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Views and Opinions.

Religion and Science.

LAST week I addressed an open letter to Bishop Barnes dealing with his position in the Church. Unlike the work which a certain gentleman dedicated to posterity, but which Voltaire assured him would never reach its address, I have evidence that this letter did reach its address, very much duplicated, although I am doubtful if any reply will be offered. At the close of that article I mentioned that in a recent sermon Bishop Barnes had laid down what he considered the real position of Christianity and science, and it is that sermon with which I purpose dealing in these notes. There is, he says in opening, "still much misunderstanding as to the effect of scientific discovery on religious belief." And he adds that this is due to the "unfortunate silence too long maintained by religious teachers." Presumably Bishop Barnes is better acquainted with his brother parsons than I am. He knows them from the inside, I can judge only from a distance. But this passage shows quite clearly that our judgments of them are at one. I do not claim, as I do not believe, that the majority of clergymen know that their teachings will not bear the light of scientific investigation. I should have a much higher opinion of their intelligence if I did so believe. But that a fairly large number know that their teachings are false does not admit of doubt. As Bishop Barnes says, they maintain silence and wait for a time to speak. Meanwhile they perpetuate, by their silence if not in so many words, an ancient lie.

* * *

A Useless Hypothesis.

The sermon of Bishop Barnes may be taken as his Confession of Faith, so far as the relation of science to religion is concerned. It was delivered in the face of a grave emergency, intended to justify his own heresy and to encourage others to speak out with greater honesty than they have hitherto displayed. In what way then does science encourage belief in

the Christian religion? Does it give anything in the shape of actual evidence, positive evidence, in that direction? Bishop Barnes makes no such claim. He says, "From a scientific survey, we get, so far as I can see, nothing to encourage us to repudiate the Christian belief that man's creation was divinely planned." Observe there is not evidence in support of the "Christian belief"; there is simply, so says the Bishop, nothing which directly repudiates it. I do not agree with that, but for the moment it is enough to notice that, speaking as a student of science, Bishop Barnes can only say there is nothing against it. But surely if science is to give any support to religion it must say something more than merely that there is nothing against it. Scientific generalizations are established, or rendered probably true, not by there being nothing against them, but by evidence being brought forward as to at least their probable truth. Moreover, the only function of a scientific hypothesis is to explain. And Dr. Barnes' religion does not explain anything. He can only say that you cannot prove it to be false.

* * *

Design in Nature.

It is not human knowledge upon which Bishop Barnes builds, but human ignorance. And with all gravity, and without the slightest intention of being offensive, his argument is all along an argument of the commonest and cheapest kind. I ought, perhaps, to make allowances for the fact that it was a sermon, preached in a church, both a place and an occasion where careful reasoning is notoriously out of place; but the fact remains. Here is a summary of Bishop Barnes' points, and the reader may judge for himself.

Our planetary system appears to be rare in the universe. The solar system arose, probably, by a kind of accident, and in the nature of the case such accidents must be rare. It is surprising that the earth should have retained its atmosphere for so long, while other planets have lost theirs. For animal life to persist, the temperature of the earth must have remained fairly constant for an enormous period of time. Without water no life could exist, but while the moon is without water the earth has retained it. And yet air and water might easily have been lost. There have been great alternations of climate on the earth, but these have never been great enough to destroy human life entirely. Man and his mammalian ancestors have succeeded in resisting disease, while others have succumbed. We do not know the cause of variations. Our existence appears to be the product of a series of lucky accidents, therefore—"If the Christian attributes the lucky accidents to the providence of God, who in His infinite wisdom has contrived the slowly maturing plan by which the human race has been brought into existence, modern

science will bring no cogent arguments against him . . . The ground plan of the universe is unreasonable if there is implanted in us a burning to know its mysteries, and we are none the less fated to die in ignorance."

* * *

God's Experiments.

Now here is a faithful summary of Bishop Barnes' reconciliation of the case for the harmony of science with "Christian belief," and I confess that if it is more than the usual and very commonplace argument from ignorance, it escapes my notice. The ponderosity of the statement ought not to obscure its extreme tenuity, nor the fact of its being delivered in a Cathedral hide from us the fact that it could have been heard at any time on a Christian Evidence platform in one of the public parks. I pass by the fact that many of the things which Bishop Barnes declares to be unsolved puzzles are not so, in order to stress the fact that *all* of his cases are exactly on a level with the famous discovery of the hand of God in the fact that death came at the end of life instead of in the middle of it, or that by the wisdom of God great rivers had been designed to flow past big towns. The conditions requisite for the appearance of a given phenomenon must be as unusual as is the unusual character of the phenomenon produced. But because the unusual is not brought about by a *common* combination of circumstances, Bishop Barnes sees in it a "divine plan." That may be theology, but it is neither science nor logic. Certain things persist, but because their persistence is dependent upon the persistence of certain general conditions, here also there is evidence of the hand of God. And in the same breath he is pointing out that on other planets, forms of life, or an atmosphere, have not persisted because the conditions necessary have passed away. What of the divine plan there? Did things happen there without any divine plan? If that was the case there, why not here? Or is it that God tried a number of experiments all over the universe, and that everywhere but here his divine plan was frustrated, his wisdom fell short of achievement? This talk of Bishop Barnes may be theology, but it is certainly not science. He has simply sought the asylum of the ignorant, and he must not feel hurt if someone points out the nature of his selected residence.

* * *

The General and the Particular.

But when Bishop Barnes says that animal and human life persists on the earth, it may be as well to separate the general from the particular. And when he says that the ground plan of the universe is unreasonable if we are fated to perish in ignorance, the same rule may be of service. It is true that animal life persists, but not individual animal life. That dies. The conditions are not such that human beings, considered as individuals, either persist indefinitely or overcome disease. Millions die at an early age; every individual life comes to an end sooner or later. Every individual does die in a greater or lesser degree of ignorance. In every case falling under one or other of these heads the universe is, in the eyes of Bishop Barnes, "unreasonable." He escapes this by his confusion concerning progress as a racial and an individual fact. It is not the individual that achieves any considerable degree of knowledge concerning the universe, but the race. And one would dearly like Bishop Barnes to explain what degree of comfort it can give to an individual who is panting to know the mysteries of the universe, and who feels that all is a sham unless he does know, to be told that some day some other individual, who will live thousands of

years after he is dead, will know all about it. It reminds one of a question asked by Huxley. Of someone who used a similar argument to that of Bishop Barnes he asked: What compensation could be offered to the Eohippus, who died out hundreds of thousands of years ago, to be told that its ancestor would win the Derby? Perhaps Bishop Barnes will supply the answer.

* * *

I have space for only a brief comment on the statement that there is nothing in science to encourage a repudiation of Christian belief. I suppose it all depends upon what is meant by Christian belief, but if it is meant by that elastic phrase, things which the vast majority of Christians have believed and still believe, the statement falls little short of an absurdity. What of the miracles associated with Christianity? Does science not encourage us to disbelieve in the special creation of man, in a divine revelation, in a virgin-born God, etc. Why, even at the moment, Bishop Barnes is pointing out the glaring scientific absurdity of Transubstantiation, which is a belief still held by the vast majority of Christians. And, most important of all, will Bishop Barnes really say that science offers no discouragement to the belief in God and a Soul, when all the time there is a whole branch of science which exerts itself in tracing these ideas to a primitive delusion? I have, of course, no expectation that Bishop Barnes will reply to these queries. But, for what it is worth, I can assure him that so long as he retains the major superstitions, his rejection of the minor ones will hardly serve to raise him to the level of a fearless reformer or a scientific thinker.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Philosopher's Ballade of Folly.

THE folly of contending. Fate prevails;
Doomed is the man who would his lot confound,
As doomed as he who sees that naught avails.
The noblest hopes of man shall strew the ground
And at the end no trace of good be found
For faith and hope and love and sanctity
Shall fail at last with fate's own fetters bound.
This is end of all philosophy.

The folly of believing. He that prays
Unto his God but prays to his own mind,
And when he thinks that God regards his ways
'Tis ignorance and instinct intertwined.
The faith he trusts to help him he shall find
When put to test, a snare—impotency;
Then comes despair, for what is fate but blind.
This is the end of all philosophy.

The folly of much thinking. Thou shall doubt
All that thou holdest dear and lose thy God
And long for those illusions driven out
And curse the search for truth that vanquished
fraud;
With predetermined plans thou shalt be shod,
In predetermined paths thy way shalt be,
Grave for thy goal and sleep beneath the sod.
This is the end of all philosophy.

ENVOI.

Ye who would seek to understand the cause
Of life, of death, and nature's mystery,
Cease now the quest ere life its joy withdraws.
This is the end of all philosophy.

G. S. SMITH.

"Is God a Human Invention?"

THE *New Standard Dictionary* defines Atheism as "the denial of or disbelief in God as a First Cause, or Ground of the universe." Then it quotes a saying of the late Professor Flint's, of Edinburgh, to the effect that "what is called positive or dogmatic Atheism, so far from being the only kind of Atheism, is the rarest of all kinds." Etymologically, Atheist simply means a person without God. "Is God a Human Invention?" is the title of a remarkable article by the Rev. P. E. England, M.A., B.D., published in the *British Weekly* of October 27. We do not know to which denomination Mr. England belongs; but it is beyond all question that he is not a conventional theologian. The very title of his article is an indication that his treatment of the subject will be original and challengeable. Quoting Feuerbach, he says that "God is the self of a man clothed in expression," a saying as theologically heterodox as it can be; and it gives rise to the following Freethinking statement:—

This was no new doctrine. It was forcibly expressed by the old Greek thinker Xenophanes, 600 years B.C. If oxen and lions could picture a God, he says, they would fashion him in terms of themselves. The horses would picture God like a horse, and the oxen like an ox.

