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

## Views and Opinions.

### The Ways of God.

In Uganda there exists a religious sect called the Amalekites. It is formed of natives, naturally; the white Christian has a very strong objection to seeking God or talking to God in the company of coloured people. It is also, obviously, of Christian origin. English missionaries who went to Africa took with them the Bible, which, they told the simple natives, was the source of England's greatness. And the natives, seeing how easily the followers of the new Joss conquered, and how very powerful were his implements of destruction, decided there must be much sound magic in the new religion. Heeding his religious instructors the simple African was told from the Bible which the new preachers brought with them that God made everything, that nothing could be done against his will, that not a sparrow could fall to the ground, and that the power of life and death rested solely with him. He read, or was told, that the power of prayer could cure disease, and that even the dead could be raised to life again through the magic of the White Joss. It was great "medicine."

Putting all things together, the simple, but logical African, decided that whether a man lived or died was ultimately a matter of God's decision; and he argued that if the decision rests with God, nothing that man can do will be of avail. So the Amalekites do not believe in doctors, or disinfection. Following the New Testament, and the Church of England, and the Faith-healers, and all sound Christians, they say that whether a man lives or dies is a question which can only be determined by God—and they leave him to it.

### Spiritual Kin.

But by the grace of God bubonic plague made its

appearance in a certain village in Uganda, and inoculation was ordered. To the members of this missionary-born, Bible-believing sect, the order was rank blasphemy. It was flying in the face of God. So on July 13 (I am following a *Daily Mail* report) Mr. Kendall, a Sanitary Inspector, was ordered to inoculate the natives against the infection. The natives objected, and they received this outrage on their religious feelings in quite a Christian manner. A spear was thrown at him, and he narrowly escaped decapitation. His arm was so badly cut that it has had to be amputated. Later, the police went to the village, there was a fight, and seven of the Amalekites were killed. The situation, says the *Daily Mail*, is now quiet—so are the seven who so faithfully followed the Bible teaching.

Uganda is—geographically—quite a long way from Lambeth Palace. But mentally their relative positions is as near as is one room to the next. From Lambeth Palace to the British Museum one may walk in about thirty minutes; but from Lambeth Palace to the home of the Amalekites is, mentally, no distance at all. Lambeth Palace is the spiritual home of the Amalekite; the Amalekite is the spiritual brother of the Bishop of London, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Pope of Rome. They all believe in the same God, they believe in the same revelation concerning his will, they believe he has power over life and death. The spiritual kinship is close. There is a difference of clothing, of cost, of habitation, but with a very little instruction the Amalekite medicine-man might take the place of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and, if he could do with ruder creature comforts, and a lower salary, the Archbishop could easily officiate as the chief of the Amalekites. In this direction Christianity does really break down national barriers and unite the English Christian with the African believer.

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### God's Will.

Prior to the coming of the missionary the African had his gods of disease, and his gods of health, and he pitted one against the other. Sometimes one gained and sometimes the other. He did not talk about disease being sent for his benefit; he had enough common sense to realize the absurdity of such talk, much like the Zulu who first opened Bishop Colenso's eyes to the absurdity of the Bible. But Christianity came and annexed him, first in a material, then in a spiritual sense; it clothed him with shoddy and doped him with the gospel, and his native shrewdness was so far undermined as to place him on the same mental level as our own medicine-men. He finds that the Established Church of England, on which many millions are spent annually, teaches that whatever illness one has, it is certainly God's visitation. He sees our newspapers publishing accounts of pilgrimages to Lourdes, and recording a

number of "cures" of cases which are, always, medically incurable. Mr. James Douglas solemnly records that on three occasions God specially intervened to alter the operations of nature so that his valuable life should be spared to the nation. He finds the Roman Church publishing accounts of cures effected either by God himself, or by the saints, and issuing lists of saints to whom all applications for cures must be addressed—with fees to be paid to the priests. Sometimes those who pray are saved, sometimes they are not. When they are not it is because God in his wisdom deems it best to "take them home." So say the medicine-men in England; so also say the priests in Uganda. Both agree that God can always save if he will, but sometimes he won't. "Not my will, but thy will be done," or as the rhyme has it:—

There was an old woman of Sydney  
Who had a disease of the Kidney.  
She prayed to the Lord,  
That she might be restored,  
And he could if he would,  
But he did'nae.

\* \* \*

Lo, the Poor African!

Logic is given such a doubtful place in religion that I hardly know whether to call the African Amalekite higher or lower than the English specimen. The African branch, believing that God really has power over life and death, leaves him to do as he wishes, and with a faith that should appeal to his English brethren declines to put any obstacles in his way. The English branch says, "All power is with the Lord, but do not trust him over much. If you are unwell, ask God to restore you to perfect health, and by way of helping God to consult a doctor." But the African Amalekite objects; to bother with doctors is to imply want of trust in the power of God. Not so, replies the English believer. It is true God sent the disease that threatens your extinction, but he also sent the doctor to prevent its doing so. And if the poor African objects that it would have been much easier, and much less troublesome, for God not to have sent the disease, one can always reply that all this is part of the mystery of godliness, and that is a good opiate, if not a very satisfactory explanation. So the African is first of all dosed with the Bible which tells him to trust in God, then if he does so there is the Sanitary Inspector and the armed police, and the "All is quiet on the religious front"—including the seven killed. One day the African Amalekite will learn better; and, provided he remains a Christian, as he approximates to the British Christian's standard of culture, so he will approximate to his religious humbug and hypocrisy.

\* \* \*

The Poor Gods!

Gods nowadays cut a ridiculous figure. In the native environment of the Amalekites they are all right; they fit it because they are born of it, and their existence offers none of the problems and difficulties that surround gods in other conditions. With one god looking after health, and another inflicting disease, the theory appears to roughly harmonize with the facts. For that, after all, is the way nature operates. She builds up and she pulls down with a magnificent unconcern as to what has been or what will be, or who gets crushed in the process. But when the many gods are reduced to one, and that one endowed with power over everything, and when the civilized representatives of God are compelled for the sake of their livelihood, to attempt the perpetuation of primitive practices, the procedure becomes nonsensical and the god contemptible. He wants to

do so much, and he accomplishes so little. He means to do well and he does so ill. Priests explain that he meant man to be happy, but he is very often miserable. He meant men to love one another, and they are often armed to the teeth, bent upon one another's destruction. He meant the world to be perfect, but it is full of imperfections. Politicians tell us that God meant the earth to be for man, but it is gathered into private hands and used for the aggrandisement of the few. He is like a king issuing countless orders that no one dreams of obeying. In a primitive environment gods are at home; they are at one with their surroundings. In a civilized environment they are as out of place as gas bombs would be at a Peace Conference.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

## Christianity's Great Revival.

"Tis life, whereof our nerves are scant,  
Oh life, not death, for which we pant,  
More life, and fuller, that we want."

Tennyson.

"Liberty, a word beside which all other words are vain."—Ingersoll.

THE clergy assert constantly that England is a Christian country, but the fact remains that the British Empire contains more non-Christian inhabitants than Christian. Prominent among the great religions incorporated within the Empire is Mohammedanism, which, under the Moorish banner, once threatened to overrun Europe. Had not the defeat of Islam resulted, a large part of the world might have become Mohammedan, or, as Edward Gibbon tersely declared, Oxford University might to-day be expounding the Koran.

Yet the Koran, the Bible of the Mohammedans, revered by over two hundred and thirty millions, of whom eighty millions are British subjects, is a little-known book in Christian Countries. It is a remarkable volume, and, if the arguments by which the divine inspiration of the Christian Bible be worth a straw, this must be inspired also. There is the same apparent incompatibility of the author with the writing; a morality as impressive, the same beauty of language and wealth of Oriental imagery; the same claim to prophecy and fulfilment of prophecy, and the same legendary blunders.

The chief difference is that there is no claim on the part of the prophet to work miracles, although the Koran is based manifestly on Jewish legends. The same fictitious characters, "Noah," "Abraham," "Lot," "Moses," "Solomon," and others, appear again and again. The theistic conception of duty is simplicity itself compared with the tangle of the Christian Trinity. Take the first Sura: "Glory to God, Master of the Universe, the Merciful, the Compassionate, Lord of the Day of Judgment, we adore Thee and implore Thy aid! guide us in the right path." Then, again, "There is no God, but God; God is the most great" was a bold message for a poor Arab to bring to a nation that had gods by the dozen, and sharp swords by the thousand to defend them.

Take the faith as laid down in the second Sura: "Piety does not consist in turning your faces to the East or West. He is pious who believes in God, and in the prophets; who, for the love of God, gives of his own to his neighbour; to the orphans, to the poor, to the traveller, and to those who ask; who ransoms the captives, who observes prayer, who gives alms, fulfils the engagements he contracts, who is patient in adversity, in hard times, and times of violence. These are just and fear the Lord."

These were not idle words. Chivalry originated

at the courts of the Emirs. The knight and the troubadour came from Islam. Together they re-summoned civilization, which had gone out in darkness at the break-up of the Roman Empire. The world at the time was divided. Long since Europe and Asia had gone their separate ways. When they caught sight of each other, the Christian Church sickened with envy and bigotry. There ensued the eight Crusades in which the Papacy pitted Christianity against Mohammedanism, and staked the authenticity of each on the result. Mohammedanism proved its claim. The Koran was the Bible of the people who, when the Saxons were living coarsely in rude huts, had developed a poetic civilization, a social order, which had a superstructure of art and of science. It was this that hundreds of thousands of Christians in rusty mail went forth to destroy. The soldiers of the Cross could not crush the warriors of the Crescent, but the chivalry of the Moslems taught them how to conquer themselves. From the silent victory contemporaneous civilization proceeds.

