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Views and Opinions.

The Blight of Belief.

If one had to name, in a single sentence, the book which on a balance of evidence has proved itself most disastrous in the history of the past sixteen centuries, one could not reply more truthfully than "The Bible." And by the Bible I mean the Old and the New Testaments. Had the Bible come before the modern world as a mere book, or a collection of books, no greater harm would have been done than is done by any other collection of writings that may attract the attention of men, and which may for a time exert a strong influence. The evil lay in the fact that it was a volume inspired by God. When a book comes before mankind with that imprimatur, and when it is backed up by an all-powerful church, the consequence is certain to be damnable. One of the conditions of the rich and fruitful intellectual life of Greece was that it had no "sacred" literature. There was no book by which men were bound, and to question which was a deadly crime. Thought was free, save for such obstacles as natural conservatism and normal authority provided. But with the Christian Church it was quite another story. Every enquiry was met with a "Thus saith the Lord!" Every new idea challenged by the same formula. And ever since the establishment of the Christian Church, one aspect of the story of the struggle to achieve progress has been the efforts to overcome the evil influence of the Bible. It did not create evils so much as it established them and endowed them with an authority that was not to be questioned. Witchcraft, demonism, eternal damnation for wrong belief, were firmly established in European thought, thanks to the Bible. A stupid Sabbatarianism, a fanatical intolerance, a belief in the worthlessness of life, an ignorant opposition to new ideas, are a few of the things we owe to the dominance of the Bible. It is useless replying that all this was due to a misunderstanding of the Bible; that may be quite true, but it is the Bible as the Christian Church taught it, and as men conceived it, with which we must deal. And of

all the disasters that have overtaken the European intellect since the downfall of the Roman Empire, the dominance of the Bible takes an easy first place.

* * *

Truth and the Bible.

When we come to deal with the Christian religion as an established historic fact, we are faced with considerations of much the same character. In a sermon preached the other day, at Westminster Abbey, Bishop Barnes put in a plea for a "reformulation" of Christianity. Well, a remodelling of one's ideas upon any subject where increased knowledge calls for it is good. The wise man is continually modifying his opinions as wider and more exact knowledge demands it. But Christianity, as the world has known it, was more than a system of ideas. It claimed to be an inspired body of truth, and however much man might learn in detail, it contained the truth concerning questions of cosmogony, ethics, and religion. You cannot remould a system of that kind. You cannot reformulate it—that is, with any marked degree of intellectual honesty. So far as matters of fact are concerned, men like Bishop Barnes give up the case as hopeless. They admit that, in the words of the late Dean Farrar, the science of the Bible is the science of its writers, and they were scientifically ignorant men in a scientifically ignorant age. Whenever the Bible can be brought to the test of fact, it has been found to contain little more than folk-lore and mythology. How can you reformulate these things? The only straightforward thing to do is to admit candidly that the Christian Church for ages forced upon the world a tissue of lies. Or if that be too strong a word for stories which may have been accepted as true in early ages, there is no questioning the fact that when that period had passed the same Church deliberately lied and persecuted in the endeavour to prevent the real truth being known. To talk of reformulation and reinterpretation in this connexion is to add one more chapter to the lengthy story of religious dishonesty.

* * *

Tweedledee and Tweedledum.

It is possible that Bishop Barnes might reply that he is not concerned with the Old Testament at all. His concern lies with the New Testament and with the figure of Jesus. But in what respect does the New Testament differ from the Old? To the student of comparative mythology they are two chapters out of the same book. The mythology of the New Testament is as pronounced as that of the Old, its supernaturalism is as definite. Is the Virgin Birth more believable than the garden of Eden? Is the story of the resurrection more credible than the Tower of Babel? Is the demonism of Jesus more scientific than the twelve plagues of Egypt? Why is it that

the clergy—some of them, at least—are ready to throw over the main incidents in the Old Testament as myth, and yet remain silent concerning the myths of the New? I venture to say that there is not a scientific student in the civilized world of to-day who does not know that the main outlines of the two books are identical, that the stories are upon substantially the same level, and that sooner or later the New Testament must be treated in exactly the same manner as anthropologists have treated the older books. Sir James Frazer has already published three bulky volumes dealing with the Folk-Lore of the Old Testament, in which the identity of the stories in the Bible with world-wide primitive superstitions is shown. Only timidity prevents him doing exactly the same with the New Testament.

* * *

A Mythical Jesus.

Bishop Barnes, in his plea for a "reformulation" of Christianity, refers to Jesus as "the Galilean Artizan," lacking

the knowledge of the man of science, with no special education, the child of his age. He had, if you will permit me to say it, a spiritual flair which we can link to our latest knowledge and find in the combination a harmony that satisfies.

Does anyone think for a moment that a Jesus who was the child of his age, who was as ignorant as the peasants around him, with no education above that of the people who listened to him, can be accepted as representative of the Jesus who has stood for centuries as the figure-head of the Christian Church? What the Church held up was a God. What Bishop Barnes proposes to substitute by way of "reformulation" is an ignorant peasant. And he does this in the name of mental honesty and moral sincerity! That is the most surprising feature of it all.

I am not quite sure what exactly is meant by the "spiritual flair" which this ignorant peasant is assumed to possess, and which we can link on to our modern knowledge and modern aspirations. But is it likely that the peasant who, on every point where his qualifications may be tested, proved himself to be the "child of his age," with no special education, managed to rise above his age in matters of religion? Does an understanding of religion require no education, no training, no knowledge worth speaking about? And in what way does he link up with our modern knowledge? Is the link found in his belief in legions of angels who could be summoned to assist him? Or in the belief that faith could move mountains? Or that the cause of epilepsy and insanity was devils taking possession of the body, which were to be driven out by prayer and fasting? Does he link up with our modern aspirations in his teaching that we should take no thought for the morrow, that we should turn one cheek when the other is smitten, or that the poor are blessed? Let anyone seriously consider what of life the New Testament Jesus—and the New Testament—does not teach, and they will at once see the absurdity of the pretension that we can build life upon that basis.

There is nothing about the State.

There is nothing about art.

There is nothing about science.

There is nothing about literature.

There is nothing about the family.

There is nothing about education.

The list might be prolonged, but this is enough to go on with, and more than enough to prove the absurdity of the pretence that we can build life upon the teachings of one, who, if he ever lived at all, never rose above the more ignorant superstitions of his

day, and showed no consciousness whatever of those higher aspects of art and literature and science which the writers of Greece and Rome were busy elaborating.

* * *

Thimblerrigging.

Long, long ago, the Catholic Church gave a sanction to a policy known as mental reservation. By that was meant that while a question might be put to you in one sense, you replied with the mental reservation of a meaning entirely different. One cannot avoid the conviction that this is the general policy of our advanced clergy. They use exactly the same phrases as do other believers about the Bible and about Jesus, but they "reserve" an entirely different meaning. They know that their position as ministers of the Christian Church involves the belief that Jesus Christ was a God, but they try to justify belief in him as a good man, thus playing the God or the man as occasion demands. They talk about the inspiration of the Bible, knowing that while they use the phrase with a reserved meaning, their congregations will understand it in another. They admit the mythical character of Bible happenings, but they go on referring to the incidents narrated as though they were as historical as the bombing of London during the war. A creed fashioned in folly continues in fraud. In the name of morality the worst kind of immorality is legalized. A raging epidemic of mental straightforwardness would end the Christian Church in the course of a single generation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

God's Own Ground-Landlords.

"Men may fight and lose the battle, and yet that which they fought for may come to pass."—W. Morris.

"Comedy is tragedy if you only look deep enough."
John Ruskin.

THE newspapers have been giving prominence to a Mr. William Allery, who has laid claim to property in suburban London valued at sixty millions of money. This is a huge sum, well calculated to excite the wonder of the average poor citizen. And that amazement will not be lessened by the further knowledge that the present owner of this gigantic property is the Church of England, whose Ecclesiastical and Church Estate Commissioners collect the rents and control the expenditure for that clerical body.

The annual rent-roll of this huge property runs into two millions of money, and the property itself sprawls its unwieldy length from Kennington to Croydon, where the Archbishop of Canterbury has one of his palaces. Nor does this tremendous estate represent anything but a small part of the revenues of the plutocratic Anglican Church. Just across the river Thames, within the narrow boundaries of the City of London, as distinguished from the County Council area, this Church possesses property valued at over two millions, and likely to rise in price greatly during the next few years. In addition to this London property the Church also draws huge revenues from the mining areas in the North of England, the income from coal royalties in the county of Durham alone being over £30,000 yearly.

Over and beyond all this the Ecclesiastical Commissioners control all the ancient endowments of the Church, including Queen Anne's Bounty, and tithe-rent charges. The total revenues are vast, and at the present time must run into many millions a year. The exact figures are difficult to determine, for

priests are more shy in disclosing their profits than a maiden is in broadcasting her love letters.

Who are these men who control millions of money in the interests of Priestcraft? Two Archbishops, a handful of Bishops, three Deans, a few Cabinet Ministers, four Judges and eleven lay members of the Anglican Church, eight of whom are selected by the Government and three by the Archbishop of Canterbury. These men have full statutory power to sue for their rents, royalties, profits, and other emoluments, by a special Act of Parliament passed in the reign of William the Fourth, a monarch who is chiefly remembered because his statue calmly regards the crowds passing over London Bridge.

