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

Views and Opinions.

Evolution.

If ever there was a doctrine that should command the assent of all intelligent men and women, it is that of evolution. The evidence for it is clear, precise, and universal in scope. Every known fact makes for it, and not one against it. Physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, and sociology each yields its quota of unmistakable proof. The more we know of the atom at one end of the scale and of man at the other, the more certain are we that evolution alone supplies the general explanation that will account for what we see going on around us. It is safe to say that any other theory that could offer a like volume of evidence, as complete as the nature of the case admits, would be accepted without demur. The fact that it cuts across certain theological teachings is the sole reason for the opposition that has been shown towards it, as well as for the qualifications that some evolutionists attach to their statement of the case.

Among the recent books on the subject, *Creation by Evolution* (Macmillan, 21s.) is one for which we have hardly anything but praise. The book is well printed and contains numerous fine plates. It consists of twenty-six chapters by such well known scientists as Professors Scott Sherrington, Lloyd Morgan, Starr Jordan, Fairfield Osborne, Elliott Smith, Gregory, Lull, E. B. Poulton, H. H. Newman, with others, each of whom contributes a chapter on a distinct aspect of evolution. The whole work is written in the clearest and simplest style, and anyone of very ordinary understanding can follow with ease all that is said. It is difficult to select where all are so good; but if one had to select, I would place them in the following order: Sir A. E. Shipley's fascinating chapter on "The Evolution of the Bee and the Beehive"; "Evolution of the Brain," by Elliot Smith; "The Evolution of the Bird," by D. M. S. Watson; and the chapter on "Cumulative Evolution," by H. H. Newman. One other thing is

worth noting. I have several times warned my readers against taking sensational newspaper articles, written by our "stunt" artists, as guides to American culture. Dayton is no more representative of American culture than the Bishop of London and James Douglas are representative of English culture. Of these twenty-six specialists, fourteen represent men who hold positions in American colleges or universities.

* * *

Science or Pseudo-Science?

Having said these things I hope that any words of criticism of certain things said by some of the writers will not be taken as a disparagement of the book itself. I say them because the work offers an occasion for doing so, and their importance as aids to accurate thinking is such that they cannot be said too often. We are living with a society which is sufficiently near to the Dark Ages to give theology considerable power, and which induces writers to accompany scientific statements with comments that are quite unnecessary. Thus, we have Professor Starr Jordan putting in a quite needless aside in connexion with the origin of life:—

To state facts in simple terms, life appears only in connexion with carbon, oxygen, hydrogen, and nitrogen bathed in light, heat, water, and air. So we all admit. But all life, so far as we knew, starts from life, and every living being had some sort of living ancestry, moulded by the shifting and sifting of environment.

I do not think that the implications of this statement would command the assent of many leading biologists, particularly those who belong to the experimental school. Their attitude would be better expressed by Professor Lull:—

The origin of living matter—of organic matter—from the lifeless material of the inorganic world, was the most momentous step, for it ultimately led to the peopling of the globe with the countless hosts of animals and plants.

That is, the correct scientific attitude is to take the fact for granted, and to search for the conditions of its occurrence. The idea that evolution can explain everything up to the beginning of living forms, but that just at that point something of a supernatural kind had to be called in, with evolution resuming from the tiniest speck of living material up to man, is so hopelessly unscientific as hardly to be worth discussing. Evolution is either true everywhere or nowhere. As Professor Newman says:—

No greater mistake could be made about evolution than to limit its application to living organisms. There has undoubtedly been as real an evolution of the Cosmos, of the solar system, of the earth and other planets, of the molecules and of the atoms as there has been of organisms.

In other words, evolution is a continuous process,

The same forces that appear in the atom, or in a more complex form in chemical phenomena, are at work in the world of organic structures in a still more complex form. Strange how fearful some men are in accepting the obvious when it leaves "God" out, and how ready they are to look benevolently at a theory which, without the slightest shadow of evidence, gives this bugbear of the primitive mind a footing.

* * *

A Sop to Cerberus.

Professor J. Arthur Thomson writes an excellent article on "Why We Must be Evolutionists." But it would not be Professor Thomson if he did not throw some sort of a sop to his theological friends. Thus:—

Although we do not know of any competent biologist to-day, however skeptical and inquiring he may be, who has any doubt as to the fact of organic evolution, yet no one would assert that it can be demonstrated as one might demonstrate the law of gravitation, or the conservation of matter and energy, or the development of a chick out of a drop of living matter on the top of the yolk of an egg.

That passage leaves one wondering what Professor Thomson had in mind when he wrote it. The kind of proof possible or reasonable must be determined by the sort of thing we are proving. If we wish to prove that a man has swum the channel, actual eyesight is required. But in the case of a murder, circumstantial evidence may be enough. Of course, we cannot take a single living cell, place it on a laboratory table and then watch it growing into a human being, but Professor Thomson himself points out that evolution proves man's kinship with the rest of the animal world, he tells how old structures become transformed into new things, and asserts that there "is not a single fact that can be said to be in any way contradictory." Professor Jennings explains how we can watch evolution taking place with the amoeba; there is the evidence of vestigial organs, there is the more recent evidence of blood precipitation, which proves man's kinship with the ape-world, there is the actual series of form which demonstrates the evolution of the horse, the series of evolutionary changes in the development of the butterfly, and there is the embryological evidence of the actual evolution of every human being—and other animals—during gestation. What other evidence does Professor Thomson require before he would agree with Professor Jennings that evolution,

does not deal with something transcendental, something metaphysical; it deals with processes as real as the running of a stream or the growth of a tree. Organic evolution is a physiological process, like the digestion of food; it is something that is occurring at all times including the present.

Or this from Professor Elliot Smith:—

It is often contended that such an interpretation (evolution) of the evidence is merely a theory, or even nothing better than a mere working hypothesis. I want to assure my readers that such statements are very misleading—that they are actually evasions of the truth. Man's kinship with other living creatures is established by evidence afforded by his own structure, by the mode of development of his body, by the mode of action of his every tissue.

Or this from Professor Newman:—

The principle of evolution is so well established by the amassed evidence derived from every branch of science, that it has come to be regarded in scientific circles as one of the great laws of nature, ranking with the law of gravitation in scope and validity.

Or with this conclusion by Professor Holmes:—

The fear that the foundations of morality would be undermined if it were proved that we are derived from an animal ancestry is eminently absurd. The foundations of moral life lie deeply rooted in the domestic and social instincts, which form the main-springs of action in animals and men alike. We do not speak of sympathy, mutual helpfulness, or parental love as parts of our so-called animal nature, although in consistency we should do so, for these traits are as much a part of the nature of animals as ferocity or greed. It is traits such as affection, sympathy and group loyalty that constitute the basis of our moral impulses and sentiments. Our social and altruistic impulses are no less worthy of esteem if they are shared by less highly developed creatures than ourselves. Like the lower animals, we are, in general, sympathetic and helpful to our own kind. To our enemies and the enemies of our country we are hostile. . . . In man and animals, love and antipathy, courage and cowardice, self-sacrifice, loyalty and deception, play much the same part in determining behaviour. We play the game of life less simply and crudely than the animals, but our fundamental interests in life are much the same.

I fancy that Professor Thomson would not dispute any of these statements. The regrettable thing is that people should be so solemnly warned not to place too great faith in scientific generalizations, when the only consequence of such cautions is to encourage them to place reliance upon the stupidities of theology. There are other odd expressions one would like to spend some little time on, such as that of Professor Newman's curious remark that "Evolution no more takes God out of the universe than does gravitation." The obvious comment is that "God" must first be in the universe before he can be taken out; evolution certainly leaves nothing for him to do, and offers no proof of his presence. One would also like to spend some time on Professor Lloyd Morgan's interesting chapter on "Mind in Evolution." But that would take up altogether too much space. We can only end by repeating that *Creation by Evolution* is one of the best general books on the subject we have seen for some time. It is clear, comprehensive, and convincing. What could one ask for more?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Desire.

Fain would I be
Where the heart is free,
And the summer does not fade;
Where dawns are fair,
And nights are rare,
And Youth a masquerade!

Fain would I go
Where the roses blow,
In the Land of No Regret,
Where the world is glad
For maid and lad,
And hearts can ne'er forget.

Fain would I dwell
Where the lilies tell
Their hopes to the drowsing stream;
Where the fleeting years,
That bring no tears,
Pass like a golden dream!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Nothing is more disgusting than the crowing about liberty by slaves, as most men are, and the flippant mistaking for freedom of some paper preamble.

Emerson.

A Bishop's Bunkum.

"Who knew the seasons where to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider."—*Tennyson.*

"If I am not level with the lowest
I am nothing."—*Carpenter.*

The clergy are a tearful race. They are worse than gravediggers and undertakers, for these harmless, necessary folks do unbend after working hours. Unlike lodging-house landladies, the clergy cannot even plead that they have seen better days. Luckily, however, for their congregations there are a few exceptions which prove the rule. Chief among these Merry Andrews of the Pulpit is the Bishop of London, who is just a bright, breezy schoolboy with no parsonified nonsense about him. In this he resembles old Dr. Martin Luther, who gave utterance to the profound truism:—

"Who loves not woman, wine and song,
Remains a fool his whole life long."

Mind you, the Bishop of London is a Wardour Street Catholic, re-upholstered to suit the present fashion, and Luther was a mail-fisted Protestant. In their theological simplicity, however, these two are brothers. One believed in an infallible Book, and the other believes in an infallible Church, and both equally noisy, cocksure, and mistaken. With this striking difference: Doctor Luther has been dead for centuries, and the Bishop of London is now welcome in many West-End drawing-rooms as the hero of a hundred tea-fights.