Saladin, the great Moslem leader, illustrated the chivalry of the race. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; but when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed civilian blood. On the contrary he spent large sums of money in alleviating distress. At his death he ordered gifts to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of creed, a noble act in that age. "Take this cloak," he said to one of his servants, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the Ruler of the East could take but one garment into the grave."

The place filled by the founder of Mohammedanism is very prominent. As compared with some other religious systems, Islam possesses great advantages. The text of the Koran was finally settled within thirty years of Mohammed's death, and, so far as his own life is concerned, critics are agreed as to the main facts of his career, however their judgment of it may differ. The career of Mohammed may be traced in the stately pages of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, the picturesque phrases of Carlyle, and in many other volumes. An ardent propagandist, the prophet made only thirteen converts in three years. In most communities such propaganda meant death or severe punishment. The execution of Socrates took place after a legal trial in a highly civilized state of antiquity. The charge was that Socrates did not worship the gods and shook other people's belief in them. In the nineteenth century Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, met his death in a Republican country at the hands of the State soldiery. The reason why Mohammed escaped death was that there was no orderly government. When forced to take the sword in hand, it took him ten years' hard fighting before he prevailed. The motto on his banner was "God is Great," a motto which has challenged the Puritanian Christian world for centuries.

Islam has a noble and ancient history, but no people can live on its past. Its doom is sounded. It seems passing strange that this should be so, for hundreds of cities shimmer with mosques. From thousands of filagreed pulpits the glory of Allah and his prophet are daily proclaimed. And Moslems possess a good share of the simple virtues. They are said to be temperate, truthful, honest, and hospitable. Yet, as a ruling power, they are a curse to all who fall under their sway. Trained under despotism and superstition, they are capable of the wildest fanaticism.

Islam has given to the world one of the immortal books in *The Arabian Nights*. In the Alhambra, she has incarnated dreams in architectural marble.

Her poets have penned manuscripts which throughout the ages retain the perfume of scented Eastern gardens. From being truly powerful in the world, she is now at the foot of the ladder of progress.

What is the reason for this terrible decline and fall? The answer is simple. She is the victim of stereotyped religion. To the Moslem, religion is not an amusement, or a social decoration, or a social police force. It is a passion that inflames his nature, and makes all other things trivial. Christianity is open to much of these objections, only there is less sincerity in it. It is only better as a mild attack of fever is better than a severe attack of fever. Most Christians have the disease on Sundays, but are free the other six days of the week. The followers of Mohammed were more fanatical than their prophet. The Caliph Omar wished to burn all books except the Koran, which he considered embodied all wisdom and all knowledge. This spirit has destroyed the value of Islamism.

Stereotyped religion, whether it be that of Islamism, or Roman Catholicism, or that of the Greek Church, or any other superstition, is doomed to downfall. It contradicts the eternal quest of mankind for knowledge, which will one day make all things new, and will change the face of the earth. In that day superstitions will be transformed into the religion of Humanity, and both Christianity and Islamism will be as remote as when the star of Ormuzd burned out in the unquiet skies. Religions change in the course of the years. "The Koran" differs from the Christian Bible. But there are thousands of Christian priests very like the Caliph Omar who would destroy all literature save their fetish-book.

MIMNERMUS.

## Leo Tolstoy.

WITH the publication of the *Diary of Tolstoy's Wife*, there has been a revival of interest in the life and personality of Leo Tolstoy, the last disciple of Jesus Christ; the only man with a European reputation, in modern times, who has attempted to carry into practical life, the genuine unadulterated teachings of the Four Gospels of the New Testament.

Mr. Harold Nicholson, in his monograph on *Tennyson*, has said of the Victorian Age: "The more the scientists succeeded in shaking their belief in God, the more did they invest their own leading contemporaries with divine attributes." (p. 5.) We can confirm this from personal experience during the seventies and eighties of last century. Never did hero-worshipping reach to such a pitch. If the Roman Catholics could boast of their dead Saints, the Protestants could boast of our living ones.

There was General Gordon, the great Christian fighting man. A modern Joshua, under the special guidance and protection of God—although most unaccountably, and perplexingly, God allowed him to perish in Khartoum, in spite of the millions of prayers put up by the Churches on his behalf—In politics there was the Quaker, John Bright, and Mr. Gladstone, the author of *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*. Our great philosopher, and inspired moral teacher, was Thomas Carlyle, with his eternal verities, and the Everlasting Yea to religion—of course nothing was publicly known then of his loss of faith in Christianity, or of his unhappy domestic affairs.

There were two inspired artists, Doré and Holman Hunt. Doré had a permanent exhibition in London at the Doré Gallery, where "Christ leaving the Praetorium," and other religious pictures might be seen. Holman Hunt's painting of Christ as "The

Light of the World"—we should describe it as of the best 'Hollywood school,' to-day—aroused so much religious emotion, that a replica was painted and sent on travel to all the principal cities of the empire, where it was received with not less adoration than a holy Russian Ikon. Tennyson and Wordsworth were, of course, the two inspired poets.

"And as in art," says Mr. Somervell, "so in music. The Victorian Age revelled in what was called 'sacred music.' Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* were far more widely known and loved than any symphony of Beethoven and Schubert."<sup>1</sup> We can confirm this. These were the great days of the Sacred Oratorios. We can remember, as a youth, being taken to the Albert Hall, which was packed from floor to ceiling, to hear the *Messiah*, and, on another occasion, the *Judas Maccabeus*, by the same composer; but I never heard of Beethoven until much later.

But the personality which struck the imagination of the pious Victorians most forcibly, was that of Count Leo Tolstoy, when he publicly announced his conversion to the teachings of Jesus Christ, and, what is more, his resolve to carry out, literally, those teachings by making them the rule of his own life. As Stefan Zweig observes, in his recently published book<sup>2</sup> *Tolstoy's My Confession*, "which for us has long ceased to be anything more than a document of psychological interest, fired youthful believers like a new Book of Revelation. "At length," they said, rejoicing, a mighty man, known far and wide as the greatest of living writers, has declared his simple faith:—

it has not come from one of those whose profession is to make phrases about progress, but from a man of independent and incorruptible personality, whose authority and sincerity no one will dream of challenging. This man, we are given to understand, wishes to set an example by the conduct of his own life, by every action he performs. A Count, he refuses to avail himself of the privileges of nobility; a wealthy man, he would fain discard his proprietary rights; born and brought up among the great, he prefers to participate in the working community of the people, to the end that religious brotherhood shall replace the tyranny of the State, and that the divine kingdom of love shall be substituted for the tsardom of force. (pp. 314-315.)

This great aristocrat, high in favour at the Russian Court, of great wealth, the world-renowned writer, had renounced all this earthly glory, as if it were so much dust and ashes, and had thrown himself at the foot of the Cross. "There," said the preachers, to the critics of Christianity, "you said that the teachings of Jesus are too hard and impracticable for everyday use, but here is a great man, one of the greatest, who is actually living the Gospel life." Such was the light in which Tolstoy was regarded by the Victorians, towards the end of the last century, and they put him on a pedestal, among the other Victorian saints, and offered homage.

Since then, however, like all the other saints of the Victorian Pantheon, his stock, as a religious teacher, has greatly depreciated. It is not as a great religious teacher that we are now asked to admire Tolstoy, but as the author of *War and Peace*, and *Anna Karenina*, the novels by which he became famous before his conversion. His later works have been stigmatized as "Tracts." Moreover, there

has been much published since then, notably, the Autobiography, a few years ago, and this year, *The Diary of Tolstoy's Wife*, which put a very different complexion on the life and character of Leo Tolstoy.

As a sample of the difference of regard in which Tolstoy is now held, we may cite, among others, the following from a review of the recently published *Diary of Countess Tolstoy*, by the well-known novelist, Miss Rebecca West, which appeared in *Time and Tide* (December 14, 1928):—

The years brought Tolstoy what must have been an ideally happy married life, from his point of view. He gave Sophie Andreyevna [his wife] thirteen children, while perpetually explaining in public and in private, that he regarded sex as loathsome, and that his one desire was to get away from his family. In order to absolve himself from the guilt of holding property, he signed his estate away; but in order that he should continue to live in comfort he signed his estate away to Sophie Andreyevna, and expected her to administer it for his benefit. He turned her children against her. "Everyone, Lev Nikolævich," [Tolstoy] she writes in 1886, "as well as the children, who follow him like a flock of sheep, has come to think of me as a scourge. After throwing on me the whole responsibility of the children and their education, household duties, money matters, and all the other material things, which they all make much greater use of than I ever do, they come along and with a cold, officious, and pious expression, tell me to give a horse to a peasant, or some money, or some flour, or this, that, and the next thing." The climax of her martyrdom came with the publication of the "Kreutzer Sonata," that revoltingly obscene statement of the relationship between husbands and wives. The poor creature writes in her diary, when on the Christmas Day of the twenty-ninth year after her marriage, she has reason to believe that she is going to have another child: "Everybody will hear of this disgrace and gleefully repeat the recent Moscow joke *Voilà le véritable 'postscriptum' de la Sonate de Kreutzer!*" There were no alleviations of her lot. For she was no fool. When, after insisting on the purity of women all his life, Tolstoy rebuked her for separating their daughter from a prostitute whom one of his followers had brought to Tasnaya Polyana, when he welcomed a young man who, having deserted his pregnant wife, and refused to work for money because he thought it wrong, believed himself to have solved all his moral problems in becoming a parasite on Sophie Andreyevna's estate, she saw that the intellectual life to which she had been sacrificed was not worth the living."