The origin of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is not, like the Christian Religion itself, "wropt in mystery." It was due to the vast economic changes caused by the industrial revolution in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. Town property had increased in value, and agricultural property had fallen in value. Old towns had decayed, and new ones had sprung up like mushroom. The result was that there was financial chaos in the Lord's Vineyard, as parcelled out by the ecclesiastics. One parson would be receiving £5,000, or even £7,000, yearly and a brother-in-Christ, a few miles away, found his salary almost as insufficient as those of his parishioners. Many cathedral chapters were over-rich and over-stuffed, a pleasing phenomenon which did not excite so much clerical criticism.

As public fighting is unseemly on the part of Christian priests in this country, pressure was brought to bear on Parliament, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners came into existence. The huge resources of the Anglican Church were transferred to the new body, which, out of revenue, pays the comfortable salaries of the higher ecclesiastics. The balance, a large one, is paid into a common fund, and is used to build churches and supply priests in new areas, or wherever required, and also to pay pensions to the clergy who are too old for active work, usually octogenarians.

The ancient ecclesiastical endowments of the Church of England are vast. They are far more solid than the gold streets of the New Jerusalem. Lord Addington's return in 1801 showed that the annual value at that time of these old church endowments was nearly six millions. Modern private benefactions amounted to £284,000 yearly, enough to make a "share-pusher" squirm.

It is decidedly curious that the inquirer has to go to the records of a profane body like Parliament to find out the truth about the resources of this wealthy Church of Christ. The *Church of England Year Book* is a bulky, but not an illuminative volume, and resembles a politician because it talks a lot but says so little. Crockford's *Clergy List* throws some light on the subject, because it places the gross income against each benefice, but Crockford, like a true son of the Church, does not talk "shop" in public. "Mum's the word" is the order of the day where Priestcraft is concerned, and is likely to be so for many more days to come, until a Bill is introduced in Parliament for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Anglican Church, which has long since ceased to represent the nation as a whole. Except for the thousands of clergy and their dupes, the Church of England has ceased to represent England.

Socialists are far too tender-hearted concerning this purse-proud and powerful State Church, which is not a democratic body at all, but a survival from the Middle Ages. Even a Socialist should be interested to learn that a bishop's dress costs £200, and that the

Bench of Bishops share £182,000 yearly. Hospitality to the tune of thousands should stagger them as much as it used to stagger the stalwart old Radicals fifty years ago. For much food can be obtained for a more moderate figure. "The stair-carpet at Farnham Palace are measured by miles," wrote old Bishop Thorold, who lived there. "My episcopal income goes in gardening and geraniums," complained Bishop Stubbs. It is, indeed, a far cry from the pictures of the twelve disciples, with their highly-coloured blankets and fishing-nets, to Lambeth Palace with its guard-room; Fulham Palace with its pleasure grounds, Farnham Palace with its deer-park; and Wells with its moated garden. Perhaps, some day, Socialists will really try to be serious, and cease to kneel in front of the priests. At any rate, whilst kneeling, they should keep their hands in their pockets. MIMNERMUS.

The Borgias.

(Concluded from page 229.)

IN dealing with the crimes of the Borgias, it is difficult to know where to begin—they are so multitudinous—and, having begun, to know where to stop. "Former Pontiffs had raised money by the sale of indulgences," says J. A. Symonds, but Alexander VI (Rodrigo Borgia) improved upon this: "Having sold the scarlet [the cardinal's robe] to the highest bidder, he used to feed his prelate with rich benefices. When he had fattened him sufficiently, he poisoned him, laid hands upon his hoards, and recommenced the game. Paolo Capello, the Venetian Ambassador, wrote in the year 1500: 'Every night they find in Rome four or five murdered men, bishops and prelates and so forth.' Panvinius mentions three cardinals who were known to have been poisoned by the Pope; and to their names may be added those of the cardinals of Capua and Verona." ⁴ The same historian tells us that twelve cardinals' hats were put up for auction in 1500!

Another ambassador, Giustinian, reports that: "All Romans who are reputed rich are in the extremity of fear, and at every moment fancy the executioner is at their back." Signor Portigliotti, who cites this testimony, remarks: "To be exact, they feared the cup-bearer rather than the executioner; the white powder of arsenic rather than the midnight dagger or the silent waters of the Tiber." ⁵ The castle of Saint Angelo became the temporary prison of "the victims of his insatiable and criminal cupidity," on the road to death and oblivion.

On September 14, 1497, the Pope arrested the Archbishop of Cosenza, Bartolomeo Florès, and his secretary, upon a charge of forgery, and "laid hands on all their money and valuables." In April, 1498, the Bishop of Calahorra, Pedro de Aranda, formerly master of the Pope's household, was sent to the castle, charged with maintaining the ancient Hebrew faith, and his immense fortune was at once confiscated. He died there in August, 1500; according to some, through the collapse of the ceiling of his cell, according to others he was poisoned. In a cell not far removed from his, in July, 1500, the Duca Jacopo Caetani was strangled and the whole of the vast patrimony of his family was seized by the Pope.

But it was on January 1, 1503, says Portigliotti, that "the Borgia made a great cast of his net. Antonio da Santa Croce, Archbishop of Florence, his brother Jacopo, the abate Bernadino, Carlo Orsini,

⁴ J. A. Symonds: *The Renaissance*. (Age of the Despots.) (p. 324.)

⁵ G. Portigliotti. *The Borgias*. 1928. (p. 70.)

and Cardinal Giovanni Battista Orsini, were arrested together and imprisoned." Cardinal Orsini had been living at some distance from Rome as he distrusted the Pope—and with good reason, as events proved—but Alexander wrote him "affectionate and fatherly letters," to induce him to return to Rome, where he was immediately imprisoned in the castle. His mother was driven out of her house in Rome, and she, with some young serving-men, wandered about Rome, none daring to take them in. Nevertheless, the poor mother was allowed to supply her son with food; later, however, the Pope demanded 2,000 ducats and a magnificent pearl for this permission; the lady, after much difficulty, collected the money from her friends and relations, delivering it, with the pearl, at the Vatican. But when the unhappy mother went to the castle to see her son, she was told that he had just expired; and Burchard, the Master of the Ceremonies, calmly wrote in his famous diary—of which more later—"he drank of the cup." A few days later, says Portigliotti, the Pope wrote to his son Cæsar Borgia "a laconic and terrible letter: 'We must make an end at once, most beloved son, of this house [of Orsini], take as many of them as we can, and spare neither women nor children.' It was a general extermination. The booty was said to be enormous." (*The Borgias*, p. 73.)

The same historian gives several other cases of "these methodical murders," the narration of them, as he himself remarks, becomes "monotonous," but we must refer the reader to the book. His dealings with women were on the same enormous scale of immorality. During the reign of Alexander VI the Vatican, says Portigliotti, "had become a brothel." (p. 100). On the eve of all Saints' Day, 1501, fifty prostitutes from the streets of Rome were brought into the Vatican, and at a given moment divested themselves of their clothing, and we have the spectacle of those women on their hands and knees scrambling for chestnuts thrown among them by the Holy Father, his son Cæsar Borgia, and his daughter Lucretia. The servants of the Vatican then danced with the women, and afterwards prizes were awarded for—but it is impossible to give a translation of all the details as described by the dry and unemotional pen of Burchard, the Popes' Master of the Ceremonies, in his *Diary*.

Some Roman Catholic apologists, scandalized by the revelations contained in Burchard's diary, have endeavoured to throw doubt on its veracity, or profess to believe that the more scabrous details have been interpolated. Portigliotti, on the contrary, describes it "as the richest and most impartial source for the pontificate of Alexander VI," and instead of interpolations, he considers that there have been important parts of it omitted, or deleted, where the narrative sometimes breaks off in the midst of a sentence. The affair of the chestnuts itself, has been crossed out with strokes of the pen, and can only be deciphered with difficulty.

But, the reader will ask, "how can a diary written up from day to day, be interpolated, or mutilated, without it being obvious at the first glance?" Probably Signor Portigliotti takes it for granted that everyone knows the history of the Diary, so he does not mention it. The fact is, the famous diary is safe under lock and key in the Vatican, and is likely to remain there. We should probably never have heard of it at all had not Pope Alexander VII (1655-67) caused a copy to be made for his kinsman Prince Chigi. It is from this copy that the three volumes of the *Diary* have been printed, and not from the original in the Vatican. However, if the compromising passages, like the affair of the chestnuts, was not con-

tained in the original diary, the custodians of the work would soon let us know about it.

Burchard held the office of Master of the Ceremonies, the highest position in the Vatican, for more than twenty years. When he was first appointed he was at first "perturbed and scandalized" by what he saw, and ventured a mild remonstrance to the Pope who merely shrugged his shoulders. On one occasion he went so far as to say that matters "will not turn out well." But the Pope "retorted brusquely that he did not know what Burchard was talking about." At last he resigned himself to what he saw he could not alter, and confined himself to recording in his brief dry style the events of each day, generally merely rough notes to aid his memory, for his private use and never intended to be seen by any eyes than his own. "The equanimity of this chaplain," says Gebhart, "is astonishing; when he records an infamy he is a hundred times from the thought that an infamy is in question." Portigliotti, who quotes this, observes: "Therein lies his value as a historical witness." (p. 40.)

