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

Views and Opinions.

God and Modern Knowledge.

I HAVE been glancing through a recent encyclopedic publication of about 1,100 pages, which, written by twenty-four experts on as many branches of knowledge, is a marvel of cheapness in these days of dear printing. That *An Outline of Modern Knowledge* can be issued at the low price of 8s. 6d. is evidence that books on subjects such as the volume deals with are still published at too high a price. For this is not a volume of reprints of the work of dead authors. Presumably each author is paid, each author has some standing in that portion of the world of knowledge with which he deals, and the book is well printed and well produced. Why cannot other books be published, not at the same price, but at least at less than the guinea, or thirty shillings, or even two guineas, which are still asked by publishers? The main reply is, I fancy, that knowing that a certain number of people must buy a new book that appears on their subject, publishers decline to take the ordinary trade risks, but make up their mind to publish a small edition at a large price and make their profit out of those who simply must buy. It is a kind of polite species of highway robbery, in which the reader is held up to make an extravagant payment for something he is almost compelled to have. Of course, there are plenty of good books, at a low price, but these are mainly popular summaries. One wants to see new authoritative works, and particularly translations of foreign works of importance brought down to something like a reasonable figure.

The Round Peg in the Square Hole.

I am not intending anything like a review of the book, but desire to call attention to the essay on *The Idea of God*, by the Rev. Professor W. R. Mathews, as an example of the way in which these things are done. Professor Mathews is the Dean of King's

College, London, and is also Professor of the Philosophy of Religion in the University of London. The authorities of King's College, founded as a theological college, naturally see to it that downright heresy is kept under, but the University of London, founded by Freethinkers to see that theology was at least kept in its place, could hardly have made a worse choice of a Professor to instruct students in the philosophy of religion. For, taking the present essay as a fair sample, Professor Mathews tells his readers everything they need not know, and nothing at all of what they ought to know concerning the philosophy of religion, and about the idea of God.

These be hard words, but I can make my meaning clear, and I think my justification complete, by taking an illustration from the world of biology. What would be said of a board of governors who selected a Professor to write on the subject of biology without giving his readers or his students any idea of the evolution of biological forms? He would be the laughing stock of everyone concerned. Everyone knows that in the study of biology you simply cannot leave evolution out. You may lean to this or that theory, you may talk a lot of flapdoodle about the urge behind evolution, or the working out of some divine purpose in evolution, but you simply cannot leave out the fact that the human form is an animal form, and it is derived in some way from lower forms of animal life. A teacher who left this aspect of his subject untouched, would soon be reminded that we were living in the twentieth, not the eighteenth century.

* * *

Hamlet Minus the Prince.

What is true of the physical structure of man is equally true of his psychological structure, of his institutions, and of his beliefs. Evolution is something that is true everywhere or nowhere. The idea that the physical structure of man comes from the animal world while his mental structure is elsewhere derived, or that natural forces are responsible for the evolution of a planet while it requires something else to account for living beings belongs to that class of fantastic absurdities which shows how far many of our leading "thinkers," even those who figure as scientific teachers, have to travel before they can be said to conduct their thinking along scientific lines.

For here in a work with the title of *An Outline of Modern Knowledge*, we have the essay on the philosophy of religion written by a man who, save that some of the writers quoted have written within recent years, simply ignores modern knowledge altogether. The unprepared reader who goes to Professor Mathews' essay will leave it knowing nothing whatever of the light that modern knowledge casts on the whole question of religion. Even in the short bibliography that is printed at the conclusion of the essay, there is no mention of a single work by one of the very numerous body of anthropologists who have

written on the origin and development of the idea of God. Every writer selected is one who writes on behalf of some sort of a God. With other subjects the writers generally take the evolutionary view and give readers something of an historical view of the subject. Professor Mathews writes as though nothing whatever is known of the real nature of the god-idea, and so keeps his readers completely in the dark concerning the fact that in the light of a knowledge of origin "God" is an exploded hypothesis.

Naturally, a man such as Professor Mathews, has never heard of such a thing as a reasoned disbelief in God, which finds expression in a scientific Atheism. He has become aware of the Agnostic, but that appears to be mainly because no one is quite certain what anyone means by it, because it does leave room for a speculative belief in God, and finally because it allows him to point out that Agnosticism is self-contradictory because, "If I know that I cannot know Ultimate Reality, then I know enough of the nature of Ultimate Reality to know that it is unknowable by us." What is quite a sound criticism of the average Agnostic desiring to escape the odium of that terrible word Atheism, but which opens Professor Mathews to the retort that "God" has as much to do with "Ultimate Reality" as a horse chestnut has to do with a chestnut horse. On that subject we may write in a subsequent article.

* * *

Flapdoodle.

Now this method of dealing with the subject of God and religion cannot be accidental, it is deliberate. Professor Mathews and the editor of the volume, Dr. W. Rose, know quite well what has been done in the direction of laying bare the origins of religious belief. But the subject is simply ignored, and we are left "in the air." Neither can it be that it was impossible to get a genuinely scientific statement of the present position of religion in the world of science—as distinguished from the world of workers in scientific laboratories. That could very easily be done; and in a volume which claims at giving an outline of modern knowledge the genuinely modern attitude towards religion simply ought to have been stated. It is the one blot on the volume that this has not been done. To select as the sole person who is permitted to handle religion, a clergyman, whose main work in life is to bolster up accepted religious beliefs, and who therefore carefully avoids all that is to be said against them, and who would have written, substantially, as he has written, had he been writing in the eighteenth century, is playing false to the public. It is a lesson in the art of religious bamboozlement.

What is the modern position? The earlier position was to start with the existence of the belief in God and state the reasons for and against the rationality of the belief. This was the general position up to, say, sixty or seventy years ago. So much was this the case that even those who stood out for a genuinely Atheistic position were content to largely rest their case upon the unreasonableness of the belief in a God, upon the faults in the construction of the world, upon the pain and evil in animal and human society. Then came the era of evolution and of scientific anthropology; and that transformed the whole position. It placed Atheism upon a positive basis, instead of upon a negative one. It placed the belief in God upon substantially the same basis as the delusional beliefs of a dipsomaniac or a lunatic. As medical science showed these latter to rest upon a derangement of the physiological and nervous system, so the belief in gods and ghosts in souls and a future existence were shown to rest upon a basis of perverted reasoning. The gods belonged to the same class of errors as the belief in a

flat earth, or a solid sky, or the thousand and one errors man makes in his slow and stumbling journey towards the truth. In science it is no longer a question of whether the visions of the neurotic are glimpses of a spiritual world, but only what are the causes that have given rise to these delusions. The question is no longer historical, save so far as history provides material for study, but psychological. We do not ask whether Luther saw the devil in the castle of Wurtzburg, but *why* he believed he saw him. To-day science does not ask whether the gods exist, it asks why men came to believe they exist. It is the cause of the existence of the belief, not its accuracy, that is the question to-day.

* * *

Which Road?

That is why Professor Mathews' essay is such a blot upon an otherwise useful volume. The essential modern question is never touched. If the essay had been followed by a strictly scientific one, on the other side, even if the whole subject had been left out, the situation would not have been so bad. As it is, one can only say quite plainly that it is a striking example of the dishonesty of our public men when dealing with the question of religion. If men who deal with religion in the way that it is dealt with by Professor Mathews were ignorant of the advance of modern knowledge one might pass it by with a feeling of pity. But that is not the case. These men know what kind of light anthropology casts upon religious origins; they do not dispute the findings of the anthropologists, they simply leave them unnoticed, trusting that their readers will be sufficiently uninformed not to detect the way in which they are being fooled.

Once again let me put the situation. It is an accepted fact in modern anthropology that all over the world man arrives at the belief in gods and ghosts and souls through a misunderstanding of his own mental states and misreading of the causes of the phenomena around him. There are differences of opinion as to the exact nature of these misunderstandings, or the sequence of various phases in the early stages of religious development, but there is a general agreement, just as to-day there is a consensus of opinion on the fact of evolution, whatever disagreement there may be as to its mechanism. But if this general agreement exists as to the conditions under which the belief in gods came into existence, an enquiry as to its truth, is just about as reasonable as an enquiry concerning the probable or possible existence of the curious animals that a dipsomaniac sees parading round his room. The honest and intelligent writer has, therefore, one of two courses from which to choose. He may reject the conclusions of modern science and go on weighing the reasons for and against the existence of God. Or he may accept these conclusions and regard the question of the existence of God as finally settled. And if he chooses the latter course there is no room for a suspended judgment, there is no room for Agnosticism, whether of the reverent or irreverent variety. The inevitable conclusion is Atheism. You cannot marry the primitive delusion to the modern fact. And the attempt to force such a union results in that crop of insincerities and hypocrisies which make so much of our public life a disgrace.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The situation that has not its duty, its ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes, here, in this poor miserable, hampered, despicable, actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy ideal; work it out therefrom, and, working, believe, live to be free. Fool! the ideal is in thy self.—*Carlyle*.

Ignorance never settles a question.—*Disraeli*

The Price of Priestcraft.

"The services of the clergy are imaginary, and their payment should be of the same description."

G. W. Foote.

"The State is founded on follies, the Church on sins."

Landor.

A NUMBER of English farmers are in active revolt against the tyranny of the ecclesiastical tithe, and they are demanding relief from an iniquitous annual charge which presses very heavily upon agriculture in this country, and often makes the difference between success and failure in a basic industry. The Farmers' Union has passed a resolution demanding a Government inquiry into the tithe question. In county after county the farmers have been driven to resist payment, thousands of farm-labourers are temporarily unemployed, and a number of tithe sales following distraint orders have been the scene of angry demonstration and violence.