Stefan Zweig has given us some outspoken criticism, in his *Adepts in Self-Portraiture*. So has Janko Lavrin, in his, *Tolstoy: A Psycho-critical Study*. Maxim Gorky, who lived with Tolstoy for a time, in the Crimea, makes some very interesting revelations in his: *Reminiscences of Leo Tolstoy*. Mr. Fausset has also helped—howbeit, in a somewhat regretful and apologetic mood—to dismantle the Victorian idol. But the recently published *Diary of Tolstoy's Wife* has finally shattered the halo which once adorned his brow.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

That wandering ship of the drunken pilot, the mutinous crew and the angry captain, called Human Nature.—George Meredith.

The first lesson to learn is that there are other people in the world beside yourself.—Hazlitt.

<sup>1</sup> D. C. Somervell: *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century*. p. 216.

<sup>2</sup> Zweig: *Adepts in Self-Portraiture* (1929). p. 314.

## Man's Simian Cousins.

THE monkeys, and above all, the manlike apes are of perennial interest to humankind. The famous naturalist, Linnæus, in his system of classification included men, monkeys, apes, lemurs and bats in his order Primates. The bats are now classified as a distinct, if related group, while the lemurs and their allies are distinguished as the Prosimiæ or Lemuroidea.

The Primates of modern biology range from the tiny tarsiers and marmosets to the anthropoid apes and man. Certain of the lemurs and lower monkeys produce twins or triplets, but the higher forms, including man, usually give birth to one. The infant ape or monkey is as helpless at birth as a new-born babe, and for several months needs constant maternal care.

The Primates are almost invariably vegetarians with an occasional insect, spider, or egg. No strictly carnivorous Primate is so far known. Among them, man alone is delivered naked into the world. All our humble relatives are born provided with a protective covering of fur or hair. That man was originally a hirsute animal is suggested by the hairy covering of the human foetus, but for some unknown reason this hairy adornment has disappeared.

Many otherwise instructed people entertain the mistaken belief that all the monkey tribe display a prominent tail. Now, the caudal appendage varies immensely throughout the order. It is entirely absent in the anthropoid apes—the gibbon, gorilla, orang-utan, and chimpanzee—or may be extremely long as in the various spider-monkeys. With many monkeys the appendage is purely ornamental, much as it is in Persian cats. Sometimes it is serviceable as a balancing organ, while in other monkeys prehensile tails are used to enclose objects, thus supplementing the upper and lower extremities. Trustworthy observers state that certain monkeys utilize their naked prehensile tails in grasping their food.

The Anthropoidea, the Old and New World monkeys of numerous families, genera and species are widely distributed in Africa, south of the Sahara, in India, Southern China, South and Central America, and the Malay Region. On the other hand, the habitat of the manlike apes is noticeably restricted. The several species of gibbon are definitely confined to the Malay Peninsula, and certain isles in the Indian Ocean. The orang-utan is restricted to the tropical islands of Sumatra and Borneo. The gorilla is found in special areas of equatorial Africa only, and the chimpanzee's homes are mainly confined to a territory stretching from the West Coast of Africa to the Eastern frontiers of the Belgian Congo.

Man, the most enterprising and successful Primate has subjugated the earth. Less at the mercy of his environment than his humbler relatives he has utilized his discovery of fire as a safeguard against inclement conditions and in preparing his food. He is proficient as a tool-using mammal. It is true that some of the lower Primates construct rude shelters, but man stands alone in erecting solid habitations in which he can permanently dwell in comfort and security.

Professor Robert M. Yerkes, the psychologist of Yale University, in his interesting and suggestive volume *Almost Human*, says that "Significant differences between man and the other primates are suggested by the facts of distribution. Human intelligence seems to have favoured the conquering of the

earth, and has made possible existence in frigid, temperate, and torrid zones. Nevertheless, distribution does not vary directly with intelligence, for the monkeys, which in many respects are far inferior to the great apes in mental ability, are at once more numerous and more widely distributed; and the gorilla which bears closest resemblance to man structurally, and in many of its functions, is narrowly limited in its distribution. These facts suggest that there may be essential differences in the nature of the mental ability of different types of primate. Of them all, man alone has developed to a highly useful degree spoken and written language. Must it then be supposed that language so favours the appearance of ideas and their use in the subordination of environment that it has enabled man to advance, while his strong, versatile, but relatively speechless kindred have gradually lost in the struggle for existence?"

A collection of nearly 100 apes and monkeys dwells in the gardens of Madam Abreu's splendid estate at Quinta Palatino, Havana. There, the animals are studied in the interests of science. This Cuban sanctuary is also famous for the fact that the first chimpanzee born in captivity in the New World that survived to maturity emerged from his mother's womb in April, 1915.

Remarkable, and indeed amazing to those who still refuse to credit the lower animals with reasoning faculties are the observed and photographed evidences of high intelligence manifested by the apes. Prof. Yerkes, while studying Madam Abreu's pets, witnessed a blood-transfusion operation performed for the purpose of preserving the life of a chimpanzee. The blood of several young chimpanzees was tested by the attendant physician. Some of these apes resisted the preliminary operation. Others seemed to sympathize, and behaved just as a human creature might in similar circumstances. "When it came to the transfusion operation itself," writes Prof. Yerkes, "the sick chimpanzee was too weak and listless to struggle, but the animal whose blood was to be borrowed was a healthy, vigorous creature whom one might naturally have expected to rebel against the treatment of the surgeons. Instead, she lent her aid to them and remained virtually quiet throughout the operation. The physicians themselves were so impressed by her co-operation that they expressed keen regret in not having secured a moving-picture record of the operation, which should show in detail the behaviour of both the chimpanzees involved."

The recent experimental studies of scientific psychologists have revealed a high mental endowment in apes. The term "scientific" is used advisedly in this connection as so much so-called psychology is mere metaphysical abstraction. In pre-War days we largely depended upon the observations and deductions of travellers and field naturalists for our knowledge concerning simian intelligence. Now, the more extended studies of trained scientific investigators are available.

These inquiries are far from complete, but firm foundations have been laid for a future psychological structure.

Generally speaking, the human senses of taste and smell are imperfectly developed, and this is true of the apes also. The sense of hearing is very acute in man-like apes, while the range of their vocal organs is limited. The sense of touch is highly developed, and the wonderful acrobatic powers of apes indicate a sensory and central nervous system of great complexity with markedly efficient functioning powers.

Vision in apes has been dispassionately studied, and it is evident that the simian sense of sight approximates to that of man. The researches of Kohts and Koehler prove that the chimpanzee visualizes

colour, and easily distinguishes the difference of black, white, and grey. It has likewise been shown that the chimpanzee is conscious of distance and depth, and that this awareness of space relations is dependent, as with man, on the possession of binocular vision.

Man was long exalted as the sole tool-using creature. Yet the writer has on several occasions seen a thrush shatter the shell of a snail with the aid of a stone. Now, as Prof. Yerkes states: "When the chimpanzee is so placed that a desired object—such, for example, as a banana or an orange—cannot be obtained by reaching, jumping, or climbing, it may have recourse to sticks as aids. And the interesting thing is that the stick may be used in a variety of ways. Some individuals will strike with it, thus trying to dislodge the reward; others may use it as an aid in jumping; or again, they may stand it beneath the objective and, quickly climbing it, reach from it. So skilful are they in this manoeuvre that occasionally an individual will climb to a height of eight or ten feet on a slight pole which rests on the ground or floor of the cage without other support. It takes an accomplished acrobat to do this!"

The investigations of the various observers demonstrate that apes differ considerably in mental ability. Where one will soon succeed in solving a difficulty another will fail completely. Thus the orthodox theory of a mechanical instinct becomes utterly untenable. In some of Kochler's tests the object to be employed as a tool is hidden from the ape. A pole or ladder was placed outside the cage in a passage through which the animal was led to the cage for the experiment. This was done in order to ascertain whether the ape would observe the ladder, and when requiring assistance, remember it and fetch it. This we are told actually occurred in some instances.

Many additional examples of ape mentality might be noted did space permit. Prof. Yerkes sums up some of the results recently gained as follows: "The great apes exhibit ideational behaviour; they act with insight. It remains for further patient, critical research to analyse this behaviour more adequately and to compare it with our own action under identical conditions." T. F. PALMER.

### "Is Science Reliable?"

WHILE not wholly disagreeing with the general contention of Mr. R. B. Kerr in the *Freethinker* of the 14th ultimo, that many of the statements of scientists must be taken with the proverbial grain of sodium chloride,\* it would be unfair to pass without comment the peculiarly unfortunate instances he has quoted and the sweeping inferences he has drawn. His insinuation that, as regards superstition, the mental outlook of the scientist is not very different from that of the priest is absurd. The fact is, the outlooks are diametrically opposed, they are antipodal. No doubt there are a few regrettable exceptions, but such only prove that the "man of science" is not necessarily always a "scientific thinker," and the latter is not necessarily a scientist. It is unjust to con-

\* For example, some of Prof. J. H. Jeans', F.R.S. assumptions: (1) that the universe is melting away into radiation; (2) that the general trend of chemical evolution in the universe as a whole is from the complex to the simple; (3) that the final end of the universe is a "cool glow of radiation uniformly diffused through space"; (4) that matter can change into radiation, but not the converse; (5) that space has no limit, but is nevertheless finite; (6) that if we go on and on in space beyond the confines of the known universe, "we merely come back to ourselves"; (7) that everything points with overwhelming force to a definite event, or series of events, of *Creation* (my italics) at some time or times, not infinitely remote.

demn wholesale because here and there a fly is found in the ointment. Even Science has its Olivers!