Catholic apologists have in vain attempted the task of whitewashing this criminal Pope. Signor Portigliotti remarks of these efforts: "the mass of puerile inventions, clumsy deceptions and vulgar falsifications of which these books are full has left us with a most painful impression." (*The Borgias*, p. 141.) Mr. Rafael Sabatini, the novelist, is one of the latest defenders of this Pope. In his *Life of Cæsar Borgia* (1926) in the preface to which the warns us with charming frankness, "This is quite frankly a brief for the defence." (p. v.) He expresses his disbelief in Borgia's crimes, mainly on account of their incredible wickedness. But as Portigliotti observes, the facts are too well documented to admit of dispute.

A far greater authority than Mr. Sabatini, the Roman Catholic historian, Ludwig Pastor, in his monumental *History of the Popes*, which runs to fourteen volumes, says of Rodrigo Borgia (Pope Alexander, VI): "So much against him has been clearly proved, that we are forced to reject the modern attempt at whitewashing him as an unworthy tampering with the truth." (Vol. vi. p. 138 (1898).) He also declares that Burchard's description of the "chestnuts dance" "is not a later interpolation." (p. 108.)

By a mysterious dispensation of providence, this monster lived to the green old age of 72—a very long life for those times—and at last died from "the cup" he had prepared for so many others. The corpse immediately turned putrid black and swollen. Guis-tinian describes it as: "the most hideous, monstrous, and horrible corpse that was ever seen." It was carried into St. Peter's, to lie in State; but such a disgusting and fetid odour emanated from the body that it had to be coffined. The casket proving too small, we have the spectacle of eight men, under the flickering smoky light from candles, hurrying over their dreadful task, because of the insupportable heat and stench: "thumping the corpse with their hands and feet they forced it in the coffin." Of the Pope's daughter, the beautiful Lucretia, and his son Cæsar, we shall deal in another article.

W. MANN.

CHILDREN'S GARDENS.

Gardens, big gardens filled with hundreds of children, clean as rain, wholesome as the light that healed them—these should be everywhere. It is difficult to see why they should not be the normal infant school. If England will make them general, if she will do this on a large scale, she will soon have a new race, and may close a great many of her hospitals.—Margaret Macmillan.

Clerical Inconsistency.

To a student of modern society, surely at once the most striking and most disquieting feature of religious organizations is the intellectual dishonesty of their professional exponents. The disparity between the privately avowed convictions held by the clergy and their public professions has just been brought home to New Zealanders by recent Anglican and Presbyterian pronouncements in favour of Evolution. Sir Arthur Keith's authoritative and masterly exposition of Darwinism practically compelled a "show down" on this question, and the result is that the doctrine of Evolution is by Divines from these churches now officially proclaimed to be part and parcel of Orthodox Christianity in our Dominion. But why was this avowal not made much earlier? Those of us who have been privileged to discuss this matter any time during the last twenty years with Church of England, Presbyterian or Methodist clergymen—representing the three wealthiest and numerically strongest Protestant bodies in New Zealand—know with what fine scorn they would repudiate any suggestion that they were either ignorant of or hostile to the truth of Evolution. Yet during the whole of that period, their pulpit and public professions were so timid, so uncertain, and so contrary to their freely expressed private convictions as to be the positive despair of any sincere truthseeker.

But it is the attitude of the clergy towards the Bible, where the degradation of their order is most clearly shown. They proclaim in season and out of season, that in the Bible, and in the Bible only, are truth and morality to be found. So often and so loudly is this repeated that comparatively few know the real attitude of the clergymen towards that book. Do the paid representatives of these Protestant Christian denominations accept the Bible as a true record of fact about the world and its people? And do they accept its teaching as a moral guide for modern men and women? Nay verily! Question any one independently and he will be as emphatic as the veriest Freethinker, that it is not a true statement of fact that there was day and night before the sun was made, or that woman was carved from a rib of man, or that mankind is damned to all eternity because the lady ate a nice apple, or that Noah took over a million species of animals on a lengthy cruise in a stuffy boat during wet weather, or that Jonah got three day's comfortable free board and lodging in the belly of a whale, or that daylight saving was originated by supernatural power, causing the sun and moon to stand still to allow time for one savage tribe to massacre another, or that a Jewish jazz band could raze the walls of a city with three performances, or that the Devil took the God of all the world to the top of a hill to propose bribery and corruption, or that God swore at and perished a fruit tree because it had no figs in the off season, or that the Devil entered pigs and played the very devil with a fine herd of porkers.

Further, these clerics will repudiate with the utmost enthusiasm, a suggestion that we should select King David, the sweet singer of Israel, as a pattern on which to base our conduct in order to become like him, "after God's own heart." They will emphatically refuse to acknowledge that David's amorous adventures with the fair Bethsheba represent the highest ideal of human morality. Nor will they stamp with approval a proposal that men of the twentieth century should emulate the pious David in his politic "removal" of an unwanted husband. Neither will these guardians of righteousness recommend us to copy the keen commercial instincts of

that godly man Jacob, who deceived his own father, cheated his brother, and robbed his father-in-law, although his smart business methods are fully endorsed in Scripture, for we are pointedly told that God said "Jacob I have loved."

That these clergymen know the real nature of the Bible there can be no doubt. They know that it is the literature of an ignorant age, of a people just emerging from barbarism. They know that it contains the errors and mistakes natural and inevitable to a people at a low stage of intellectual development. They know that it contains much of the crudest superstition. They know that if it contains some truth and wisdom, it contains records of practices and beliefs that are a blot on humanity and which we have happily outgrown. They know that it inculcates slavery, barbarous punishment for trivial offences, and savage death punishment for differences of religious belief—enormities of which we are rightly ashamed.

Our historian, W. P. Reeves, well says, "The primary schools are the pride and strength of New Zealand." We have had secular education for fifty years, with excellent results. The clergymen of these three Protestant sects have banded themselves together in an attempt to get the Bible introduced into our State schools.

Do these clerics deceive themselves? What excuse can be urged for men who obviously know the real nature of the Bible, yet who for ulterior motives are unscrupulous enough to combine together in order to get this collection of atrocities, crude superstitions and immoral characters placed in the hands of innocent children to be taught to them as actual truth and as examples for their guidance and imitation?

J. SIM.

Auckland, N.Z.

To a Young Man just entering on Life's Battle.

YOUNG friend, I like you and I wish you well,
So, as you enter now on man's estate,
In which you hope, quite rightly, to be great,
Perhaps you will forgive me if I tell
Of a most certain charm and potent spell
Whereby each one may for himself create
Conditions that will lead him, soon or late,
To those high realms where the immortals dwell.

The wise and great in every age and clime,
(Born, Envy mutters, 'neath a lucky star)
Whose deeds heroic and whose lives sublime
We humble folk must worship from afar,
Are those who first and last and all the time
Fulfil this precept: *Be just what you are.*

BAVARD SIMMONS.

"There," said he, shouldering his burden again, "you have a batch of dancing-dolls which I am going to deliver straight away to a toy-merchant in the Rue de la Loi. There is a whole tribe of them inside; I am their creator; they have received of me a perishable body, exempt from joy and sufferings. I have not given them the gift of thought, for I am a benevolent God."

Anatole France ("The Gods are Athirst").

War is not an art, and luck alone decides the fate of battles. With two generals, both blockheads, face to face, one of them must inevitably be victorious.

Anatole France ("The Gods are Athirst").

The stroke of the great humorist is world-wide, with lights of Tragedy in his laughter.—George Meredith.

The Shadow Show.

"For in and out, above, about, below,
'Tis nothing but a magic shadow show,
Played in a box—whose candle is the sun,
Round which we phantom figures come—and go."

OMAR KHAYYAM.

THIS WEEK'S NEWS REEL.

The fabric of Empire shook, the stars in their courses reeled, when the dreadful charge *re* the Admiral's barge, was recently revealed. It was twenty minutes late, we are given to understand, but it was beyond a joke on the "Royal Oak," when the Admiral banned the band! But Britannia still rules the waves, and somehow the world spins gaily on—though Admirals swear and tear their hair, using naughty words from *Pygmalion*!

The Primate was eighty last week, but the longer he lives he discerns, if the Prayer Book's submitted, it must be admitted there'll be *Many Unhappy Returns!* But Winston is crowing with glee, for his Budget has "rounded the corner." For under his thumb, is a four million plum, and he's holding on tight—like Jack Horner.

Amanullah is off to Moscow, and the Die-Hards are speechless with fury, and Mr. Valletta is feeling much better, now he's cleared of misleading the Jury! The Vicar of Galleywood Church, on whist drives has put down his foot, he's caused quite a scrimmage and the lads of the village have pelted their Pastor with soot!

Sir Austen is rather perturbed, at Geneva the League sits and winks, for Nahas the Pasha, grows rasha and rasha, and the Lion is warning the Sphinx! James Douglas still blethers and bleats, in articles "straight from the shoulder," but Youth's not enticed, by this Champion of Christ who grows sillier as he grows older. Bishop Barnes too, keeps doing his stuff, as a Thinker he grows more profound, a patron of Science, he maintains with defiance, that the shape of the earth is still round!