The belated revolt against the "sacred tenth," as the tithe has been called, is the result of the prevalent agricultural depression. That the ecclesiastical tithe is a real burden may be seen by the bare information that the total annual payment of tithe in this country alone amounts to £3,214,000, which is managed by the governors of Queen Anne's Bounty as trustees of the Anglican Church. This money is used for the benefit of the priests of this Church, which is but one of the many religious organizations of the country. What right has this one particular Church to derive its priests' incomes from the cultivation of the land, and from the capital, muscle, and brain of the farmer and his men? Why should the prime food producer be penalized for the benefit of the priests of an individual Church?

The ecclesiastical tithe is a grim relic of the Ages of Faith, and is a part of the great price paid by this country for Priestcraft. As long ago as Anglo-Saxon days every village supported the local priest, and gave him a piece of the village land, the glebe, for his support. This generosity was further supplemented by giving the priest one tenth of their produce, which was then paid in kind. The landowner paid tithe on everything that yielded increase "by the act of God." He paid tithe on corn, hay, cattle, poultry, and other things; a great part of the country was liable to tithe, but Church property itself was exempted, as in the case of monastic land and nunneries. Not only is the tithe a tax upon agriculture, but it must be realized that land which is tithable actually pays two rents, one to the landlord for the use of the land, and another to the owner of the tithe out of the produce of the land.

The demand of present-day farmers for a public inquiry into this iniquitous state of affairs is strengthened by the knowledge that the so-called Church of England is only nominally the national church of this country. It is but one of many competing religious organizations, and although it has Parliamentary sanction and support, it only counts on the membership of one in nineteen of the population. So overwhelming, indeed, is the case against this legalized robbery of the "sacred tenths," that we cannot but hope that before very long an adequate response will be given to the moving appeal of the distressed English farmers.

The Protestant Reformed Church, "as by law established," has been manufactured by Parliament, and from time to time has been under the hands of its creator for repairs and alterations. The creator is a purely political association known as the House of Commons, having no religion in particular, and looking upon the theology which it patronizes as a special

constable, whose duty it is to frighten ordinary citizens from attending too much to the affairs of life by promising them rewards when they are no longer alive. This iniquity and injustice of the tithe shows once more that there is more room for drastic Parliamentary action.

This wickedness of the State Church ecclesiastics concerns each and all of us, men and women alike. For the legal theory of this country makes us all parties to the constitution of this Protestant Reformed Church, "as by law established." If it were in the United States of America, or any of the British Colonies, where no such thing as a State Church exists, we need not care a button what humbug or hypocrisy went on in a particular Church, for it would be none of our affair. But the legislation of the Houses of Parliament makes us all partners in this Anglican Church, and compels us to be, as it were, privy to its dishonesty and chicanery. The rise and fall of the national currency is important, but not nearly so important as the rise and fall of the national intelligence. The general public is absolutely innocent of the wiles of Priestcraft, and it is imperative that this should be altered. The public, like little Red Riding Hood, believes Holy Mother Church to be a benevolent grandmother, while she is, in reality, but a very greedy wolf. The plight of the farmers proves this beyond cavil and dispute.

MIMNERMUS.

Studies in the New Testament.

V.

THE GENEALOGIES OF JESUS.

It would be difficult to find any subject connected with the New Testament so thoroughly unprofitable as the question of the genealogies of Jesus given in Matthew and Luke. Hundreds of books and essays and studies have been written upon them, and these works only prove that their authors differ as to any real solution of the problem quite as much as Matthew and Luke differ from each other and from the genealogies in the Old Testament. It would be safe to say that ninety-nine out of every hundred Christians fervently wish the genealogies anywhere but in the sacred volume.

The majority of clergymen simply hate a discussion on the subject or any inquiry; and many of the speakers on various Christian platforms are simply too ignorant to discuss it.

The easy way of settling the whole matter is by an appeal to faith. Believe what your holy father-in-God tells you, ask no questions and great will be your reward in heaven.

Now what is the problem? The Messiah expected by the Jews was to be of the lineage of David. Jesus was the Messiah, therefore Jesus was of the lineage of David. But Jesus was *virgin* born, that is, he had no father on earth. He was the Son of God and his mother Mary (who besides being the mother of God's son, was also the Mother of God) was, if anything, of the lineage of Levi. At all events there is no evidence that she came into the line of David at all; how, therefore, could Jesus be descended from David and thus be the Messiah?

It is a pretty problem and so far has upset the equanimity of numberless divines who have attempted to solve the mystery for their perplexed sheep—I mean, flock. But there is worse to come. Matthew and Luke both give a genealogy from David, and it is found not to be a genealogy of Jesus but of Joseph, his reputed father. Why any should be given of Joseph when the real crux of the matter lies in Jesus, has caused more trouble in Christian camps

than even a good many of the unanswerable infidel arguments. It is very amusing to find how few of the great theologians of the nineteenth century boldly raise the problem. For example, Dr. Westcott, in his *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, puts the matter into a note:—

The questions involved in the two genealogies of Our Lord are so numerous and intricate that it is impossible to enter upon them here. The omission of the discussion is of little consequence as it has been most ably conducted by Dr. Mill and Lord A. Hervey . . . Without affirming every detail in the explanations proposed we may be satisfied that every discrepancy can be explained, and more than this is not to be expected in a case, where necessarily much of the history is most obscure. Both genealogies without doubt give the descent of Joseph the universal belief till the sixteenth century—St. Matthew showing his *legal* descent, showing that our Lord was Solomon's *heir*, though the line of Solomon failed in Jehoiachim and St. Luke his natural descent showing that he was *lineally descended* from David through Nathan.

If anybody can make head or tail out of the above balderdash, he is welcome to it; for if ever confusion reigned supreme, whether naturally or expressly, it is in this passage. Why anybody should have his *legal* descent shown and his *lineal* descent shown to prove somebody else was the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Son of David, all in one, I cannot see; and to send me to two works wherein the details are worked out so well, that the sender (that is, Dr. Westcott) doesn't agree with them, and then to claim that the "discrepancies" can be explained (but not told where) is, I think, proof enough that the whole question cannot be faced as it should. It was Dr. Westcott's duty to give a clear, coherent and concise explanation of the genealogies, and he shirked it.

Dean Alford simply cannot meet the position at all. The two genealogies differ from one another, and the great Greek scholar candidly admits that if either Matthew or Luke had the other's genealogy in front of him, there can be no explanation of "their many and unaccountable variations"; and in his Greek edition of the Gospels, he adds, "It is quite beside the purpose of the present commentary to attempt to reconcile the two. It has never yet been accomplished and every endeavour to do it has violated either ingenuousness or common sense. *The two genealogies are both of the line of Joseph and not of Mary.*"

Dean Alford's last declaration will never upset the other theologians who insist on Luke's being really Mary's genealogy and not Joseph's. For they recognize that if Mary was not descended from David, they cannot prove in any way whatever that Jesus was. It is their last straw and wild horses would not compel them to see that Luke says it was Joseph and not Mary who came, through Nathan, from David.

Eusebius quotes Julius Africanus, who says that the reason why Joseph has two fathers, is that Jacob was his real father and Heli, his legal father. Other Catholic theologians have other theories, and Father Conway in *The Question Box*, "admits no theory is absolutely satisfactory." Dr. Tregellas, Dr. Salmon, and Dr. Scrivener leave the question severely alone in their "Introductions" to the New Testament; and, wonder of wonders, so does Dr. Angus in his famous *Bible Handbook* issued, with full revisions, by the Religious Tract Society. Can anything prove more fully how they hate the whole problem?

The Rev. J. B. McClellan, however takes his coat off and puts the gloves on. He is ready to meet the whole army of infidels, and in the first volume of his new translation of the New Testament (1875) will be found what is—to him, of course—a complete refutation of infidel objections.

To boil down his confused and more or less foggy explanation is a hopeless task. I have read it, very carefully, and I am as much in the dark as ever. But it necessary to emphasize that Lord Hervey's explanation referred to by Westcott, is thrown overboard by McClellan. He calls it "utterly untenable." Anybody who takes up the question with the Bible in front of them will see that Matthew divides his list into three parts saying each is fourteen in number. That makes, or ought to make, forty-two, but when one counts the names it is found they only number forty-one. McClellan's verbal jugglery over this point is worth reading if only to see how an ultra-orthodox gentleman can twist himself into a knot. When you have finished with his "proof" and you count again, you will still find forty-one names though he insists the number in each list is "exactly" fourteen. As for the way in which Matthew and Luke contradict each other and in turn the Old Testament, McClellan devotes page after page full of learned references and you can take your choice in the flood of ink. He makes great play with Matthew's word *begat*, and Luke's words *son of*, and to his own complete satisfaction, finally settles the *legal and natural* descents and leaves us all foggy than ever.