With the approach of Easter, which is the chief festival of the Christian Religion, the Bishop has written a sermonette on so solemn an occasion. Although it only occupies half a column in a daily newspaper, it is a fine fruity piece of bombast, almost as arresting as a bookmaker's appeal to his clients regarding "a dead cert." This is how his lordship starts off:—

"It is becoming clearer day by day that we have to choose between two religions."

What on earth has happened? In the eighteenth century our forefathers chuckled at Voltaire's jest that in this country there were "a hundred religions and only one sauce." What has happened to the odd ninety-eight religions? Or, rather, ninety-nine! For what the Bishop of London describes as a "popular and easy" religion is uncommonly like what a wag calls: "Nothingarianism." Judge for yourself if it is not invertebrate nonsense: Here are the Bishop's own words:—

That a very good man appeared two thousand years ago called Jesus Christ, who left us many true and beautiful sayings, and preached some very good sermons, of which the best was the Sermon on the Mount. If you read and follow the Sermon on the Mount (not a very easy thing to do by the way) you are a good Christian, and you need not worry about such things as churchgoing or sacraments, or whether or not you believe in miracles: indeed, to use the words which have become famous: "You need not worry about your sins."

From the Bishop's point of view this could scarcely be satisfactory as a religious system. Not because it is fulsome sentimentalism, or pure bunkum, but because it spells bankruptcy to the dear clergy. If a man says prayers to a portrait of Marie Lloyd in his own room, there is no need for him to put threepenny bits in any priest's plate. A fancy religion to any orthodox priest is as much an object of admiration as a "tote" to a racing-tout.

It is quite refreshing to find the Bishop admitting that the Sermon on the Mount is not a very easy thing to follow. It always seems to me like a book, entitled *How to Live on Sixpence a Day*, which North Countrymen used to buy by the ten thousand in the days of my youth. The advice in the book

was perfect, a hundred-per-cent good, but tradesmen always blocked the way. Even a Yorkshireman couldn't make a shopkeeper serve him with "three farthings' worth of ham cuttings," and insist on not having too much fat. It simply could not be done.

Indeed, the dear Bishop hasn't tried too hard to follow his Saviour himself. During the world-war he was as bellicose as a serjeant-major, and did a lot of active recruiting. He was most industrious in introducing the Union Jack among the sacred emblems of religion. Even in the piping times of peace he treads the narrow path very gingerly, and earns the blessings of poverty as an aristocrat with a palace and a town house, and £10,000 yearly.

What is of more importance, however, is the Bishop's further admission that the original Christian Gospel "revelled in miracles"; that miracles are the "heart" and "kernel" of the Christian Religion, and that the State Church, of which he is such a very distinguished ornament, is the only pebble on the beach. That is as one expects, for no fishmonger calls stinking fish. The question of the State Church need not detain us here. Parliament made the sorry institution, and in time will disestablish and disendow it, and thus release millions of money now spent in the furtherance of Superstition for more honest and useful work in other directions.

The Christian Religion is actually based on lies, for Christianity is based on miracles. It is on the truth or falsehood of miracles that the very personality of Christ must stand or fall. According to the Gospels, it was by miracles that he attested his divine mission to save mankind. It was by miracles that he is said to have won his first following. It was by miracles that he proclaimed himself the "son of God," and without credulous belief in miracles Christianity would have long since died out. It is not a creed of "love" and "brotherhood" which has fascinated ignorant millions through so many centuries, and caused them to fill the priests' coffers with gold.

The Gospels claim that Jesus was a god, and the proofs were that he multiplied loaves and fishes, healed the sick, and restored the dead to life. If men believe that Christ was really born of a virgin, that he performed prodigies, and finally left the earth like an aeroplane, then they need not hesitate to accept the priestly pretensions for Christianity. If, on the other hand, men believe that the proofs for the miracles are missing, or that the stories are priestly lies, no talk of "love" or "brotherhood" will make believable the nonsense upon which the priests' living is based.

The most important Christian body, the Roman Catholic Church, recognizes this, and claims a continuance of miracles. They say that the so-called "cures" at Lourdes, and elsewhere, and the questionable liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples, are the same as those mentioned in the Christian Bible, and that the alleged apparition of the Virgin at La Salette is as genuine as the miracles in Judæa. The priests of the Greek Church take the same attitude, and contend that the annual swindle of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem is simply the latest link in a great chain which extends back to the Biblical times of Jonah and the whale, and Noah's Ark.

The two greatest Churches of Christendom stuff men with lies, and the Bishop of London smilingly agrees that these same lies are the very "heart" of the Christian Religion. Old Dr. Johnson once said that it would not be immoral for a bishop to whip a top in Grosvenor Square. The Bishop of London would be more usefully employed in such a pastime than in foisting falsehoods on his countrymen and making a fine living in the process. MIMNERMUS.

Are Our Council Schools to be Opened to Sectarian Teaching?

As is well known to secular educationalists, there has for some time been a movement on foot to get sectarian instruction included in the curriculum of public (provided or Council) schools. Such instruction is at present prohibited by the Education Act now in force, which states that no religious catechism or formulary that is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught.

During the past few weeks the subject has again been brought to the foreground by a letter sent to a public Education Authority by the Board of Education, suggesting that such instruction *may* be given. The curious paragraph containing the suggestion is as follows: "It is common knowledge that Local Education Authorities sometimes permit the premises of a Council school to be used otherwise than for the purposes of the school, e.g., on Sundays or Sundays or after school hours on other week days, and it may be that if on occasion there is a room which during part of the school hours is not required for school purposes, similar permission is sometimes given to use such room."

Education, in a leading article, has strongly condemned the suggestion, and the Executive of the National Union of Teachers has passed a resolution expressing "surprise and regret that the Board felt justified in proceeding to comment on a matter which it admits is outside its administrative scope"; and, the resolution continues: "The Executive is strongly of opinion that the comments are of such a character as to be likely to revive controversies in relation to the right of entry and the giving of sectarian instruction in provided schools."

The admission of such instruction by the circuitous route suggested would almost certainly be followed by further sectarian demands. There are very few schools in which "there is a room which during part of the school hours is not required for school purposes"; and where no such room is available, it is fairly certain that the headteachers of the schools would be asked or instructed to clear a room, or more than one, for the purpose. This would be effected in most cases by crowding the scholars in other rooms and, among other things, would unduly vitiate the atmosphere of such rooms and increase the possibility of infection by disease. It is also likely that when a room is not available the Authority would be called upon to provide a room at the expense of the public.

To this we must add the baneful effect of dividing the scholars into sectarian groups, with, probably, a few "goats" who will be withdrawn from all sectarian instruction.

The President of the Board, who is evidently a champion of the voluntary schools, has lately said that he has been working quietly towards a solution of the religious question, and has intimated that some success has attended his efforts. Among the results of his cogitative efforts we may presumably include, in addition to that already mentioned, the following, both of which are important from the educational and rationalist points of view:—

1. The public pronouncement that he has no powers, and does not propose to ask Parliament for powers, to require the managers of voluntary schools to incur any extra expenditure on the (projected, and in the view of practically all educationists, highly desirable) reorganization of the elementary schools. On this the *Journal of Education* has commented as follows: "Lord Percy is establishing a new precedent, even for Ministers of Education, in accepting, apparently with willingness, all those

conditions in relation to non-provided schools which make the task of reorganization almost impossible." To this may be added the recent positive declaration of a high dignitary of the Roman Catholic Church, that the senior scholars will not be sent to the provided Central schools, but are to remain (except perhaps here and there in a large town, where a Roman Catholic Central school might be built), under greatly inferior educational conditions, in a "Catholic atmosphere."

2. The intimation that through the agreement of the churches the religious difficulty in education may be settled. To this the obvious and only reply is that if the agreement should be, as it probably will be, a demand for an "enabling act," which will admit sectarian teaching into the Council schools, as part of the curriculum, the matter will be settled by the people as a whole, including rationalists and a host of others who are definitely and strongly opposed to what the *Schoolmaster* refers to as the "overweening claims of the denominationalists."

Naturally, the pronouncements and suggestions made by Lord Percy have been welcomed by sectarian protagonists, who, we are told, are freely circulating copies of the letter of the Board of Education to which reference has been made. The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, at the opening of a campaign to "educate on education," impressed upon his audience the necessity of seizing the present opportunity of influencing public opinion and the politicians with a view to the attainment of their objective, which is the provision and upkeep by the public of Roman Catholic school premises, as well as the payment of all other costs.

In connexion with this demand, we note the recent "Lancaster judgment." In this case the public Education Authority had paid for improvement of the playground of a voluntary school, and was surcharged by the auditor on the ground that the procedure was in opposition to the Education Act. Three judges, however, decided against the auditor, the argument being that the playground was not part of the buildings; and it is now therefore open to any reactionary Local Authority to spend public money on the premises of sectarian schools. We have therefore to offer what opposition we can to the present attempt to make the Council schools, like the voluntary schools, nurseries of superstition, and to recognize that if the control of the Board of Education remains as it is for another period, we shall probably be faced with a Bill to legalize, if not to make compulsory, sectarian instruction in all our provided schools, and, possibly, also with a Bill to make the whole provision of sectarian schools a public charge.

Finally, if any Authority should act on the Board's suggestion to open the Council schools to sectarian instruction while it is illegal, it will be desirable for secularists to consider what steps can be taken to scotch the movement.

J. REEVES.

BOOKS AND READING.

Were I to pray for a taste which should stand me in stead under every variety of circumstances, and be a source of happiness and cheerfulness to me during life, and a shield against its ills, however things might go amiss, and the world frown upon me, it would be a taste for reading. Give a man this taste and the means of gratifying it, and you can hardly fail of making him a happy man; unless indeed, you put into his hands a most perverse selection of books. You place him in contact with the best society in every period of history—with the wisest, the wittiest, the tenderest, the bravest, and the purest characters who have adorned humanity. You make him a denizen of all nations, a contemporary of all ages.—*Sir J. Herschel.*

A Chance for Freethinkers.