And the Flapper at last has her vote, 'though Rothermere's roaring "agin it!" Religion's not dead—as the late Barnum said: "There's a fool that's born every minute!"

THE PAST PANORAMA.

April 15th. The feast-day of SS. Basillissa and Anastasia, martyrs, of glorious memory, likewise St. Ruadham, St. Munde and St. Peter Gonzales—and much good may the information do you my masters. On this day too, in 1521, good Martin Luther was condemned by the Faculty of Theology in Paris, and I hope it kept fine for him.

Let us pass on—twirl the rollers of our Shadow Show more quickly, varlet—saints are dull actors at best, let us glimpse a sinner or two on the Past Panorama. On this date, in 1679, was born the masterful Catherine I of Russia, and in 1719 the lovely Mme. de Maintenon died—doubtless, in the odour of sanctity mixed with the perfume of patchouli. In 1755, on April 15, the little Old Lady of Threadneedle Street received the shock of her life. A crowd of lottery ticket buyers besieged the premises of the Bank and broke down the counters in their eagerness to buy Premium Bonds. Will Winston take a tip from this peep at the past? I doubt it. The Evangelical conscience of the egregious Jix is sufficient warranty against any repetition of that dreadful scene.

In 1861 the Pope protested against the new Kingdom of Italy. Verily history repeats itself. The Head of the Great Lying Church is at it again to-day. I hold no brief for Mussolini and his Castor Oil Campaigners—but methinks the Pope doth protest too much. Maybe a Fascist dose of oil in the Vatican might do good—if Il Duce has the pluck. It would move the Holy Father, if not to reprisals—!

On this day, in 1865, died Lincoln—greatest of American Presidents. Like many of his predecessors at the White House, Lincoln was a Freethinker—despite the anxiety of the Christians to claim him as their own. This rough, rugged genius, whose unswerving courage and high vision led the American

nation through the greatest crisis in its history, had little use for the Medicine-Men and their nostrums. "I have never united myself to any church," he once said, "because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their articles of belief and confession of faith."

And on this day, too, was enacted one of the greatest tragedies of the Sea. The "Titanic" foundered after colliding with an iceberg, 800 miles off Newfoundland, in the early hours of April 15, 1912. 1,635 people were drowned, among whom were W. T. Stead, John Jacob Astor, Francis D. Millet the American war correspondent, Charles Hays the Canadian Railway King, and that delightful novelist, Jacques Futrelle. Scenes of unparalleled heroism and heartrending pathos took place—but nothing perhaps more grimly ironical than the action of the ship's band, which played "Nearer my God to Thee!" as the ship sank. Truly the Loving Heavenly Father heeds the fall of the sparrows and numbers every hair of his children. Witness his kindly act in sending that iceberg to crash into the Titanic, and drowning one thousand six hundred and thirty-five men, women and children. No wonder good Christians fall over themselves to Crown Him Lord of All!

THE PROBLEM OF PRAYER.

That dope disseminator to the masses, the *Daily Express*, prints, in addition to the bi-weekly blathering of James Douglas, a "Saturday Sermon." Last week, "An Anglican Layman," enthused in a half-column of hysteria about the need and necessity of Prayer. "Watch and pray!" remarked the pious layman, "That is Our Lord's reiterated command." "Prayer," says he chattering in his beard, "carries us not only beyond the reach of the ephemeral and the mundane, but it links the whole world in closer communion with the spiritual and the eternal." Splendid! Now we know where we are.

Having peeped at the Anglican Layman's pretty picture, my hearties, cast your eyes on Miss Joan Arnold, twenty-three, daughter of the Governor of Norton Boys' Training School, Birmingham, for a moment. Miss Joan, who is assistant matron of the school, anxious, doubtless, to get into "closer communication with the spiritual and the whatname," knelt beside her little bed for a confidential chat with Jesus. She described to the magistrate, later, that she was just beginning her prayers when one of the boys, a youth named Hampton, crept into her room and stabbed her with a knife. "We fought!" she explained. "I felt his hand round my throat, so I bit his wrist. I looked in the glass and saw blood all over myself." Evidently Jesus was right as usual. Watch and pray! It's a pity Miss Joan did not follow the *Express* "Saturday Sermon" more literally though, for the Anglican Layman remarks that "prayer covers every need of man in its sublime simplicity."

OUR DUSTBIN—RUBBISH MAY BE SHOT HERE.

"Disestablishment would mean that the clergy would lose their priceless right of entering every house in the name of God."—*Bishop of Durham.*

"A man cannot be truly moral unless he is at the same time deeply religious."

James J. Davies, U.S. Secretary of Labour.

"Darwin, in his last illness, only asked for the Gospel of Christ to be read to him."

Rev. Billy Sunday.

"The Church has never lacked an army of devoted competent men and women to uphold and extend its good influence."—*Daily Express.*

"I hate moral indignation."—*Mrs. Sidney Webb.*

GWYN EVANS.

What can You Offer in place of My Faith?

To a convinced Freethinker who is faced by an enquiring Christian with the above question, it may seem sufficient to reply, "If you get rid of a disease you don't want another one in its place."

But I am sure that this answer would not satisfy the questioner, and it is up to we who are out to clear the cobwebs of Christian, and other superstitions from the human mind, to offer something which will satisfy the genuine seeker after the light of knowledge.

I number among my friends and acquaintances many decent, thoughtful Christians, who take their religion very seriously, and who derive much comfort from the faith they hold, and we shall certainly never wean them from their mistaken ideas by sneering at them and telling them that their religious faith is analogous to a disease.

If we are to convince them that we are right we must show them, as we assuredly CAN show them, that we HAVE something to offer in place of their faith in Christianity, something which will help to solve some of the problems which must beset all sincere Christians and will bring to them a peace of mind impossible to a Christian who faces the facts of life squarely.

Having been brought up in the faith, I can testify to the great benefit I have derived since I threw off the shackles of the Christian superstition. Life now presents far fewer problems than it did when I was one of the faithful.

For instance: The other day I tried to do the Good Samaritan stunt and picked up a weary wayfarer in my car; he repaid me for my trouble by carelessly smashing a celluloid side-curtain with a stick he was carrying. Had I been a Christian I should have been sorely puzzled, and have wondered what the devil God was doing to allow such a thing to happen when I was trying to do God's work.

Not being a Christian, I was faced with no such problem. I know that it was just a bit of bad luck that I should have picked up such a careless fellow.

On another occasion, hearing that some people were imprisoned in the bedroom of their cottage by a sudden flood (an act of God, by the way) and were without food, I commandeered the services of the local baker's horse and van, hoping to get near enough to throw some parcels of food to them through the window. My only reward was to be called a fool for my pains by the very people, I was seeking to help, and to be told that they had plenty of food to last until the flood subsided.

I admit that it was perhaps rather foolish of me to set out to relieve distress without making sure that the distress actually existed, but here again, I knew that I had only my impulsive disposition to thank, and had no reason to ask myself why God should allow me to be placed in such a dilemma when I was doing what a Christian would say God would approve of.

Then again, I am not now expected to swallow such fables as the Virgin Birth, nor am I troubled over the question as to whether wine becomes blood and bread flesh if a priest mumbles an incantation over them.

I do not have to bother about readymade prayers, neither am I concerned as to whether the story of creation in Genesis is to be taken literally or looked upon as allegory.

So, when a Christian asks, "What can you give me in place of my faith?" we can answer: "We can give you intellectual freedom, we can give you a self-reliant outlook on life, we can give you something to live and work for—the emancipation of humanity from the bondage of superstition and the domination of a priestly class."

FRED HOBDAV.

The man will always have the crowd with him who is sure of himself as he is of the world at large. That is what the crowd likes; it demands categorical statements and not proofs. Proofs disturb and puzzle it. It is simple minded and only understands simplicity. You just do not tell it how or in what way, but simply yes or no.—*Anatole France.*

Acid Drops.

Prebendary Key told the Education Committee of Stoke-on-Trent, of which body he is a member, that he is greatly dissatisfied with the knowledge of the Bible in the elementary schools. He says that it is due to the fact of there not being enough Bibles to go round, and proposes the purchase of 10,000 new Bibles. Of course, the Education Committee has power to do this, but it is a scandalous waste of public money if they do. An education body that spends public money for the purchase of 10,000 Bibles deserves to be disfranchised.

The B.B.C., we learn, can produce enough echoes of the sound of a few people applauding to produce the illusion of a large number of people applauding. The B.B.C. appear to be using a somewhat similar arrangement to produce the illusion that the vast majority of listeners are applauding the broadcast Sunday religious service.

Great Britain has ten suicides annually for every 100,000 inhabitants—almost least of any country in the world. It shows, says a weekly paper, that we at all events try to make life tolerable for all. That is an unwarranted inference. The low rate of suicide is due entirely to General Booth's Suicide Bureau. The General believes so, anyway. And no one is able to refute him.