It should be borne in mind that all these theologians were convinced believers in the historicity of Jesus, of his reputed father and mother, and of all the names found in the various genealogies. But as there is no evidence whatever for the existence of even Mary, as a living character, it is not beyond the bounds of reason that the whole of the stories written round Jesus are *myths*, the meaning of many of which, are quite forgotten are based on mere conjecture. But even theologians who believe in Jesus are forced to admit that the genealogies in Matthew and Luke present extraordinary features of *magic numbers*. Thus if, as the mystics maintain, seven is a divine number, then it is not surprising that Luke's genealogy consists of seventy-seven names with God at one end and Jesus at the other. And if you add to Matthew's forty-one names, four omitted from the Old Testament records, and the twenty-one (that is 3×7) given in Luke before Abraham, you get sixty-six names. Six is a human number, seven is a divine one, and this proves conclusively that Jesus was both human and divine. Moreover, instead of fourteen names in one of Matthew's groups you only get thirteen, that is $7+6$, again showing you how the idea of Jesus's divine and human nature is worked into a rather unexpected place. But there are many other designed features of mystical numbering in the two genealogies, which explains why the question of discrepancies never worried the true believer. The ordinary Christian who knows about as much of mysticism as my old tin helmet is the one who worries because he can't understand how God's Precious Word could have such obvious contradictions, and the mystic simply smiles and keeps silent.

But how does he eventually answer the persistent infidel? Very simply. The reader will find the best answer given in the *Encyclopedia Biblica*, by Professor von Soden. If Jesus was the genuine Messiah, then he must have been descended from David. No documentary proof is needed whatever. You can dispense with the whole paraphernalia of genealogies. Jesus was the Messiah, he therefore was descended from David, and the ignorant unbeliever can now hide his head in shame. And I am sure that this is the best way to settle all Biblical claims. Believe or be damned. It has the whole weight of Christian tradition behind it, and has, in the past, kept Christians together more than any other method. It is the very core of Christian faith.

H. CUTNER.

Civilizing the Heathen.

SCIENTIFIC and missionary circles in Australia will be profoundly stirred by the publication of *Fiji and the Fijians*, a sternly critical, provocative, and intelligent book by Emeritus Professor Henderson, of the Department of History in the University of Adelaide.

It is an elucidation of the famous journal of the Rev. Thomas Williams, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary in Fiji from 1840 to 1853. Professor Henderson has produced his commentary on this famous old anthropological source book, as he says, "chiefly, but not exclusively, in the interests of anthropological science."

His sharp, penetrating criticisms are directed at the missionaries of that era. But they apply with equal force, according to modern anthropological views, to the work of a great many modern missionaries.

Disease, crime, victimisation are agents of evil for which missionaries are, of course, blameless.

But there is another which many anthropologists believe is just as vicious in principle, if not in motive.

This is the ignorant, ethically prejudiced, and unscientific attempt of many modern church missionaries to graft foreign morals, foreign religious dogmas, foreign economic incentives, and foreign social habits on to entire generations of natives.

Criticism is withheld by most scientists because the missionaries' motives and zeal are honourable and well-intended.

No one but a trained anthropologist really understands native life. An untrained missionary with "white man's ways" over natives may be an agent of great harm, even if his motives and morals are beyond reproach.

The moral uprightness (according to European standards) or the spiritual fervour of the missionaries past and present have never seriously been questioned, nor should they be.

Professor Henderson pays a notable tribute to the unselfishness, bravery, and spiritual sublimity of the Fijian missionaries.

"It was not in moral grandeur or spiritual fervour that the missionaries were wanting," says the professor.

"Had they known more about anthropology they would have shown greater respect for the native customs and institutions.

"Had they understood something about psychology they would have seen the danger of denuding the life of the native of so many of its sustaining interests.

"Had they understood evolution, they would have preserved what was good in the old religion, and grafted something better on to it.

"But they did not understand these things. Very few people in the middle of last century did.

"They undertook one of the most delicate and difficult tasks in the whole range of human activity—nothing less than to change the soul of a people.

"In their attacks on the religion of the people the missionaries were, as we have seen, ruthless, and the effects were far reaching.

"They took much away and left natives in such an impoverished condition inwardly that life was hardly worth living as compared with the olden days.

"The missionaries interfered with everything—their politics, their method of conducting business, their marriage system, their dress, their recreation, and, above all, their religion."

The professor indignantly singles out one missionary, a Joseph Waterhouse, as the worst of all offenders. In the name of the Church, Waterhouse flagrantly and impudently desecrated the sacred gods of the Fijians. To the horror of the natives, he kicked one revered image.

"In blatant and irreverent iconoclasm he surpasses all the missionaries," says the professor. "Is it possible for the missionaries and want of consideration for the religious susceptibilities of others to go further?"

Was the religion of the missionaries themselves so free from imperfection that they could afford to treat the shrines of the natives with such contempt?

Much of their faith was sustaining and noble, he says, but there were also defects and inconsistencies, and "at least one very blasphemous doctrine for which I can find no parallel, even the most cruel beliefs of the Fijians."

Professor Henderson refers to the missionaries' stern denunciation of the Fijians' polytheism and insistence upon the worship of one God.

"The worship of many gods, instead of one, filled the missionaries with horror. But who amongst us, even now, after all the thinking of the last century, knows for certain whether the Almighty stands absolutely alone, or is at the head of a hierarchy?"

Professor Henderson refers to what he calls the fantastic subtleties about One in Three and Three in One, and calls the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity an "improvised mystery."

"If there is no impropriety in believing in three or four Gods, where is the blasphemy in believing in a dozen or a hundred?"

Inflexible orders from stupid bigots in London that the natives should be "decently dressed" and should have only one wife, according to Professor Henderson, played havoc with native life.

The misuse of clothing induced deadly pneumonia and hundreds of natives died.

The disruption of the normal polygamous married life of the Fijians, which was so ordered that each wife was only allowed to have children at intervals of three or four years, soon caused serious infantile mortality.

These things are nearly a century old, but the same mistakes, or ones nearly as grave, are being committed to-day.

No one suggests that all the work of missionaries is so harmful. On the contrary, much of it has been highly beneficial, medical and educative mission work particularly.

But missionaries are still assuming that what is right for us is right for primitive societies. Natives are still being deprived of the essential stimuli of their religion, mystical customs, magic, sexual and economic and political life, which were adequately served by their original culture, and given an unsatisfactory set of stimuli in return.

From the "Sunday Guardian," Sydney, N.S.W.,
June 21, 1931.

Orthodox Jocularly.

ONE thing must be apparent to all those who have occasion regularly to peruse a number of daily and weekly journals, and that is that one can find therein a large increase in the number of jokes and comic stories of which profanity is the pivot. In this respect some papers are distinctly brighter than they were at the beginning of the present century. Indeed there are now appearing paragraphs which would have horrified the orthodox of fifty years since, and which the Editors of that time would not have dared to pass for insertion.

For instance in a Scottish evening paper there appears a "Howler" from a school, of which one of the masters took a holiday in Italy and ascended Vesuvius. On his return he described his experiences in a lecture to the boys, and asked them to write resumés. One essay contained the following:—

"Mr. Blank spent his holiday in Italy and went up many mountains. After a hard climb he went up one of great height and at the top found the creator smoking."

This is evidence of a more flexible mentality than was conceivable in earlier days, and the flexibility is due to the influence of Freethought propaganda. It is in line with the dramatization of the deity in such a production as *The Green Pastures*. Perhaps some tobacco manufacturer may one day bring out a poster advertisement showing the Creator in hiking costume lolling by a roadside and smoking the latest brand of Empire Mixture in a big pipe, or puffing a fat cigar of the *Non Plus Ultra* kind—which, of course, would be the *only* kind appropriate to a gentleman hiker, who is "beyond" everybody.

Even religious journals do not now exclude mildly

humorous references to Noah and the Ark, Jonah, Elijah and the Ravens, Saul and the Asses, etc. Says Noah irritably: "What's all this noise when a man wants to get to sleep?" To which the Elephant replies: "Oh just a bit of a joke! We put the two porcupines in the lion's bed."

One is reminded of how Mark Twain scandalized his religious contemporaries by the ridicule he poured upon several of the narratives of the Holy Bible. Readers of his works will remember the old seadog—a retired skipper—whom he had as a fellow voyager on a trip to the Sandwich Islands. The skipper was a great reader of the Bible, but put his own construction on what he read; and maintained that there was a natural explanation of even the most baffling biblical stories. For example, his explanation of the story of Elijah (whom he persisted in misnaming "Isaac") and the Prophets of Baal, was that though he called for barrel after barrel of water to be poured over his sacrifice on the altar, the liquid was really petroleum; and as he finished his prayer he secretly struck a match on his pants and set the whole altar immediately in a blaze—pretending to the Prophets of Baal that it was fire from Heaven. The Freethought Movement owes a good deal to Mark Twain!

From a credible source the information reaches us that a Scottish clergyman on his return from a visit to Palestine related at a social gathering, that while a company of tourists (himself included) was standing by the Lake of Galilee one of the tourists (an Aberdonian) asked a Lake Boatman what the charge was to ferry him across the Lake. The boatman said "five shilling." But mighty me, man," retorted the Aberdonian, "Whaur I come frae, I could get ferried as far for saxpence!" "Ah but Sir," said the boatman "do not forget that our Saviour walked across this very lake." "Huh," snorted the Aberdonian, "an well he nicht raither than tak a boat!"

Those of us who can remember what the average clergyman of the Victorian Era was like cannot fail to be impressed with the remarkable change that such an incident illustrates! And when we converse with ex-service men who were in Palestine, Mesopotamia and Egypt, we realize how the general attitude to religion has changed in essentials. The horrors of the Great War showed thinking people the futility, if not positive harmfulness, of religious beliefs. So the congregations of worshippers are greatly thinned, and even those who still observe the "forms" as a matter of custom or for social or business reasons do not regard religion as a vital force in their lives, and can joke on Monday about things before which they reverentially bowed or genuflected on Sunday!