More commonly, nowadays, God is said to be a product of our own thought, or even of our own imagination. Bertrand Russell, for example, speaks of God as the creation of our own conscience, and whilst he advocates the worship of this self-made God, he would have the worshipper recognize that what he worships is no more than a private make-believe which has no counterpart in the actual world. And in the same way many psycho-analysts, including Dr. Jung, seem to think that God is nothing but the projection of an ideal—the externalization of our own private notion, and not an independently existing reality.

There is nothing new in that conception of God, but it is refreshingly new for a minister of the Gospel to advocate it, and so far we are in complete agreement with him.

At this stage in his article, however, Mr. England begins to show signs of ominous inconsistency. Whilst approving of "Voltaire's characteristic remark that instead of saying that God made man in his own image, we should rather say that man makes God in his own image," he maintains that though the idea of God is an invention, it by no means follows that there is no objective reality corresponding to it. He dismisses the inference that there is no God at all, because it "involves an egregious logical fallacy, and an obvious psychological confusion." He says:—

The logical fallacy is that of declaring that because a notion is invented by my mind, it therefore has no counterpart in actual reality. This is patently false, for I may invent an idea, and afterwards find an actual entity corresponding to it.

In reality, it is Mr. England's reasoning that "involves an egregious logical fallacy." He invents the notion of a spiritual world inhabited by a Supreme Being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, but how does he know that there exists an objective reality corresponding to it? He does not know, "for Knowledge is of things we see." Tennyson saw deeper into this subject, when he said:—

We have but faith; we cannot know,
 than Mr. England is ever likely to do. All he can say is, that he may invent an idea and afterwards find an actual entity corresponding to it, but who has ever discovered an objective reality corresponding to the idea of God? (The reverend gentleman talks a great

deal of sheer nonsense on the subject, and it would indeed be a miracle if he did not do so, for very absurd ideas of God have been afloat in the world. Jehovah was a man of war, whose sword was always drawn. He was known as the God of battles, the Lord of Hosts, and he was never so happy as when he went forth to war. Human life was amazingly cheap in his sight. The same thing is true of the Christian God. From time to time millions of lives have been sacrificed in his name. In all history he has always been in the very image of his makers. Even Mr. England speaks of him as undergoing mighty alterations in disposition and character. He says:—

When man himself became a moral being, he ascribed moral qualities to his God. God was regarded not only as the supremely powerful, but as the supremely good. And so at the highest level of religious experience man comes to form his idea of God in terms of the highest he knows. . . . Man, then forms his notion of God in the light of the highest he knows, and the question is, what reason have we for supposing that there is any actually existing Divine Being corresponding to our notion?

Mr. England frankly admits that knowledge even at its highest and best is marvellously limited in quantity, and inadequate as a guiding influence in life. He says:—

You may look steadily at a piece of machinery for half an hour, and come away without sufficient knowledge of it to enable you to say anything significant about it. And from such immediate apprehension, right up to the most complete scientific knowledge, all that we know is tinged with uncertainty. And further, it is in regard to the deepest and most profound features of life that logic lends the least assistance.

Now it is to be specially borne in mind that knowledge, however shallow and uncertain it may at best be, it is confined exclusively to this world and its affairs. Nature is the only object of study and knowledge within our reach. The invisible universe of which certain philosophers and divines undertake to supply us with so much valuable information, is not an object of knowledge at all. Even its existence is a piece of speculation absolutely unsusceptible of demonstration. Sir Oliver Lodge, according to a report in the *Daily Mail* of October 27, believes that what he calls "things of the spirit," are not "accessible to our systematic methods of scientific exploration." It is not true, however, to declare that science, which is "a body of organized knowledge," is inclined to "despise instincts or to suspect the intuitive apprehension of truth not founded upon ascertained and formulated data." But Sir Oliver hits the nail on the head when he says that the conflict between religion and science is really a conflict between faith and knowledge. Supernatural religion and faith are synonymous terms. God is an object of faith, not of knowledge. The Bible, again and again, tells us that believers are dowered with the knowledge of God and eternal life, and in all ages Christians have boasted that they possessed the happy knowledge of God in Christ; but their boast is rooted in an empty dream. It is by faith that they have always lived, never by knowledge. Mr. England says:—

The point I desire particularly to stress is, that the validity of our conception of God is established in precisely the same way as the validity of any other notion. The scientist puts his conceptions to the test of experiment. If they work he accepts them as true; if they fail to account for the observed facts he revises or even rejects them. The conception of God is verified in the same way. It is a concept which requires experimentation. You must needs put it to the test of your own life. And the test question is this: There are voices that speak within

us, entreaties, warnings, urgent imperatives, reproofs. There are intuitions, aspirations; there is a sense of incompleteness; a hunger and a thirst after something better. How are we to account for these voices?

The alleged establishment of the validity of the conception of God is an illusion. You cannot test the validity of that which does not exist. The voices that speak of and urge to better things have their source in human nature itself. Aspirations, warnings, entreaties, urgent imperatives, reproofs are experienced by people who do not entertain any idea of God at all. They are characteristics of ever evolving human beings, and it is essentially uncomplimentary to our nature to describe them as of a superhuman origin.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Tame Torquemada.

"How can I hate anything unless I am myself filled with hatred."—*Goethe*.

"It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
Their saints, their all they fear or hope,
Are lies and lies."

Robert Browning.

ON a recent Sunday hundreds of churchgoers gathered in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, to see a fine show. The Rev. Bullock-Webster, rector of St. Michael Royal, College Hill, E.C., arrayed in full ecclesiastical war-paint, denounced the preacher, Bishop Barnes, and demanded his trial for heresy.

It is seldom in this age of unfaith that the quietude of a service in a place of public worship is interrupted as it was on this occasion. Controversial demonstrations in churches and chapels are usually construed as brawling, and the offender is handed over to the police. For it is in the irony of things that Christianity, which is popularly supposed to be a religion of love, is always associated with policemen and other suitable embodiments of brute force. Granting, however, the sincerity of the Anglo-Catholic convictions which prompted the Rev. Bullock-Webster to forget the Beautitudes and the Sermon on the Mount, and granting also the sincerity of the ultra-Protestant views of the Bishop of Birmingham, it is difficult to see how any sane man could hope for any good result by imitating the bad methods, and invoking the ecclesiastical tyrannies of the fifteenth century.

Times have changed, and heresy is no longer so serious a crime as it once was. In the fifteenth century, which was an age of faith, and very unlike the present age of unfaith, heretics were delivered up to be burned at the stake. Indeed, the fifteenth century was a pitiless time, and so were the preceding centuries when priests aped the tyrant, and made torture and murder one of the fine arts. Its bonfires burned women as well as men in wholesale fashion. Indeed, a long time was to pass before the last of these baleful fires should be put out. That padded and half-forgotten buffoon, King James the First, sent two heretics to the stake; an obstinate heretic was burned at Smithfield in 1612, and other poor creature suffered after him at Lichfield. And the dreadful spirit which prompted this murder in the name of religion is by no means extinct in the year of grace 1927.

The Rev. Bullock-Webster wants help from the Right Reverend Father in God, the Bishop of London, to deal with the dreadful heresies of Bishop Barnes, who objects to the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation and other so-called "mysteries" of the Christian Religion. Presumably, he sighs for a trial for heresy, and the martyrdom of Bishop Barnes. It is fortunate for the Bishop that he lives in a sceptical

era. Otherwise, he would be faced with the pleasant alternative of recanting his dreadful heresies in a public place, or else he should be delivered up to be butchered to make a Roman holiday.

The Rev. Bullock-Webster evidently thinks that this heresy hunt is the best way of checking the spread of opinions he does not himself approve of. Ordinary citizens will doubt this. Bishop Barnes' sermons have been printed, and not all the hundreds of thousands of priests of Christendom can destroy the printed word. If a thousand copies of these sermons should be destroyed, the printers would merely smile at each other, and set about issuing a new edition. For the Bishop of Birmingham would be regarded as a Protestant martyr, and all good Protestants would wish to read his views.

The Rev. Bullock-Webster, and his handful of Romanist sympathizers, cannot put the clock back in this arbitrary fashion. Yet the protest has its significance, even if it were but a gesture of an ardent Catholic Churchman. The mere fact that this protest was made tends to show that the old persecuting spirit of religion is alive, although it rarely raises its ugly head in public. It is well for Bishop Barnes that he is not living in the fifteenth century, indeed, it is well for all of us. The fire that burned the martyrs at Smithfield would have been relighted for him. Heresies change in the course of the generations; the scepticism of one age is the orthodoxy of the next. But the Rev. Bullock-Webster must be very like the hatchet-faced, surpliced fanatics who burned men and women at Smithfield in those bad old times of priestly tyranny. The Rev. Bullock-Webster has spoken in haste. In assuming the part of Torquemada, he has overlooked the fact that he is living in the twentieth century. As for religion, the form changes, but the substance remains unalterably the same.

MIMNERMUS.

The Dead Man Nodded.