The alleged scientific blunder of the two eminent agriculturists that "a metric ton contains 2,000 lbs. only" may possibly be explainable through the individual responsible for the statement being an American, and if this is so it affords an excellent example of the hopeless confusion extant consequent upon the general lack of congruity in the system of weights and measures adopted by different nations, a confusion which emphasizes the urgent need of the universal adoption of a consistent and uniform system such as the metrical. As a matter of fact the American ton is 2,000 lbs., while the British is 2,240 lbs. (not, as Mr. Kerr states, 2,204 lbs.). Indeed, Internationalists differentiate by alluding to the former as the "short,"—and to the latter as the "long ton." In other countries the ton varies yet further. The inconveniences and even dangers attendant upon such lack of uniformity are brought home to one when dealing with culinary and pharmacological measurements and calculations. A certain lady Doctor of Science at one of our Universities has in the last few days informed me that she was greatly puzzled by the fact that certain recipes she had been trying from a cookery book refused to pan out "according to Cocker" until, having discovered that the book was an American one, she effected the necessary numerical conversions. Again, if a housewife buys one pound of sodium bicarbonate from a grocer, and another pound from a chemist, she will find that if she weighs her purchases on the kitchen scales the grocer has furnished her with 16 ozs., the chemist with only 13 ozs. 1 drachm and 5½ grains. If, now, she asks the grocer and chemist respectively, not for a pound, but for 16 ozs. of the commodity she will discover that, whereas the grocer has given her exactly a pound's weight, the chemist has given her 200 grains more than a pound. The mystery is solved when she discovers that the weights, though identical in name, are quite different in value, the chemist's pound being 12 ozs., or 96 drachms or 5,760 grains as contrasted with the grocer's pound, which equals 16 ozs. or 256 drachms or 7,000 grains. Such is the muddle in our midst, but when we come to make a comparative study of the national units of measurements we shall find the confusion confounded. The British gallon is 4.5 litres, the American, 3.7. A British pint is 567.9, and liquid oz. is 28.3, cubic centimetres, but in the States the pint and oz. are respectively 473.2, and 29.5 cubic centimetres. Such discrepancies in the numerical nomenclature of the different nations are apt, occasionally, with casual translators of popular scientific works to lead to the most glaring mistakes. Astronomical books that have been translated into English from, say, the French, or that have been published in America for a British reading public, not infrequently contain serious errors of distances and measurements. These have arisen through the translator or reader, as the case may be, overlooking the fact that, whereas a million is the same the world over, the billion, according to the system of the American, French and other Continental Nations is a thousand millions, the trillion a million millions, and each higher denomination, quadrillion, quintillion, etc., is a thousand times the preceding. The English billion, on the other hand, is a million millions, the trillion a million billions, and each higher denomination a million times the preceding. The enormity of error liable to be entailed by such discrepancies may be illustrated by the following example. That brilliant American astronomer, Dr. Hubble of Mount Wilson Observatory, has, during the past few years, been engaged in plumbing the depths of the Universe, by which word I here mean, not, as it strictly connotes, the "all that is," but simply the all that is known, visible through a telescope, and measurable. Taking as his "yard-stick" the distance between himself and the groups of stars known, from the fluctuating character of their light, as the Cepheid Variables, he has calculated the number of times this measuring-rod would have to be laid down to span the imaginary straight line intervening between two most remotely visible objects through the largest telescope, one in one quarter, and the other in the opposite quarter, of the heavens.

The length of Dr. Hubble's cosmic yard-stick may be better appreciated by the reflection that the light waves entering the astronomer's eye from the Cepheid stars commenced their journey when man was emerging from the ape, since which time they have been speeding earthwards across the vast intervening space at the incredible velocity of 186,400 miles per second. The reason of his selection of these variable stars as the site of the far end of his measuring-rod is because of the comparative facility with which they can be picked out from the main mass of stars in consequence of their remarkable light variation, on the same principle that the mariner picks out a lighthouse from the confused mass of lights on the coast line, and by comparing its known candle-power with its apparent brightness calculates its distance. The Cepheids are about 120,000 light-years away or, in other words, the length of Hubble's measuring-rod is, in the nearest round numbers, 700,000,000,000,000,000 miles. Applying this rod along the diameter of the visible Universe, Hubble finds it can be laid down some 2,300 times, that is to say, the diameter is of an order exceeding 1600,000,000,000,000,000 miles, the most remotely visible star from our earth being, of course, one half this distance. Now, an American or Continental observer would refer numerically to the diameter of the Universe as sixteen hundred billion billions of miles, while the English reader would interpret these figures as sixteen hundred million billion miles, discrepancies amounting to an error of excess from the English view point, of over a thousand billion billions of miles, and an error of deficiency, from the American view point of a corresponding quantity.

The "terrible contradictions" between different groups of scientists that so shock Mr. Kerr concern what, after all, are but minor points in a general scheme whereon unanimity prevails. There are, admittedly, expert differences of opinion upon, shall we say, the particular path by which man has groped his way to his present estate from some lowly form of living matter. One authority, for example Wood Jones, claims a Tarsoid ancestry for man, one of the milestones in his path being a creature now represented by the little nocturnal tree-climbing *Tarsius Spectrum* of the East Indies; another authority, such as Sir Arthur Keith, claims a Simioid ascent through a creature now represented by one or other of the great tailless man-like apes, but all the authorities are emphatically agreed that man's upward evolution has been *via* a forbear common to him, the apes, monkeys, marmosets and lemurs. Such "terrible contradictions" concerning the subordinate methods and ways of evolution are, from the unprejudiced and rational point of outlook, evidence of the impregnable rock upon which scientists have founded their citadel of facts, just as, from the same outlook, the astonishing uniformity of opinion in the opposite camp of the theologians concerning such matters as the reciprocal interchangeability, equality and identifiability of the numerals one and three is evidence of the baseless fabric of their phantasmal castles in the air.

An excerpt from *Science and Life*, edited by Wells, *père et fils*, and Julian Huxley will provide a fit summing up: "First the facts and then these more stormy issues (of Evolution) may be faced. Here we traverse ground upon which scientific men of every creed and school are now agreed. We make this distinction between fact and theory here and, so to speak, underline it, because we know there is still a considerable confusion in the public mind between the fact of evolution and the conflicting theories about how it works. Dishonest Creationists, narrow fanatics and middle-headed people attempt to confuse the very wide diversity of opinion among scientific men upon the questions of how and why with their assertion of established fact. Through this confusion it is suggested that the hated fact is still unproven. It is, on the contrary, proven up to the hilt, and here we shall unfold as much of the evidence as is necessary for conviction."

CHARLES M. BEADNELL.

According to Sydney Smith, the French say there are three sexes—men, women and clergymen.

## Acid Drops.

Leicester has just had its latest ghost. The spirit of a dead priest has been seen haunting a Roman Catholic Church, and it was solemnly announced, by the priest in charge that his predecessor wished to have the prayers of the worshippers on his behalf. He is uneasy about something or other, and the prayers of those over whom he once ruled will help him. Some little light may be thrown on the vision by the fact that it has for long been the aim to rebuild the present Church, and there is nothing like a real life visitant from the other world to encourage subscriptions—particularly as we learn that the dead priest was keenly interested in getting a new Church built. The Roman Church has always been peculiarly fortunate in getting these visions, and miracles, when they were likely to be useful. We hope to be in Leicester later in the year; what a sensation there would be if this particular spirit would leave the Church and pay a visit to the Secular Hall during Mr. Chapman Cohen's lecture!

Christianity, as we have often pointed out, is quite a business-like proposition. The Christian behaves himself, not because he feels a natural inclination that way, but because he hopes to get paid back bye and bye; and he expresses a quite confident conviction, following St. Paul, that if there is no future life where one may get either a medal or the whip, there is no earthly reason why he should behave himself at all. This feature of the Christian religion comes out most nakedly in Roman Catholicism. Glancing through the *Universe*, for instance, one notes the promise that if anyone will subscribe to the funds of "The Good Shepherd Convent," Liverpool, a perpetual lamp will be kept burning for the donor and prayers said. If anyone will send to the Church of the Holy Family, Near Wigan, a mass will be offered every week during 1929 for their benefit, and The Holy Family "will shower their choicest benefits on them." It is quite a cash transaction. Benefits, direct from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in return for cash, the value of the benefits to be, we assume, proportionate to the donation.

One other example of the highly commercialized business carried on by the Roman Catholic Church. Looking through the official programme issued in connexion with a Catholic Demonstration held at Hanley on July 14, we find a notice that anyone who sends a donation of 5s. will receive a share in forty masses a year for ever. Whether, if a man sends a pound he will receive four portions, is not stated. And those who can only send a shilling will not receive anything—we expect a mere honourable mention. The notice adds that any Catholic who thinks of all this will mean to him during life, "and especially after death," will act wisely in not missing this opportunity. It is this kind of thing that helps to realize the depths of mental degradation to which the Church reduces its dupes.

It shall never be recorded of the *Freethinker* that it knowingly failed to notice any words of sense from an Archbishop. The Archbishop of Canterbury, speaking at a civic reception at Dover, said: "I venture to plead rather earnestly, that one of the most practical ways we can serve our country is by keeping still and quiet." His lordship touches the spot, for no one will deny that the Salvation Army bands, buglers in the Boy's Brigade, wheezy harmoniums at street corners, and clanging bells, are in the category of things that we could well afford to miss.

The Bishops of Bradford, Ripon, and Wakefield are asking all their clergy to offer prayers for rain so long as the present drought continues. They are to use their discretion as to whether they will pray for rain, or for reasonable weather. We think this is admirable. Naturally, if they keep on praying long enough their prayer is certain to be answered—the joke of praying

for the King's recovery, and employing a dozen doctors, then having a thanksgiving service, with the King very ill ever since, is mild at the side of it. And there is the choice of praying for rain, or for seasonable weather! That, we presume, is "Not my will, but thy will" in practice. Of course, if all the clergy are howling for rain, the Lord may lose his temper and half drown them. But if he is left to decide what is seasonable, then the responsibility will be left with him. Even then much will depend upon whether he takes most interest in seaside caterers or farmers and water companies. Really, the older religion becomes, the more foolish it is. And what profound faith these Bishops must have in the incurable stupidity of Christians!