All that men know about Heaven they have gleaned from the Bible. The Bible asserts as fact, not speculation, that the kind of life enjoyed in Heaven consists mainly of harp twanging, wing flapping, community singing, exhortation, jubilation and praise. Knowing that, we refuse to get elated when Prof. F. W. Burstall declares: "Science is going to put into our hands the possibility of Heaven upon earth." No thank you! Let science give us something less boring than that. Maybe the Professor only means that science is to give man an ideal state of earth life. As this would be nothing like Heaven as revealed in the Bible, we wish the Professor had said what he meant, and had left threadbare metaphors to the pulpit. It is so easy, you know, to prejudice people against science.

A short while ago Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, was offered a ticket for a Church raffle. This he straightway sent to the Chief Constable, who stopped the raffle. The Vicar who organized the raffle, and had hoped to make £50 profit from it, was, we learn, deeply offended at the Canon's interference. Incidentally the prizes were to include: six miniature liqueurs, two bottles of port, a bottle of old sherry, and a bottle of brandy. Canon Green remarked to a newspaper representative: "What can you think of a clergyman who hands a bottle of brandy to a seventeen-year-old Sunday School teacher?" As a severely teetotal abstainer the Canon, we presume, will in future hand out ginger-beer at Holy Communion. And why not? The "real presence" can obtain in ginger-beer quite as easily as in port wine, after the appropriate mumbo-jumbo has been mumbled over it. But we are inclined to fancy that if ginger-beer were used in every church, there might be a falling off in attendance at Communion.

A Methodist paper has discovered another reason why children don't attend Sunday school. Social habits are changing. Many children cannot get to Sunday school because "dinner is late"; and it is late because people get up late on Sunday mornings, and (we presume) breakfast late. That is a very sad state of affairs. We suppose the lie-a-beds attend places of amusement on Saturday nights and feel the need to rise later Sunday morning. If that be the explanation, the parsons will have to start a campaign against late Saturday night amusements. Otherwise, "catching 'em young" will become more difficult than ever; and so will getting adults to attend Holy Communion and morning service. Yes, that is what the parsons must agitate for next—earlier closing of Saturday night amusement places.

What on earth should we do if we did not have such fearless thinkers as the Bishops, men who are willing to probe our most pressing problems with the utmost fearlessness and thoroughness? Thus, the Bishop of Bradford, Dr. Perowne, disclaims against mill girls spending as much as five shillings per week on chocolates, which "is out of all proportion to the amount they devote to God." Here is a very serious question. And it has much wider application than the Bishop gives it. To our own knowledge there are school children in our neighbourhood who spend pennies daily on sweets, and who never put anything into the Church collecting plates! In properly regulated families this would never be allowed, and we are not surprised to find the Bishop saddened at the mill girls of Bradford literally sucking away the wealth of the Churches.

A Mr. F. C. Goodenough has been trying his hand at prophesy. He believes that there is an infinitely greater future in store for this country than ever in the past. We are not so sure about that. There is a terrible lot of Sabbath breaking going on here, and it increases week by week. And we have it on the authority of men in the confidence of God Almighty that he intends to ruin every country indulging in Sabbath breaking.

Infant mortality in London has fallen from 157 per 1,000 births in 1846 to an average of 71 in the five years 1921-25. For this lower mortality the citizens of London have to thank the improved knowledge of doctors and nurses—human knowledge gleaned painfully from experience. If the doctors and nurses had waited to receive that knowledge from the Christian Bible, Christian God, and Christian priests, they would still be without it. Man has always had to discover for himself the knowledge enabling him to combat God's disease germs. God's priests or his Word have never given any help in that direction.

We must make democracy safe for the world, says Mr. Baldwin. We suggest that a help towards this end is to teach the masses not to accept the priests as guides in the affairs of life.

In connexion with a women's society a debate was recently organized to discuss whether or not women really want women's pages of the kind supplied by daily papers. Lord Riddell contended that 97½ per cent. of women were interested; and the reason why modern women was better than her ancestors, and had better babies, was due to the instruction given in the women's pages of the press. We should like to believe Lord Riddell is right. But the enquiring student of human nature who glances through some of the weekly papers for women published by the company of which Lord Riddell is a director, will find much in these papers to make him doubt his lordship's assertion. In nearly every one of the papers is featured information about charms and superstitions and astrology, belief in which would have died out long ago were it not for the assiduous care taken by these women's journals to keep it alive.

When the particular pals of God belong to different sects, they cannot often be found to agree on matters affecting their religion. On one point, however, they are unanimous—nothing ought to be permitted that interferes with the parson's Sunday trade. The intention of Leamington Cricket Club to hold Sunday cricket matches has drawn a protest from the clergy of the town, who have presented the Club with a "memorial" on the subject. The Club promises to reconsider the matter at the end of the season. The clergy are now asking (demanding is a better word) that the Club hold a meeting forthwith to reconsider its decision. As the Club officials have not yet called the specially demanded meeting, the parsons are selecting a deputation to wait on the Club Executive. The officials' best reply would be: "We don't prevent you from enjoying your Sunday recreation, therefore don't officiously interfere with ours." "Do unto others . . ."

A Coventry woman has bequeathed £10,000 for the maintenance of the steeple of Coventry Cathedral. The only objection to that is, that the money could have provided decent homes for houseless human beings. God ought to be able to repair his own steeples. Still, we mustn't begrudge the Coventry Christian her bought passport to heaven.

Among Sir Jesse Boots' gifts to Nottingham is a great range of playing-fields covering nearly 200 acres. If these fields are to be closed on Sunday for all kinds of sports and recreation, the citizens of Nottingham will miss one-seventh of the possible, benefit that could be obtained from the fields. They should make certain that they do not lose it.

The Bishop of Kingston-on-Thames has a splendid suggestion to give to the world. He suggests a special court of law to deal with idlers—that is, all men charged with "living without visible means of subsistence," including those who live without rendering "visible" service to the community, should be found guilty of "eating without working," and should be sent to prison, no matter what is his station in life. In other words, all non-producers the Bishop wants put in jail. This is a rash suggestion. Does his right reverend lordship realize that such a court of law could place all his comrades of the dog-collar behind prison bars?

Leicestershire County Council is to be congratulated on the completion of a bit of pioneer work in education. The *Methodist Times* it is that does the congratulating business. The Council has, according to our pious contemporary, taken a "new step in religious education"—which sounds like a step backwards. The Council, we learn, believes that religion is the basis of any true education. It therefore appointed a special committee to compile a book of prayers and hymns for use in the elementary and secondary schools of the county. "This committee comprised representatives of the various educational authorities in Leicester, and also of the Anglican and the Free Churches." The latter were represented by the Rev. R. H. Gush (Wesleyan), Rev. Arthur Jubb (Prim. Meth.), Rev. E. A. Martin (Bapt.), Alderman J. W. Black (Ch. of Christ), and Alderman J. W. West (Prim. Meth.). We presume the representatives of the Anglican Churches, and of the various educational authorities were gentlemen of similar religious qualifications, with a special interest in the "true education" which aims at filling churches rather than at developing intelligence and intellect.

The *Literary Digest* reports that more than 32 per cent. of the Presbyterian, Northern Baptist, and Methodist Episcopal Churches in U.S.A. failed to obtain a single convert last year. This is not the invention of an enemy. The *Digest* is a Christian journal, which runs a weekly page of religious news. The figures it quotes are the official figures of the churches. There were the following churches without a single new member: Presbyterian, 3,269; Baptist, 3,474; Methodist, 4,651. This means that, taking the same proportion over the whole country there are 60,000 churches sterile and stagnant. All manner of excuses are offered by the professional soul-savers. The funniest explanation is that of Dr. C. H. Fenn of Princeton (the famous theological college). He says "the churches are suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart (wealth, luxury and ease); pernicious anemia (lack of blood in the fight against sin); cerebrospinal meningitis (destruction of back-bone and brain-centre); cancer (unbelief); and neuritis (super-sensitiveness to ridicule)." Some of these phrases get very near to the truth.

"Plain Talk" has performed a public service in looking up the records of what the preachers said about Abraham Lincoln, in his own day. The recent orgy of paucyryic half a century after Lincoln's death is no criterion of what the religious professionals of that period thought and said of one whom they now want to claim as their own ideal statesman. In those days they called him the "infidel" he was. To-day they want to say how "essentially Christian" he was.

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.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. Wearing, 18.

O. BARRETT.—We cannot follow your fanciful distinction between religion and worship.

L. HAZILL.—We do not think that it was the custom to send to Rome all death warrants in cases of executions in any part of the Roman Empire, but records were kept, and these could be demanded, and in case of imported persons would be mentioned in whatever reports were so sent. There is in existence no legal document of any sort referring to the death of Jesus Christ. Nor is there any room for reasonable doubt that the story of the trial and execution is religious fiction.

F. W. TAYLOR.—Mr. Cohen is returning the correspondence. It would have been sent back before, but Mr. Cohen has been too busy to attend to it.

S. GRAHAM.—How in the name of all that is reasonable can one re-interpret an infallible message? As we say elsewhere in this issue, if the story of Christianity as hitherto received is not true then Christianity is a lie. Making it mean something different from what it has always meant cannot make the original statement true.

H. MARSHALL.—We are glad you so much enjoyed our criticism of Robert Blatchford. We share your high appreciation of the late J. T. Lloyd. When the churches do get hold of that stamp of man nowadays they invariably lose them again.