NOT only did the dead man—a Roman senator—nod. He also opened his eyes, and looked at the genius—Simon Magus by name—who had kindled the spark of life in his corpse.

The nodding corpse lay on a cremation-bier, which had been carried to the Forum of Rome by a company of young men. A vast crowd filled the valley of the Forum, and thronged the overlooking slopes of the Capitol and Palatine; and the clear blue of the Italian sky arched the marvellous scenery. Marvellous, not merely because of its memorials of the Republic, Pompey and Caesar, but because here, on this day, would be decided a contest between the claims of the Reverend Simon of Samaria, and the Venerable Peter of Jerusalem, Apostle of Jesus Christ. The dead senator's mother had implored Peter to raise her son to life. Peter consented, but proposed that the occasion should be used to test also the pretensions of Simon Magus.

The word "Magus" originally came from Persia, Assyria and Babylonia. Just as, among the Hebrews, the tribe of Levi furnished priests who interpreted the will and mind of the God Yahweh to his Chosen People, so, in ancient Persia, a "Magus" tribe possessed a Magus-power, or Magic, which gave the Magi, or Reverend Men, spiritual authority over the masses. The Magic Reverends could, of course, heal diseases and raise the dead, and, naturally, the Magi who travelled about the Roman Empire were everywhere received with admiration, and entertained by wealthy patrons. However, a good while ago—or, to be precise, somewhere about the year 1—the Christian Revelation was born in the per-

son of Jesus, at Bethlehem in Palestine. The Persian and Babylonian genius recognized the superiority of the new genius of Palestine; and several Magi (usually supposed to be three) journeyed all the way from Mesopotamia to Bethlehem, discovered the newly-born Jesus in a stable, and offered him gold and spices. Thus the older Faith paid homage to the newer Faith. But all the disciples of the older Faith were not prepared at a moment's notice to abandon their rank and social honours, and one of these obstinate reactionaries was the Reverend Simon of Samaria. He took every opportunity to thwart the new religion. And he had quite personal reasons for his policy. Simon Magus had enjoyed the hospitality of a rich lady in Judæa, who greatly treasured a gold statuette, about two pounds in weight; and the Reverend Simon had, by a "charm" manoeuvre, conveyed the gold figure from the house, and made arrangements for its profitable sale to a goldsmith. On the principle of setting one Reverend to trap another, the lady rushed to Peter, persuaded him to use his kind offices, and happily succeeded in getting back the valuable statuette. Simon Magus managed to evade arrest, and he escaped to Italy. He stayed for a time at the delightful village of Aricia, near the grove and temple, since celebrated for the "Golden Bough" of Sir James Frazer. Then he moved to Rome, performed miracles, and gained a comfortable lodging in the mansion of Senator Marcellus. At this point in our story, the Apostle Peter appears in Rome. He had been divinely deputed to follow Simon Magus to Rome, and convince the citizens that the Revelation of Christ was infinitely preferable to Persian and Babylonian magic.

Peter acted with characteristic energy. He hurried to the villa of Marcellus, noticed a big dog at the entrance, loosed its chain, and told it to go indoors and bark at Simon Magus in these words: "Wicked man! Soul-deceiver! Peter the servant of Christ has come to Rome to expose you!" The dog obeyed, and Senator Marcellus flung himself at Peter's feet, and repented of having harboured the magician; and Peter besought God Almighty to absolve Marcellus from his grievous sin. Events moved swiftly. Peter enabled Marcellus to perform a miracle, namely, to restore a broken marble statue to complete beauty, simply by sprinkling it with water—and prayer. The dog of whom we have just heard, addressed the people, and declared that Peter would assuredly prove himself a greater wonder-worker than Simon; and, having so spoken, the dog fell down dead, feeling, no doubt, that he had done enough to establish a permanent place for himself in the history of Rome. Peter (who had formerly been a fisherman, and thoroughly understood fish, living or smoked) observed a pickled sardine hanging from a beam. He took the sardine, walked to the senator's private swimming-bath, and, to the amazement of the crowd, the fish, when dropped into the water, lived and swam. And seeing this marvel, many followed Peter and believed in the Lord. The wretched Simon was pitched out of the house, beaten with sticks and stoned, and buckets of filth were emptied over his head; and for some days, he retired into solitude. But even those of us who have the highest regard for Peter cannot withhold a tribute of respect for Simon's courage when we hear that he emerged, alert and smiling, to challenge Peter to further competition in miracles. And this brings us back to the scene in the Forum, with which the present account opened.

As I have already stated, the dead man nodded and opened his eyes. The crowd, deeply impressed, turned against Peter, and some shouted for wood and torches to burn him. But Peter lifted up his voice,

and said: "People of Rome! I see that you are—but no! I must not call you Fools and Empty-heads, so long as your eyes and your ears and your hearts are blinded. How long shall your understanding be darkened? See you not that you are bewitched? You suppose the dead man is raised, though he cannot lift himself up!"

After a pause, Peter shouted: "Arise!"

The young senator arose, and put off his grave-clothes, and asked for his ordinary raiment. Tremendous excitement followed. To Peter, from all parts of Rome, came invalids, who were promptly healed of paralysis, gout, and fever. The Reverend Simon made a last attempt. He advertised that he would fly. And fly he did. In the sight of an immense multitude he rose into the air, high above the temples and hills of Rome. The crisis had arrived. The Venerable Peter collected all his forces, and vigorously invoked the help of Heaven, and asked that the Magus should be thrown down, with a leg broken in three places. The prayer was granted. The miserable Magician lay on the Appian Road till night, when certain pitiful souls picked him up, and carried him on a bed to Aricia of the Golden Bough, and thence to the seaside town of Terracina, and there (says the sacred record) this "Angel of Satan came to his end."

By way of very dramatic sequel, Peter also came to his end, and was crucified (by his own wish, head downwards) under the orders of the Emperor Nero. The Senator Marcellus washed Peter's corpse in wine and milk, and placed it in a coffin of marble.

* * *

If the astonished reader inquires how I came to know all the extraordinary incidents just related, I will tell him willingly. I got them from a volume of Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses collected by Dr. Montague Rhodes James, Provost of Eton College.* The particular document from which I have drawn the staggering material is the *Acts of Peter*. It was written, probably, by an inhabitant of Anatolia, "not later" (says Dr. James) "than A.D. 200, in Greek," but the chief manuscript of it, now extant, is in Latin. If it was written about the year 200, it was composed by the Anatolian novelist (as I think we may term the imaginative gentleman who invented the pickled sardine story) at a period when the New Testament—the New Testament considered orthodox in 1927—was more or less recognized as the official history of Christian origins and doctrine.

Some day, the real human quality of the New Testament will be understood. In my judgment, its best and most significant portions are the Gospel of *Luke*, the Epistle to the *Galatians*, and one or two other passages such as Pauline Hymn to Charity (1 Cor. xiii.). Unfortunately, the way in which these documents throw light on the social and economic conditions of the Mediterranean world just after the days of Julius Cæsar, Virgil and Plutarch, is shockingly misconceived by the Bishops, vicars, and chapel-ministers of to-day. They are the worst enemies of the Bible, for they have no idea how to interpret it as part of the record of civilization. There is no excuse for them.

There is, however, excuse for the simple, ignorant slaves, artisans, sailors, and villagers who, about the period 100 to 200, listened to all sorts of wonder-tales such as I have just recounted. You can see, from this novelette about Simon Magus and Peter, the mentality of the people among whom the legends of the

* *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Milford; 10s., first edition 1924; second, 1926). It is a book of 584 pages.

Virgin-Birth, Resurrection and Ascension gradually grew to universal acceptance. The untrained and undisciplined minds that readily took in the talking-dog tale or the pickled sardine tale would, without question or hesitation, absorb the descriptions supplied by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. I quite sincerely affirm that I should never dream of blaming the second-century folk of Anatolia or Italy for believing the legends of the New Testament, or the *Acts of Peter*. I can even discern certain values in these singular stories, and I am not too proud to learn a little sociology while I laugh at the whimsical fables. But I cannot pardon the church-men and chapel-men of 1927, who grotesquely offer us, as divine truth, the romantic "short stories" and popular novels of the second century.

F. J. GOULD.

The Dark American.

THE Negroes, despite their generally solemn and humourless mien, do not lack critics of their own race, and some of those critics, notably George S. Schuyler, of the *Pittsburgh Courier*, are extremely realistic. They are tartly critical of the Negro Babbitt, who now begins to roar precisely like a white Rotarian, and they are by no means blind to the excessive faults of the dark holy clerk, or coloured pastor.

This worthy man, it seems to me, is now the most dangerous enemy, at least within their own ranks, that the coloured brethren have to face. He is, in the main, magnificently uneducated, and mixed with his somewhat theatrical piety there is a large adulteration of bald self-seeking. The kind of religion he preaches was exactly suited to the needs of the Negroes while they remained slaves, and perhaps it was also of some use to them during the first fifty years of freedom, but to-day it falls far behind their aspirations. Its one aim seems to be to stir up the emotions, and its effects are indistinguishable from those of the frantic whooping of such political evangelists as Marcus Garvey.

Worse, its upkeep is very expensive. The Negroes everywhere have too many churches, and keep themselves poor supporting them. In my own town of Baltimore, when the late war gave them ready money, they wasted most of it buying abandoned white churches. The higher the steeple the more they were willing to pay for it. As a result they were stripped bare and led into debt, and a bit later on, when a chance offered to set up a badly needed hospital for their people, they had a hard time raising the money. Much the same thing happened in other towns. In proportion to their incomes the Negroes probably spend more money upon religious enterprises than any other group among us, and a great deal of what is left is wasted upon tin-pot fraternal orders.