The Bishop of Exeter and the President of the Wesleyan Conference took part in a service in St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth. We suppose that it was as an apology for these brotherly Christians meeting in this way that the Bishop explained, "We must stand shoulder to shoulder to meet the foe of Atheism and unbelief." We ought to find ourselves trembling; but we can only detect a smile. We expect the *Freethinker* will continue to appear even now that these two tremendous antagonists have joined forces.

A teacher in a non-provided school writes to the *Teachers World* as follows:—

Many teachers in non-provided schools are waiting hopefully for the day when the anachronism dual control will be swept away. But in this land of liberty they are afraid to raise up their voices and cry out to be freed.

The parson is, in a way, still a powerful man, and the parochial and religious "atmosphere" that he is so anxiously clamouring to retain can become very unhealthy for the teacher who dares proclaim that more of parson's work should be done in the church and less in school.

Few people realize—even H.M. Inspectors and Board of Education officials—the tyranny that dual control really is. Surely the time has arrived when the teaching of sectarian dogma should be discontinued in all schools. Must the non-provided teachers be compelled to go on teaching—against conscience and reason—tenets that should have been scrapped long ago?

The Rev. H. C. Carter says that there is to-day an orgy of revolt against "institutional" Christianity. "Let us have Christianity without Churchianity." This talk, says Mr. Carter is fundamentally fallacious. There never was, nor can be, a Christianity that does not embody itself in a fellowship, visibly expressed, of those who hold the faith. Without the Church, says the reverend gent., there would be no Bible and no preaching of the Gospel. Quite so, and there would also be a large number of parsons no longer parasites to society, but put to the task of earning a living. And this is the all-important consideration! Most emphatically there can be no Christianity without a fellowship of mugs willing to provide houses, food and clothing for the parsons. To think otherwise is perilously fallacious—from the parson's point of view.

Mr. Walter Runciman, M.P., told the Wesleyan Conference that wherever religious controversy was imported in to public education, it was the education of the children which suffered. That is true. But as long as religion is retained in the school, there will always be controversy, and therefore the education of the children will suffer. What is curious is that in regard to the secular side of education, one doesn't hear of wrangling, of scheming and planning, and of pulling political wires to get some particular kind of secular instruction taught. It is only when religion comes into the picture, that those sort of things are attempted. What interest have the Churches in education as education? Very little. All their interest is centered on getting the schools to impart certain beliefs that will help the Churches to secure more clients. Meanwhile, as Mr. Runciman says, it is the education of the children which suffers.

Mr. Osbert Sitwell has a very good idea of war trophies and there is a story of him that deserves record. The parish council of Eckington wished to set up a captured howitzer on a piece of land owned by him. He consented, but the inscription placed on the gun makes good reading:—

This gun has been placed here to remind the people of Eckington of the vicious folly of war, which has been responsible for the deaths of so many of the best of them, and in the hope that the ugliness of the object will impress the children so that they will grow up with a natural hatred of war and the brutal machinery that accompanies it.

An Essex Coroner threatened a Jew with Contempt of Court because he refused to sign a deposition on Saturday, because it was the Jewish Sabbath. The coroner said that refusing to sign a paper on Saturday was "ridiculous nonsense," and the *Daily News* protests against this language to a member of a great religious body, and thinks it is more likely to bring the law itself into contempt.

We don't seriously disagree with either the coroner or the paper. All we have to say is that the Jew was basing his conduct on the Bible, and we agree that any rule based thus is very likely indeed to be ridiculous. Next we do not think that if the Coroner had had before him a Roman Catholic bishop or the Bishop of London, and either had declined to do something because it was contrary to his religious practice or belief, that he would have used the same expression. It makes a devil of a difference whether the nonsense before us is the kind of nonsense we are used to or a new form of stupidity.

Finally, we do not see what the size of a religious body has to do with the sense or nonsense of its tenets. The *Daily News* thinks it wrong to speak of the beliefs of a "great religious body" as ridiculous nonsense. If it had been the "Peculiar People," and the coroner had described their belief that God would cure the sick, and so had logically declined to call in a doctor, the *Daily News* would have remained silent. It is all a question of numbers and influence. Given a large number, and an influential number, above all, in a Christian country, and any kind of absurdity must be spoken of respectfully. Compare the treatment of the wealthy Christian Science Organizations, with the struggling and poor "Peculiar People," or the treatment of the Theosophists with a poor claimant to occult powers, who tries to pick up a living by giving half-a-crown audiences, and one will soon see the rule that is being applied.

The Lord Mayor of York told the Wesleyan Conference that one reason for the indifference to religion characteristic of the time was the education given in elementary schools. Some religious teaching which was undenominational, he said, taught no respect for the Churches, and was very prejudicial. We are afraid these doleful remarks of the Lord Mayor will rather disconcert Wesleyans. The Conference declared in favour of a national system of education, and against any denominational religion being taught therein. But how the deuce can children be taught respect for any Church unless they receive denominational teaching?

Glancing through the article on Buddhism in a Dictionary of Sects, we were interested in the following comment on Buddhism:—

Such a system would naturally, in its pure Atheistic philosophy, have but little hold upon the mass of unintelligent men. We know that "Truth crushed to earth will rise again," but we do not expect it to get up in such a violent hurry as this. It is something to find a religious writer, and a D.D., assuring us that Atheism makes no appeal to unintelligent men, with the implication that Theism is the thing that appeals to them. We are almost tired of saying, "We told you so," but it is an exact statement of the case.



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FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—W. Anderson, 108.; W. Barraclough, 108.

E.A.M.—The writers of the *Wayside Pulpit* appear to have laid themselves out to demonstrate how near to downright idioecy one becomes when saturated with Christianity.

A.H.M.—Hope you are all the better for your tramping holiday. The weather has certainly done its best.

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

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

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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.

We would call the special attention of Branch Secretaries to the fact that matters would be helped at this end, if they would send their lecture notices on separate cards, or letters addressed to the Manager. Sending them in private letters to the editor often means delay. Nothing is required on the card but the mere information that is to be published.

Mr. John M. Robertson's *History of Freethought in the Nineteenth Century*, which has been issued in thirteen fortnightly parts, is now complete, and the publishers, Messrs. Watts & Co., have had prepared covers for the whole work, which is issued free to every subscriber. Those who wish the publishers to do the binding may have it done for an inclusive charge of 4s. 6d. It is a work that all Freethinkers should have by them. To those who have not subscribed for the parts the price is 18s.

Of the work as a whole, we can only repeat what we said when the first three or four parts were issued. It shows an immense amount of difficult research, and by its combination Mr. Robertson has placed all Freethinkers under an obligation to him. Mr. Robertson would be the first to admit—he does so admit—that in breaking what is practically new ground, many names that one would like to see mentioned are omitted, and

some incidents in the struggles of Freethinkers against established authority one might wish had been treated at greater length. For our own part, we feel that greater justice has yet to be done to the more "Popular" side of the Movement, and to the part played by its leaders in making it quite safe for highly-placed Freethinkers to speak, and in forcing concessions from the champions of orthodoxy. But we must be thankful for what we have got, and Mr. Robertson has made it so much easier for the next who comes along with a more elaborate survey of the ground he has so ably covered.

On one point we feel that we must say one word because it concerns a question in which we are specially interested. Mr. Robertson still thinks he is correct in viewing the founding of the Secular Society, Limited, as in some sense a "getting round" the law on the subject, and thinks he is correct in saying that the law admitted the terms of business and finance, what it would not admit in propaganda. As one who was concerned with the Secular Society, Limited at the outset, and who was very closely connected with the legal fight through all its stages, we can assure Mr. Robertson that this is quite inaccurate. Throughout the whole of the hearings in Chambers, in the High Court, and in the House of Lords, it was specially stressed that profit-making was not the object of the society, that its directors and members were specially precluded from making any kind of profit, and the sole point discussed by all the judges was whether the propaganda which the Society was founded to pursue could be considered legal or not. Of course, there had been a great change of opinion so far as the public was concerned, and this change of opinion led to the celebrated summing up of Lord Coleridge in the Foote trial. The House of Lords finally registered this change of opinion in its judgment as to the complete legality of the objects of the Secular Society, Limited. The case thus moved along the same lines as others have moved—a change in public opinion which involved re-reading, or a reinterpretation of the law on the subject.

It is easy to criticize an anthology, since its compilation is largely a matter of personal taste, and no two persons would make quite the same selection in any direction. So if we say of *Infidels and Heretics. An Agnostic's Anthology*, by Clarence Darrow, and Wallace Rice (Stratford Company, Boston, U.S.A., 12s. 6d.), that we should like to have seen a better presentation of the fighting Freethinkers of the world, it need be taken as no disparagement of the work. The selections as they stand cover a very wide field, and the authors disarm all criticism by the modest hope that their work will be thought "sufficiently representative of the enormously greater whole from which it is drawn." There will be no doubt on that point. The book extends to nearly 300 pages, is well printed and strongly bound. As a gift book it would be excellent.

A difficulty always facing the publisher of Freethinking books is the boycott maintained by the general press. Any work that is straightforward and uncompromising in its criticism of established religion is almost entirely ignored by the newspapers, with the result that the general public are unaware of its existence. When the publishers are such as ourselves, who cannot bribe the newspapers by lavish advertisements, the plan is simple, the books are simply ignored. When a criticism appears from other publishers who do advertise well, and whom the newspapers cannot afford to altogether ignore, a scant notice is given, and the impression given that the work is not of very much account. In either case boycott does as much as it can, and the general ignorance is undisturbed.