This all contains heartening matter for Freethinkers, even when their task seems most difficult! Rome was not built in a day; and the "Great City" of emancipated humanity will also take long to build. But oftener than before we can find in the columns of orthodox papers a fuller representation of serious rationalistic arguments upon the position of the Church; Evolution; "How to Spend Sunday," and similar topics! Let those who bear the torches of Freethought march forward into the future with confidence for theirs is the Greatest of Causes!

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops.

The religious liar is ever with us. No exposure can injure him with his fellow Christians, because when he is exposed his friends are never offended at his lying, they are merely sorry he has been found out, and hope he will have better luck in the future. The latest example of the type is found in the *Sunday Companion* for September 12, a copy of which has just come to hand. As an illustration of the power of prayer, the writer of an article, the Rev. J. F. Lawis, of the United Methodist Church, Beverley, Yorks, says that Charles Bradlaugh was once booked to give a lecture in Birmingham. But a "band of godly men" got together and prayed that God would interpose and prevent the delivery of the lecture. So when the time came for the lecture Bradlaugh rose and

after a few moments stopped, stammered, and then said "I do not know what is the matter with me. I cannot think of anything I was intending to say. Everything has gone from me. The meeting will have to be abandoned."

The best comment on this tale, and Mr. Lawis, is the story told by Phil May. Said one coster to another, "I say, did you tell Bill I was a liar?" "No," came the reply. "I fort he knoo it." There is no need to describe Mr. Lawis. He is a true Christian in spirit and in speech.

The British Association is no more infallible than the Pope, and it is no fault of its most distinguished ornaments if anyone supposes otherwise. When, therefore, the President of the Educational Section, Sir Charles Grant Robertson concluded his address with the passage now to be quoted it is to be understood, and indeed he makes it plain, that he speaks only for himself. Sir Charles (as reported by the *Times*), said: "It is my unshakable conviction that the fundamental place of religion in life must be regarded as an essential preliminary to any further educational advance." Now in this very address the same speaker pointed out that our educational progress has been impeded "because we have refused to solve the fundamental problem of religious instruction." Which, being interpreted into plain English means that, as everyone knows is the case, the real stumbling block to educational advance in this country is, and has been, the "problem of religious instruction." Until it is solved "it is our unshakable conviction," if we may borrow Sir Charles' phrase, that "the aid which our Educational system can increasingly give to this complicated social and economic transformation is being limited because we have refused"—to clear the contending sectarians out of the road, to secularize national education, and to leave it to those concerned "to allocate to institutional religion its harmonious place" (if it ever can have a "harmonious" place) in the task of training for life.

A correspondent in the *Universe* is very sore that recently at Plymouth Mr. John Kensit's party is allowed to shout "No Popery," and a lecturer of the Secular Society, "No God." He thinks the latter shout is bound to follow the former, but he seems particularly angry that the Secularist serves up "a torrent of question-begging blasphemy with the same old sophisms, the same old tricks of speech, the same old chestnuts that have done duty for argument since the days of Charles Bradlaugh and 'Bob' Ingersoll." We seem to have heard this kind of thing before. Is it beyond the bounds of possibility that the correspondent is a converted Christian Evidence follower, and that now, while being *plus royalist que le roi*, he uses the same old replies to our arguments that have done duty on the Christian Evidence Society platform for donkey's years?

We will bet a volume of Bradlaugh against a volume of Catholic theology that, in any case, the angry Catholic or any of his Catholic Evidence Guild friends or those infidel smashers, Dr. Grimley and Fr. Dudley, would renounce the blazes from any debate with the Secularist. The *Universe* never admits any reply to the silly statements found in its pages, and no Catholic Evidence Guild lecturer has the stomach—or the knowledge, for that matter—for a real encounter with an unbeliever. But then discretion is always the better part of valour.

Just a notion. When our pessimistic parsons can take a brief respite from deploring the godlessness of the age and prophesying the inevitable outcome therefrom, they may find time to note that Portsmouth is hoping to save £10,000 a year by closing its prison. There are similar signs and portents for them to observe, when they can perceive without using the distorting mirror of a creed that assumes mankind to be under the woeful necessity of being "saved."

There is more than a touch of irony in the fact that that part of the Church of England now known as "Anglo-Catholic," and making a great parade of its

social and industrial affiliations, and of its "catholic-socialist" priests, should have had its origin in the much vaunted Oxford movement which is about to celebrate its centenary. That movement was contemporary with the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, and with Lord Grey's plans for what was then called "reform." Newman, and even more Keble and Pusey—who did not follow him to Rome—were out to assert the authority of the Church, and, incidentally, to assert the idea of authority, and its divine significance, both in Church and State. Nobody would dream that such modern Anglo-Catholics as the author of a book just published, *The Catholic Faith and the Industrial Order*, by Ruth Kenyon, would claim to be in direct continuity with those ideas. Not that it matters much what the Church of England or any section of it does think about the future "industrial order," for that order, in so far as it is to be better than the present one, will owe nothing to its teaching or example. And if we were called upon to-day to answer old Bishop Ryle's question, "What do we owe to the Reformation?" we should reply that we owe to it the existence of our high-low-broad-moderate-evangelical-ritualistic-anglo-Catholic-Protestant-reformed Church of England, and not very much else. It is too late in the day to pretend that this body, instead of being the anarchical and contending rabble that it is, has made or can make any contribution to the new industrial, or any other, order.

Professor Fearon Halliday discusses in the *British Weekly*, what is True Belief. He concludes that "there are three great beliefs upon which all living religion must rest—the belief in God, in freedom, in immortality." Noting that freedom comes before immortality in the Professor's creed, we were curious as to just what sort of freedom he had in mind, for the ordinary implications of the word and of the thing are not those with which religion is mostly concerned. "We take freedom for granted, but few are free"—free from what? Sin or ignorance? No, but just "freedom to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free." The Professor goes on to deal with "Immortality," the third item of his creed. "It is reasonable to believe in immortality." Why? "Persons are the summit of this world's development." Yes. "They register in their lives and characters the resultant of its achievements, and if they pass into nothingness all history is but a nightmare." The temptation to turn round this dictum is almost irresistible, for it is precisely the belief in "immortality," and the sort of "freedom" with which Christ made people like Torquemada "free," that have made a nightmare of so much history in the past.

The Rev. Courthope Todd contributes to *The Christian*, an attempt to prove that Christian teaching is not incredible. "Men," he says, "are apt to regard what they fail to understand as incredible." In order to assure "cultivated cold-hearted sceptics," "there are many things in the spiritual world that are deemed incredible" that are nevertheless true, the "best argument" is "quiet, calm assurance of a fact. They are usually well versed in the grounds of their opposition." So apologetics, like advertising, consists in repetition; and if you only say the same thing often enough, and with that "calm assurance" that is so marked a feature of the publicity agents for pills and potions, all will be well with religion. Mr. Todd, however, gives an example of Providence which would have been more convincing if we had had the names and addresses of the parties concerned. He says: "Many of God's people have been placed in grievous straits, often not knowing where to turn for the next meal. Help has seemed even to them incredible. From whence should the necessary aid come? In God's own time and way the needs have been met, for 'with God all things are possible.'" It is a pity that lots of poor people in these hard times who "do not know where to turn," don't know the address of Mr. Todd's provider, but perhaps it is only "God's people" to whom He is a friend in need. There are a surprising number of them who, presumably having applied in vain to the channel mentioned by Mr. Todd, have had to seek help at the Labour Exchange or from the Poor Law. Not only does Mr. Todd think "the Lord will provide"; he

also thinks that "mere moral reformation is building a rope of sand," and "both in human nature and in society" transformation "is not a thing incredible when by simple faith 'the wonderful change' takes place." And he actually asks, "why should this be thought incredible?"

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings . . . ! The *Children's Newspaper* suggests:—

After all, Evolution is perhaps not true in Tennessee. Some people go backward.

And the closer they get to the "pure," or original, type of Christianity or Christians, the further backward they go.

While the question of State economy is under discussion, may we suggest that the salaries paid to parsons attached to the Army and Navy, and to prisons be stopped altogether. As the work done by these parsons is purely in the interests not of the State but of the Churches, why not let the Churches pay the chaplains? If the Churches will but make this offer to relieve the national load, we feel sure the over-burdened tax-payer will be duly grateful.

By some mischance the following quotation from Mark Twain strayed into a religious weekly:—

Most people are bothered by the passages in Scripture which they cannot understand, but as for me I always noticed that I was most bothered by those passages which I do understand.

It was, of course, Mark Twain's understanding of those passages which turned him from religion and made him a Freethinker. We hope our pious contemporary appreciates that.

In a Primitive Methodist journal a parson declares that Christians must acknowledge a "social obligation" in regard to the proclamation of the Word of God. His argument is:—

My salvation is a most important matter to me and everybody else. It may be that without salvation I shall become a menace to the community and an undeveloped animal . . . But the same thing is true of the other man. Neither of us is safe if the other is unconverted . . . No man is safe so long as his brother is outside; no land is every truly Christian so long as another one is heathen. As a specimen of Primitive Methodist logic this is certainly primitive. What it appears to imply is that the millions of British people who have ceased to trouble about religion are not to be trusted. It suggests that they should all be regarded as potential blackguards or rogues or criminals. It is encouraging the Christian to mistrust his fellow-men. As a matter of fact, there is nothing to give credence to this so truly Christian piece of slander. Since the majority of British citizens left the churches alone there has been no marked increase in rogerly or crime. Indeed, several jails has been closed, and the people are, in the main, more law-abiding. The parson whose words we have quoted is probably well aware of this. But in the interests of his trade he is trying to invent, with the aid of slander, a social advantage to place to the credit of religion. He is not, we may add, a very original inventor. His contention seems to be merely a variant of the ancient Christian lie about the Freethinker. Of course, if one states that all Christians, by virtue of their religion, and as the result of their religion, are ideal citizens, and that all non-Christians are the exact opposite, then there is no difficulty in convincing the pious of the urgent need for converting the non-religious, as a "social obligation." Incidentally, of course, one obliquely suggests the social importance of, and necessity for, the parson!