This habit not only dissipates their money; it also exposes them to imprudent and disastrous leadership. The Negroes of America, despite the great progress that they have made of late years, still face very serious difficulties, and need enlightened and sagacious leaders. But nearly everywhere the men who might develop into such leaders are held in suspicion, and the masses of the blacks follow mountebanks, clerical and lay. Some of the coloured clergy, to be sure, are men of sense, but not many. The average is an ignoramus. The theology that he trumpets comes out of the swamps of Mississippi, and his personal culture remains on a pork-chop level. It is seldom that he enjoys the respect of the neighbouring whites. They see few signs of intelligence in him, and very often they have serious doubts of his integrity.

H. L. MENCKEN, in the *Chicago Sunday Tribune*.

Are not all true men that live, or that ever lived, soldiers of the same army, enlisted under heaven's captaincy, to do battle against the same enemy—the empire of darkness and wrong?—*Carlyle*.

Only what we experience within ourselves opens up the beauties of the outer world.—*Dr. Rudolf Steiner*.

Acid Drops.

Ever since the late Wilson Barrett deliberately spoofed the public by playing to their religious ignorance with the "Sign of the Cross," other playwrights have had their eyes upon this particular source of revenue. And, of course, the Cinemas have not escaped. We have had a great many quite religious pictures, and having boosted into popularity a rather second-rate film in the shape of "Ben-Hur," another advertising campaign is being started with the "King of Kings," which portrays Jesus Christ. The latest newspaper paragraph we have seen is one stating that the play has been licensed by the L.C.C., after a display behind closed doors, during which "women cried, and men ceased smoking because of the spiritual impulses provoked by the film." Evidently it has evoked some tall lying, but that is not quite unique when Christianity is the force which is in operation.

Dust, says a well-known physician, has been called the aeroplane of the microbe. And lest our Christian apologists forget it, we add that God designed and created both aeroplane and microbe, and decided the work they have to do in this best of all possible worlds.

A piece of cheering news for Freethinkers comes to hand from the *Methodist Times*. It says, compared with the figures of the *Daily News* census of twenty-five years ago, attendances (at churches and chapels) have seriously declined. And if the same rate of decrease goes on for another twenty-five years, the Churches must close their doors.

The jaunty assurance of those who know for certain what actually happened two thousand years ago is not shared by a newspaper correspondent, who doubts that Nelson, when dying, uttered the famous words to Hardy. This was in connexion with the battle of Trafalgar one hundred and thirty-two years ago; these certitudes of history are in many ways as real as the Mons Angels, and the Russian soldiers who passed through Tooting or the Scilly Islands on their way to the Western front.

What may be called light opera is supplied in the information that every year the City of London presents to St. Paul's Cathedral fifty-two small bottles of sherry. And probably there is more substance in the contents of the bottles than there is in the mental nourishment handed out from the pulpit. There is at least a jolly human touch about it.

In the *English Churchman*, a reader reminds the editor that the new Prayer Book treats the Army forces very offensively by ignoring them in the special prayers. This is indeed a serious matter. We hope the Bishops will enquire into it and get the omission rectified as speedily as possible. Why, a war might break out at any moment. And just fancy what a crushing defeat our army would meet with if we were not able to beseech God in the proper manner to give our soldiers the victory.

The Rev. Dr. Dinsdale Young believes in the cover-to-cover faith of his forebears. He accepts thankfully, joyfully, every single word of the Book of Books. There are hundreds of thousands like him. And the fact justifies the work the *Freethinker* is doing. We can afford to ignore the sneer of unobservant critics that we are flogging a dead horse.

"A Young Person" of Birmingham, wonders, in a newspaper, why great clerics spend themselves in doctrinal combat, when their whole energies are so urgently needed for practical problems like the prevention of war, and the betterment of the conditions of life. This young person must be very young, or he would know that it is the habit of great clerics thus to spend themselves. That is why they are great clerics, and why practical problems are always solved by men who are not great clerics.

Dr. C. A. Alington, headmaster of Eton College, recently addressed a meeting of business men on the "Reality of Christendom." The real cure for present-day pessimism, he said, was to be found in a true reading of history. Compared with the conditions obtaining in some much-vaunted periods of several centuries ago, life to-day was on a much nobler plane. For instance, he added, the ages of faith, so called because everyone accepted a uniform theology, were really not ages of faith, because faith could hardly come into the picture when it never occurred to anyone to doubt. As a specimen of scholastic-cum-religionist logic this wants some beating. Dr. Alington appears to be understudying Mr. G. K. Chesterton, and with a little encouragement he ought soon to develop as humourously serious as his model.

The Doctor firmly believes that the Christian religion is making steady progress to-day. One reason he gives for this belief, is that an increasing number of people in business and politics are beginning to recognize Jesus as having set the highest standard of whatever was good for the individual, the nation, and the world. We will take the Doctor's word for this. But we should like to point out that there is an increasing number of thoughtful people who are rejecting the Jesus standard. They think there is a better standard to be had than that set by a Jewish mechanic muddled with Eastern theology and superstition.

A Christian writer thinks that the immediate effect of the recent Church controversies will be a considerable increase in religious literature during the next few years. Since the war, he says, religious literature, properly and technically so-called, has been diminishing, to correspond with the decline in church-going and religious observance. He predicts that an enormous number of books about religion will be published in the near future. Possibly so. But the books are not likely to be read by the people who have given up church-going and religious observance. The readers will be those who still believe, and those who have begun to doubt the Christian religion and are seeking something to dispel their doubts. We predict that the books will do little towards arresting the decline. On the contrary, the decline will continue; for the causes of the decline are still operating and will go on operating.

Just to show there is more than one way of regarding the sinful cinemas, a reader of a weekly paper writes:—

The Bishop of Durham is credited with advising miners not to visit the cinemas, as by so doing their eyesight may be endangered and their morals corrupted. After a hard day's work I find relaxation, education and amusement at the cinemas, which counteract any desire to hang about "pubs." I have yet to see the picture likely to corrupt the morals of any sane individual. The Bishop's clerical business instinct would appear to have turned his judgment cock-eyed.

Dr. T. R. Glover, in the *Daily News*, says:—

Manners perhaps change from century to century; but courtesy, one might say, is a virtue, everywhere and always the same, something fundamental. How true that is! Take Christian courtesy towards unbelievers—everywhere and always the same . . . gentle, considerate, noble.

A religious weekly gives an account of what it styles "aggressive evangelism in the East End," during the past twelve months. This appears largely to consist of the following:—13,000 children were given Christmas treats; 52,000 hungry children received a free breakfast during the winter; 12,000 sick, poor people received medical attention; and 15,000 children were sent on holiday. This is not evangelism. It is simply the doleing out of charity to make good the weaknesses in a defective social system. But perhaps our contemporary thinks that when the Churches have netted a few thousand "rice Christians," aggressive evangelism is a

success, on the principle that even rice Christians are better than none.

A paper edited by Mr. Arthur Mee is indignant at the superstitious beliefs people harbour. Writing of a certain section of the public it says:—

They ride in motor-cars with dolls dangling at their windows, or with some tawdry rag animal peering out as they rush along. These are what they call their mascots, and it means that these people are so steeped in superstition, that they believe a dangling doll can save them from an accident. The chances are that people who believe such nonsense are the very people who will have an accident, for they are the people who trust to luck and leave their brains at home.

What requires to be added here is that no one need be surprised at the prevalence of these crude superstitions. Centuries of Christian Bible teaching has impregnated the thought of the masses and the classes with belief in the supernatural. When the Bible is kicked out of all the schools there may then be some hope of rational thought becoming as common as superstition is now.

The *Sunday School Chronicle* doubts the decline in Sunday School scholars. It is time, it says, "to examine our nets and to see that the damaged meshes are repaired." It has, however, been assured by workers in the schools that the rock-bottom of Sunday School membership has been touched, and that an upward movement may be confidently looked for in the near future. The wish is evidently father to the thought. A bit of optimism is a good thing, but we fear it is a poor substitute for scholars who wickedly keep out of the clutches of the parsons, as most of the modern generation clearly intend to. And what is worse still, the parents do not care whether the children go or not to the Sunday Schools. These facts are poor foundation on which to build pious hopes.

One gets an inkling of what is meant by "repairing the nets," in the shape of our contemporary's talk about striving to give young persons "an early bias towards righteousness," and of attempts to cover the whole life of the young people with bright and healthy activities from Sunday to Saturday night. All this means is that the Churches must strive to "catch 'em young," and to get the young people to form a habit of seeking their amusement among the various secular pastimes tacked on the Church organizations. That is certainly a good method for netting clients. But if the young people refuse to come near the nets, the fishers will have poor catches—which seems a pity after the fishers have worked so hard and have prayed so earnestly for success.

There are churches, says a religious weekly, which have been held back for years by the lack of good humour among church-workers. The lack of good humour, we gather, takes the form of touchiness, pomposity, suspicion, envy, and such-like pettiness. This doesn't say much for the uplifting influence of the creed they were brought up in, and are anxious to thrust down other people's throats.

