30. Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): Open daily for reading, etc., from 10 a.m. All Freethinkers and enquirers welcome.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Rooms, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0—Members' Meeting.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. Meetings held in the Bull Ring, Monday, Wednesday and Friday, at 7 p.m.

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