A chapel parson tells his flock that they are "in danger of falling victims to a mawkky sentimentality which talks about the Love of God as though there were no such thing as the Anger of God." In other words—keep the Hell-fire burning! The dear brethren, it seems, are likely to fail to appreciate the glad tidings of dear Jesus, if they forget the great necessity for fearing God.

The greater the fear the sweeter the appreciation of the Love. What a funny religion. What would one think of an earthly father who taught his children to fear and dread him in order to teach them to love him?

Denmark is sending China as much typhoid and cholera vaccines as will inoculate 100,000 persons. On the assumption that vaccines really are preventatives, it would seem that Denmark's method of assisting the "heathen" to combat disease is an improvement on the truly Christian method of distributing Bibles and teaching the credulous to rely on God for help. This latter method, which was relied on in Protestant countries for many centuries, merely allowed disease to have all its own way. On the other hand, the method of Science, which ignores God and relies on human observation, experience, experiment and reasoning, has enabled man to gain some measure of control over disease.

A correspondent asks if we agree with Mr. Edgar Wallace that "the Church of England was founded on the festering corpse of Henry VIII."? Well, one of its most notable defenders, to wit Robert Southey, Poet Laureate, in his famous *Book of the Church* (p. 295) has a reference to the matter which is too good a sample of pious apologetics not to quote. He says, on this very question:—

With regard to the Church of England, its foundations rest upon the rock of Scripture, not upon the character of the King by whom they were laid . . . That religion had little influence upon his moral conduct will not appear strange, if we consider what the religion was in which he was trained up; nor if we look at the generality of men even now (*i.e.*, 1837), under circumstances immeasurably more fortunate than those in which he was placed . . . It is our part to be thankful to that all-ruling Providence, which rendered even his passions and his vices subservient to an important end, namely, preserving what he believed to be the essentials of Christianity.

After this we must say we think Mr. Wallace has it.

There has been much and interesting comment on the recent Census, the official returns of which have set to work many who seek to "point their moral," and "adorn their tale." It is a long time since God ordered Moses and Eleazar the priest to "number the children of Israel in the plains of Moab"; and since, when David forced Joab to number the people, "the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel," in anger thereat. If anyone had questioned the Government's right to take the recent Census on religious grounds he would not have had much attention, except perhaps in *Punch*. But there was a great rumpus when, in 1753, a proposal was made in Parliament to "number the people." Mr. Thornton, M.P., for York said, "he did not believe there was any set of men, or, indeed, any individual of the human species, so presumptuous and so abandoned as to make the proposal we have just heard." Mr. Ridley, another M.P., stated that his constituents "looked upon the proposal as ominous, and feared lest some public misfortune or an epidemical distemper should follow the numbering." This terrible fear was abated by that old friend of superstition the House of Lords, which threw out the proposal, and it was not revived for half a century, when in 1800, the first Census was taken in this country. Since 1851 a Census has been taken every ten years, and as the Lord's anger has not apparently "moved against" its authors, and as no "epidemical distemper" has followed it, we may assume that in this, as in many other matters, the Lord has moved with the times.

For the small sum of 1s. 6d. you can buy a book which will show you how to pray without being a bore. The Rev. T. Dilworth-Harrison is so certain that the devil concentrates his energies on making prayers both boring and futile that he has been compelled to write a book on frustrating his Satanic Majesty—and all for eighteen pence.

Writing about the present economic state of affairs in

Europe, Mr. Hugh Martin, the newspaper correspondent, says:—

Wise men don't shut their eyes to the coming flood. They look, they think, they understand, they act. *Mankind is still capable of ruling its destiny.* Or should we not rather say that mankind, with all the resources of scientific thought and investigation at its disposal, is now, for the first time, in a position to be no longer at the mercy of blind forces, but able consciously to work out its own salvation.

This picture of mankind "at the mercy of blind forces," suggestive as it is of the Christian God looking on and doing nothing, will not be particularly pleasing to our Christian friends. One may add that the scientific resources now at the disposal of mankind have had to be very slowly and painfully discovered without any assistance from an alleged Father in the skies. And only when mankind leaves off expecting inspiration and aid from Heaven will mankind properly learn to utilize those resources for the greater happiness of the human race.

When a new term starts at universities, training colleges, music schools, and hospitals, etc., anxious requests never fail to appear in the various religious journals. Invariably appeals to students belonging to their denominations to forward their name and address comes from parsons living in the district where the training "depot" is situated. The parsons are very anxious to keep the students under observation—"for the good of their soul"—of course. But the matter boils down to the business-like fact that the parsons are much concerned lest their sect should lose a client. What is curious is how little they trust their young clinkets to find their way unaided to the proper praying-shed.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE FATES OF JUDAS.

"Then Judas repented himself—And he cast down the piece of silver in the temple and went and hanged himself."—Matt. xxvii. 3-5.

"Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gused out."—Acts i. 18.

DEARLY beloved brethren,—Among all the asses mentioned in sacred Scripture there is none more worthy of the attention of the devout believer than Judas, surnamed Iscariot. He is was who, according to the mysterious dispensation of an inscrutable Providence, was appointed to bring about the salvation of God's elect, through the atoning blood of the lamb. Jesus said, "Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?" Lest, brethren, we might suppose that the sin of Judas was not fore-ordained in the counsels of the Most High, we are expressly told "he knew who it was that should betray him." He told his disciples it should be the one to whom he gave the sop, and he gave the sop to Judas. Oh, brethren, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! Well might Jesus say "It had been good for that man if he had never been born." I beg you to remark, brethren, that this sentence excludes the hope of final salvation. It may possibly have been that Judas kissed his Master out of love for him and faith in him, wishing to give him an opportunity of asserting his Messiahship before the chief priests and elders; or it may have been that his eyes were blinded to the Godhead he kissed. Satan, we are told, had entered into him. The carnal mind may ask, if Satan is the Devil, and Judas was a devil, how the devil did the Devil enter into a devil? But we cannot pause to deal with unsettling sceptical questions. Brethren, mark the fates of the chosen of the Lord, as described in our texts. It is not for us to say whether Judas first repented, returned the money and hanged himself, and afterwards bought a field with the money and burst asunder in the midst, or whether he first bought a field and falling headlong burst asunder, and then repented, returned the money, and hanged himself. It is for us to receive the oracles of God with unquestioning faith.

The "Freethinker," October 9, 1881.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Mr. A. LE MAINE, of the West London Branch, asks us to publish the following, as he is unaware of the address of the person indicated: "One of the Crowd," duly received.

R. H. KANE.—We should very much like to issue an "Omnibus" volume of Freethought writings at a low figure. But unless someone is willing to father an inevitable loss, we must give up the idea. We have all we can do—and more than we can do—to get over present financial difficulties.

F. HORDAY.—Reached us quite safely, but have not yet found space for insertion. We have a pile of unprinted articles that gaze at us with dumb reproachfulness.

CINE CERE.—We agree with you as to the disgusting nature of the fraud practiced by these priests. Any man who tried the same game, but left out the name of Jesus would soon find himself in prison.

F. ABEL.—We do not think there is any likelihood of our undertaking the publication of the work. You should try some general publisher.

H. SIDNEY.—Thanks for your congratulations on the Picton Hall meeting.

F. STOWALL. The Principles and Objects of the N.S.S. are inserted in the paper frequently, but we do not think we could spare the space to insert them in every issue, much as we should like to fall in with your suggestion.

C. D. WESTON.—Thanks. We will take the earliest opportunity of reading the book.

A. MRSY.—Foote's Defence will be issued soon. There are still copies of Mr. Cohen's *Religion and Sex* in stock. The price is 6s.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 11) Mr. Cohen visits Plymouth and will speak in Plymouth Chambers, No. 1 Hall, Drake Circus, at 3 o'clock on "Secularism," and at 7.0 on "The Present Outlook." Admission will be free. On Sunday next Mr. Cohen visits Manchester.

The Liverpool Branch made a very good start with its winter campaign on Sunday last with a lecture from Mr. Cohen. The large Picton Hall was quite filled, and several hundred people were unable to gain admission. The address was followed in a way that gives pleasure to a speaker, and we fancy that the chairman's (Mr. Egerton Stafford) strong appeal for local support during the season is likely to bring much needed help. The Liverpool Branch deserves all the help that can be given it. Friends were present from Manchester, Birkenhead, Port Sunlight, Chester and other neighbouring places. The stock of *Freethinkers* was quite exhausted, and there was a good sale of other literature. It was quite a good day.

For the rest of the season the Branch carries on its meeting in the Transport Hall. The speaker to-day October 11—is Mr. E. Egerton Stafford. The meeting starts at 7.0. We hope that Liverpool friends will see to it that the hall is quite filled.

The North London Branch N.S.S. has arranged for a series of Sunday morning meetings at the White Stone Pond, Hainpstead (near the Tube Station) to-day Mr. L. Ebury will be the speaker at 11.30. Naturally the Branch expects the local saints to give all assistance possible.