A FEW days ago a friend of mine, who is a pronounced Freethinker, received a leaflet inviting him to attend St. Mary Magdalene Church, Peckham, to listen to a course of lectures on some very controversial subjects, in relation to the Christian religion. I live in the same district, but for some reason or other I did not receive the leaflet. Perhaps it was because the vicar knows me to be a very aggressive Freethinker; and thought there would be no possibility of converting me to the faith which I abandoned, after very serious thought, over fifty years ago, and have used every opportunity since to discredit and destroy it in the minds of intelligent men and women.

Or perhaps the omission was quite accidental or unintentional. Anyhow, my freethinking friend has lent me the leaflet, and I want to show the readers of the *Freethinker* what devices Christian clergymen are up to to-day in order to try and get people to fill the vacant pews in their churches. The course of sermons will be on:—

QUESTIONINGS.

- Do People believe the Bible to-day?
- Does it matter what we believe?
- Why bother about the Conversion of the Jews?
- Why Doesn't God kill the Devil?
- Is Christian experience an Illusion?
- And last, but not least, the Great conundrum:
What happens when we die?

When I looked at it first, I wondered whether questions and discussion were to follow these discourses; and in imagination I could see myself getting up and asking a long series of questions, and being interrupted by various members of the congregation, and the police being sent for to apprehend me for "brawling in Church." So I turned to the leaflet again and found that questions were to be invited, but they were to be "in writing," and placed in the box marked "Letters to the Clergy," and would be dealt with "on a later Sunday evening," when probably the questioner would not be present. Thus we see that the clergy still want to speak from the Coward's Castle, and to give sceptics no fair opportunity of reply.

How different the policy of Freethinkers, as compared with Christians! At Freethought gatherings, Christians have not only an opportunity of asking questions, but questions and discussion are welcomed, because Freethought lecturers are convinced that they have truth on their side, and are confident that in any intellectual encounter on Biblical and theological questions they are bound to triumph.

But let me look at these subjects and see what questions might reasonably be "put in the box," for the clergy to answer. And let me say at once that they are very elementary questions the clergy propose to discuss, and have been answered by Freethinkers hundreds of times during the past half century. Take the first question.

"Do people believe the Bible to-day?" The question is very vaguely worded, but if it means, do the people believe that the Bible is divinely inspired, and is absolutely true from Genesis to Revelation—then the answer is that intelligent people do not. Fundamentalists undoubtedly do, but they are among the least intelligent persons in the Church, or in the Dissenting bodies—and the members of the Salvation Army also believe, but they are neither distinguished for their intelligence nor for their knowledge.

But the clergy might be asked whether it is not a

fact that Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, not only disbelieves in the inspiration of the story of creation in Genesis, but says emphatically that the story of the alleged Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden is purely allegorical; and whether, if this is true, what need was there for Jesus to come on earth four thousand years later to die as an atonement for the sins of mankind, if the fall never took place?

And further, if bishops are allowed to disbelieve one portion of the Bible, why the ordinary Christian is not allowed to disbelieve another part that does not commend itself to his reason without receiving the censure of the clergy or his Christian brethren?

The second question, "Does it matter what we believe?" The answer is that it certainly does matter; but no man can believe what he likes, and if he uses his reason he must believe only in those things which appear rational and commend themselves to his best judgment. No man who uses his reason can believe either in the inspiration of "The Old or the New Testament."

Bishop Gore has recently shown that Moses could not have been the author of any of the books of the Pentateuch, and that they contain narratives that are neither scientific, historical, nor morally true.

Other learned divines throw doubts upon the alleged virgin birth; some of the miracles of Jesus; and the whole scheme of salvation is undermined by Christians themselves. Remembering these things, "the man in the street," who uses his reason cannot believe in the Christian creed. A large number of questions on these points might be "put in the box," to be answered by the clergy.

The third discourse is to be on, "Why bother about the Conversion of the Jews? Who does bother about the Conversion of the Jews, except a few eccentric Christians? They both have a religion of common origin—and they both worship a God that is a mere figment of the imagination. So far as the Freethinker is concerned, he might say with Jago—that whether Cassio kills Roderigo (metaphorically in an intellectual encounter) or Roderigo kills Cassio—it all makes for our gain. And the vicar is going to give a sermon on a very old subject, "Why doesn't God kill the Devil?" Fancy an educated clergyman of University training, who believes in a personal Devil in the twentieth century! What a primitive state of mind to be sure!

It reminds me of when I was a young man, I went to hear a lecture by a Christian Evidence lecturer, at the old Walworth Freethought Institute. The subject was "Christianity worthy of God, and suitable to man," and when the time for questions came along, I asked one question only. It was this: "Whether the creation of the Devil was worthy of God and suitable to man?" The audience laughed, and the lecturer floundered about in such an extraordinary fashion in his attempt to answer the question, that nobody could precisely tell whether he was apologizing for God's want of power or his goodness, or both, in creating his great antagonist—His Satanic Majesty the Devil!

Another sermon is on the question, "Is Christian experience an illusion? From a Freethought point of view, the answer is "certainly." The Christian, like the Spiritualist, gets himself into an atmosphere in which he imagines all sorts of things. The entrancing music of the organ, the thrilling and beautiful singing of the choir, the charming treble voices of the boys, singing with rare purity of tone and expression, transport the earnest Christian into an imaginary heaven of delight. And it is while in this condition that he gets the feeling that there is something divine in his nature that he is, so to speak, "born again," and that something extraordinary in

such feelings renders him superior to other persons. But such an assumption is assuredly an illusion. The same kind of ecstatic feelings can be got by listening to a beautiful opera. I have known Freethinkers to be moved to such an extraordinary degree by the wonderful melodies of "Lohengrin," and the stupendous choruses of "Tannhäuser" and other great operas; but they do not foolishly consider themselves divinely inspired as a consequence.

The last question is: "What happens when we die?" The obvious answer is that we all hope to get decently buried or cremated—the latter for preference. But, of course, the Christian believes in a life hereafter; and he is buried "in the certain hope of a glorious resurrection." But what evidence has he that such a hope will ever be realized? None whatever. It is a pure delusion. Nobody has ever known a person who was once dead and decomposed, ever to come to life again as a human being. I say again, it is a pure delusion! Without an atom of evidence in support of such an absurd assumption. A very large number of questions might be "put in the box" for the clergy to answer on this question; but if anybody expects a rational reply, he would be much mistaken. I have called this article "A Chance for Freethinkers," but I realize that it is a very "poor chance" after all, and those who expect Christian clergymen to manifest anything like a spirit of fair play towards Freethinkers would be egregiously mistaken.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

How Neptune Saved the Trojan Fleet.

PELEUS, King of Thessaly, was the only man who ever married a goddess. She was one of the fifty daughters born to Nereus and Doris, divinities of the sea. Neptune and Jupiter sued for her hand, but when some indiscreet person told them that she would have a son destined to become greater than his father, their love quickly evaporated. Is it a marvel that after having been sought by such illustrious wooers, she treated the pretensions of Peleus with disdain? But he played her a trick, and she had to marry him. The wedding was magnificent. It took place on Mount Pelion. All the gods and goddesses attended except Discordia, who got no invitation because of her cantankerous disposition and her objectionable relatives. The feast had not ended before that slight was avenged. From some obscure point, the injured deity let fall a golden apple bearing the seductive inscription: "For the fairest." Every goddess claimed it, but only three, Juno, Minerva, and Venus, finally persisted. The gods, being far too wily to judge the case, assigned that thankless task to Paris, one of the innumerable sons begotten by Priam, King of Troy. Whilst Paris was still in his infancy, the soothsayers declared that he would become the ruin of the town, and, on this account, Priam ordered him to be killed, but somehow or other he escaped death, and now, unknown to his father, he was flourishing as a youthful shepherd on Mount Ida, famous for his wisdom and beauty, and perfectly happy in the embraces of his wife Cœnonce, a nymph of the mountain, who was the most tender and devoted of her sex. To this ill-starred youth appeared the three goddesses without a single scrap of their habiliments. Each one solicited the prize by making him an offer. Juno held out a kingdom; Minerva set forth military glory; and Venus promised the fairest spouse in the world. Paris gave the apple to Venus, and the other two gave him their everlasting hatred. Shortly after this event, Paris was discovered by his sister,