Dr. J. D. Jones told the Congregational Union Assembly: "I should feel much happier about the future of our Church if all our people resolved to keep their cars in the garage on Sunday, to give the golf club a rest that day, and to cut out Sunday dinners and supper parties." It seems rather un-Christian of Dr. Jones to seek happiness in striving to deprive other people of their pleasures.

The Rev. R. G. Legge, of the Lord's Day Observance Society, told a Glasgow audience that the subject of Sunday Observance was very important. It was, he said, (1) a big religious issue; (2) a big national issue; and (3) a big industrial issue. It reminds us of: "faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is . . ." Number One—a big religious issue, which, if decided against the parson, puts him out of business sooner or later.

Men, says Mr. A. G. Gardiner, are not a flock of sheep. They will never permanently consent to be treated as a flock of sheep. Of course not. And that is the reason why they have grown tired of "The Good Shepherd," and the claims to leadership of his sheep-herding proxies on earth.

A lady member of Parliament indicts the younger generation for wearing scanty dress. This she appears to think accompanies slack morals. These puritans are all the same. They appear to say: "Look at me—how well covered up I am, and therefore how moral!"

Speaking of the Roman finery of some Anglican Church bishops, the *English Churchman* says: "The ecclesiastical spirit, in a bad sense, has certainly arisen with a vengeance in this twentieth century." Has arisen? Our contemporary must have been Rip Van Winkling.

Science, by producing a new variety of sugar-cane with resistant powers, has won a victory over the insects which have done enormous damage to the sugar-cane industry in Louisiana. We are not sure whether that will please the Christian God, for he has now to invent some other means of feeding the part of his insect creation which has a liking for sugar. Science always seems to be upsetting the divine scheme of things. And we fancy God dislikes that. For see how suspicious of science he appears to have made most Christians.

To the *Daily Mirror* a reader signing himself "Agnostic," addresses the following:—

"Is this the age of toleration?" asks your cartoonist. For an answer, go to those Christians whose quarrels have lately convulsed the Church.

But no one in these enlightened days would judge whether this is an age of toleration by the degree of toleration shown among professing Christians. Followers of Christ never have been tolerant, are not tolerant, and never will be tolerant. The best they can manage, and will ever manage, is to be a little less intolerant. Only fools expect tolerance from admirers of an intolerant Jesus.

Going to Church with one's fellow men may be a duty, retorts a newspaper reader to another, but it does not, *ipso facto*, constitute a Christian; it is possible to be a Christian without public exhibition of the fact. This ultra-modest Christian appears lacking in a sense of the fitness of things. Any parson would tell him that every Christian man ought to attend divine service; otherwise, the solemn business of passing round the collection-bag degenerates into a farce. Parsons are not Elijahs fed by ravens.

Says a newspaper heading: "Dr. Barnes stands to his guns"—which is good enough as a metaphor, but hardly gives an accurate picture of a Bishop fighting with a bladder of wind against opponents similarly armed. The Bishop is lucky in being born in an age when his opponents have only bladders to use, and the pastime of Christian martyr making has gone out of fashion.

The world is getting too funny to be made fun of, says Mr. G. K. Chesterton. Things are hardly so bad as that. The Chesterton-Belloc combination engaged in religious disputation or propaganda still furnishes serious opportunities for fun making to the ungodly.

Gateshead, with a population of 100,000 people, has not one public playing-field for them. What matters about that, so long as Gateshead has its full measure of praying-sheds; and an efficient police force to deal with delinquents who get into trouble because they have no wholesome means of occupying leisure hours?

What have the 1,000 churches of Tyneside done for that one-third of the families of Newcastle living in one or two rooms? asks the Chairman of the Congregational Union. And echo answers—taught them Christian resignation.

Lieut-Col. Richardson, the well-known breeder of dogs, tells of one of his charges that "went to prayers." He says the dog became "so attuned to words, that when 'the power and the glory, Amen,' was said at the end of the family prayers, the dog immediately arose and went to bed." That is a good story, but, after all, "that drowsy feeling" is not unknown to humans during the course of prayers.

Where the late Camille Flammarion was content to speculate only about life on the stars, Sir Francis Young-husband in *Life in the Stars*, explains how distant spirits influence us, and appeals to telepathy and ultra-X-rays. And this is precisely what theology does—theorizes on the unprovable. The reviewer, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, dismisses the book by stating that as a theory of the universe it has no particular claim to attention. It would be very comforting to think that all the problems of this life were solved, but as they are not, Sir Francis is only adding to the number of metaphysical gnats that bite and sting man in this vale of tears. Brethren—all sing!

Although theological circles are at present more interested in food and drink than anything else, in a copy of *Answers*, we find its readers are reminded that, according to an expert at a recent meeting of the Royal Sanitary Institute, "ministers of religion are the slowest of all to assist in health propaganda." It is all to the good that a popular journal should record this of a professional body of men supposed to be really interested in the welfare of mankind.

The Rev. W. H. G. Shapcott is interested in the "cock-tail" menace to young girls. And this, we think, reflects, at its true value how much the world craves for what professional religionists can offer. Yesterday, it was the length of skirts, the day before it was bicycles, and the ordinary man is left wondering what it all has to do with the saving of souls.

J. M. Andrews, the Singing Evangelist, requests the prayers of Christian people for his forthcoming mission at Boston, Lines., next month. Perhaps if he learnt to perform on a mouth-organ the prayers wouldn't be so necessary.

The Rev. G. M. Guinness, who is leaving Guildford, has been presented with a book-case and £36. The perquisites of the job of following a divine eulogiser of poverty are not to be succeeded at.

The Crisis in the Church

Those who wish to understand the dispute now raging in the Established Church concerning the Sacrament should read:

GOD EATING

A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism
By J. T. LLOYD

PRICE 3d. By POST 4d.

This pamphlet deals with the subject from the historical, doctrinal and anthropological points of view. It is just the kind of work to place in the hands of an enquiring Christian.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

The "Freethinker" Endowment Trust.

We have taken but a small step forward this week, and we now have but two months to go to secure the promised amounts. Upon the friends of the paper subscribing £535 19s. 6d. during that time depends our getting another £1,615. That should be quite spur enough to get what is required.

We are pleased to note among this week's subscriptions one from Mr. Edward Clodd, if only as evidence of the wide-spread opinion among all classes of genuinely liberal thinkers of the importance of the *Freethinker*.

The important thing we have to note just now is that our subscription list must average between £50 and £60 per week, if we are to get what is required. It ought to average twice that, and would, if the backward ones come forward in time.

Below will be found the list of subscriptions to date:—

EIGHTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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PREVIOUSLY ACKNOWLEDGED	5,810	7	9
Edward Clodd	2	0	0
J. W. F.	15	0	0
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Mr. McKee	1	0	0
A. W. Hook	0	5	0
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R. Daniell	1	0	0
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Promised on condition that a further £535 19s. 6d. is contributed by December 31, 1927 ... £1,615 0 0

Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to the *Freethinker* Endowment Trust, and crossed Clerkenwell Branch, Midland Bank, and directed to me at 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that a 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.

R. DANIELL.—We should like all to feel as you do towards the Endowment Trust. Its success will not merely mean less worry to us personally, but also a splendid present to the Freethought movement.

H. DENT.—Shall look forward to seeing you at Chester-le-Street.

J. ROBINSON.—We should be very slow in taking the gentleman named as being an authority on the subject referred to. His writings prove that he is quite out of his depth on such a subject. The complete study of Materialism would involve a study of scientific method, a general knowledge of the positive results of scientific research, and a knowledge of the course of philosophic speculation. For that purpose a good short history of philosophy would be useful. If you can get Lange's *History of Materialism*, read that—it has just been published in one volume. Carl Snyder's *World Machine*, is also a book well worth attention.

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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When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. F. Mann, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 6) Mr. Cohen will lecture twice in the Kenfig Hill Labour Hall, near Bridgend. In the afternoon, at 2.45, his subject will be, "Do the Dead Live?" In the evening, at 7.45, "The New Warfare Between Religion and Science." Good meetings are anticipated. The Sunday following, Mr. Cohen will pay a visit to the very active Chester-le-Street Branch.

The Secretary of the Swansea Branch, in view of those in that neighbourhood who would like to attend Mr. Cohen's meetings, desires to state that the most suitable train will leave High Street, Swansea, at 1 o'clock.

There were two good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last, to listen to Mr. Cohen's lectures. The hall was comfortably filled in the morning, and well filled in the evening. There were the usual number of questions; a meeting of Scotchmen without a certain amount of "heckling" is almost inconceivable. But all went off quite pleasantly. Mr. Lonsdale occupied the chair in the forenoon, and Mr. Hale in the evening.

With the present ferment in the Church of England, and the attention paid to religious subjects in the general press, the present offers a golden opportunity to those interested to bring the claims of the *Freethinker* before new people. That this journal has played its part in undermining religious belief, and so forcing the clergy to try to make terms with the heresy afoot, there can be no doubt. And in these circumstances there should be a large number of men and women who would gladly make acquaintance with the only outspoken organ of Freethought in the country. Mr. George Bernard Shaw spoke the sober truth when he said that we were doing a work that no one else would do, and he might as truth-

fully have added that no more important work is being done by any journal in the country.

We will, on receipt of threepence in stamps, be pleased to send copies of the paper for six weeks to likely readers. Many new subscribers are gained in this way. And to those who are ready to take a little more trouble, we will send a parcel of specimen copies for distribution in likely quarters. All they need do is to send on their names and addresses, and say how many copies they wish us to send. But we should all make the most we can of the occasion. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country, and we want them as quickly as possible.