With reference to the "Views and Opinions" in this issue. The publisher of the work, in the course of an interview which appears in the *Observer* of Sunday last, says that the object throughout the book was to emphasize the word "modern." So far as the other essays are concerned this has been done fairly well, but with regard to the essay on the Idea of God, we would seriously ask

him to go over that essay again, and then say whether either in the bibliography attached or in the essay itself it deserves that term. Substantially the essay is at least seventy years behind the time, and as it stands it is imposing on the ignorance of those who read it without knowing what has been done in the field of anthropology during the past two generations. Those who do know will agree with our judgment. It is the one big blot on the book.

The North London Branch holds weekly meetings, every Thursday evening at 8.0 at the corner of Arlington Road, Camden Town, N.W. We hope that Freethinkers in the locality will make a point of putting in an appearance when possible. There are special reasons why they should do so.

The new Branch of the N.S.S. at Birkenhead has left nothing to chance for a successful opening to-day (Sunday) of the excellent syllabus of lectures arranged for the winter in the Boilermakers Hall, Argyle Street, Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak at 7.0 p.m. on "Is Christianity in Harmony with Science." Copies of the syllabus may be obtained from the local Secretary, Mr. J. W. Porter, 63 New Chester Road, New Ferry, Cheshire.

From a religious weekly:—

I have just read a review of the *Life of Robert, Marquis of Salisbury*, by his daughter. His daughter says that the making of bishops weighed heavily with him, because "the men who want bishoprics are unfit for them, and the men who are fit for them won't have them. I am sick of the business." I am wondering whether this is peculiar to the Anglican Church.

Hardly so—Christian human nature being what it is. It would certainly be wrong to assume that Nonconformist ministers are not equal to their Anglican brethren in a keen appreciation of the advantages of position, power and pelf.

It has been said of the Government of Louis XV. of France that "there was no thinker who ventured to say it was a good type of government; it found no defender in France half so enthusiastic as it found later in England when Burke undertook its championship." We quote this to point out that history is repeating itself once again, for while the government of the ex-King Alfonso, buttressed only on the Army and the Church, had no defender among the thinkers of Spain, it is not without unscrupulous apologists in this country. The essential and inspiring element in the Spanish as in the French revolution was the unspeakable condition to which affairs, and the community, had been brought by the existing regime. This was also true of Russia, and, odd as it may seem, coincides with the one condition in which even the medieval schoolmen were prepared to justify revolt. In a new work, *Social and Political Ideals of Some Great French Thinkers of the Age of Reason* (Harrap) Professor Hearnshaw, the Editor, and one of his contributors, Professor Laski, deal with Rousseau's contribution to the French Revolution in a critical vein which, we think, does it a little less than justice:—

He (Rousseau) was an unsystematic thinker, untrained in formal logic. He was an omnivorous reader with undeveloped powers of assimilation. He was an emotional enthusiast who spoke without due reflection. He was an irresponsible writer with a fatal gift for epigram.

But, as even the *Times* reviewer is moved to point out, none of the system of philosophy put forward at this time "was at all commensurate with the actual upheaval which followed." It was Rousseau who "supplied the Revolution with an ideology." The criticism of Rousseau, quoted above, might be urged, and indeed has been urged, against many leaders of thought who were not of the elite intelligentsia of their time, like Paine and Ingersoll. Yet, notwithstanding Mr. Birrell's dictum that "Tom Paine never took the first step to words becoming a great man," and notwithstanding the suggestion that Ingersoll was more an orator and a rhetorician than a thinker, the *Age of Reason*, and Ingersoll's convincing and inspiring eloquence, place them in the same category as Rousseau, namely among the evangelists of human emancipation.

Earth's Humanity Watched.

Psycho-Historical Elucidation of Man's Failure.

A BRIEF partial recapitulation of the story of evolutionary biology as told by the scientists who have step by step established it, is necessary to lead up to a submission. It is common knowledge among the well-informed that in the historical past the seeds of nationalities have grown into great nations, and that the latter have developed vast civilizations, which have crumbled and disintegrated and gone. In the last stage of the going, a crop of graveyard growths, have sent their weed foliage towering above temples and palaces, shutting away from the understanding of men and women the answer to the question "why did they crumble?"

We hear of the dawn of understanding. It must have arrived long before the period which Whittier had in his mind when he wrote of the morning twilight of the race, for he was thinking of the human race, and Keith has shown that this is no more than a branch of the gorilla species. So that the dawn must have preceded our departure from our true gorillian ancestors, must have been a long way back in the gorillian line, and, of course, in the lines of other species. So that it is unthinkable far back, as we judge things, though as time is reckoned by the scientists not at all far back. I have not said this to try to mingle with the readers self-conceit a splash of the colour of morbid melancholy, nor yet to make him feel in touch with his own forlornness. I want to make him realize fact, and that is that time is a very long affair, and the life of a "people"—a matter of centuries or a millenium or two—a mere fleabite of time. And that therefore although the dawn broke a long time ago it has so far only dissipated a little of the darkness of our mentality of our night period, so that man still gropes for a real sight of this, and that, and the other.

The outstanding "urges" in all living things are to live as individuals and to reproduce in kind and so enable the species to continue. The man or woman who can think of a single act indulged in by humanity, which is not indulged in in compliance with these two urges will have thought of something which no one else has ever thought of. That, again, emphasizes our insignificance. Indeed, we are just puny, very "limited," microscopic things, relatively to more important things, for example the forty billion stars in our galaxy, and that is why everything we construct, including our civilizations, fails to last.

The future is hidden in the obscurity of our still-present early dawn of understanding, and the past is buried under graveyards weeds. It is hoped, however, that this article may throw additional light on the failure of *civilizations*.

In regard to understanding, therefore, we are all of us where we have always been, in its dawn period, and for the rest we are all of us for that reason of unsound mind—in the sense that we are of unsound ability to understand. Yet we go on striving, and in the process we depart from reality, and build up beliefs, which rigidly held by us, are in the language of mental medicine *delusions*. We build up systematized delusions, which are the production of a form of universal insanity called *paranoia*. It exists in all of us in varying degrees; if it becomes bad in respect to one subject it progresses into mania, and if it gets bad as mania it produces what are called *paranoics*, people who will, because apprehensive of environ-

mental meddling, attack without rhyme or reason. That is why no civilization has ever lasted; it is why in the life story of nations and of the civilizations of their building up, a stage is reached, always the same stage, at which *paranoia*, running riot, knocks the mortar out of the edifice, and that, progressively crumbling, gradually collapses—to be covered as other civilizations have been with obliterating graveyard weeds.

Throughout all historical time, and, in view of what has been said, therefore before it, man has desired, as part of his urge to live, to participate in a post mundane existence. Basing his thought on his definite knowledge that he can in his own small way make things, the universe around him has in terms of his dawning understanding suggested to him that there must, on a far greater scale, be a maker for the greater scheme. Time was when one of the greater makers was a Thunder God, and there have been many Sun Gods. And associated with each god was the god's life duration, much longer, of course, than our own. So that man has wished to please and appease his god, in the hope that having done so he might among other things be allowed to participate in the gods longer life after his life here. Thus he set his dawn-time understanding groping for a comprehension of how to effect his purpose. And out of his endeavours highly syntheticated beliefs, as systematized delusions of *paranoia*, have been formed all over the world. Let us trace a faith through to the present day.

The Early Egyptians came to the conclusion that they derived life from the sun, and so they in imagination created a sun god named Ra. And this is how that came about.

There is in the Nile Valley a beetle of large dimensions, which, as to the male, rolls matter which it finds, if suitable for food, into a ball, working it along the ground under its body; until it can push it into a hole, prepared for its reception, and there cover it up and leave it "stored" for future use. The female similarly rolls matter found by her, but into her ball she lays an egg, which in course of time, as a young beetle, breaks free to commence its career in the world. The Early Watchers knew nothing of the egg laid in her case, and so assumed that out of every ball rolled by *scarabæus sacer* life sprang. They connected the spherical ball with the spherical sun, and so decided that the sun was the source of their personal life. And they carried the thing still farther; for as the sun rose each morning and made a journey through the heavens and *scarabæus sacer* was seen to roll its ball along the ground, they assumed that the sun was pushed into the sky and onwards along its daily route by a gigantic beetle. Ra came to be symbolised as a beetle, and throughout the long run of centuries during which pharaohs reigned the *scarab* as an ornament or trinket or protection was worn.

Having got that into their minds the question then arose how to appease and please their god, in order that participation in his so much longer life might be enjoyed by them when they were dead. It was assumed that what would please an Egyptian of high rank would please him, and so as the centuries slipped along the details and etiquette and ritual of a great faith, with its officiating priesthood and temples, were syntheticated and systematized.

Elsewhere in the area there were Jews, of whom some were, for probably three hundred years until they were turned out again by an Egyptian, Ahmes I., pharaohs of Egypt; but they were Jews and did not really worship Ra; they had their own Jehovah; whom they still worship, thus constituting themselves the

only people of pre-Christian Northern Africa who today worship the same god. For along the line of pharoanic and other highly bred Egyptian families, from time to time during three thousand years, unmarried women who found themselves by way of becoming mothers had announced to the populace that their children had been begotten by Ra; upon which the populace had hailed the children as holy, and welcomed them. To the Egyptian populace a Ra-begotten child was no erring woman's offspring, was divinely begotten; and so when, in the same area, Mary declared the Christ begotten of Jehovah, a new faith for those who accepted the teachings of her child received its birth. Though the Jews, not Ra worshippers, and doubtless understanding the practice of the ladies of the high families of Egypt over which they had reigned, denied the validity of the Christ's claim, and retained their own sole god. But by that time Ancient Egypt was well advanced into crumbling, had passed under Greece; and her population having slowly internationalized and lost its Egyptian instincts Ra was passing out of favour; in the end Islam replaced him. Though many Christian monasteries were founded along the Nile Valley; and in the Roman Empire by monkly orders, and Christianity drove, as though a wedge, into the mixed pagan thought of that Empire's population, thrust paganism out, and spread in dominating acceptance.