and acknowledged by his father. The promise of Venus haunted him continually, and at last, setting off on the pretext of avenging his aunt at Salamis, he made for Sparta, where Menelaus, the King, had a wife named Helen, who was known to everybody as the fairest woman in the world. Menelaus gave Paris a royal welcome, and then left for Crete; whereupon Paris persuaded Helen to go home with him, and poor old doting Priam took them into his palace just to spite the Greeks. Now, before Helen accepted Menelaus, all the heroes and kings of Greece were madly anxious to marry her, but they had agreed that she should choose the one who might please her the most, and that the rest should pledge themselves to assist her husband against any man who violated his nuptial couch. They kept word. For, when Menelaus, on coming back, learned that Helen had eloped with Paris, they assembled their forces at Aulis in Boetia, and chose as leader Agamemnon, King of Mycenæ and Argos, who was brother to Menelaus, and whose tomb has recently been found in Kentucky by the famous antiquary, Mr. Huckleberry Finn. The Greeks sent a polite request for the return of Helen, and upon this being refused, they laid siege to Troy. The city was invested for ten years before it fell. A blind poet named Homer, who enjoys some celebrity, has described the affair at considerable length. Troy was a very negligible quantity when the Greeks had done with it. But several of the Trojans escaped, and among them a man named Æneas, who is said to have taken his father on his shoulders, and his little boy by the hand, although in the hurry he forgot his wife. Æneas owed the light of day to a lapse on the part of Venus, and no doubt it was his divine mother who provided him and his companions with a fleet of ships to seek their fortune under other skies. The Fates, having reserved for Æneas the honour of founding the Roman state, guided his movements more or less peacefully for many years until the day of his leaving the Sicilian shores for the Italian strand. Then it was that Juno, who had never forgotten the wretched Paris and his unlucky apple, got to hear of the expedition. Forthwith she flew to Æolus, who had the painful duty of guarding the four winds in a dismal cavern. Him she promised that if he would only let his captives out upon the Trojan fleet, he should have the fairest of her fourteen nymphs to wife, and should become the father of lovely children. Delighted with this offer, he stuck his spear through a side of the cavern, and thus gave exit to his uproarious charges. Off they went, and in a very short time, according to Dante's friend Virgil, the Trojan fleet lessened rapidly, whilst as for the Trojans themselves, well: *Apparent rantes in gurgite vasto*, which in the classic version of Mr. Huckleberry Finn reads, "Just a handful of them appeared bobbing up and down like corks in a whirlpool." It looked as if the Fates were going to have a miss that time. But what has to be will be, and Neptune, by a speedy and seasonable intervention saved the lives of the Trojans, and the reputation of the Fates. On the point of this rescue; our authority, Virgil, might have told us more, but we have had his gaps filled through the kind offices of an excellent medium armed with the highest possible references. The report of that lady is as follows. On the day of the "accident," Neptune was floating in his crystal palace a short distance beneath the surface of the ocean. He had recently enjoyed a copious lunch, and now sate in his armchair with the youngest and the sweetest of the Graces upon his lap. A remarkable drowsiness possessed the couple. The vast head of Neptune was nodding on his breast, whilst the curly locks of the little

Grace mingled with his bushy white hair, and her tiny fingers were hidden in his long snowy beard. All of a sudden the palace began to tremble, and a noise like the sound of ten million thunders aroused the sleepers from their delectable repose. "Buddy, my love," quoth Neptune, gently putting down the little one on the Persian rug, "what is all that row about?" A glance through the nearest pane of unfrosted glass revealed to him mountainous seas, and sweeping clouds. "Jupiter," he cried, "that must be my dear sister's handywork. Never would those low fellows have ventured to carry on like that if One of Us had not given the word." Then he slipped out in his bathing suit, at the risk of apoplexy, and straightway cowed the raging winds, rebuking them soundly, and sending them back to their cavern. In two minutes he was there also, and blocked up the hole after them by chucking in huge stones, but not before giving Æolus a bit of his mind. Then, like the good old fellow that he really was, he made off to the scene of the disaster with his son Triton and a water nymph, and they fished up all the sunken ships, and the treasures, and made everybody—right down to the cats and the cabin boys—all alive and kicking, and sent the whole flotilla away to Carthage with a stately benediction. Then Neptune just dropped back into his crystal palace, and found the little Grace asleep on the Persian rug with her face downwards, and he gave her the gentlest possible kick in the best possible place, and she turned over, and put her dimpled fists into her sleepy eyes, and murmured, "Encore grandpa."

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Acid Drops.

We pointed out last week, that by the new arrangement between the Pope and Mussolini, the only legal marriage in Italy will be a marriage by a Catholic priest. That is, of course, the Roman Catholic policy everywhere. The rule, so far as Catholics are concerned, is laid down in a copy of the Catholic Parish Magazine, issued by the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Maryhill, Glasgow. Those interested are informed that:—

Only in very exceptional cases will a Dispensation be asked for a mixed marriage. Catholics keeping company with those of another religion with a view to marriage are informed that such a marriage will not be permitted except in very exceptional circumstances, and therefore they have no alternative but to break away from the relationship or sin their souls by contracting a non-Catholic marriage, which is no marriage in the eyes of the Church. Parties contracting a non-Catholic marriage cannot participate in the Sacraments unless they have been reinstated, following a public form of apology from the pulpit.

Protestants have little occasion to throw stones. In England, until Dissenters were strong enough to alter the law, the only legal marriage was that performed by a Church of England minister, and even to-day there are plenty of Protestant clergymen who tell folk that the civil marriage is not a real marriage at all. On matters of divorce, too, there are plenty of High Churchmen who decline to recognize the power of the State to divorce people. In these matters they have the impudence to turn to what "Our Lord" said as an absolute guide for men and women living to-day. Between Protestant and Catholic, each tries to over-ride the civil power when it can and how it can.

A lonely listener writes to *Radio Times*:—

Please, oh please do not let them alter the Sunday programme! They are splendid. Many and myself have enjoyed the services so much—they are such a comfort and help when one is ill and unable to get out. But surely it is the duty of a good Christian to sacrifice his or her Sunday pleasure for the good of other people?

Brighter Sunday programmes would give such a lot of happiness to many thousands of listeners. But perhaps we are forgetting that people are not supposed to be happy on Sunday.

Dr. Fort Newton, a Free Churchman whom the Lord "called" to America in search of a "wider sphere" (and larger salary) has, in the words of a contemporary, blossomed afresh as a poet. The following is a sample of his blossom:—

I sought too high for truth nearby,
Standing aloof and apart:
For God is found in love and beauty—
The world is in thy heart.

Ella W. Wilcox will have to look to her laurels.

In *Goodwill*, the organ of the World Alliance for Promoting Friendship through the Churches, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby has an article on War and the Churches. The following, an excerpt:—

It would not be too much to say that the Christian Church actually has it in its power to stop war. Vague approval of the League of Nations or mild and qualified disapproval of modern warfare are of no use whatever. This timidity is simply political opportunism founded on a desire to keep the backdoor open so as to be able to join once more in the clamour should the hounds of war again be released. To oppose a war, *once it has been declared*, would require more courage than the Church militant has ever been known to display. . . . It is not the opinion of one man, but the conviction of tens of thousands, that, considering their sacred obligations, the attitude on the part of the Churches is cowardly and contemptible.

This is a good echo of the *Freethinker*, and the Churches will dislike it all the more because it is.

One of our readers sent us the following, which we may publish as a kind of addendum to our notes on Professors Wolf and Eddington in last week's issue:—

May we make so bold as to comment on a few choice extracts from *The Nature of the Physical Universe*, by Professor Eddington? It is readily admitted that very much of this book is beyond us; but that does not seem to be sufficient reason for failing to register our views of such parts as we think we can understand.

(p. 194.) "In the last century—and I think also in this—there must have been many scientific men who kept their science and religion in watertight compartments. One set of beliefs held good in the laboratory and another set of beliefs in church, and no serious effort was made to harmonize them. The attitude is defensible. To discuss the compatibility of the beliefs would lead the scientist into regions of thought in which he was inexpert [aside: what do you think of that for a priceless piece of cant?] and any answer he might reach might be undeserving of strong confidence. Better admit that there was some truth both in science and religion; and if they must fight, let it be elsewhere than in the brain of the hard-working scientist. If we have ever scorned this attitude, Nemesis has overtaken us."

Now isn't that just too charmingly and refreshingly frank! It does not need comment; but it could not be printed too often just as it stands—especially that touch about Nemesis. But childlike and bland though it appears, there is a deep and cunning trick in it. Listen:—

"For ten years we have had to divide modern science into two compartments; we have one set of beliefs in the classical compartments and another set of beliefs in the quantum compartment."

So, you see, it is quite the proper modern scientific thing to have two sets of beliefs, more or less inconsistent, at the same time; and if we cannot quite give scientific support to religion, we can, at least, scientifically support the attitude of keeping them in watertight compartments—admitting there is some truth in both! It is to be hoped that no one will be so ungracious as to read significantly the last sentence of the paragraph: "Unfortunately (*italics*) our compartments are not watertight"; or to remember that it is evidently the anxious aim of scientists to square their two sets of beliefs as soon as they can.

(p. 336.) "I have sometimes been asked whether science cannot now furnish an argument which ought to convince any reasonable atheist."

We wonder who could have asked the great man so silly, not to say wicked, a question? Perhaps it was his dear little nieces—thoughtless little girls are apt to ask silly questions. Of course he told them that a great scientist is not concerned to find arguments to support worn out superstitions, but is simply and single-heartedly seeking the Truth—without fear or favour. It is distressing to note that Professor Eddington thinks that science would still find it as impossible to convert the atheist as to ram a joke into a Scotchman, which he uses as the formula of the utterly impossible.

(p. 353.) "The religious reader may well be content that I have not offered him a God revealed by the quantum theory, and therefore liable to be swept away in the next scientific revolution."

The scientist, of course, finds it difficult to escape from the habit of having his theories securely based on facts that are likely to be permanent, otherwise, perhaps, this opportunity of giving God the backing of the most sensational scientific discovery of modern times would not have been lost. Professor Eddington need not have been so cautious, for the "religious leader" is blessed with an extremely crude critical faculty, which has allowed his God to survive many more important catastrophes than being based on a quantum theory which subsequently collapsed—indeed, in some minds he bears a miraculous life which nothing could destroy.

It is by no means suggested that these three quotations give a summary, or criticism, or even an idea of this long and abstruse book, but they are, perhaps, worthy of comment as straws showing the direction of the wind.

A Sheffield reader of *Radio Times* thinks that the working classes would go in for wireless more if there was more dance music on Sundays. For our part, we think there would be an increase in listeners if the Sunday programme was revised. There should be fewer hours of priest-ordained silence, and more hours devoted to what the average man enjoys on days that are not "sacred." This is, we admit, expecting rather too much, since the B.B.C.'s committee of parsons, being divinely inspired, are determined to give the public what it ought to have and not what the public may like and want.