We were struck by this on reading a notice in the *Observer*, a review of two books, *Jesus of Nazareth*, by Bishop Gore, and *Religion in England*, by E. B. Powley, published by Kegan Paul. Both books have already been noticed in these columns. Bishop Gore's book, which maintains views, which, while "advanced" in

relation to some other Christians, maintains opinions that Bishop Barnes would probably classify as civilized barbarisms is described as showing a fine enthusiasm, and indicates ripe scholarship. That is because he leaves Christianity essentially untouched. But Mr. Powley says that the belief in the divinity of Christ is childish, that religion began in the fear and ignorance of primitive man, and declares that Jesus has failed, and that Christianity must give way to a wider philosophy of life. That being the case, Mr. Powley's book is classed as "too crude to carry weight," and says it is a pity the publishers did not secure a writer who was "less crude," and "more sympathetic in his spiritual outlook."

That is the way our free press contributes to the enlightenment of opinion. A man who writes on behalf of as gross a superstition as ever obsessed the human mind is filled with a "fine enthusiasm." Then one who says plainly that superstition is superstition, and prophecies that one day men and women will outgrow these uncivilized modes of thought, is crude, and lacking in "spiritual outlook." So publishers are warned that if they wish their books noticed, they must not publish books that really attack Christianity. They may criticize it, but they must at the same time leave it unharmed. And authors are warned in the same manner. A frank confession from both writers and publishers in this country would lead to some startling revelations of the extent to which the press helps to perpetuate obscurantism.

## The Atheist's Prayer.

### A SLIGHT STUDY IN RELIGIOUS PSYCHOLOGY.

SCATTERED up and down this fair and Christian land of ours are little, wee sects or groups of Protestant Nonconformists, who issue little, wee papers calling attention to their own particular little, wee specialities in the Blessed Gospel.

Luther and Calvin, of pious if unpleasant memory, are the remote generators of this branch of sacred literature, which has, naturally, its own peculiar characteristics; these being complete dogmatism, a thoroughgoing disregard for any kind of common sense, unlimited mendacity, and, of course, a wholesale assurance of direct communication with its common inspirer, "God," who is presumably on the free list of subscribers.

The alluring, and often alliterative, names of these organs of truth and terror are vaguely reminiscent and redolent of the Great Days of Nonconformity, when the Reverent Zephaniah Habbakuk Johnson penned, in words of frenzied flame, "A Blazing Brand to Lighten Lousy Laggards," in thundrous answer to Pastor Smite-them-Hip-and-Thigh Jackson's blood-boiling and cranium-cockling "Well of Whitewash to Purify Protestant Punks." But, as befits the declining industry of soul-saving, the "virginal chaste names" of these degenerated relics of holiness of our own day are softer, milder, gentler, sloppier; "The Heavenly Howler," "Divine Dribblings," "Godly Gobblings," "Treachle for the Tired," and so on.

Alas for Piety! Those were the days—the good old Gospel Times—when Christians of all sects, Catholic, Protestant, and Nonconformist (with the honourable exception of the Quakers), were accustomed, when they were powerful enough, to tear-out each others' tongues and entrails, to burn one another alive, to exhaust their dictionaries of terms of vituperation for fellow-Christians who ventured to differ from their own personal interpretation of the Blessed Gospel; these "heretics" practicing similar amenities on their persecutors if they themselves had the power.

The only point, indeed, whereon "Christians" were united in the palmy and juicy days of religion

(What *should* we do without it?) was a simple and positive one: that it is both personally expedient and pleasing to "God"—a most fortunate combination—to harry, torture, mulct and smash those unlucky fellow humans, Pagans, Jews, and Freethinkers, who, by tradition or conviction, find themselves unable to swallow the blessed Gospel of Christ, ironically called "The Prince of Peace."

By the grace of Divine Providence we discovered just recently, on the marble-topped table of a village tea-shop, an odd copy of one of the little, wee sheets whose existence we have mentioned. This particular specimen is labelled *Gospel Gleanings*; it is priced—rather extravagantly, we think—at One Penny; and it hails, as might be expected, from Paternoster Row, that home and museum of morbid, musty, degenerated and moribund theology, still haunted by the gaunt and grizzled black crows with artful eyes who serve "The Master," and apparently grow fat and flourishing on the proceeds.

This particular issue of *Gospel Gleanings* contains a little article called "The Atheist's Prayer," evidently the star-turn of the number, and to this we sped with eager eyes, with the joyous anticipation of the collector of literary oddities. Nor were we disappointed. Our readers may like to share in our discovery. It is not merely for fun that we analyse this fragment of religious art; but also to try to "get at" the arcana of pious psychology.

"The Atheist's Prayer" begins with a general exordium: "It must be an awful feeling for one who has said 'No God for me!' and denied the existence of a Creator, to find himself in a position of distress and danger, with none to turn to for help or deliverance!"

It must! Only it so happens that no Atheist makes that particular remark; and it is evident that the anonymous scribbler knows no more of Atheism than a white mouse of the differential calculus. We ourselves should find it an even awfuller feeling were we to try to write dogmatically on subjects whereof we had not the slightest knowledge. But there is no accounting for religious taste; and holy ethics are equally mysterious.

There is another paragraph of this sacred stuff, wherein the veracious writer expresses "the deepest pity for those" who have not a nice, kind, hell-fire and damnation God like *he* has. "And what a world it is to be alone in, *without God!*" It may be. But when we consider that being, presumably, *with* "God" does not seem to guarantee any very remarkable show of veracity, accuracy, or intelligence, we cannot help wondering what it is that the wicked Atheist misses. But we are enlightened at once. Thus:—

"But such was Z—the friend of the noted Charles Bradlaugh (with whom he had appeared on the platform), and the zealous distributor of the *Freethinker*." What did this mysterious Z—, who is unfortunately unrecognisable in any of the published "Lives" of Bradlaugh, do "on the platform"? Did he act as low comedian, as a foil to his chief's resonant efficiency? Did he dust the chairs! Was he Commander-in-Chief of the Water-Bottle? Judging by the specimens given of his intellectual activities, he can scarcely have been any kind of colleague. His Chief would not have stood him for five seconds. Still, "such was Z—" Such! "Such," no doubt, for he is merely the creation of a morbid Christian imagination.

The anonymous and slanderous author of this strange fragment of biography imagines that Bradlaugh edited the *Freethinker*! "Such," again, is the historical accuracy of "such" pious scribblers; and "such," once more, is the psychological effect

of Christianity (or, indeed, of any kind of supernaturalism) on the mediocre intellect.

This unique fellow, Z—, lived at West B—, wherever that may have been; we suggest West Buncombe; and here "a terrible epidemic of smallpox had broken out." So terrible, indeed, was it that "the authorities almost lost their heads in the endeavour to cope with it." Even the prayers of the pious failed to stay the plague; for "God," who had sent it, was in a very devil of a temper, and bent on sending as many as possible of his "children" to blazes. Z—, being at that time an Atheist, was naturally, as all Freethinkers are, a drunkard, a coward, and a fool; intemperance, cowardice and folly being unknown failings in religious communities, excepting, of course, amongst infidels like this "friend of the noted Charles Bradlaugh."

We will return to our lamb of God, Z—. He "felt uneasy; what should he do?" His blood was "inflamed by alcohol," and, in his terror, he fancied that he would have less chance of catching the prevailing infection, if he would "sign the pledge." So, "alone in the world," as he was, utterly without God, this "friend of the noted Charles Bradlaugh," trembling with superstitious fears, groaning in spirit at the bitter beer that flooded his veins, dreading at each step to break out into spots, managed, with Christ's help, to propel himself "to a coffee house, where temperance meetings were held." Here he "told the proprietor what he wanted."

Let us picture this pious and imaginary meeting: falling swooning across the threshold of this "Good Pull-up for Carmen," the about-to-be-saved Z— is received into the loving and Christian arms of the proprietor, who happily is not at the moment laden with the sausage-and-mash and "boiled jam" of his profession. In a voice shaken by Atheism, cowardice, and more "doubles" and Worthingtons than our modesty allows us to record, Bradlaugh's old and valued friend manages to stammer out his mission to the Pussyfoot Boniface. That worthy as promptly fetches the pledge-book and . . . opens it.

A "religious" colloquy follows; for it is too good a chance for either the teetotal tradesman or our pious author to let slip. The devout restaurateur points out that only by "God's help will Z— be able to 'keep the pledge.'" However, "Z— signed, and left him, and went home."

But ah! Z—, "zealous distributor of the *Freethinker*," could not hold out during the night. Darkness was full of terror to him, as it is to all infidels. What were Charles Bradlaugh and the *Freethinker* to him when he blew the candle out? (Why a candle? Because all godly people used to pray by candle-light.) Like all unbelievers he lay awake in the dark, trembling at the sins of his soul, dreaming horribly of Doom, Judgment-Day, Hell, the Devil, Everlasting Life, Immortal Worms, and all the other spiritual amenities wherewith Christianity is said to console us. Worse than all—if we dare hint at such a scandal—there was an Unknown Presence in the room; and we all know what that means. In other words, poor, sinful Z— received a midnight visit from the late Jesus Christ or his representative, who descended from "heaven," and climbed down the chimney, or crept through the key-hole, or clambered through the window, (if Z— had been so thoughtful as to leave it open), or perhaps did all three (for "All things are possible with God"), in order to save his wretched, drunken, lonely, shaking friend from Atheism and smallpox.

A noble picture of the influence of Christianity, truly. What should we do without it?