Strange Tales.

It seems almost a pity that the Lord of Hosts has changed his tactics. Doubtless it is for our own benefit, but really, as Hood says, "Heaven seems further off since I was a boy."

Time was when an accredited representative could indulge in a tête-à-tête with the Almighty. Quite often he was amenable to sincere petitions. The omnipotent arm could be jogged on occasion. If babies were anxiously demanded—as in the case of Sarah and Hannah (two good old-fashioned names) the result could be guaranteed. The Almighty was never inactive when an increase of population was urgently required.

Moses, Aaron and Joshua, in those early days, were specially favoured mortals. Each in turn acted as a kind of go-between in critical times. They seemed to have the ear of Omniscience, and be able to have the latest information direct from headquarters.

Moses especially was favoured. In those diplomatic encounters with Pharaoh, he was as a mouth-piece for Omnipotence. He occupied a peculiarly strong position.

If, in these days, some of our ambassadors were able to threaten, not only a rupture of relations, or a creation of business contracts, but the turning of a foreign river into genuine blood, there seems little reason to doubt that the alien could be made to pay. Since the time of Moses we have lost a great weapon for the plenipotentiary.

There was no aloofness about Jahveh in those halcyon days. He was get-at-able. He interested himself in ordinary mundane affairs. The kind of food we ate, the clothes we wore, the sort of hair-oil most beneficial, the temple "purtenances," curtain rings, and other upholstery. Nothing was too small to be the object of fatherly care and devotion.

It is amazing why the children of Israel ever went astray at all. Under the leadership of Moses they were the spoiled darlings of Deity. Did they want food in the wilderness? Manna was provided. Did they lust for the flesh-pots of Egypt? Quails were brought up in abundance. The waters of the Red Sea stood up on either hand to let them pass, and were graciously released in order to punish the wicked Egyptians, who really ought to have known better than attempt to follow such "Kittle Cattle."

Pharaoh must have been a most irrational person. He seems to have gloried in his obstinacy. Two or three plagues would satisfy reasonable people. It took ten to warp his judgment and still he was bigoted. A most outrageous monarch! One admires his courage, but despises his judgment. Moses—with Jehovah at his back—was too many for him.

It does seem a wonder that the Israelites ever had a fancy for other gods. The proofs of the favoured nation clause were so unmistakable. If the people were thirsty, Moses, by hitting hard, could make the welcome flood issue from the rock. Moses was a man

of many parts. If he had one weakness it was self-effacement. He was coy.

Nowadays, if a man gathers fuel on a Sunday hardly any notice is taken. In colliery districts men go regularly to work on Sunday night. I don't envy them. If they would turn to Numbers xv. they would hesitate. Coals are certainly not mentioned, but the punishment might apply to any form of fuel. Here, as in so many places, the Lord spake unto Moses. The majesty of the law had to be upheld. The man must be taught a lesson. He had six days wherein to look after firewood. The punishment must be nicely fitted to the crime. Should the heinous offence be overlooked myriads of respectable Israelites might go a-whoring after firefighters on the sabbath. The Lord said: "The man shall be surely put to death: and all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died."

ALAN TYNDAL.

The Contemporary Outlook.

(Concluded from page 700.)

As the original dissociation of the phenomena of life was a total misapprehension, the present application of an entelechy to the process is an obvious insertion and an overt forgery. In the preface to *Principles of General Physiology*, the greatest systematic treatise yet written on the life processes, classic in method and essentially permanent in fundamental conclusions, Sir William Maddock Bayliss, quoting Claude Bernard, wrote: "There is, in reality, only one general physics, only one chemistry, and only one mechanics, in which all the phenomenal manifestations of nature are included, both those of living bodies as well as those of inanimate ones. In a word, all the phenomena which make their appearance in a living being obey the same laws as those outside of it. So that one may say that all the manifestations of life are composed of phenomena borrowed from the outer cosmic world, so far as their nature is concerned, possessing, however, a special morphology, in the sense that they are manifested under characteristic forms and by the aid of special physiological instruments.' It must be remembered, of course, that the special systems referred to are not to be understood as outside the laws of physics and chemistry. All that we are justified in stating is that, up to the present, no physico-chemical system has been met with having the same properties as those known as vital; in other words, none have, as yet, been prepared of similar complexity and internal co-ordination." Life is then provisionally a state of dynamic structure, organized in discrete cellular units, to the activities of which function or the tendency and capacity for the perpetuation of form, substance and chemical equilibration and for renewal can be applied. It exhibits such further phenomena as extensive varied differential, and directional permeability, chemical maintenance through specific syntheses, catabolism through rapid energy yielding chemical actions, which go completely to the end point, a selective disproportional displacement of equilibrium or irritability associated with specific reactivity. Such distinctive events are descriptively available. How the insinuation of any unsubstantiated entity can result in the manifold processes manifested in them is totally unintelligible. It is as facile in language as it is impossible in thought.

A sentient accompaniment corresponds to certain phases of these dynamics. Actually, it is a situation of direct awareness to some of the internal tensions. This quality of consciousness inexplicably arisen

must at one time have been unique, concomitant of the processes previously carried on in identical form without it. Most primitively it would cover only organic sentiences. But it would be from its origin essentially conative. External contributions would later be instigated. Increased sensitivity followed the acquisition of these faculties. With the intensification of consciousness adoptive benefits would accrue. In our immediately known form this manifestly epiphenomenal development has attained a longer reach. It is no longer obviously intermediary in an organic process. It has attained a certain independence and self-appointment. When consciousness reaches its present status, it undertakes the elaboration of its content. Still, the knowledge of its actual outlook is necessary. The fundamental problem of thought is the placement of consciousness, the standing of its data and the validity of its workings. Consciousness remains at all times that which is known when certain chemical tensions alter. All that is known is that consciousness somehow accompanies these.² Through its inception to its arrival at its most generous functioning, the fundamental development of consciousness is a loosing from the activities of which it was solely the increment till it reaches its widest scope. Yet it is always bound to its origin. It is always coincident with the life processes.

The living organism is the manifestation of certain processes. The maintenance of the organized equilibria give these. That is all that happens. A certain derangement is their complete breakdown. The individual life ends. Sentience is terminated. It is cessation. The terminology of immortality has gone. Without it the conception is impossible. Nothing is left for it. It is completely disallowed. Discontinuance is something of a baffling affront to the conative consciousness. But cessation alone is indicated. It is the only fit conclusion. It is the only possible solution. It is dissolution.

Sentience is the same or is enhanced through its juster apprehension under that form of thought which frees it from extraneous inserts. Those who must call out their dependance on extraneous conceptions to give value to their experiences confess their slightness and ungentleness in so doing. Those in touch with the flow of thought and experience, who by various shifts hold the older forms in its disfavour, also bespeak themselves. This outlook is not to be pointed to as materialism, which is an untenable and fallacious dogma. Instead, it is part of the foremost philosophy. It apprehends experience under the newest forms. It is the most adequate. It is rationalism according to the great comprehensive radical activity that reason has become in its recent definitions. All the possibilities of life find these newest forms most appropriate to them.

All is as amoral as from remotest times some have known it to be. The hypostatized morality dissolves. There remains that actual reaction of the person and the folkways. And to each personality every situation and response has its intrinsic experiential quality.

Whatever may have been genuine in the old religion must separate from it. For that religion cannot take on a new purposive reach. Its original impulsion is gone. Another cannot be substituted. The attempt is futile hardihood. It can have no issue. Still the degraded remnant of the one-time religion hangs on. Rationalism indicted Christian

theory still firm in the surety that accompanies gradual degeneration. Nietzsche impugned the textual ethic. Other livers have followed with later attacks. But it persists as the conventional receptacle for some slight amenities, far trusts and predetermined attitudes, the acceptance of some few soft and vapid dogmas, the guide to some few accustomed latitudes of thought and sentiment, evidencing a laggard mentality aligned with the bulward of ignorance and its militancy, an indelible marking with the conceptuality of the nether centuries, a readiness to parade together the inconsistent heritage and some slight show of modernity gained by vaguely listening-in on the currency of knowledge, an only partially enlightened outlook, some unfortunate conceptual malalliance, or the insufficient emergence of a certain intellectual incompleteness, in its adherents. The march of thought has left it all behind. But perhaps unreason, too, is somehow justified of its children. These are among the things only to be justified in such a reference.

What remains untouched is the original experiential basis of religion. It is the personal largest response which is its only authentic ground. This is the most generous sentience. It is the net quality of a life as it is immediately and individually known. It is the realization of one's intrinsic emotional outcome in all experience. It is the apprehension of an ultimate generalized feeling for life. This doctrine is said in few sentences. After them there is really nothing more to write. But, after them, all things are open to experience.

CURTIS BRUEN.

Was He Crucified?

EVERY one has heard of the sailor who was looking into a shop-widow at a picture of Jesus Christ agonizing upon the cross. As he was looking a Jew came up, and the sailor knocked him down. The son of Israel picked himself up, and inquired the reason of such treatment. "Didn't you damned Jews crucify him?" said the sailor. "Oh," said the smarting Hebrew, "that was a long time ago." "Never mind," replied Jack, "I only heard of it yesterday."