"Sport," says the Rev. Herbt. Dunnico, "is the greatest factor in promoting international friendship." Surely not the greatest factor. Is religion, then, an "also ran?" Personally, we think it is not even that. Seeing how effectively religion alienates large sections of people one from another in every nation, we are quite sure it is a "non-starter" where promoting international friendship is concerned.

The Rev. Albert B. Belden, of Whitefield's Central Mission, London, asks the Rev. Dr. Cairns to shed some light on the following conundrum. The credibility, or otherwise, of some of the miracles, says Dr. Belden, is determined for many minds to-day, not on the issue of whether Jesus was capable of this or that, but on the issue of why, "if He did this or that, He did not do more, very much more." Mr. Belden suggests that there were many other widow's sons or daughters that needed either curing, or else raising from the dead. There were many persons on the border of starvation. There were hosts of lepers waiting piteously for healing. This, Mr. Belden thinks, is the modern form of difficulty in regard to Christ's miracles; and he asks Dr. Cairns to supply an explanation. We have no doubt the reverend doctor will oblige with a choice piece of word-spinning to suit the type of intelligence that asks this type of question.

Mr. W. E. Soothill, Professor of Chinese at Oxford University, has been writing, in a religious weekly, about Missions in China to-day. He says there are three or four millions of Christians there, but there are four hundred millions of other people who are not Christian. Some, he says, have acclaimed atheism; while others oppose Christianity because it is a foreign importation. But that, says the Professor, represents

only a temporary fever in China's mind. The Chinese people, he avers, are sound and sensible. They will refuse both atheism and agnosticism. Also they will decline to be put off with the second best in religion; they will want the best. And, of course, the best is Christianity! But, as the Professor says, the Chinese are sensible. Therefore they are likely to examine this fresh creed to know where the difference lies. With their own religions they are expected to waste much time on prayer and worship; they have to provide money for building and repairing temples, and for priests. The Chinese, being sensible, will realize that they will have to do all these things if they embrace Christianity, and they will want to know where the advantages over heathen creeds come in. And like sensible people they will say "We're not having any, thank you!"

Lord Henry Cavendish Bentinck recently addressed a Laymen's Missionary luncheon. Speaking on "Obstacles to Peace," he suggested that the chief obstacle was the mentality of the rulers of the nations. However many treaties statesmen might sign, they seemed unable yet to disabuse themselves of the notion that the only ultimate arbiter of international affairs was the appeal to arms. It was the duty of the public, said Lord Henry, to convince their rulers that international questions *must* be settled by law and not war. This doesn't seem the right conclusion for a "laymen's missionary luncheon." What seems to be required is some reference to the Churches as first-class removers of obstacles to peace. And there surely should have been mention of Prayer—it is a wonderful thing for altering mentality.

According to Mr. W. E. Cule, there is a problem of the morning service and a problem of the Sunday school. The morning service, he says, is declining everywhere, and the Sunday school is fading away. He thinks the morning service the most hopeless of the Church's problems. As a secretary of a pastorless church, he declares the attendance at the morning service is deplorable. Mr. Cule has a plan to solve both problems. He suggests turning the morning service into a Young People's Service. This seems a poor cure, since he admits that "the natural desire for a more reasonable use of the Day of Rest, and the growth of motoring and other recreations" have much to do with the two problems.

In regard to compulsory religious instruction (R.C.) in all Italian schools, and an application of canon law which will make divorce impossible and legal separation difficult, the *New Chronicle* (of Christian education) comments as follows:—

The first will intensify the disabilities and even persecution from which Protestants in Italy are suffering, since the instruction will presumably be in strict accordance with Roman Catholic doctrine, and Signor Mussolini is unlikely to approve of a scheme of exemption on the ground of conscience. The second, while intended to deal drastically with a menacing moral and social evil, may produce further political unrest, particularly among a powerful group of middle-class people who already feel that the hand of Fascism is too heavy upon them. . . . On the face of it, the agreement would seem to involve the Church in support of Fascism. . . . no less than it confirms the State in its maintenance and propaganda of Roman Catholicism.

The Pope says, apropos of the concordat between the Italian Government and the Vatican, that "it has given God to Italy and Italy to God." He means it has given the Italians to the Roman Catholic Church. We won't say "God save Italy!" The Italian nation will have to save itself. We are inclined to fancy that there are a large number of enlightened Italians who will resent being dragooned by the Church and her priests, and who will attempt the saving job before long.

Sir Robert Horne says: "The shorter catechism is rather strong meat for children." Still, if children cannot digest it they will not suffer from mental malnutrition by ejecting it.

National Secular Society.

THE FUNDS of the National Secular Society are now legally controlled by Trust Deed, and those who wish to benefit the Society by gift or bequest may do so with complete confidence that any money so received will be properly administered and expended.

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FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A. Maclean, £1; Miss V. Murray, £1 5s.

A.H.M.—Copy received, hope to publish soon. That is a capital way of getting the paper into new hands.

J. M. BAYLEY.—We have passed your letter on to the General Secretary of the N.S.S., who will write the Birmingham Branch about lectures at Barnt Green. There is no reason why they should not be arranged.

H. SWAN.—Please make yourself known to Mr. Cohen at Swansea. He will be very pleased to meet you.

R. R. WHITCOMBE.—We did not feel "pettish," and we are sorry if you managed to find it in our remarks. But if you find it obvious that our actions are almost entirely governed by our thoughts, you must move in a different world to ourselves. To us it is fairly plain, and it is almost a commonplace of modern psychology that our reason acts as an excuse for actions rather than as a cause. And with that we largely agree.

J. P. FERNDALE.—Charles Bradlaugh never called himself anything but an Atheist. He had no liking for ambiguous descriptive terms. The *National Reformer* was never described as an "Agnostic Journal." It had several descriptive titles. One was "Radical Advocate and Freethought Journal." "Secular Advocate and Freethought Journal." For many years the declared policy of the paper was Atheistic, Republican, and Malthusian.

T. MORGAN.—You are quite wrong. Atheism has never been a legal offence in England. George Jacob Holyoake called his trial "The Last Trial for Atheism," but the indictment was for blasphemy. The term was used because he called himself an Atheist, and because that was really the essence of his offence. But no man could, at any time, be charged under English law for the mere fact of being an Atheist.

C. WEDMAN.—We have received no such criticism and so could not have refused it. But we have no objection whatever to a "careful criticism" of *Materialism Restated*. On the contrary, we should welcome it. Our complaint is that none such has been forthcoming.

T. L.—*Conscience and Fanaticism* is by George Pitt Rivers. We fancy he is a relation of the author of *Medicine, Magic, and Religion*. Both are Freethinkers.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (March 3), Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Elysium Hall, Swansea. His subject will be "Christianity's Crowning Crime." The chair will be taken at 7.30. It is some time since Mr. Cohen was in Swansea, and a number of friends from districts near are expected.

On his return from Swansea and after seeing the *Freethinker* through the press, Mr. Cohen will leave for Belfast. He will lecture in the Ulster Hall on the evenings of March 7 and 8. The lectures commence at 7.30.

Those who are interested in the question of a historical Jesus may perhaps like to know that Mr. Robert Arch and Mr. H. Cutner are holding a debate on the subject on Tuesday, March 5, at 7.30, at the small Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, under the auspices of the R.P.A. The exact wording of the debate is "That the Jesus of the Gospels is founded on a Historical Figure." Mr. Arch is taking the affirmative, and Mr. Cutner the negative position.

Mr. F. P. Corrigan is lecturing in the Chester-le-Street Branch district on Sunday, March 3. He will speak in the Minets' Hall at Houghton-le-Spring in the afternoon at 3 p.m., taking as his subject, "Why I am an Atheist." In the evening, at 7 p.m., he will address a meeting in the Co-operative Hall, Chester-le-Street, when his subject will be "Has Christianity Failed?" If it can be arranged, Mr. Corrigan will also speak at Stanley, and those who intend to be present at the meetings should consult the local press for the final arrangements.

North London Freethinkers are reminded that to-day (March 3), Mr. F. A. Hornibrook will lecture in the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.1, at 7.30, on "Postures and Health." Mr. Hornibrook's lectures on these subjects are interesting, informing, and beneficial, and those who have heard him before will be anxious to hear him again.

Something went amiss with the advertising of Mr. Cohen's lectures at Glasgow on Sunday last, and it was the more surprising—and gratifying—to find the hall quite full, with some listeners standing at the evening meeting. The morning gathering was rather smaller than usual. The listeners appeared to be delighted with the lectures, and some of the questions were interesting. We fancy there was a good sale of literature, Mr. Cohen's new book, *Four Lectures on Freethought and Life*, were sold out at the morning meeting.

Our little life begins to shine in that moment when it is directed to a high purpose. But there must be no straining to do more than we can. No man has a lot in life too humble if it become ennobled by high principles. If we have honesty and self-respect and independence, let him be content; nobody has anything better.—*Dr. Moncure Conway.*

Under the Bo-Tree.

THE anthropologists of sixty or seventy years ago were endowed, generally, with a brand of courage that made light of the scoldings of the ever-present Grundyites. Although the result of their investigations saw the light in comparatively obscure journals and expensive books, the courage behind them was none the less, and if one has to exist in an atmosphere of dust and musty smells while studying them, the truth in their pages is none the less valuable. I purpose to dig up some of their facts because, in the first place, they are seldom mentioned in these days, and in the second, they undoubtedly shed a light on the early development, if not the origin of religions.