"The noted Charles Bradlaugh" was now, of course, nowhere with his crew while friend, who surrendered to his Blessed Saviour without a groan. After such an experience Z— naturally began to doubt the efficacy of Atheism. For the first time a strange idea flashed across what should have been his mind. "But Mr. — believes in prayer, and he seems a shrewd man. Perhaps he is right, and there is something in it." He was right; there is "something in it"; some evil dope that means an end to all chance of sound happiness to humanity until it is expelled for ever from the brain of mankind.

This little masterpiece of mendacity continues in the usual way; all the age-long accessories are there. He "fought" his thoughts, "but a stronger than he was present, and a power to which he was a stranger, and which he had denied, overcame him, and forced the proud infidel on to his knees—*alone with God.*" There follows a delicious piece of greasy unctuousness, written evidently with the consciousness that the pious biographer has done his work well and completely; "What he prayed for I cannot tell you; it is registered in heaven." If that be the case, we protest that the system of registration in vogue in "heaven" needs overhauling. We should not mind a quiet five minutes with the head clerk. But seriously, here is an holy scribe who invents a yarn, every word of which bears overwhelming evidence of its falsity, and who actually drags in "heaven," which is the same thing as "God," as a witness to his veracity. Such—we love that "such"—is the effect of Christianity on its victims; and such are the ethical implications of religion; and such is Protestant regard for truth.

If there were any sort of "God" in "heaven," and he kept a register of truth, the inventor of "The Atheist's Prayer" would cut a strangely poor figure; still, he might quote Romans iii. 7. And Paul's "God" might accept the defence. But what a pretty religion is Christianity. And there are real people about, some of them "educated"—God help us!—who ask, seriously and solemnly, (a) What we should do without it, (b) What we intend to "put in its place," (c) Why we object to it, anyway?

On our oath, we think that the April, 1929, issue of *Gospel Gleanings* is a complete answer to these cavillers.

We will return for a last fleeting glimpse of Z—. After his conversion his newly-found friend Jesus got him a job in the very nick of time, in answer to his prayer for work; this must have been all the easier for Jesus, for Z— was by profession a bricklayer; and "God's" son, being a carpenter in his boyhood, no doubt still has influence in the building trade. All this proves that Christianity is not only true, but good business as well. And, in a commercial country like England, it is surely hypercritical to object to anything that pays.

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

### Self Love.

SIN of self-love possesseth all mine eye  
 And all my soul and all my every part;  
 And for this sin there is no remedy,  
 It is so grounded in ward in my heart.  
 Methinks no face so gracious is as mine,  
 No shape as true, no truth of such account;  
 And for myself mine own worth to define,  
 As I all other in all worths surmount.  
 But when my glass shows me myself indeed,  
 Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity,  
 Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;  
 Self so self-loving were iniquity.  
 'Tis thee, myself, that for myself I praise,  
 Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

## Atheist or Agnostic?

AGNOSTIC, most decidedly.

I have a good many objections to "Atheist" as a term, to Atheism as a theory, and as various militant Atheists have lately been scorning "Agnostic" and "Agnosticism," some reply seems necessary.

Atheism presupposes Theism. Atheist presupposes Theist; and thus Atheist and Atheism are not primary terms, but secondary. The Atheist describes himself as a negative to a prior positive, and by so doing admits a precedence to his opponents—an artless flattery in which I at least do not wish to be implicated. No "second fiddle" label for me, if I can help it.

Atheists seem to me to be victims of their own prejudices. They show it in various ways, if which that of the term they describe themselves by is one of the least mischievous. Theist and Theism are to them like King Charles was to Uncle Dick. The Theists with whom they are acquainted are chiefly Christians, to a lesser extent Jews, and to a still less extent Mahomedans. All these three sects hold Theism, which for our present purpose are identical. They consider that the riddle of the universe is explained by (postulating) a Creator God who is All Powerful, All Wise, and Perfectly Moral, who interferes in the affairs of men, and has at various times "revealed" himself. Implicitly and overtly these Theists postulate a Perfect God. Atheists can see no evidence of this perfection, nor of interference (special or otherwise) in the affairs of men. There is no sign of your perfect God and your so-called "revelations" are delusions, says the Atheists to the Theists—and they are right. But then they go on to say: "Therefore there is no God."—which is bad logic. The Atheist, suffering from prejudice again, shows by this illogical conclusion, that he gives far too much importance to the crude Theists of his acquaintance. He does not stop to inquire if the views of these primitive religious people really exhaust the subject of Theism. Although he is so scornful of the intellect of religious people, he does behave as if they had said the last word on Theism. But they haven't.

What inherent impossibility is there in supposing this universe to have been created by a God who is *not* absolutely all powerful, all wise, perfectly moral? Postulate a creator who though immeasurably greater than us has yet some little failings, and Theism can be made a theory that will hang together. Or rather, a great number of quite plausible theories could be formed on a basis of a great but still not quite perfect God.

But in his prejudice the Atheist will have none of them. He does not study the universe dispassionately. In his rebound from Christian crudities he is obsessed with the idea of proving a negative. His main purpose is to "prove" there is no God. And, of course, he finds what he seeks—a blank. He will, for instance, reduce life and personality to a chemical reaction, and do it with a triumphant sapience that would be rather irritating if there were not something humorous in it.

What's in a name?—there is a good deal in a name. What do I require in the name that describes me, intellectually speaking? *Not* a term that orients me in relation to other men, but in relation to the greatest of all intellectual matters, or (to put it better still), the sum of all intellectual matters, *i.e.*, the riddle of the universe. The Atheist, by the very term, has one eye cocked at the Theists all the time, and does not face the riddle squarely. His attention is distracted. Half his time he is busy telling these other people they are wrong, and the other half he is committing the intellectual impropriety of asserting very loudly that he has solved the riddle. With the former attitude I, as an Agnostic, am not essentially concerned. It is, so to speak, a private affair of the Atheists. But the other attitude is the one to which I as an Agnostic do most strongly and fundamentally object. In fact, much as both may dislike it, I roundly class the Atheist and the Theist together as committing the worst of intellectual sins in regard to ultimate questions of cosmogony. They are both *too cocksure*. To put it bluntly, they both seem to be troubled with swelled heads. When the Theist and the

Atheist both (in effect) say they *know* the Agnostic more modestly says he does not know.

The Agnostic is usually considered as a person who gives tremendous deference to the doubt. The cocksure people (in their haste) think the Agnostic is a colourless negative sort of a person. But the Agnostic is not negative, and though judicial, he is not thereby neutral, for he is too active. When up against the cosmic mysteries, the doubt which the Agnostic has about the cocksure "solutions" of the Theist and Atheist is not solely or even chiefly because of their inherent improbability or (at least) insufficiency. It is because he can see that many other solutions are possible. To use rather slap-dash language, the Agnostic looks on the Universe as a bag of mystery containing many tricks, whereas both the Atheist and the Theist think it only contains one trick. These latter, not having the large view of the Agnostic, look on him merely as a doubter of their own odd tricks.

The Theist has let a child-like imagination run riot. The Atheist, in cantankerous contrariness, as I believe, has deliberately stultified his imagination. The Agnostic has an active but scientific imagination which does not run riot. On the one hand, it gives him an increased appreciation of the profundities of the mysteries of the universe which prevents any swelled-headed assumption of having solved them—are certain to make him doubt his capability of comprehending them. But on the other hand, if there are any cracks in the barriers, this alert imagination is likely to get him on their track whilst the self-stultified Atheist remains a smug and self-complacent prisoner.

If a man die shall he live again? Yes, says the Theist. No, says the Atheist. *There's a doubt about it*, says the Agnostic.

If a man die is he done for? No, says the Theist. Yes, says the Atheist, *There's a doubt about it*, says the Agnostic.

If a man die shall he live again? *I know*, say both the Theist and the Atheist. *I don't know*, says the Agnostic.

Who answers both with intellectual propriety? The Agnostic, decidedly.

BOYD FREEMAN.

## Brighter Wales.

TRUTH peeps out in all kinds of unsuspected places, and statements which at one time would have led the speaker or writer to the stake can now be made with impunity.

For instance, I have been reading, with great interest, Mr. S. L. Bensusan's book *On the Tramp in Wales* (Noel Douglas, 8s.), which is a delightful account of a tour in Wales on a motor called "The Tramp."

The book is not an ordinary holiday book, for it is filled with notes about agricultural knowledge, and about the results of the author's investigation into the life of the Welsh farmer.

The author shows how Wales is slowly throwing off its shackles, but his comments on certain aspects of the life are well worth quoting in full. He refers to the good work of the Women's Institutes and adds:

"Before that time the village had for recreation its chapel, and for contemplation, in scanty leisure, the unbending principles associated therewith. Joy was of the Devil and consequently of the damned. Hell was never far below the feet of men, women and unbaptized children. Song was limited to folklore and hymns, dancing was taboo, all music was national or religious, the younger generation was sternly suppressed, the housewife closed a brief and uneventful season of gaiety when the wedding-ring was placed on her finger; it was possible to pass through village after village without meeting a smile, without finding any among the elders who knew that a merry heart goes all the way, or would even have kept company with one."

According to Mr. Bensusan, the cure for all this sad state of affairs came, not with a religious revival but, with the founding of the Women's Institutes. "The institute and the club have changed the outlook and removed the worst fear."

Mr. Bensusan points out that although the Welsh are Liberal in politics and Dissenters in creed, the organizers of the Institutes and Clubs have "recognized very wisely that these things have nothing to do with the work they have in hand."

Reading between the lines one can glimpse the deadness of life in the old-time Welsh village dominated by the chapel: "To-day the Eisteddfodau concerts have left the village school and the village chapel, and have come to the Institute, and nobody looks askance at whist drives, dances, billiards, or the games room. Thanks to the new interest, the street corner has ceased to attract, or at least to hold the young men, and those who seek culture can find. All these possibilities had no existence less than twenty years ago."