The story of the Crucifixion has been the making of Christianity. It is full of moving incident and thrilling pathos. Children who knew nothing of tragedies and martyrdoms, have followed Jesus in imagination from Gethsemane to Calvary, and his sufferings have become associated with their earliest feelings of pity, and, through pity, of affection. Had the Prophet of Nazareth ascended to heaven like Elijah, without tasting a bitter death; had he even died of some disease, however terrible and excruciating, and risen from the dead after such a decease; he would never have become the object of such profound sympathy. Death from disease is common. It is a violent death that excites attention. And when the violence is inflicted on an innocent man, whose sufferings are depicted with considerable art and invested with awful mystery, it is no wonder that the story should gain a supreme hold upon the human mind—particularly when we remember that it is so carefully pressed upon every fresh generation, in its susceptible childhood, when the feelings are unblunted, and the imagination is at the mercy of accident or authority.

Considering the nature of this story, it is curious how its chief incident—the death of Jesus—is commemorated by millions of professed Christians. According to the Gospels there was a huge eclipse during the Crucifixion; or, as Christian poets have said, the sun veiled its face at the insult offered to its God. But other times bring other manners; and, as the Jew said, the Crucifixion was such a long time ago. Christians call the anniversary of their Saviour's death *Good Friday*. No sign of sadness appears upon their countenances. They seem to say "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-day he

² *Physiological Chemistry*. Albert Matthews. Contains a scientifically expert and philosophically competent discussion of the situation.

died." And certainly they do *drink*. It is a glorious opportunity for the publicans as well as the sinners.

How few of these merry-making Christians ask themselves how it is that Good Friday is a shifting anniversary. Jesus Christ must have died (if he ever lived) on a particular day, and the day should be punctually celebrated. Shakespeare's death always occupies the same place in the calendar. Jesus Christ's death has to be fixed every year by astronomical calculations. Such a fact is enough to make us ask whether his death is really an historic fact.

It is no answer to this question to point to the circumstantial character of the Gospel narrative. Art is always more circumstantial than history. Look at the wonderful details of *Robinson Crusoe*. Observe the vivid portraiture of Hamlet and Othello. Does it not make them more real to us than many of the persons with whom we are intimately acquainted? Yet they are creatures of imagination. The highest art conceals the traces of art. In the language of paradox, its productions are more natural than nature itself.

The art of the Gospels is not so great as the art of Shakespeare. It does not satisfy the intellect and imagination that are fortified by experience. To the critical investigator it reveals grave flaws, wide discrepancies, and serious self-contradictions. One reason for these defects is, that the picture of Christ was not the work of a single master-hand. It was the work of many hands, in several generations. The first sketches, which seem for ever lost, grew into a finished design, not in a private studio, but in a public school. Fresh touches were constantly being given by daring artists, until orthodoxy checked any further development. The picture satisfied the simple and uncritical, but the keen-eyed and reflective see its composite character, and notice the botches of the original designers under the improvements of later and more finished artists.

We have no space to deal with the many self-contradictions of the Crucifixion story. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the task of pointing out some of its serious improbabilities.

Jesus had wrought many miracles. He had even raised the dead. What madness it was, then, on the part of his enemies to seek his life! He had the power of blasting them into nothingness, yet they compassed his death as though he were but an ordinary mortal, to be put out of the way as a nuisance or an inconvenience.

They paid Judas to betray him; that is, they gave Judas thirty half-crowns to identify the best-known man in Jerusalem. We cannot believe that Jews were ever such spendthrifts. Nor can we believe that they were ever so foolish. Suppose the London police had to arrest the late Charles Bradlaugh. Would they pay anyone £3 15s. to identify him?

Judas is the second figure in the Crucifixion story. We are told that he was smitten with remorse and committed suicide. Yet the earliest Christian writer who mentions a Gospel—namely, Papias informs us that Judas lived on a great example of impiety, that he grew very corpulent, and was eventually crushed to death between a chariot and a wall. Evidently, therefore, the Judas episode had not been finally worked-up even in the days of Papias—that is, more than a hundred years after the date of the Crucifixion.

John, who gives Jesus a more ideal and mystical character than the Synoptics, states that Jesus advanced of his own accord to his arresters, saying, "I am he," and that the very sound of his voice threw them upon their backs. They got up, however, and completed the arrest; which is more than English policemen would do in such circumstances. A man who could floor you with a word would be too dangerous to apprehend.

Bringing Jesus before the High Priest for trial involves ignorance of both Jewish and Roman jurisprudence. The priests' court had no penal jurisdiction except in temple affairs, and only then over priests and Levites. It is also monstrous to suppose that the judges who were trying a prisoner would walk about the room, with the witnesses, the servants, and the crowd, and even spit upon and revile him. The writers of our Gospels were not Jews. They wrote long after the fall of Jerusalem, when there was no one to check their absurdities, and they also wrote for Gentiles.

Pilate, the Roman Governor at Jerusalem, is said to have sent Jesus to Herod, who ruled in Galilee, because Jesus was born there. Is not this ridiculous? Would a Frenchman who committed a murder in England be sent for trial in Paris?

Is it credible that the wife of a Roman governor should send him a message while he sat upon the judgment-seat, requesting him to acquit a prisoner because she knew he was innocent?

Would a Roman governor—especially a proud one like Pilate—sentence a prisoner to execution, although knowing him to be innocent, and then exculpate himself by washing his hands in public? Such a thing was never heard of in the history of Roman jurisprudence. Washing the hands, indeed, was a purely Jewish symbolism. The idea could never have occurred to a Roman judge.

Pilate's whole conduct is opposed to all we know of the duties and responsibilities of a Roman governor. His going to and fro between the prisoner and his accusers was justly described as impossible by the Rev. Dr. Giles, who declared without hesitation that "no Roman Governor ever condescended to an act which he would deem so derogatory to his rank and dignity."

The haste of the trial and execution, the miracles at the Crucifixion itself, and many incidents which we have no space to criticize—all show that we are not reading history, but romance; a romance in the interest of a Church which had the effrontery to assert that Pilate sent an account of the Crucifixion to Tiberius, and that Tiberius proposed the deification of Christ to the Roman Senate!

G. W. FOOTE.

(Reprinted from the FREETHINKER, April 14, 1895.)

Books and Life.

IN 1925, in this series, we noted with pleasure *The Travel Diary of a Philosopher*, by Count Hermann Keyserling. Jonathan Cape have now published another book by this author, entitled *The World in the Making*, price 9s. net., and a careful reading justifies our recommendation of it to those who are interested in culture in the past, present and future. In Greece, an advance in the understanding of the Gods meant their dethronement. Circumstances and cunning afterwards enthroned another God in the quagmire of history known as the dark ages. And what Euripides and Aristophanes had done for the Greek gods was taken up by Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Bruno and Galileo, only to mention a few. Churches were centres of communal life, and as knowledge was in the hands of a privileged few, there grew a culture of a kind, but always subservient to ecclesiastical authority. Medieval-minded persons in our own day wish to return to those palmy days, in the same way that American music-hall singers want to "get back" to Tennessee and other places, but the fact remains that the wealth of knowledge—we will not say wisdom, prevents any possibility of this return. "To-day," states the author, "all the old culture on the face of the earth is perishing, because the new determined type of man disavows it." Although we may deplore the passing away of even Anglo-Saxon culture, in which our own aristocrats are the villains of the piece, it is nevertheless a fact. In a plea for *Peter's Pence of Literature*, the writer asserts that Nietzsche is without a doubt the first and greatest prophet of the world in the making. We are in entire and hearty agreement with this, and further on he states, "The spiritual values of mankind will, in an increasing measure, be recognized as humanity values." Here we touch the tainted vocabulary of theology; without a definition of the word spiritual, in this paper at least, we are quite ready to read into this a dethronement of a deity. And, we might add, there would be no harm done to the deity; and a possibility of good for humanity. Another little extract, and we must bow to space; "neither the primitive Christianity of newly-awakened Russia, nor the primitive element of the American, nor even the unrejuvenated Catholic Church has any historic future." There is the fierce ring of sincerity in this book; the writer's life has been one of terrific struggle with himself amidst prosperity, adversity, poverty and misfortune through the Russian

Revolution, and in his own words, the chief reason for praising this book is also his reason for writing it, "it deals with the practical tasks of life in this age of transition."

Sir Philip Gibbs, some months ago wrote an article in the *Daily Express*, in connexion with a symposium on "Looking at Life." He entitled it "The Middle of the Road," and there was one quality in it that made us put it aside for future reference; it was the quality of frankness. This quality may be traced through most Russian novels, and in most cases the author's use of it is amazing. Tolstoy, Gogol, Gorki, Artzibashef all use it with bewildering force. In *The Idiot*, Dostoïeffsky projects a scene in which each member of a party recounts his worst action; Gorki, through his characters, makes observations that almost leave the reader breathless; Artzibashef has a character "Sanine," who says, "When I am drunk, I'm the most good natured person imaginable, for I've forgotten so much that is mean and vile." Poushkin, some time after hearing Gogol read aloud "Dead Souls" said "Gogol invents nothing; it is the simple truth, the terrible truth." Noting this quality in the article mentioned above, as purely a matter of conjecture, we wonder if one desirable influence from Russia has reached this country. The famous author had a different view-point from army chaplains and the clergy; he writes: "I confess that during the whole war I could not work up any reasonable hatred against the Germans."—and further on:—

In my judgment, after wandering about the world a bit, after reading most of the great masters, and grabbing at knowledge wherever I could find it, the best way to look at life is with a little humour, a lot of pity, and a ceaseless curiosity, a love of beauty, and a sense of comradeship with all men, women and beasts.