In man's endeavour to acquire what he desires, paranoia has throughout historical periods mingled with the urge in the vast majority in all they have done; and so in the various civilization high water mark periods, when iron discipline relaxed, the masses have fought for and won political power in such terms that they could wield it to bring about a variation in the commercial and social fabric in which they lived, it has caused them to strike a fatal blow. Whereas in the case of faiths the purpose has been and is to obtain a continuance of life after earthly death, the aim of the syntheticators of the systematized social and commercial delusions has been and always is to secure for vast aggregates the pleasures and privileges previously enjoyed by the few. In the end, and that every time, there has, within the civilization, been class and commercial and bitter political and very often sex aspiration paranoia raging, as though a "holy war," shaking and loosening the fabric, destroying control, thrusting aside known natural laws as no longer to be complied with, and gradually heading the whole aggregation of struggling humanity towards the cart of the sower of the graveyards weed-seeds. Prosperity has petered out and the civilization has disintegrated.

The break-up may, historically, proceed rapidly in a matter of decades, or, less hurriedly, in generations, or may occupy centuries. But the attack from within having started, the civilization has to come down. The watchers on the other stars have seen history thus make and repeat itself over and over again on our little earth; and we are in another "classicism" now. For the whole of Europe has since the twelfth century, ranked as one "cultural area," the high water mark in kingly endeavour being reached by Napoleon. The last quarter of a century has seen more than half a dozen thrones struck down, in circumstances which have rendered three hundred million people self governing in terms of various forms of mass outlook; and whereas throughout the whole area to-day the feature is paranoia as class war, commercial war, sex war, and a war between old and young, traditions, experience, sentiment, and sense, being flung aside, only the few, the commercially super-powerful few, are gaining. For the rest ever widening and more devastating unemployment and need is proclaiming its arrival, and it is arriving, not as impoverishment in a

commercial cycle, but as law reiterating that man must wait, that he is still, and for tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of years and more, will remain, as far as one can judge by what has gone before, in the dawn of comprehension.

The outstanding urges in all living things are to live as individuals and reproduce in kind; the beetles stored food to the former end, and in protecting balls laid eggs to the latter. And on a misunderstanding of these habits, as in paranoia, the Egyptians created their faith, and so in due course a crop of graveyard growths sent their weed foliage towering above their temples and palaces.

No longer do the Pharaohs drive their chariots in the streets of Thebes or Memphis or Abydos. But scarabæi sacer still roll their balls between those ruined cities.

H. J. FISHER.

Dr. Barnes's Dilemma.

Dr. Barnes of Birmingham seems to have taken a busman's holiday when in London for the meetings of the Royal Society, for he preached at a Harvest Festival in Hertfordshire on the Sunday. It is a pity that the local paper (*The Herts Advertiser*) could only give twenty lines to this sermon, which was preached at Shenley Parish Church. What we have of it makes us anxious to consider how this Fellow of the Royal Society contrives to remain in his ecclesiastical office. When we remember that Dr. Barnes has recently, and no doubt justly, required the clergy in his diocese to keep the law of the land which is the law of the Church from which they draw their incomes we are bound to ask whether his own departure from the doctrine of the Articles and formularies of the Establishment is not as obvious, and a good deal more serious, than that of the Anglo-Catholics. Whatever may be the truth about the legality of the Mass, or the Invocation of Saints, in the Church of England, it certainly does not teach that "we must be prepared to submit our beliefs to human reason"; that "belief must be reasonable," and that "it must consist of kindness, beauty and truth," and "to find those three things we have to study the human mind." But this is what Dr. Barnes said at Shenley:—

"In regard to the general problem of harvest and evolution—a problem of great magnitude—there had been great changes in the world, as there had been in belief of the teaching of Christ during the past two generations. The change of reconstruction of faith must always be a slow progress, but faith must be reasonable. They had to be prepared to submit their beliefs to human reason, and, because that belief must be reasonable, they must uphold it in the view of the human universe, and, at the same time, that view must be complete. It must consist of kindness, beauty and truth and, to find those three things, they had to study the character of the human mind, which had been created by God to bring such realities into existence.

When Dr. Barnes was consecrated Bishop he had a public examination "to the end that the congregation present may have a trial and bear witness how you are minded to behave yourself in the Church of God." He was asked: "Are you persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all the doctrine required for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ?" And he was asked, "Will you withstand all and convince gainsayers of this wholesome doctrine?" Further, he was asked: Will you "banish and drive away all strange and erroneous doctrines contrary to God's word, and both openly and privately call upon others to do the same?" To all these questions Dr. Barnes answered, we must assume, in the words of the liturgy for this occasion appointed, "I will, the Lord being my helper." We are not authorities on theology, but, as we understand Dr. Barnes's interpretation of these pledges "erroneous and strange doctrines" mean popish doctrines in particular, other odd variants of Christianity, and, in general, anything that undermines the fundamentals of Christianity which, even we must admit, is bigger than, though it

may be allowed to include, the Church of England. It was alleged at the annual meeting of the English Church Union recently that those who think with Dr. Barnes would, if they were left to carry on, compel every real Christian to separate from the Church. These speakers meant separate en route for Rome; but what about the other route, to Reason? Is that not the logical conclusion of making the Christian beliefs subject to human reason?

There is one other point in Dr. Barnes' harvest sermon that is worth notice. Referring to the religion of "truth, beauty and kindness" aforesaid, he said, "the human mind had been created by God to bring such realities into existence." Now Dr. Barnes can hardly justify the use of the word "creation" in this connexion; and he will, perhaps, be surprised to discover that a fine old heretic, one Matthew Tindal (1657-1733), in some words which were quoted here no longer ago than August 23 last (from *Christianity as old as Creation*), sounds uncommonly like this Shenley sermon. Good things will bear repetition, and we will therefore put the two passages side by side:—

TINDAL:—If God designed all mankind should at all times know what he wills them to know, believe and profess; and has given them no other means for this but the use of Reason; Reason, human Reason, must be the means.

BARNES:—They had to be prepared to submit their beliefs to human reason, and because that belief must be reasonable . . . they had to study the character of the human mind which God had created to bring such realities into existence.

Now, according to orthodox Christianity, Reason is like the snake in the fable, whose frost-bound coils were revived only to pierce to death the breast in which they had been thawed into life. This fable is called, oddly enough, "Hear both sides of a question; or the man and the snake." Perhaps Dr. Barnes will think that Æsop, in this connexion is irrelevant. If so, what about Tindal?

A.II.

The Farmers' "Harvest Home."

THEY plough the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is soaked and ruined
By God's almighty hand.
He sends the rain and thunder,
And frost to kill the shoots,
For the odds they labour under
He doesn't care two hoots.

All good things around us
Are difficult to find,
If there's a Lord, if there's a Lord
He is dumb, and deaf, and blind.

They work both late and early,
They slave until they're ill;
For wheat and oats and barley
The market price is nil:
They graze the country's cattle,
For which they get no thanks:
Their homes and farms and fittings
Are mortgaged to the Banks.

All good things around us
Are difficult to find,
If there's a Lord, if there's a Lord
He is dumb, and deaf, and blind.

The Churches are so righteous,
They hold their fest—i—vals
Of gifts to avaricious
Ec—clesiast—i—cals.
The farmers they get nothing—
The Churches sell them up!
To gather in the "tithing"
And swell the "Bounty" cup.

All good things around us
Are difficult to find,
If there's a Lord, if there's a Lord
He's dumb, and deaf, and blind!!!

R. HENRY BURGESS.

From the U.S.A.

An Open Letter to President Herbert Hoover.

PROCLAIMING BLAMEGIVING DAY ON THANKSGIVING DAY.
President Herbert Hoover,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

July 26, 1931.

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT,

Whereas our former protests to the President of the United States against the issuance of a Thanksgiving proclamation have been ignored; and

Where as the course of events for the year has been a mixture of good and evil, with evil predominating; and

Whereas expressing gratitude for favours without voicing grievance for injuries characterizes the slavish subject of a Asiatic despot rather than the free American citizen.

We have, therefore, resolved:

(1) That this Fall we shall make no protest to the President;

(2) That, assuming for the one day the existence of an all-powerful deity, we hereby, in order to make Thanksgiving Day a true day of accounting, proclaim a Blamegiving Day, to be observed on Thanksgiving Day, this year, and each succeeding year, so long as Thanksgiving services are unconstitutionally proclaimed by the President;

(3) That we will hold a mass meeting in Webster Hall, 119 E. 11th Street, New York, in the afternoon of November 26, for the purpose of blaming the deity for widespread and undeserved misery;

(4) That we invite the unemployed, the drought-stricken, the afflicted, and all victims of acts of God—all persons, who during the year have suffered through no fault of their own—to join with us in observing Blamegiving Day in the first service of its kind ever held in the United States, by holding similar meetings, either public or private, in every community throughout the country, where a group of intellectually independent persons can be gathered together;

(5) That we request the various political parties and social welfare movements to participate in this effort to obtain less evil and more good from Divine Providence;

(6) That, since the holding of either a Blamegiving service or a Thanksgiving service, without the other being held, would be dishonest accounting, we shall cancel our Blamegiving programme, if the President will follow Thomas Jefferson and the secular spirit of our Constitution in refusing to issue a religious proclamation.