Without subscribing to all the lavish praise bestowed by the author on Women's Institutes, one can agree that secular institutions make people happier and brighter than religious.

NECHELLS.

## Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

### INFORMATION ASKED FOR.

SIR,—I would be grateful to any of your readers who could tell me the name of the book or publication containing the following remarks, which I read six or seven years ago:—

"The majority of modern scholars regard the whole Christian story, from beginning to end, as a myth, derived wholly or in part from the Egyptian legend, current about 1000 B.C., wherein the principal characters are: Osiris, the Father God; Horus, the Only Son and Redeemer of Mankind, born of the Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mother, Isis, through the mystic intervention of Ra; and the Holy Sun Spirit, Ra. Osiris, Horus, and Ra formed the then Holy Trinity, while the Goddess, Isis, was worshipped as an incompatible, and therefore miraculous, combination of Virgin and Mother. If this absurd legend had been first produced about 1000 A.D., every one would have declared it to be a parody or plagiarism upon the Christian story. This would be sound reasoning, therefore it should be equally applicable the opposite way."

I deemed the foregoing a *multum in parvo* in the way of concise information, so I copied it out, but omitted to add the name and date of publication. I now want them for a special purpose.

E. G. ELIOT.

SIR,—It has long appeared to the writer that an intelligent Bishop (I mean one with scientific knowledge and common sense judgment) stands between the Devil and the Deep Sea.

There is the Devil of a huge salary on the one hand, and the deep sea of intelligent criticism on the other. The huge salary is more than human nature can forfeit; and so, the Lord Bishop must play the fool whilst practising the knave.

In this respect he stands where the politician stands when he has attained to a crown Minister's salary.

He draws his salary whilst desiring not to be such a fool as he appears in the estimation of ordinary folk.

The smart business man would say, "Well! that is good business."

It is at the same time base "materialism," but the clergy never tire of advising us to carry ourselves beyond the material things of earth, in the hope of rising to those eternal "flats" in the skies, where there are many mansions.

SINE CERRE.

### RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS.

SIR,—Every time I see it stated in your columns that Freethinkers ought to withdraw their children from religious instruction at school, I am inclined to wonder whether my reasons for not doing so in the case of my own daughter represent merely a rationalization of my real perfidy to the Cause.

The son of a Freethinker, I can remember my interest in the Scripture Lessons as a boy. Yet, the

slightest hints from my father were enough to keep my doubts active and critical faculties wide awake. At the age of seven or eight I had reached a stage that might be compared with that of Bishop Barnes or Dean Inge to-day; I regarded my father's Atheism as utter folly, feeling that "there must be a kind of a something." I already rejected Christian dogma, and thenceforth regularly gained prizes and certificates for my acquaintance with them.

Not only did I learn something of religion at school, I regularly went to Sunday-school, too! I look back with gratitude to the inept lady teachers whose failure to answer the questions I took a fiendish pleasure in asking, helped me on the road to a really outspoken Freethought position. The choicest morsel of my boyhood's experience of Religion, however, was when the curate at the Sunday-school learned that I had not been baptized and had an Atheist father, whereupon he suggested that I should be baptized without telling my parents, which led me to decide that I had had enough of Sunday-school.

At fifteen my Freethinking became something that I saw no cause for hiding. I voluntarily ceased taking any part in religious services, kept my eyes open and head conspicuously upright during prayers at school, carried on propaganda in my class and read a paper in the school Debating Society on "God and the Unknown." This last brought the Headmaster into the arena with a commentary on my arguments which was published in the next issue of the School Magazine; the Doctor of Philosophy's criticism, unfortunately, contained no quotation from the schoolboy's thesis!

I believe that my father was right in not withdrawing me from religious instruction at school. So far as my little girl of nearly nine is concerned, she would certainly think that I was being horribly unfair if I exercised my right to withdraw her, and I am unwilling to give her any grounds for criticizing the quality of the freedom I advocate. "Certainly, if you want to go," was my reply when she asked me if she could accompany her little friend to Sunday-school. After a year of it she asked if she might stop going, and permission has been given with at least equal willingness.

Children are not going to be made Freethinkers by parents putting them in a position that may lead to their social ostracism, and I reject the right of withdrawal as no justice at all. It is some consolation to tell the bigots that the religion my child does get taught looks like providing all the material I need to make it appear to her as a supremely ridiculous thing.

P. VICTOR MORRIS.

### A SUGGESTED EXCURSION FOR LONDON FREETHINKERS.

SIR,—It has been suggested that an outing be arranged for members and friends of the Movement.

As a result, the Executive can arrange for a party to leave Waterloo Station, on Sunday, September 8, about 10 o'clock, for Dorking, at a charge of 7s. per head, to include, return rail fare, cold meat lunch, and plain tea.

The Executive will have to guarantee a certain number, and arrangements will be proceeded with, only, provided sufficient definite promises are received.

Will those wishing to go please notify the General Secretary, at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, Telephone No. City 0041, not later than August 12. The notification must be considered a definite and responsible promise.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

### CHURCH PARADES.

SIR,—In view of the resolution passed at the last N.S.S. Conference, in Manchester, the following will be of interest to your readers:—

Extract *Manchester Guardian* July 24, 1920.

Mr. Thurtle (Lab. Shoreditch) asked whether in view of the unpopularity of compulsory Church Parades with many of the Troops, the Secretary for War would secure that in future, such parades should not be compulsory.

Mr. Shaw (War Minister) replied that the matter was fully considered by a Committee, which reported in 1925, and which recommended that no change should be made.

Mr. Thurtle suggested substitutory private Bible Study in the Barrack-rooms. (Laughter.)

Such is the result of serious effort to achieve some of the practical objects of the N.S.S. Not much encouragement here for Repeal of the Blasphemy Law! Evidently the Labour Party's mentality is no different to its predecessors.

H. BLACK.

### Society News.

MR. GEORGE WHITEHEAD addressed seven meetings at Plymouth under ideal weather conditions. The audiences were good, and listened attentively at each meeting. The only excitement was caused on two evenings by a local exponent of religion, who was quite sure Charles Bradlaugh had recanted on his death-bed, his daughter being cited as the authority on one occasion, and his wife on another. The religious lie dies very slowly. Another incident worth noting was in connexion with a well known religious missionary of Hyde Park, who was in Plymouth for the Wesleyan Conference, and took the opportunity of holding an outdoor meeting, to inform the people what liars Secularists are, and what a "boshy" paper is the *Freethinker*. In answer to a letter written by the Secretary of the Plymouth N.S.S., inviting him to justify these statements on the platform, a reply was received five days later, to say the gentleman had returned to London, or he would have been willing to substantiate his remarks. Other statements he made reflecting on one of the London Branches will be investigated, and the missionary may discover that speeches made in Plymouth may have an unpleasant echo in London.

A BIG crowd was awaiting the arrival of Mr. Clayton at Great Harwood on Monday, July 22. A Religious denomination in the town had brought along a champion in opposition, but as rain commenced to fall before the lecture ended, it was decided to arrange a debate for the following Monday, the subject being, "Is There a God."

The address at Ladbarn, on Wednesday created a great amount of interest, and although there was no opposition, there is certainly going to be some at future lectures, if the signs are anything to go by.

At Crawshaw Booth, on Friday, some interruption was caused by a drunk, but the pleasing thing to note in these new places, is that we are getting people to listen to the Freethought message, and to take an interest in it.—C.J.

### National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD 26 JULY, 1929.

PRESIDENT, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Neate, Moss, Clifton, Corrigan, Hornibrook, Mrs. Quinton, junr., Miss Kough, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed, and the monthly Financial Statement accepted.

New members were accepted for West Ham, West London, and the Parent Society. Various items of correspondence were dealt with, and a grant made to the South London Branch.

Mrs. E. Venton was elected to represent the N.W. Eng. Group on the Executive, in the vacancy caused by the appointment of the General Secretary.

Proposals for lectures at Glasgow, and Stratford, were dealt with, and the Secretary instructed to act.

Suggestions for an outing were discussed, and the Secretary was asked to prepare an announcement.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.5, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Sherlocks Road, Walliam Green): Saturday, 7.45, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—A Lecture. Sunday, 7.45, Effie Road, Walliam Green Station, Various Speakers.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Messrs. James Hart and R. G. Lennard; 3.30, Messrs. E. Betts and B. A. Le Maine; 6.30, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and A. H. Hyatt. Freethought meetings every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. J. Hart and R. G. Lennard. Every Friday, at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* can be obtained outside Hyde Park during our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith).—No Meeting.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. F. Mann.—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S.—No Meeting.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Brockwell Park, 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan; Wednesday, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mr. F. Mann; Friday, Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, 8.0, Mr. F. Mann.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Moor, near North Road, entrance): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beaumont Street and Lodge Lane): Monday, August 5, 7.30, Mr. J. V. Shortt—A Lecture.

MR. J. T. BRIGHTON will lecture at Queen Street, Spenny-moor, on August 2, at 7.15, subject—"Is There a Life After Death." On August 3, at Stanley (Anthony Street): 7.15, subject—"Christianity and Morals."

### Miscellaneous Advertisements.

A BUSINESS MAN writes: "Some years ago I engaged an Accountant to write up my annual accounts, and send the Returns for Income Tax purposes to the Inspector of Taxes. I had been greatly bothered in previous years with this matter. I believe it is an advantage in every way for anyone in business, whether large or small, to pay an Accountant to deal with the authorities, as the fee is more than saved by securing all, and full, allowances and deductions due under the Income Tax Acts."—Write to ACCOUNTANT, 11 Salisbury Road, Forest Gate, E7, if you need help with your business accounts.

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Dr. Sechehaye in the "Swiss Medical Review.")

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