What! comradeship with all men? Is it that the truth of Thomas Paine was prophetic?

Another book, by Mr. Patrick Braybrooke, has been published by Henry J. Drane, 82a Farringdon Street, E.C. 4. It is called, *Peeps at the Mighty*, 7s. 6d. net, and in the course of one hundred and sixty nicely printed pages, he gives us his opinions of H. G. Wells, Dean Inge, Max Beerholm, A. C. Benson, G. K. Chesterton, Jack London, Stephen Leacock and Arnold Bennett. He is original and interesting, and his clear essays give the impression of having thoroughly mastered his subject. The essay on the novel *Christina Alberta's Father* provokes Mr. Braybrooke to definitely state that Mr. Wells' attitude towards our asylums is unfair: "As I have said earlier, I think that his attack is unfair in only one respect; that is, that it is not severe enough." A Christian country is perhaps to be excused for its shortcomings in this direction; the crudity of the subject of insanity in the Bible might even disqualify a night porter for his job at a hospital. We must pick a bone, however, with the industrious author. In the essay on Dean Inge and Cardinal Newman, which we think is the best in the book, he writes: "For say what you like, for good or for bad, the Roman Catholic is a slave and very likely it is such an excellent form of slavery that it is good for the individual." This is a very hazy sort of statement that might mean anything; we hope that Mr. Braybrooke has not caught the trick of certain mystical writers who straddle with a leg in each camp, for on the opposite page he utters a truth in a stage whisper: "Then there is the appeal to history, and no Church has wrapped up its history so attractively as the Roman Church." His voice would have reached the commissioner in the gallery, if he had written "effectively" for "attractively," but, thanks to the same means that enables us to read *Peeps at the Mighty*, it is now there for anyone with eyes to see, that it is the history of the Roman Church that assumes the black cap in judgment on a system that waxed fat on the worst form of slavery—the slavery of the mind. Where's our *Materialism Re-Stated*? "Until about 1820 the Roman Church never officially admitted that the earth revolved round the sun." The author of this book is never dull, he has a good style, free from the ambiguities that give

headaches—and work for the opticians; he has something to say and says it freely and frankly, and in his next book he might give a glance at such ordinary beings as Professor G. Elliot Smith, Professor C. H. Perry, Sir James G. Frazer, Bertrand Russell, and Fielding Hall. With these, he would not be hampered too much with the metaphysics of the poor, and he would be doing a valuable service towards making the way straight for a general acceptance of their ideas by the poverty-stricken and gravelled-for-matter academicians, politicians, statesmen and all the gallimaufry who tell the community to sing while they try to think of something. Item of interest: the reader of this book will see by an advertisement that there actually is such paper as the *Freethinker*.

Many thinkers, dramatists, poets and all strugglers for the good of their own species have had their say about the idea of mankind as one man. There are bright gleams of truth in this that are apparent to the materialist who exists by the grace of patronage, condescension and abuse from those who tell him all about what cannot be disproved, because it cannot be proved—one of the laziest, moth-eaten and ignorant forms of argument. (Yes, we have read *Materialism Re-Stated* twice). Ibsen wrote: "In every poem or play I have aimed at my own spiritual emancipation and purification—for a man shares the responsibility and the guilt of the society to which he belongs." Browning, in *Cleon*, touches the same idea, and, here is a modern poet, in a didactic poem "Babel" striving in his way to accept responsibility for mankind—it needs it:—

Mankind is one—

Bound by common inheritance, like nature;
Each bears his neighbour's evil on his back
As each is strengthened by his neighbour's good.

WILLIAM REPTON.

Correspondence.

A CHANCE FOR FREETHINKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The events of the last three weeks enacted in the dovecoats of the Church of England have lessons for Freethinkers, and it is hoped they will not be slow to learn them. There has not been such a rumpus since Bishop Colenso gave the show away, and W. E. Gladstone wrote the *Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. There is great alarm in the Christian camp, which should give us much encouragement to keep pegging away. It should also wake up the indolent and indifferent Freethinkers, who believe that we are "flogging a dead horse." There is a good deal of kick in him yet. The squabble between the bishops has its amusing side. Where is their boasted brotherhood? The High, Low and Moderns are at each other's throats. The "Moderns" are rather ancient, and at best only, parrot-like, use the slogans of fifty years ago. One of the mysteries is that some men advance to a certain extent, the Unitarians for instance, and never get any further, forgetting that if we do not advance mentally, we must, willy nilly, retrograde. Let us, with a long long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together, push Dr. Barnes and his party on another notch towards mental freedom.

EDWIN DAWSON.

HOW I BECAME A FREETHINKER.

SIR,—You say you will be pleased to have letters from readers describing how they became Freethinkers. I have been a Freethinker for twenty-two years, and if you think an account of how I became a Freethinker would be of any interest you could publish this letter.

Twenty-two years ago I was a member of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Society. I lived then at Stoke Newington, and one Sunday morning I stopped and listened to the discussion at a meeting in Ridley Road. The discussion set me thinking. I was not a philosopher, and I considered the problem entirely from a personal standpoint. The problem of pain was much in my mind. Since I was three I had suffered through illness, and now

I said, "If there is a good, loving God, why do I and others suffer through no fault of our own." I have read and studied since then, and increasing knowledge and deeper thought has confirmed the answer I gave myself as a young man—"There is no God."

The malady from which I suffer has given me opportunities of observing the extent to which the belief in religion dominates institutions that should be conducted on purely scientific lines. In one place where I spent fourteen months, we had grace before and after meals, a prayer meeting every night, and religious service three times on Sunday. I don't know whether the treatment was to be blamed, or whether the religious services undid the good the treatment did me, but after fourteen months I was none the better. I blame the religious services, because I have gradually improved in health since I ceased to hear them!

In view of the tales we hear of the terrible lives lived by Atheists, I should perhaps mention that I am a lifelong abstainer, a non-smoker, and that I have never gambled. These are the "downward" paths that Christians would have us believe the Atheist treads at the double. I have lived a "Christian life," and I am damned! It is very funny.

H. J. HEVER.

Obituary.

MR. HARRY TUCKER.

It is my sad duty to record the death, after a brief illness, on October 24, in his 74th year, of Harry Tucker. By his death, Freethought has lost one of its most loyal and staunch supporters. He was always ready to help anyone who was in trouble, and he gave his highest service in a quiet and unobtrusive way to the best of causes which he loved well. As a good Secularist, he hated all humbug and injustice. He brought to the study of affairs a kindly consideration, a keen mind, and a sound judgment. At his request the writer read a Secular Address at his funeral, which took place on the 27th ult.

G. F. H. McCLUSKEY.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

Last Sunday, at the St. Pancras Reform Club, Mr. Mann opened a discussion on the question, "Can a Lawyer be Honest?" Mr. Mann said people depended for justice on the existence of a number of men who were learned in the law and had the power of advocacy, and who were prepared to act for anyone, whatever their own opinion might be in regard to the point at issue. Lawyers certainly sold their services, but who did not? Men such as Ingersoll were praised as honest lawyers in relation to those cases where they had been dishonest and unjust.

Amongst those who took part in the discussion were Mr. Ebury, Mr. Egar and Mr. Palmer. The discussion, which covered a lot of ground, was astonishingly "learned." It is perhaps well for our leading K.C.'s that Freethinkers do not go in for the law as a profession!

To-day we have with us Miss Ettie A. Rout, who will lecture on "Native Diet." Miss Rout's exceptional ability as a lecturer is well known, and the subject is one upon which she is an authority. We are looking for a good audience, and an interesting and profitable evening.—X.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Miss Ettie A. Rout—"Native Diet."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, "Social." Members may bring friends.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Harry Snell, M.P.—"Miss Mayo's Mother India: Fact of Libel?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): E. N. Bennett, M.A.—"Psychical Research as a Branch of Scientific Study."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34, George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Mr. Baker—"A Criticism of the League of Nations." Thursday, November 10, Dance at Slater's Restaurant, Kensington High Street.

OUTDOOR.

FREETHOUGHT MEETINGS.—(Corner of North End Road, Fulham—near Walham Green Church): Tuesdays and Saturdays, 7.30 p.m. Speakers—F. Bryant, A. J. Mathie, F. Moister. Local Freethinkers' attendance invited.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. Leonard Ebury. Wednesday (Clapham Old Town): 8.0, Mr. W. Sandford.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Hyde Park): 11.30 and 3.0, Speakers—Messrs. Botting, Baker, Parton and Hanson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Messrs. A. Hyatt, B. A. Le Maine; 6.0, Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Carter and Jackson. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith, W.): 3.0, Mr. Campbell-Everden, A Lecture. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday in Hyde Park at 7.30. Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Assembly Rooms, Front Street): 7.0, Mr. E. Cook—"The Ice Age." Chairman: Mr. W. Jeffreys.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No 2 Room, City Hall, enter by Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Irvine—"Spiritualism."

KENFIG HILL, near Bridgend (Labour Hall): 2.45 and 7.45, Chapman Cohen—Subjects: "Do the Dead Live?" and "The New Warfare Between Religion and Science."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Mr. J. Leaper—"Freethought and Poverty." Admission free. Discussion.

OUTDOOR.

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

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