The Buddha sat, in Ingersoll's eloquent phrasing, under the Bo-Tree's contemplative shade, brooding on the problems of mankind. To a good European, the picture suggests Mongolian sloth and supineness; that it seduced men and women from active life into sloth, was one of the charges brought against Buddhism by the Confucians in the ninth century, when the Emperor Wu-tung dissolved their multitude of monasteries and convents in the Celestial Kingdom. It is also a curious fact that the Buddha sitting position, as usually depicted, is characteristic of the Mongolian race. Dr. Crookshank, in his *The Mongol in our Midst*, says that among the white peoples the attitude is only adopted by a certain class of imbecile and others with marked Mongol facial traits. Ingersoll, however, did not put the Buddha under the Bo-tree as a matter of mere scan-sion. He found him there and, as the anthropologists contend, for a very good reason. The Bo-Tree was the fig tree (*ficus religiosa*) and before the reaction from the well nigh universal phallic worship took place, the fruit of it represented the virgin womb, just as the pomegranate was the symbol of the full womb. It was said to derive greater sacredness from its encircling the palm, the Palmyr palm being the tree of life in the Hindu paradise. This connexion is termed by the Buddhists, "the bo-tree united in marriage with the palm," and it involves the perfect idea of generative activity, the combination of the male and female elements. These phallic symbols are common in early Buddhism; there is a goodly collection of them pictured in one of the volumes of the Royal Asiatic Society. Buddhist deities, for there are many, are often represented with the nimbus, which is a phallic symbol, as is the crescent and trident ornamentation on the top of Tibetan manasteries. It is connected with the god Siva, who, as the Supreme Being, desiring to tempt Brahma, did so by dropping from heaven the blossom of the fig tree. It was from the wood of the fig tree that statues of Priapus, the erotic god, were made. Buddha is, as everyone knows, a title, and the "Enlightened One," sitting under the sacred Bo-Tree, is probably the male element in a phallic symbol. One anthropologist of considerable standing, assuming that the Buddha was an historical personage, goes so far as to suggest that it was he who combined the two principal phallic symbols to form the lingam, the common phallic symbol in India to-day. The times were saturated with the phallic idea. The sects most nearly related to Buddhism had it to a great extent, and generally expressed it in plain enough terms. This is certainly not in accord with the later development of Buddhism, which, according to Fergusson, was, in the beginning, "little more than a revival of the coarser superstition of the aboriginal races, purified and refined by the application of Aryan morality, and elevated by doc-

trines borrowed from the intellectual superiority of the Aryan races," but the fact that the phallic mark still clings to it despite its many reincarnations is enough to show what its early associations were like. It is not alone in this respect; the great religions all bear this brand of their lowly origin.

It is sometimes contended that Buddhism is an atheistic system. Mr. J. M. Robertson says that the teaching is practically atheistic, and quotes some half dozen writers to the same effect. On the other hand, Moncure Conway suggested that the "so-called atheism" of Buddha "was not philosophical anti-supernaturalism, but moral insurrection against the vile and cruel phantasms of popular fear." It all works out, however, as "practical atheism," which is a theologian's phrase, and liable to be applied anywhere. It is arrived at by taking some utterances of a secularistic nature attributed to the Buddha and making them stand for Buddhism to the exclusion of all else. Christians have a similar habit of taking a beneficent text from the Bible, or a folk saying, old as time, and putting it forward as *real* Christianity. It is a convenient method in certain circumstances, but as a statement of the system in question, open to objection. The teaching that called forth the praise of Conway and others is a product of thought tendencies not necessarily connected with the Buddha. His doctrine, set up, probably, by a rebound from contact with the paganism of his time, is, logically, a doctrine of suicide. The words of an Old Testament pessimist who, it has been contended, was influenced by Buddhism, puts the spirit of it with that literary skill which is mainly responsible for its lease of life everywhere. "I surveyed all the works that are wrought under the sun, and behold, all was vanity and the grasping of wind." "Through thirst for existence," the Buddha is reported to have said, "arises a craving for life; through this, being; through being, birth; through birth are produced age and death, care and misery, suffering, wretchedness and despair. By means of the total annihilation of this thirst for existence the destruction of the craving for life is compassed; through the destruction of the craving for life, the uprooting of being is effected; through the uprooting of being, the annihilation of birth, the abolition of age and death, of care and misery, of suffering, wretchedness and despair is accomplished. In this wise takes place the annihilation of this sum of suffering."

This running away from life is the root doctrine of the Buddha; the others are but trimmings. One of his disciples laid it down in similar terms. "It is that desire which leads from new birth to new birth, which is accompanied by joy and passion, which delights us here, now there; it is the sexual instinct, the impulse towards existence, the craving for development. That, brethren, is the source of suffering." And Nirvana follows as a matter of course. Moncure Conway asked Sumangala, "Priest of Adam's Peak, Primate of the Buddhist world," about Nirvana, and was told that to reach Nirvana was to be no more. It was like saying that when you are dead you stop dead, but Sumangala had just been explaining that reaching Paradise with a great desire for it, meant being born again to get rid of the desire. Coveting Paradise blocks the way to Nirvana. That is what probably prevents the wholesale self-murder of Buddhists; it is, at least, a good enough way of side-stepping the logical consequences of the main doctrine. Men, of course, are not remarkable for logical thinking, be they Atheists or Buddhists, and the vast majority of the latter hang on to this life and hope for immortality in the next.

The Buddha prohibited the taking of life and the

edicts of Asoka enjoined kindness to animals, motivated, apparently, by the belief that they might be the abode of degraded human souls. When Moncure Conway put before a bunch of Buddhist priests the supposititious case of a man with a gun watching a tiger attack a little girl, and asked what the man should do in view of the prohibition of taking life, they were hard put to it to answer, but eventually decided that the tiger should be killed. "It would be right to kill the tiger," they said, "but it would be a sin"; the sort of muddle people get into when their principles are rooted in unreason. Huc, the Tibetan traveller of the eighteenth century, found lamas who could not explain what the object of their meditations was. Like the priests of Conway's day, they had hardly taken a second step in thinking out their position. Conway suggested to another prominent Buddhist that if existence be an evil, bringing children into the world really did them an ill turn by depriving them of the Nirvana of non-existence. Schopenhauer, who shared the pessimism of the Buddha, faced that position by denouncing the youth and maid who fell in love; they perpetuated the misery of life. The prominent Buddhist, however, overlooked Conway's query and discoursed on the law of cause and effect. "The mind of the unborn child"—Conway was referring to the creation of a germ where none exists—"is not," he said, "and cannot be, in Nirvana; it is always under the influence of the impressions of its former births or terms of existences, and the will to live and multiply is inherent in it." Its parents, therefore, have no option but to usher it into this vale of misery. The Buddha is sometimes said to have anticipated the principle which underlies modern science, but this reading of causation is fatalistic in every line of it, and fatalism is foreign to the modern understanding of scientific principle. The world is not a machine that grinds out the destiny of man regardless of his wishes. The fact of causation is the justification for man assuming that the future is in his hands, in proportion to his knowledge and his use of it.

Buddhism originated, probably, in a reaction to the serpent worshipping sects then prevailing; it early adopted the monastic ideal, and as the moral ideas embodied in dialogue and story, more common in the East than in Western countries, gathered around it, the world-wide tendency to attribute such teachings to a common source, in order to give them coherence and stability, would operate, and the male element in a phallic symbol, known as the Enlightened One, or the Life Giver, would fill the rôle of wisdom dispenser to the satisfaction of everyone, even those opposed to the new doctrine. The further development inside the creed, which the small band of philosophers who assert the historicity of the Buddha and the authenticity of his teachings term corruption, is but the normal growth of unreason everywhere. Buddhism lines up with the other great religions; it has the one effect common to them all, that of sending a man to his knees. In what may be called its higher aspects, it is a religion for the thin-blooded; otherwise, it caters equally well for the savage nomads of the Mongolian steppes and the effeminate natives of Ceylon.

H. B. DODDS.

WHAT IS BLASPHEMY?

I hear everywhere the cry of blasphemy. The Christian is a blasphemer in Asia, the Musselman in Europe, the Papist in London, the Calvinist in Paris, the Jansenist at the top of the Rue Saint-Jacques, the Molinist at the bottom of the faubourg of Saint-Medard. Who, then, is a blasphemer? Everybody or nobody.—*Diderot*.

To the Spirit of Henley.

I SAW, upon a swiftly flowing stream,
A voyager, within a tiny craft,
He sang as he applied a feeble oar
To keep his course, and guard 'gainst rocks and shoals—
But vain against that current fierce to steer
As, ever growing stronger, on it urged
Towards what end, the traveller knew not.

Perhaps it ended in a placid pool
Where, safely landing on some sun-lit beach,
He might refresh himself, and gain new strength
For fresh adventures. Peradventure he
Would find himself upon the ocean's brim;
Or, as the torrent rushed, and grew in strength,
To'ards some dread cateract he might be hurled,
His bark beneath him sinking, his frail body
Embosomed in the whirlpool's eddies dark.

The voyager knew not, but he sang his song,
A song of courage, written by a man
Whom fate had cruelly served, with this refrain:
"I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul."

And then I heard harsh voices from the shore:
"Fool, know you not that rapids are ahead?
Your life will soon be ended. What avails
The transient beauty of the passing hour?
'Tis surely time for prayer and penitence."

He smilingly replied, "So that is Fate.
If then 'tis written and ordained that I
Shall thus be cut off from the pleasant world,
I, in myself, can be as firm as Fate.
I can say, 'Monster, though you do your worst,
I will not plead to you, nor do you homage,
But will despise and mock you to the end.'"

And as he glimpsed the sun-lit glades, he smiled,
And at the fleecy clouds, the flowers, the birds,
Rejoicing in these beauties, heeding not
The solemn warning nor the veiled beyond—
And, singing still his song, passed from my sight.

A.H.M.

Hell in the United States.