J. B. ELLAM.—This particular lie about Darwin's death-bed conversion has been exposed many times by members of the family. But one cannot expect Christian tract-mongers to boggle at a lie. And "respectable" parsons will not risk anything by denouncing the liars.

S. PULMAN AND A. W. COLEMAN.—We are glad to see that so many readers are keeping up the bombardment of the B.B.C. We are not likely to quickly make these people alter their zeal for using their machinery in the interests of the Churches, but it may make it difficult to play the same game again.

H. J. BAILEY.—Thanks for resolution of the Leicester Secular Society's Discussion Class against using the wireless for religious propaganda. We should like to see every Freethinking organization follow the same policy.

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Now that Easter is over members and Branches of the N.S.S. should bear in mind the Annual Conference, which will take place on Whit-Sunday, May 27. Next week we shall be able to announce the place of meeting, which is determined by the votes of the Branches.

Chester-le-Street and Liverpool are the two places nominated. But we hope, whichever place is selected, to find there is a good muster of members and delegates. Notices of motion for the Agenda should be sent forthwith, and these may be forwarded by either Branches or by individual members.

As regards the Leicester Secular Society's resolution protesting against the ban placed by the B.B.C. upon criticisms of religion, we advise every N.S.S. branch to do likewise, and to forward to the B.B.C. a copy of the resolution, as well as a petition asking for an alternative programme on Sunday. We suggest also that every Freethinker who has protested against the ban should individually ask the B.B.C. for an alternative Sunday programme excluding the religious element. That is a quite reasonable request, and we shall be interested in noting what kind of ingenious excuses the B.B.C. can discover for their not granting such request.

Mr. W. H. Wilkinson is, so far as we are aware, a new writer, but in *Thinker or Believer?* (Watts & Co. 5s.) he has written a very useful and an interesting survey of the Christian position, and has marshalled well many of the principle and popular objections to the orthodox position. The work is simply written and makes no great demand on the reader for elaborate study, or detailed scholarship. For that very reason it is calculated to achieve the purpose for which it is written. All the writer asks of his readers is that they shall be animated by the desire to get at the truth, and to clear their minds of cant and prejudice. With so many thousands who are to-day at the parting of the ways, feeling terribly dissatisfied with the old position, and not quite certain about a new one, Mr. Wilkinson's book will be welcome and instructive. If there is one fault that we could find with the author's outlook it would be his readiness to attribute to the New Testament Jesus an ethical aim which we are quite sure is not there. Believing as he does that the teachings and the character of the New Testament Jesus is a composite built up of pieces collected from many quarters, it would certainly have been as well to face and state the further fact, namely, that it is as the centre of a system of theology that Jesus Christ has his existence. Destroy this and the character vanishes into nothingness. But we do not wish this criticism to weaken our commendation of the usefulness of the work to all enquirers into the truth of the Christian religion.

A motion is shortly to be presented to the Turkish Assembly asking for the suppression of those articles in the Constitution which recognize Islam as the religion of the State. This is, of course, a motion for the dis-establishment of religion, and there is every likelihood that the motion will be accepted. One day, we expect, this country will also have advanced sufficiently to pass a similar measure.

Mr. J. B. S. Haldane will deliver the Nineteenth Conway Memorial Lecture on April 18, at 7 p.m., at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C., his subject being "Science and Ethics." Admission will be free.

The Secular Society, Limited has just issued a booklet by Mr. George Whitehead, under the title of *Religion and Woman*. It is a first part of a work which aims at applying Psycho-analysis to Religion, and we think our readers will find it both useful and interesting. The price of the booklet is 6d., by post, sevenpence. We cordially commend the work to all.

John Bull (April 2):—

Southport's Watch Committee spent three hours in deciding to recommend the Council to grant seven-day licences to kinemas. We are surprised. The experience of the other districts should have sufficed to settle the matter in five minutes, seeing that Sunday night kinemas have been proved to be a real solution of the social problem of the streets.

Lest we forget—"the social problem of the streets" on Sunday is Christian made and parson made.

The Origin of Spiritualism.

(Concluded from page 235.)

Manifestly, dreams constitute the usual mode in which the rubbish of the intellect has a chance to have a giddy time of its own. Occasionally, it is true, in consequence of some chance association unearthing a stagnant correlative impression, a worthwhile idea results from a dream. But for every sensible association induced by the dream state there are at least ten thousand inane puerilities or idiotic imageries. Nor is there any essential difference between the hallucinations of the dream state and those of the waking state. Given the same degree of dissociation and equivalent sensory stimuli, the hallucination in each case would be the same. The idea that during sleep one is unresponsive to sensory stimuli is fallacious. True, the sounder the sleep the less responsive; for this reason it is rare that dreams are a feature of deep sleep. The most striking, and therefore the remembered dreams, are those occurring during light slumber, in many cases the dreamer being in a transitory stage between sleeping and waking—the most favourable of all to hallucinations. Often enough the dream concludes in wide-awakeness, in most instances a more perceptible sensory stimuli having awakened the sleeper. Visceral disturbance, pressure of the bedclothes, cutaneous irritation, the banging of a door, the barking of a dog: all are sensory stimuli which, in conjunction with the dominant waking thoughts of the preceding day, direct the trend of the dream and the form of the hallucination.

It is precisely because mentality in so far as regards the mass of men and women is of one pretty consistent level that the illusions suffered from are of such rubber stamped type. It is owing to this fact, coupled with suggestion, that collective hallucinations are possible. It will be urged that every man does not see angels and fairies or even ordinary ghosts. True enough this. But very nearly everybody sees faces in the fire or in the clouds. Certainly every normal child does. So does every savage. It only requires slightly more disturbed association such as is easily induced by the physiological conditions already considered to see a good deal more. It only requires violent dissociation to induce the cortical disturbances resulting in the visions of Moses, of St. Paul, of Mohammed, of John Wesley, of Mrs. Eddy, of John Bunyan, of George Fox. These volcanic excitations are largely pathological in character. The birth of a new religion may be traceable to so prosaic a cause as the mental nonsense of an epileptic or a victim of Bright's disease; a message from the Lord God Jehovah may have been induced by anaesthesia or by a tumour; a whiff of Paradise or a glimpse of Hell may be due to syphilis or to uterine disease, to sexual psychosis or to vulgar onanism; the jigging round a witch's cauldron was in many an instance neither more nor less than a bad attack of St. Vitus Dance.

We have seen that intellect so far from being a gift from a mystical god is merely a bundle of associated ideas, liable to increase, diminution, elaboration or distortion, through chemico-psychological causes. Let me attempt to put this matter a little clearer. The intellect (meaning by intellect, the unity of what psychologists divide into the conscious and subconscious minds) must always be considered as representing the totality of every associated idea acquired since birth. Thus a person's action in response to a certain sensory stimulus is not defined by the resultant reflex action, as it would be in the case of an idiot devoid of any associative ideas to influence the

matter. It is defined by the sum total of all associated ideas available at the time. In the perfect intelligence the whole of those ideas, in complete association, will be available. In the idiot's, none. In mankind in the mass: very few, and those few as often as not partially or wholly erroneous. Now suppose through any one of a hundred causes the organs of association fail to work accurately at the moment when wanted. What is the result? Simply that the cumulative value of the percipient's knowledge is partially destroyed. Suppose the sensory image is distorted as in icterus, diplopia, poisoning, nystagmus, inebriation, fatigue? The wrong associations are called up. Suppose excitement, ecstasy or sentiment causes the jactitation of one brand of association. All the rest of the ideas in the cortex might not exist. They are ineffective for the simple reason that the one big idea has smothered all the others. Often enough the result is actual analgesia. Any of these causes may play fast and loose with the most highly developed cerebral powers. Of the truth of this examples abound. Take for instance the highly emotional association called love. Imagine a learned professor of logic in the throes of erotic fanaticism and in the presence of his alluring charmer. Overpowered is every atom of logic. Trampled underfoot is every principle of reasoning. He is suffering from the effects of defective comparison, just as is the religious fanatic or the actual victim of insanity.

Illusion and hallucination are every-day occurrences, so common indeed that where they fail to reach any abnormal state they are unnoticed by either the percipient or by anyone else. It requires additional colloidal or peripheral disturbance, provoking in turn increased distortion of ideas to render the hallucination sufficiently unusual to be noticeable. Equally effective, however, is emotional disturbance, whether manifested in the form of ecstasy or melancholia. Emotion is the antithesis of sensation: indeed it is often accompanied by actual analgesia. It is one-sided cortical activity, causing by its concentration on one centre of association, stagnancy or complete cessation of activity in every other.