Respectfully yours,

American Association for the
Advancement of Atheism, Inc.

By CHARLES SMITH,
President.

The New Lord's Prayer.

(According to Professor Eddington who claims GOD is a kind of Mathematical Formula.)

OUR FORMULA which art in the Fourth Dimension, hal-
lowed be Thy sins, Thy tangent come, Thy radius vector
be done, in logarithms as it is in spherical trigonometry.
Give us this day our daily binomial theorem, and forgive
us our miscalculations as we forgive those who have
erroneously triangulated our position, and lead us not
into faulty calculus, but deliver us from quaternions
errata, for Thine are the circumference and the radius
and the "pi."

For relatively infinite temporal extension.

New Hampshire, U.S.A.

Q.E.D.

Freethinker Receives Message from God.

PRAISE whatever gods there be for I have seen God! Not only have I seen him, but I have received a message from him. Unlike most people who see God and receive messages from him I do not need to wrap up my statements in vagueness and mystery.

I was working at my desk this morning when I heard a rattle at my letterbox, and I saw an old man trot past my window and rattle at my neighbour's letterbox, and so on all down the street.

I went to my letterbox and there was a sixteen page leaflet headed *A Message from God*. I am sorry it was printed, for I would much rather have had a written letter from God—it takes away the glory when I know that everyone else in the street is to be blessed.

However—

I gather that this message from God is edited by a Heyman Wreford, who surely deserves a thunderbolt for daring to edit the heavenly message. These messages are, according to a note, in their forty-seventh year, and anyone can buy a single copy for one penny or a hundred for eight shillings.

What I like about the contents of the booklet are the stories about infidels. For instance there is a story contained in an address delivered by Heyman Wreford at Exeter. The story tells of a young convert who stood up to speak in the open air and who stuttered and stammered. An infidel (there is always an infidel) said, "You ought to be ashamed of yourself standing and talking like that." The convert replied, "I am ashamed of myself, but I am not ashamed of Christ." The infidel let us hope, crept away and either drank himself to death or else sobbed out his repentance to a sympathetic priest, for no infidel ever did anything else according to Christian literature.

There is a long and delightful story called *The Infidel and the Bible*, told by a J. Mck. I don't know J. Mck. but I should think he ought to get a good job in Fleet Street.

Anyhow this is the story, and as it is told by a Christian there cannot possibly be any untruth in it.

J. Mck. was travelling by steamer from Dundee to London when he heard an infidel debating with a Christian, and proving glibly that Christianity was ridiculous. The Christian was defeated, whereupon J. Mck. took up the cudgels and challenged the infidel's statement that he had read the Bible through and through. J. Mck. said he would give the infidel £10 if he would quote ten verses from the Bible correctly. The poor misguided infidel said he hadn't read the Bible for some time and his memory was failing. J. Mck. asked for seven verses, then five, and then three, and the infidel confessed he could not quote. J. Mck. therefore, spoke to the passengers for half an hour and engaged in prayer.

On arrival in London the infidel and a godless companion confessed that they had no sleep all night, and that they would henceforth be different men.

The Message from God is pleased to quote from the *Morning Post* an account of a Communist school in London, where children are taught the principles of Communism, and to hint darkly but with true Christian unscrupulousness, "Dark stories are told in the district of the uses to which the school is put in the evenings, when it serves as a Communist Club."

Mr. Wreford finishes up his message from God with "Yours for Christ's sake, 12-14 Gandy Street, Exeter."

So perhaps after all this is only a message from Wreford, and that old man who passed my window was not God, but merely one of his representatives. Perhaps it was the Pope, or the Bishop of Birmingham or even Aimee Macpherson's English representative.

NECHELLS.

For blocks are better cleft with wedges,
Than tools of sharp or subtle edges,
And dullest nonsense has been found,
By some to be the most profound.—Butler.

"Brain and Mind."

DR. ARTHUR LYNCH's little work* is a valuable contribution to one of the most difficult of all sciences—psychology. The exact relation of mind to brain, why the brain should have "mind," what causes us to know things, what memory is, and countless other questions connected with human thought, has been the subject of study by some of our greatest thinkers. Dr. Lynch, whose versatility is extraordinary, has always been a fascinated student of what he terms "the matrix of the sciences." His views, and finely independent they are too, will be found in detail in his great work *The Principles of Psychology*. In this pamphlet he gives us, he says, "the essence of the system to which I have devoted the great part of my intellectual life." Any good book on psychology is not easy reading, and though Dr. Lynch writes very clearly, *Brain and Mind* requires very careful study, but a study, the discipline of which is worth every moment devoted to it.

Dr. Lynch's reading is very wide and varied, and he constantly refers to authors and to experiments in both science and psychology which only those who have made the subject an intensive course of study can know well. But there can be few works in which so much knowledge and deduction are packed in so small a space, or one in which the author shows such downright independence of thought. His final conclusions point to a belief in pure mechanism or materialism—though I am not quite clear whether he would dissent from this. In any case *Brain and Mind* should prove provocative and stimulating, and readers should buy and study it for themselves; and if it leads them to the further study of Dr. Lynch's other works, the author would be more than satisfied. *Brain and Mind* is well printed and generally well got up, and at the price of 6d. should be in the library of all *Freethinker* readers and all other Freethinkers as well.

H.C.

* *Brain and Mind*, by Arthur Lynch. The Pioneer Press, London. 6d.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SOCIALISM AND FREETHOUGHT.

SIR,—This criticism and correction is not an attempt to support or oppose the case of the N.S.S. as to whether you should support any political party or not.

So I quote from the *Freethinker*, October 4, page 626, column 1: "To ask everyone to study social institutions without being subservient to Authority or to religious prepossessions, is ultimately one of the greatest revolutionary propositions ever set forth. It is so revolutionary that political parties—in this country, at least—while setting forth drastic proposals, yet are afraid to oppose religion."

The above is substantially correct for Socialism. But it is not true to assert that in this country, "England" no party is afraid to oppose religion.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, not to be confused with the Labour Party, I.L.P., or Communist Party, does definitely oppose religion. Any readers of the *Freethinker* can verify the above by obtaining the pamphlet, *Socialism and Religion*, from the S.P.G.B., 42 Great Dover Street, S.E.1.

W. C. ELLIOTT.

[Some letters on this subject are held over until next week.—ED.]

THE BIBLE AND THE SCHOOLS.

SIR,—In the article "The Bible and the Public Schools," which appeared in your issue of the 20th inst, there appears to be an error in the percentages of executions, the Catholic percentage would appear to 65% and not 6.1%. I think it would be worth while correcting this misprint in a future issue.

W. C. DAVISON.

Obituary.

WALTER GEORGE WALTER.

By the death of Walter George Walter, Freethought has lost a loyal and warm-hearted follower, and the West Ham Branch N.S.S. loses one of its most esteemed members. Freethought was to him the only Cause that mattered, and although seventy-five years of age his interest in the movement was sustained to the end. A notable feature was his well balanced judgment, and keen appreciation of great men and their work, which however never weakened into hero-worship. He was calmly indifferent about death and had some time ago, with a smile and a joke, handed the writer of these notes instructions for his obsequies which included, cremation, ashes to be scattered, no service of any description, no flowers, and no mourning to be worn. We are pleased to record that the instructions were duly honoured by the family.—R.H.R.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—A meeting will be held at White Stone Pond, Hampstead, near the Tube Station every Sunday morning at 11.30 a.m. Speaker to-day Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate): Friday, October 9, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith) : 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren, B. A. Le Maine and E. C. Saphin. Every Wednesday, at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. Tuson; every Thursday, at 7.0, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. Darby; every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8, near Marlborough Road Station) : 11.15, Mr. J. Katz, B.A.—"The Ascent of Humanity."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4) : Monday, October 12, at 8.0, subject for discussion—"The Materialistic Conception of History."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road) : 7.0, Lord Snell, C.B.E.—"What is our English Heritage?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, Hall No. 5, near Clapham Road Station, Underground) : 7.30, Mrs. I. Kingsley—"A Rational Approach to Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Right Hon. J. M. Robertson—"Religion and Democracy."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : Tuesday evening, October 13, at 7.0, Mrs. Williams-Ellis—"Right and Wrong in Modern Russia."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road, N.7) : 7.30, Mr. P. P. Corrigan—"The Whirligig of Time."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S.—Branch meetings at 104 Elm Grove (corner of Linton Street) on the third Thursday in each month at 8.0. Will members please take note.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps).—Sunday, October 11, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

DURHAM (Market Place).—Tuesday, October 13, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market).—Wednesday, October 14, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street) : Saturday, October 10, at 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, entrance in Lorn Street) 7.0, R. H. Rosetti (London)—"Is Christianity in Harmony with Science?"

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) : Bradford) : 7.30, Mr. C. Bell—"Why I am a Christian."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. J. Clavton—"Modern Miracles." Questions and discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room) : 6.30, Mr. A. Reilly—"Is Death the End?"

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Large Hall, Transport Buildings, 41 Islington, Liverpool, entrance Christian Street) : 7.0, E. Egerton Stafford (Bootle), President, Liverpool Branch—"The Savagery of Christianity." Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus, Hall No. 1) : Mr. Chapman Cohen, President N.S.S., will speak at 3.0, on "Secularism." At 7.0, on "The Present Outlook." Questions and discussions invited.

Pamphlets.

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