[The following is a summary of a racy and informative article which appeared in a recent issue of *The American Mercury*, for November, from the pen of Duncan Aiken. We question whether it would be permitted to appear in any English magazine, mainly because it is not written in a sufficiently "reverential" tone. With us, religious topics, no matter how absurd or even revolting they may be, must still be written of as though they are of the utmost consequence, and the religious opinions of the most outrageous of Yahoos spoken of as though they enshrine somewhere or the other a most valuable truth. In justice to Christians, it should be said that there are some exceptions to this rule. The exceptions occur when the religion under discussion is not Christianity. Then one may be as "brutal" as one pleases. By the English law, the Christian god is the only one who needs the protection of a policeman.]

In its frequent altruistic broodings over the good it may do for such backward races as the inhabitants of the District of Columbia and the Nicaraguans, the American nation habitually forgets that it has a colonial dependency older than any of them, and that nothing has ever been done to improve it. Hell was annexed to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607, to Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620, and to Los Angeles some sixty years before Gen. Stephen Kearny's troop of gringo dragoons arrived there in 1846 on their way to it.

In those three centuries at least ten times as many Americans have settled in Hell as have gone to foreign parts since 1920 for their drinking. They have endured more atrocities there than the oil promoters in Mexico or the Belgian virgins during the late barbarian invasion. On the brighter side, it has stimulated America's ecclesiastical industries more than the Liberian and

Philippine jungles have helped the rubber tire business. Almost as many Americans have gained fame and fortune by believing in Hell as by having faith in Southern California. In its time it has probably had a greater influence on social decorum and moral progress in the Republic than the Manu Act or the Eighteenth Amendment.

No one has determined whether, when Americans locate there, the Constitution follows the flag, or whether the large proportion of boozers among them may legally take their fire-water straight. As a place of residence, its chief charm lies solely in the fact that it is one realm under the shadow of Washington's benevolence which the five major divisions of the government, including the D.A.R. and the Anti-Saloon League, have let strictly alone.

The difficulty seems to lie in the fact that the early Americans allowed the association between Hell and America to develop much too casually. To the early colonists, the new dependency was simply a public convenience—a place to which they consigned those who disagreed with them about theology, and other habitual criminals; and to which they occasionally might return a few obnoxious native products, such as witches and Quakers, by the gallows route. The arrangement was much too simple to require a statement of the relationship in a treaty or in legislative enactments providing a formal system of government. Even the New Englanders, whose interest in Hell's foreign and domestic problems was the strongest, merely gave their clergy an informal mandate to decide who was going there, and to prescribe the realm's local customs, public amusements and disciplinary methods, and let it go at that.

The youth chosen by God to sound the first trump of doom in the Republic of pre-destined optimism was Jonathan Edwards. Aside from the divine inspiration, Jonathan's preparations were more than adequate. He had been brought up in Connecticut, where less trifling with the unsaved was permitted than in the other Puritan colonies. He had graduated with honours from Yale less than twenty years after it had been founded to rebuke Harvard's growing doctrinal laxity and to serve as a kind of Bryan Fundamentalist University for colonial New England. He had experienced emotional conversion, which was comparatively rare among the New England intellectuals, and had solemnly reasoned it out that anyone who failed to love a Deity capable of bestowing such raptures upon His subjects was guilty of infinite criminality.

Jonathan, in short, at twenty-four was the last pulpit stripling in New England to accept a doctrinal scandal graciously, and when he went to Northampton, Mass., in 1727 to assist his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, in the local pulpit, he found one in full eruption. Prominent citizens were being accorded the privileges of the saved at the communion table who not only had omitted Jonathan's delicious experience of conversion, but had even neglected to subscribe to the Calvinist confession of faith. Their sole title to being received as Christians and church members was that they had lived their lives reasonably free from public scandal.

Jonathan studied the abomination for seven years with prayer and tactical observations before doing anything about it. . . . Then, in 1734, the Lord revealed it to Jonathan that by using Hell to scare hell out of them, he might lure the polluting element into salvation, and thus purify the church without hurting any prominent person's feelings. Jonathan's answer to those who did not fear Hell enough to seek salvation of their own accord was a six-months' revival keyed to his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

If you wanted to know what Northampton's penal suburb was like, warned Jonathan,

imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven all of a glowing heat, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by incidentally touching a coal of fire as the heat is greater. Imagine that you were to be there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, as full within and without as a light coal of fire, all the while full of

sense. What horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! How long would a quarter of an hour seem to you; twenty-four hours; a thousand years! How would your heart sink if you knew you must bear it forever and ever! Your torment in Hell will be immensely greater than the illustration represents!

The sinners groaned under this, were stricken with strange palsies and paralyses, were convinced and in due time saved. When Whitefield, the peerless British soul saver of the age, invaded America in 1740, the hot wind from the Northampton pulpit proceeded to sweep New England and the middle colonies into the orgy of salvation known as the Great Awakening. Jonathan was established among his contemporaries as a ranking saint in Israel and for the first time in history Hell in the United States seemed definitely on the job.

In 1787 the Rev. Dr. Charles Chauncey of Boston, descendant of Harvest presidents and pastor of the town's leading congregation of fashion, published a book to prove that Hell was not what it had been cracked up to be.

Chauncey was what would have been called, by a slightly later sectarian diction, a Restorationist. He believed, that is, in Hell, and that it was as hot as the Rev. Dr. Edwards' thermometric visions. But, as his peculiar contribution to American optimism, he also believed that it was possible and more or less inevitable that sinners should eventually get out of it. God might send the infidels and the impenitently wicked there for a few hundred or a few thousand years to roast their sinfulness out of them, but eventually they would call "enough" to the Mercy Seat and be turned loose in glory, with their burns all miraculously healed. Chauncey argued fundamentally from the ethics of Beacon Hill that since no self-respecting Bostonian would condemn his own children to everlasting torment for the sins of a few years' or a few moments' duration, obviously a Lord God Sabaoth trying to be worthy of Boston's worship would do nothing of the sort either.

But he took the literal Scriptures hard and had his difficulties proving all this by their subterranean illuminations. He won through at last by arguing that, although Hell's fire was certainly everlasting, as the Bible stated, it was merely kept there after the last sinner was taken out of it, to be ready for infidels in any subsequent creation Jehovah might wish to experiment with, and to remind the citizens of Paradise pleasantly of all they had gone through to get there.

With sentimental appropriateness, the leader of the pro-Hell forces was Jonathan Edwards, Jr., son of Northampton's Great Awakener and president of Union College. With some material assistance from the Rev. Dr. Samuel Hopkins of Newport, who had a few doubtful doctrines of his own to account for by an exceptional zeal for orthodoxy on points of infernal dispensation, Edwards fixed in the 500-odd pages of his *Reply to Rev. Charles Chauncey, D.D. on Endless Punishment*, the main lies of America's Hell defenses until a sticky tide of sentimental optimism washed them away in the Twentieth Century: These were:—

1. Chauncey had no right to expect God's punishments to be reformatory, instead of vindictive, since the divine purpose was not to cure the patients but to warn others, and since stimulating their penitence with flames would amount, in practice, to offering more grace to the sinners in Hell than was extended to the saved who applied for forgiveness in the proper way while still on earth. Only a wispy-washy and second-class God, Edwards insisted, would reward His and His Son's worst enemies by "putting [them] under the best possible advantages to secure and promote [their] everlasting happiness" while all He gave His friends and worshippers was a sporting chance at it.

2. Everlasting punishment at the hands of the Living God was just because even the least sin against God, being an outrage upon an infinite Personage, must be infinite in its consequences.

3. If He only saved penitents from a few millenniums of toasting, the infinite goodness and mercy of God would not be obvious. He must save them from infinite

torment and suffering in order to prove that He was tender-hearted in a really Big Way.

4. If the wicked could pay for their crimes by their personal sufferings in Hell, it made Jesus's sacrifice for them unnecessary, and Jesus Himself would look foolish for letting Himself be crucified when sinners could get to Heaven without Him. Furthermore, any self-saving system would deprive both the Father and the Son of the infinite satisfaction They felt in Their personally-conducted redemption arrangement and of Their claim to a fallen race's due gratitude to Them for having gone through with it.

5. Finally, if there were to be salvation for the impenitent, it would brand God as a liar in all His supremely high-powered cursing texts in both Testaments.

To these fundamentals the Rev. Dr. Hopkins added the material consideration that God's delight in the happiness of His saved could not be perfect unless He had the infinite woe of His damned to compare it with. Furthermore, as a practical controversialist, Hopkins answered several of the lowly arguments of the country-store debaters against eternal damnation.

With this the consecrated intellectuals called it a day and left the mop-up work to the mere talking pulpiteers. These did it so well, in the next dozen years, that from Connecticut north one of the strongest campaign arguments against Jefferson in 1800 was to the effect that the Republican candidate did not believe in Hell. Therefore, according to the orthodox version, if Jefferson were elected, one of Satan's literal imps would sit in the brand-new White House.

(To be concluded.)

Will Modernism Save Christianity?

In his latest volume *Assessments and Anticipations*, Dean Inge repeats the familiar Modernist cry that "the real trend of religion among the younger generation is away from dogmatic and institutional Christianity, and towards an individual and personal faith resting not on authority, but on experience."

This would appear to be the view of the overwhelming majority of the cultured clergy and laymen of the reformed churches. We see it in one form or another in our newspapers and magazines, and it seems to be accepted by nearly all editors and reviewers.

It would seem that Modernism must have a very solid foundation to meet with such general acceptance. It would be useless to attempt to discuss its philosophical basis in a short article, and it would be also inconclusive and unsatisfactory to many. I intend merely to inquire whether it has so far succeeded in reviving or, at least, saving Orthodoxy.

Modernism originated in Germany in the eighteenth century, and was given an enormous impetus through the writings of Lessing and Kant. It persisted throughout the nineteenth century up to the present time, and made its first real appearance in England in 1860 in the famous *Essays and Reviews*. Its aim is to establish a Christianity free from those dogmas considered offensive to reason or ethics.