Religious mania, though common enough, is more individual than is patriotism: only at evangelistic meetings does it break out in waves of emotion. Individual ecstasy or melancholy, though sporadic, is of the more spectacular brand. It causes fanaticism verging on psychopathy as in the cases of St. Theresa, Ignatius Loyola, St. Augustine. It leads to the foundation of new religions as in the case of Swedenborg, of Martin Luther, of John Wesley, of George Fox, of Mohammed. It was responsible for the creation of the God of Judea; as it was for the foundation of Christianity. Had the vision of Christ not appeared to St. Paul, or rather had Paul not been an ecstatic, it is safe to assume that Jesus of Nazarea would never have been known as other than the itinerant preacher he appeared to his own family. Hallucinations are common enough. They have appeared to every mortal man, woman or child in moments of intense emotional disturbance. Mrs. Tweedale tells how, since the publication of her ghost book, she has had hundreds of letters from people who have seen apparitions and longed for a sympathetic audience. Nobody likes being laughed at, and, in consequence, the bulk of hallucinations remain buried in the memories of the percipients. So, for the most part, hallucinations are forgotten until a wave of mysticism such as is at present sweeping the world leads to their resuscitation. Years ago the Society for Psychological Research collected thousands of them in those fat, dreary volumes *Phantasms of the Living*.

GEORGE R. SCOTT.

One can imagine the look of indignation on the face of an "All Dry," on being invited to:—

Come and have a tiddley round the corner.

We solemnly advise the Christian "Wets" to make sure of a good skinful here; for there will be a long dry Eternity before them. And even snuff and tobacco are on the Catalogue Expurgatorious of the Happy Land!

Snuff and tobacco you've got to quit;
When you get to Heaven you can't gob and spit;
Keep your hand on the plow, hold on!

There seems a little difficulty in placing the poet's Heaven. One contends:—

Just beyond the rolling river
Lies a bright and sunny land,
Where the blest with Christ are dwelling.

But the same authority on the next page of his *Glad Hosannas* states:—

... far over the sea,
There are mansions of bliss for you and for me.

There are mansions of bliss for you and for me. And Prof. Presley holds that:—

Out beyond the hills of time
Lies a lovely land of light;
'Tis a blessed sun-bright clime,
Where the day is ever bright.

The Welsh poet invites us "to gaze beyond the clouds of time." Both apparently in a mist. Yet another—one of the best of the modern school—shows how the bards coincide in their views; for, in the better land there will be day, but no days; summer; but no summers; the notes of the harps will fill the land; and finally we are invited to make tracks for it. And yet, Mr. H. Percy Ward (an ex-Wesleyan minister) while serving in the Liverpool branch of our Society delivered a lecture: "Heaven and how to escape it." But if our brethren are uncertain of its exact location, Bishop Taylor supplies us with details of the place, and puts the descriptive power of common fry like Milton and Dante in the shade. Observe, these lines are taken from *Choice Selections*, No. 2.

Twelve hundred miles its length and breadth
The four-square city stands;
Its gem set walls of jasper shine,
Not made with human hands;
One hundred miles its gates are wide,
Abundant entrance there;
With fifty miles of elbow room
On either side to spare.

Come early to avoid the crush!

J. S. Mill has pointed out the wonderful effects produced by what he terms "the Magic of Property"; showing what efforts a man will expend on his own house, field, or garden. Heaven holds alluring prospects to the lover of real estate. The poet Arkansawyer sings:—

Perhaps one mansion may be mine,
Oh, yes, one may be mine.

But the Rev. Johnson Oatman in "Jesus keep my Mansion," makes sure of his possession, thus:—

Though afar I may be roaming,
And from Thee may stray;
Do not give it to another,
I'll be there some day.

No apartments for Johnson Oatman; he believes in his own front and back door; and I agree with him.

The housing problem is unlikely to cause much worry, as the saints, it seems, will spend most of their well-earned leisure out of doors; the place being blessed:—

With trees and grasses ever green;
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else are seen.

There will be no work for the Welsh jerry builders, and no question of raising the rent. But let us be fair. When one of the number, who had adorned a considerable portion of the city on the Mersey, was denounced by a friend for his inferior houses, and was asked if such places were fit for human beings to live in, he replied: "No, but they are good enough for the people of Liverpool!"

On the great day, at the great gathering, according to the Welsh bard, there will be a special outburst of song—louder than even the angels have ever heard; and the Negro brother tells us of one hymn reserved for the saved alone—in this even the angels are forbidden to

join. Thus the Rev Oatman, in "When the Redeemed are gathering in":—

Saints will sing redemption's story with their voices clear and strong,

Then the angels all will listen, for they cannot join that song.

We hope they will not feel jealous of the saintly prerogative.

There will be no work, and the saints will wear robes like the driven snow; thus presenting a divine study in black and white—a celestial colour scheme.

The poets are especially severe on the people who seek pleasure to the detriment of holy things. Thus, Bishop Taylor in his beautiful "Turkey Buzzard," out of *Choice Selections*, No. 2, sings:—

Turkey buzzard sitting on the comb of a church,
Sunning himself in the air;
He looked down the chimney, and gave himself a scratch,
Says nothing going on there;
The doors are closed, and the organ won't play,
And the members all gone to the sea;
The preacher and his family is gone campaign,
And there's nobody here but me.

Chorus.

Well you can't serve God and Mammon,
That's what the good books say;
Whom the Lord has called to service,
No business going away!

But the preacher takes a virtuous turn, and comes back full of the holy fluence:—

The buzzard came back and lit on the church,
For to sun himself in the air;
He raised up his head, for he heard an awful noise,
Says, something is going on there;
Such singing, and shouting, and dancing,
In the Spirit and talkings in tongues do I hear;
The people's on fire, and very much alive,
And I've got no business here.

So we presume he would buzz off. This belongs to the superlative class of poetry which is beyond criticism; being so much above and below our commonplace standards. Still, with such a marvellous conception the bard might have worked matters out to a grand dramatic climax; converting the turkey buzzard, and sanctified him, along with the holy pigeon.

These guys who think of bluffing their way to Heaven are severely trounced in "It won't do to hobo through":—

You plant your cotton in the spring of the year
(repeat twice)

But you leave off paying your tithes.
Then the boll-weevil will come around

(repeat twice)

Because you leave off paying your tithes.

A solemn enough warning in all conscience!

Love has ever been a great theme with the poets; but ours fail to make the appeal direct as the Negro bard does. The intense religious experience is lacking; and the deep spiritual insight is not there. Their gross materialism leaves us cold. They are unfitted to soar into the purer realms, where "the prospect is free, the mind exalted."

The more I prayed the worse I felt,
At last I thought my heart would melt;
I asked the Lord what I must do;
I thought my heart would break in two.

My hands were tied, my feet were bound;
The elements opened and the Lord came down;
The voice I heard did sound so sweet,
The Love ran down to the soles of my feet!

After this, one can account for some of the well known results of a religious revival.

Perhaps the so-called advanced religionist will flatter himself that the praises, prayers, and ceremonials of his joss-house proclaim something inherently superior. The disguises he adopts, however, serve but ill to blind us to their crudities. We behold the savage in the kid gloves and top hat, handling his sacred ju-ju; the tom-tom man in the grand organist; the butcher block in the grand altar; the medicine-man in the priest; and the murderer justifying himself before God in the *Christian* soldier. And, to crown all, the religion of Love, as a Jewish scheme of Revenge against the nobility of Life!

WM. J. LAMB.

A Letter to a Believer.

The following is a reply sent to a young man who was much troubled about what I have called the subtleties and refinements of religion.

As you have been at the trouble to write what is obviously a serious letter, I have endeavoured to answer it seriously. That it will satisfy you is doubtful. Everyone of us is different from his fellows, and the line of argument which appeals to one may be quite ineffective with another. Mine is a mathematical mind. I want facts. Hence subtleties and refinements of religious philosophy do not concern me. It seems to me to be more important to decide that there is a body to be clothed, than to discuss the nature of the clothing. If this latter falls to be discussed, it can be only when the existence of the body is fully demonstrated, otherwise it is waste of time and thought. The lack of unanimity in Freethinkers is only to be expected. The moment one leaves the stereotyped form of belief laid down by an organized church, unanimity ceases, and individuality begins to play its part. I enjoy parts I and II of Colenso's Examination of the Pentateuch, including his noble preface; others no doubt would prefer the later ones—part VII most of all. The mathematical mind again, you see.

I have never before attempted to commit to paper the train of study and consequent thought which have brought about the almost total shedding of the swaddling clothes of superstition and the dualistic view of life which they impose upon the mind. The arguments which have appealed to me may, in part at least, appear to others childish and inconclusive, but that may be owing to their novelty, and they should not be dismissed without careful consideration.

From a boy at school, excessive caution has been my great drawback, my more impulsive class-fellows often stepped in before me with the correct answer, whilst I was carefully checking it over in my mind before giving voice to it. Even now on this momentous subject, I often go over some of the points on which, for many years, I have held definite opinions, to satisfy myself that no point has been overlooked which might alter or modify them. For I recognize that I am a human being, prone to error; I do not claim "to know it all," as the phrase goes. I am still a learner—not a teacher, and your fresh mind may detect some flaws which have escaped me; if so I wish to have them pointed out with the same frankness with which I pen this outline.