The Modernists have not founded any new Church in England. They have preferred to work by permeation, hoping that the little leaven might leaven the whole lump. It is thus difficult to determine their influence on the masses. Fortunately there exists one Church which has always inculcated liberal principles—the Unitarian. Let us see if it can throw any light on the problem.

The Unitarians possess only 350 Churches in the British Isles, and its congregations are mostly very small. It declines rather than increases. In the United States in the early nineteenth century it had far more importance than it has to-day. Yet its principles are identical with those preached by the Modernists and assented to by so many educated people! That is certainly not what one would expect, for liberal Christianity should certainly have made more headway with the help of all its numerous advocates—if there had been anything in it.

In Germany most of the Protestant clergy are very liberal, yet in Berlin, in 1913, only 35,000 persons attended Protestant services (about 1 per cent of the population)! Other German towns are very similar in this respect.

It seems that when people become dissatisfied with Orthodoxy they do not trouble to attend a liberal church, but give up the practice of religion altogether. Christianity devoid of elaborate dogmas may be less offensive to mind and heart than Orthodoxy, but it is far less impressive and cannot arouse anything like the same enthusiasm. The numerous literary men and editors who support Modernism do so for the most part because they and their readers dislike Orthodoxy, *not* because they wish to re-build a new faith. They would be the last to attend the up-to-date services.

Modernism, then, does not appeal to the people as a living faith, though as a revolt against Fundamentalism it is welcome enough. The liberal theologians have attacked Orthodoxy for years, for they regard it as a hindrance to the dissemination of a newer, purer faith. They thought Modernism would regain the "lapsed masses"; it has failed to do so—*absolutely failed after having had every chance*. They thought it would establish Christianity on a sound philosophical basis, but the greatest diversity of opinion exists as to the person and work of Christ and the nature of God. Modernism lacks the prestige and power of the old Orthodoxy, and though it helps to keep a few attached to the Church, its work seems in the long run to be destructive to the faith of the masses. Liberal theologians thought it would be a weapon to defend "the essentials" of Christianity. It seems to be a sword which will wound their own hands.

J. CARLTON.

Correspondence.

SAINTS IN GLORY.

SIR,—In the old Roman religion there were many subordinate gods and goddesses who presided over various kinds of human affairs, each having his or her particular sphere. For example, lovers prayed to Venus for success in affairs of the heart, and sailors to Castor and Pollux to preserve them from the dangers of the sea.

The Roman Catholic Church has her saints in glory who have similar functions to the pagan deities, but while the ancient gods were noted for their amorous liaisons, the Catholic Saints were celebrated for a penchant towards a morbid mortification of the flesh.

The Saints, according to the teaching of the Church, are credited with the power of hearing thousands of supplications at the same moment, no matter if the petitioners are in Tooting or Timbuctoo, and these various requests of the pious they carry directly to Jesus Christ for his intercession with the Supreme Deity. Now, as tens of thousands pray at the same time to their favourite saint, and all their troubles must be heard by the Son of Mary, it seems a complication that might puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to understand. No doubt the learned theologians would tell us it is a divine mystery, which is their usual explanation of any transparent absurdity.

Though millions of people believe in the efficacy of prayers to the saints, are there any who give any thought to their implications? S. SODDY.

Obituary.

MR. WILLIAM CARLILE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

TYNESIDE readers of the *Freethinker* will learn with regret of the somewhat sudden death of William Carlile, aged fifty-eight, who died at Walkerville, Newcastle, on February 9, and was cremated at Darlington on February 12. Deceased will be remembered by the older members of the Newcastle Branch of the N.S.S., which he joined in 1888, and was for years a much respected member. Being of a quiet, unassuming, and unobtrusive nature, his intellectual capabilities were only

known to those who had the pleasure of his intimate friendship. His remarkable memory enabled him to quote at length, very effectively, many fine passages from speeches he had heard by Chas. Bradlaugh, who was his ideal orator. A sorrowful long farewell will be the feeling of all who knew him.—J.G.B.

MR. H. A. THOMAS.

ON Friday, February 22, 1929, a secular service was conducted at Golder's Green Crematorium by G. Whitehead, in connexion with the death of Mr. Henry Arthur Thomas. The deceased was aged eighty-two years, and left his wife, who is approaching the same age, but no children survive. Mr. Thomas was a Freethinker of many years' standing, and had a keen admiration for G. W. Foote and Robert Ingersoll. He had often expressed a wish that he might die like Ingersoll, and this wish was realized, for after a few days' illness he passed away quietly without pain. Mr. Thomas although always taking a keen interest in political and social movements, thought Freethought activities were of even greater importance. We extend to his aged widow our sincere sympathy in her loss.

The funeral arrangements, by request of the deceased, were made by Mr. E. Webb.—G.W.

MR. LINCOLN W. WILLIS.

WE regret having to announce the death of Mr. Lincoln W. Willis, of Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire.

Mr. Willis, an uncompromising Freethinker, was a co-founder of the New Manchester Branch, took a major part in its early organization, and remained an active member until his removal from Manchester to Whaley Bridge a year or two ago.

His actions were characterized by straightforwardness and honesty, and he was spoken of highly by all those who had the good fortune to know him. We offer our deepest sympathy to his widow and family in their loss.

He deemed it unnecessary to leave any explicit instructions as to arrangements on his death, and, in accordance with his life's philosophy, an appropriate address was given by Mr. H. I. Bayford at the Crematorium last Sunday morning, the 24th ultimo. After cremation it is understood the ashes will be scattered.—F.E.M.

Society News.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

THE debate between Mr. Bowker and Mr. Palmer, last Sunday, on "Vivisection," proved vigorous and exciting, both disputants being in form, and both sincerely convinced of the truth of their respective positions. The discussion which followed also showed how deeply the controversy had moved the speakers.

To-day (Sunday, March 3), Mr. F. A. Hornibrook will lecture on "Posture and Health." It is to be hoped that a good audience will welcome the speaker, whose health talks make such a welcome change in the Branch's programme.

MANCHESTER BRANCH.

Two very good meetings were addressed by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, at Manchester, on Sunday last. There was more than the usual crop of questions, and these were all answered satisfactorily, except for one persistent cave man, who concluded that there must be a god because Sir Oliver Lodge believed in religion.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH.

MR. MANN paid his second visit to Plymouth on Sunday last, and delivered two lectures in the Co-operative Hall. Both addresses were received with evident appreciation, and many questions followed each lecture. Mr. Mann has made many friends on these two visits, and it is hoped he will be a frequent visitor in the future. The next lecturer will be Mr. R. H. Rosetti, on March 10.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. F. A. Hornibrook—"Posture and Health."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (30 Brixton Road, S.W., near Oval Station): 7.15, Mr. R. B. Kerr—"Labour's Illusions."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): Free Sunday Lectures at 7 p.m., Harry Snell, M.P.—"Whither Mankind? To Development or the Devil?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"The Democratic Man."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury—"Freethought and Politics." On March 7, at 101 Tottenham Court Road, 7.30 to 11.30 p.m., Social and Dance. Members and friends. Admission 1s.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrolds Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury.—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart. 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 7.0, Messrs. James Hart and W. P. Campbell-Everden. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden. Every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside the Park at all our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. W. P. Campbell-Everden.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Council School): 7.0, Mr. George Whitehead—"Religion and Birth Control."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall): 7.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Has Christianity Failed?" Questions and Discussion. Admission Free. Silver Collection.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY, Branch of the N.S.S. (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Harry Watson—"Implications of Relativity."

HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING BRANCH N.S.S. (Miners' Hall): 3.0, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Why I am an Atheist." Questions and Discussion. Admission Free. Silver collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, 48th Anniversary of the Opening of the Secular Hall. Special Programme.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (18 Colquitt Street, off Bold Street): 7.45, Mr. P. Egerton Stafford—"The Making of the Freethought Myth."

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Socialist Club, Arcade, Pilgrim Street): 3.0, Members' Meeting.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (Elysium Hall): 7.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"Christianity's Crowning Crime."

OUTDOOR.

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

Miscellaneous Advertisements.

YOUNG MAN, 26 years of age, desires opportunity for Advancement. Ready to go anywhere, can type, speak, knows French, German and the Scandinavian tongues, Esperanto. Freethinker, abstainer, enterprising. Has advertising and journalistic experience. Interested in literature and libraries, travel, advanced thought. Willing to learn. Address—LAWRENCE CORINNA, 30, Wheatley Road, Halifax, Yorks.

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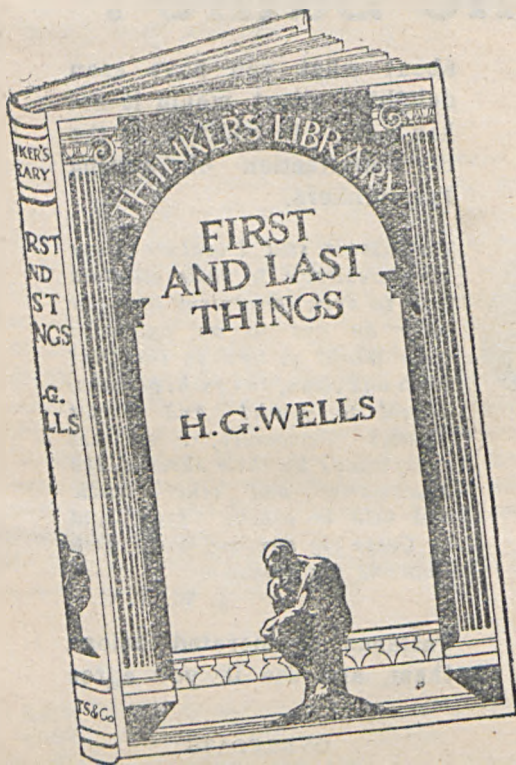
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