My early upbringing was an intensely Christian one. The Bible was in daily use, and I must confess that so imbued was I with my duty to it that it did not bore me. Much of it I memorized, but I never READ it as I understand reading now, *i.e.*, critically, with the mind alert to understand what is intended to be conveyed by the words, and on guard against what is offensive to the reasoning faculty. In that unintelligent way I went through the whole book at least three times. I had no doubts. Then I heard a preacher from the pulpit denounce Darwin and all his works. "Evolution, it is not evolution—it is Devil-ution," were his words, and I wanted to read for myself what this wicked man had been writing. My father, who was himself a great reader, knew something of the matter and tried to explain it to me. He, however, would not go further than say that the biblical account of the creation had been misunderstood, and explained that "day" did not mean "day," but an indefinite period, and so on, the harmonizing method which, no doubt, is familiar to you. In fine, I got *The Origin of Species*, and *The Descent of Man*, and studied them carefully. Still, although my mind misgave me, I struggled to maintain my hold of what all round me considered to be verities. The breaking point was due to the Rev. J. J. Lias, Chancellor of the Diocese of . . . who wrote an article in a religious magazine, *The Thinker*, in which he coolly laid down as fact that there were people living long before "the first man," and that Cain was not reduced to finding a wife from amongst his own sisters, but was a welcome emigrant amongst a not very distant tribe of people. Away went verbal

inspiration and, in due course, I came to see that I must read the Bible as I would any other book—with the mind absolutely free to examine, weigh and criticize it. Thus I came to realize that it is not a book, but a collection of books, some of them (for example, *The Song of Solomon*) without any religious significance at all, and that the Old Testament does not teach the existence of but one god, but has for its chief aim the glorification of the Jewish nation. This is attempted in several ways; they were the chosen people of the master god, to whom all other gods perforce did homage. *Cf.* the story of Dagon. He is represented as a god who bowed before the god of the Jews. The whole point is lost if he is looked upon as a chunk of wood shaped like a fish. The first commandment is meaningless, or worse, if there were no other gods and unreasoning to be jealous of them. Further, the Jews were instructed to make the ark, *i.e.*, chest, in which the emblem, if not the image of their god, was carried about. Placing their nation thus high, the same result was attained by debasing other nations near by, probably all they knew at the time. This was done in two ways: (1) By giving them inferior gods (see Dagon above); and (2) By giving them a scandalous origin (of Lot and his daughters).

Your study of history will have shown you that this custom has persisted down to comparatively recent times. Our Old English histories carry us to Æneas of Troy; nowadays we are content to start with William of Normandy for facts undiluted with fiction. So we find comparative history, comparative anatomy, and comparative religion unite in destroying any authority the Bible used to have. It ceases to be a work of religious authority, but gains in interest as a set of human documents reflecting the temper, knowledge, and ideas of their several writers. The New Testament is wholly unconnected with the Old, with which such of its writers as were Jewish attempted more or less violently to connect it. The historicity of Jesus is incapable of proof. The rise and spread of the Christian religion is not more, but less, wonderful than that of Mohammedanism or Mormonism, and in these latter there is historical proof that both Mahomet and Joseph Smith had real existences.

The longer I live the stronger become the facts which tell against Christianity, which is the only religion we are in the habit of considering in this country. During my lifetime I have seen a constant succession of readjustments and restatements to make it fit in with facts which have become known and established. It is emphatically not the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

I conclude with giving you the titles of a few works which have confirmed me in the views herein expressed. It may surprise you to know that they are for the most part written by defenders of the faith:—

The Bible: with Dr. Adam Clarke's commentary. *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined* (J. W. Colenso, D.D.); *Answer to Colenso* (Rabbi Benisch); *Hebrew, Christian and Heathen Records* (Rev. J. A. Giles); *Macnaught on Inspiration; Supernatural Religion* (W. R. Cassells); *Monism* (Ernst Haeckel); and *Presidential Address, British Association, 1927* (Sir Arthur Keith).

E. G. B.

BOOKS.

They give

New views to life, and teach us how to live;
They soothe the grieved, the stubborn they chastise,
Fools they admonish, and confirm the wise:
They aid they yield to all: they never shun
The man of sorrow, nor the wretch undone:
Unlike the hard, the selfish, and the proud,
They fly not sullen from the suppliant crowd;
Nor tell to various people various things,
But show to subjects, what they show to kings.

G. Crabbe ("The Library.")

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN THE EAST.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—A few weeks ago I went into the library in a small town in Upper Burma and saw a copy of the dear old *Freethinker* lying on the table. What memories it recalled! It reminded me of a sad (or was it happy?) afternoon nearly thirty years ago when I "fell from grace." I was a promising youth in the local Bible class and happened to stroll into Victoria Park and heard a debate between a Secularist and a member of the Christian Evidence Society. The latter gentleman behaved in such an un-Christ-like manner that I parted company with the Bible Class and its creed for ever. I might mention the other gentleman was Mr. Cohen, to whom I owe a deep debt of gratitude for opening my eyes to the Truth.

I have spent many years travelling about the East and can say, after careful observation, that if Theology is dying in the West its decease is equally rapid in the East. Though superstition still has a great hold on the ignorant masses, the intellectuals are throwing it aside. Islam (probably the most fanatical of religions) is losing strength in Turkey. In India, the stronghold of orthodoxy, the educated youth smiles with derision at the beliefs of his parents. In Benares recently one of the great Swamis (religious teachers) told me that most of them do not believe one half of what they teach.

China never was very religious, though filled with the crudest of superstitions. Young China is rapidly putting off its mental chains, and the poor Christian missionaries (who formerly lived on the fat of the land) are having a hard time of it. Converts are becoming dangerously scarce and consequently funds for the conversion of the "heathen" are reaching vanishing point. Young China is materialistic and does not want any religion, especially Christianity. They have found out that the Holy Bible is not so good as the ethics of their own Sages, and the examples of the white men they see do not inspire them with confidence in his religion.

I might mention Japan. This country is Buddhist, though it is doubtful whether its Founder would recognize his teachings in their present form. To show the little hold it has on the people I went to a big religious festival at Tokyo with one of the high priests who had lived in America. The people were burning candles and incense to devils, spirits, gods, etc., and I asked him why they were doing this. He replied: "They merely do it from custom and not one half of them believe it will have any effect. The educated priests certainly do not."

Yes, I think we may safely say the citadel of superstition is beginning to crumble, in the East as well as the West. It has cost the lives of many heroes and martyrs, and though we living to-day will see no great change, we know in the long run Truth and Reason must prevail.

One word more to show how widely the *Freethinker* circulates. I was in Sikkhim, on the borders of Tibet, and was told a white man lived in the district. After many difficulties I found him living on a mountain top. We talked for some time, when I looked at his little stock of books. Imagine my surprise, miles from civilization, to find back numbers of your paper and the works of Ingersoll. He told me he was an American Rationalist, and had known the great Freethought orator. I need hardly add we were like two brothers together.

F. F.

Burma.

WOMAN ADRIFT.

SIR,—Referring to the reference (in the *Freethinker* of April 8) to my poor attempt of a lecture at the North London Branch, I beg to say I cannot agree that it caused a certain amount of amusement, as Miss Kough states.

My considered opinion, which is shared by others, is, that no one, nor anything, could ever amuse some of the members of the Branch, who do not "seek for truth," but desire simply to score points in debate.

"'Tis true, 'tis pity; and pity 'tis, 'tis true."

A. L. BRAINE.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE (Emerson Club, 1 Little George Street, Westminster): 3.30, Lecture in French by Monsieur Deshumbert on "La Psychologie des Sentiments." All are invited.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. Geo. F. Holland—"The Theatre and Life."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. George Saville—"Should Children be Taught Sex-knowledge?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Christian Art and Ritual." Lantern Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures. 7.0, Harry Snell, M.P.—"Has Man Failed?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Fresh News from America."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (34 George Street, Manchester Square, W.1): 7.30, Annual General Meeting (Members only).

OUTDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. (Clapham Old Town): Wednesday, at 8.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. (Cooks Road, Kennington): Thursday, at 8.0, Mr. S. Hanson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart—A lecture; 3.30, Messrs. Hyatt and Burgess; 6.30, Messrs. Campbell-Iyverden and Le Maine. Freethought lectures every Wednesday and Friday at 7.30. Various Lecturers.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (78a Front Street): 7.0, Mr. H. North—"Light on Humanity's Plague." Chairman: Mr. S. Lambton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.30, Dr. C. Carmichael—"The Morality of Birth Control." Admission free. Questions and discussion.

OUTDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.—Meetings held in the Bull Ring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 7 p.m.

MONCURE CONWAY MEMORIAL LECTURE.

Mr. J. B. S. HALDANE will deliver the Nineteenth Lecture on Wednesday, April 18, at ESSEX HALL, Essex Street, Strand, the title being "SCIENCE AND ETHICS." The chair will be taken at 7 p.m. Admission Free. Reserved Tickets, 1s. each, from Messrs. Watts, 5 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

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The representative of the compilers of a world-famed Directory called upon us the other day. This gentleman travels every year from January to May, and we leave you to reckon up how many tailors he meets upon his extensive journeys. He got into conversation with our managing director upon the subject of clothes in general, and upon our method of providing them in particular. It was proved to him that things he had long wished for were part of our everyday routine—he could have perfectly-fitting garments anywhere, at any time, and on the shortest of notice, simply by asking for patterns and quoting from the particulars given a pattern number and a style number. Also, he was shown cloths which no tailor had previously thought of offering him—the ideal material of his tastes and requirements. So, in little out-of-the-way Bakewell, this widely-travelled man placed an order for two suits, with warm expressions of the pleasure he had found in getting to know us.

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