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Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Religion and Science.

GREAT are the uses of advertisement, and none are more alive to its advantages than are the Christian clergy. Medicine-men have always been among the most prominent advertisers. First, of necessity. In that far away social stage where the interposition of God Almighty's representatives is considered essential the medicine-man is present on all occasions. He must read the omens, work the necessary magic, or communicate God's will to man. At a later stage he takes a front place on all ceremonial occasions as a consequence of custom. Later still he does it of sheer necessity. Somehow he has got to figure on public occasions or people will gradually forget he is there, and as things will go on as well without him as with him—better, as a matter of fact—his existence nowadays depends upon keeping well in the public eye. If there is a war on the clergy are present to encourage the public to keep the soldiers fighting. If a war is not in being, and there is a movement in favour of doing away with war, the clergy are there ready to demonstrate that war is utterly and unmistakably un-Christian. And even though these same clergy will raise no very strong protest against arrangements which make war, as they say, inevitable, yet with rare daring some of them will offer to throw themselves between contending armies—in the sure knowledge that they will not be permitted to do anything of the kind. With the Trades Union Congress there had to be a Congress Sunday in which semi-official sermons were preached. And, of course, with the Annual Meeting of the British Association the clergy have again to associate themselves. A sermon is preached each year in connexion with the meeting to as many of the members as care to attend. I do not think the B.A. ask for it, neither do all the members attend to listen to it. But it serves to give the impression to the unthinking section of the public that science and religion—as Bishop Barnes would put it, *true science and pure re-*

ligion are at peace, and in any case it keeps the clergy well to the front of the picture. And the newspapers, although they may ignore the scientific work of the B.A. take care to report the preachings of certain persons on its work.

* * *

Our Religious Leaders.

The two principal medicine-men who performed at York were the Dean of Exeter and the Rev. Dr. Micklem, Principal of Manchester College, Oxford. It would be an interesting task to take the language of these two men, who may fairly be taken as among the best representatives of the more thoughtful and "advanced" theologians, and to show how hopelessly unscientific and *a*-logical their reasoning is. But as that would require nearly a whole issue of this paper—if one were to do the job thoroughly, I may amuse myself and perhaps interest my readers by giving one or two leading examples.

Take, as number one, the opening of the Dean of Exeter's sermon. "The universe as disclosed by science," he says, "shows mankind as a negligible fraction of the whole total of existence, and as children, not of the creative mind, but of the unguided processes of the known world." Why is mankind "negligible" and why "unguided" processes? Such words are quite out of place in a scientific discourse, and are only used because the mind of the speaker fails to understand the scientific outlook, or because he is making a sly appeal to the scientific ignorance of the general public. The last unit of force that results in a volcanic eruption is no more negligible than the sum of the units which leads up to the deciding balance of that unit. As every result is the sum of the factors that produce it, negligibility is absent in nature. Things are only negligible in view of an end which *we* frame, and we count them as useful or useless, indispensable or negligible as they do or do not contribute to that end. "Unguided" is again an example of scientific ignorance or of religious stupidity. If some things in nature were "guided," that is consciously directed to be where they were and what they were, then in distinction to these we might talk of other things as being unguided. But guidance, as the Dean admits, is quite unknown to the world of science. The scientist simply has no place for such a conception. Why, then, introduce the word? Why not say, what is the fact, that guidance is a conception for which modern science has no use for at any time? This would, of course, be an admission of the truth of what we have so often said, namely, that science is incurably Atheistic, and it would never do to express so much truth in the course of a sermon. So in lieu of this honest course, the Dean's best plan is to appeal to the bigotry of his hearers by suggesting that in some form or other science is fundamentally a very poor, and a "low"

sort of thing, and the less we depend upon it for the important things of life the better.

* * *

Pious Nonsense.

The second example of what one gets when one dips into these buckets of theological slosh may be taken from Dr. Micklem. He gives a quotation from Bishop Butler, which he makes his own by adoption, and which he evidently thinks unsurpassable in its logical force. Here is the essence of it:—

Creation is absolutely and entirely out of our depth. And yet it is as certain that God made the world as it is certain that effects have a cause. It is in general no more than effects that the most knowing are acquainted with; for as to causes they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant,

So as we know nothing of causes, but only effects, and as it is impossible for us ever to get any further, it must be "a low curiosity" which is satisfied with all we can know, and this state of incurable ignorance must "raise our desire of knowing the nature of things themselves, the Author, the Cause, and the End of them." I do not know how much better off we are for knowing that we can know nothing of causes, because the cause of it all is God, unless it is that after telling us we are hopelessly ignorant, there is a chance for Dr. Micklem to tell us all about something which on his own hypothesis, he knows no more about than we do.

But the clotted nonsense from Butler! This might have been passable in the eighteenth century, but today one would have thought that educated thinkers in even the religious world would have grown beyond such stuff. If by creation is meant the emergence of new forms, or modified forms of being, that is no more entirely out of our depth than any other subject of knowledge. If creation does not mean this, what does it mean? And what kind of an idea has Dr. Micklem of something that is entirely beyond his depth? The ability to explain the unexplainable is indeed a rare gift. So with cause and effect. It is simply nonsense to say that we have no knowledge of causes. An effect is the outcome of an assemblage of conditions necessary for the effect to exist, and when we know the total of these conditions we know the cause. We are all the time knowing causes and effects, and whether we are dealing with an effect or a cause is entirely a question of whether we are considering the sum of the conditions necessary to give a stated result, or analysing the result into its component factors. This, I may say to both the Dean and the Doctor is not arguing, it is merely telling them what is the fact. The startling thing is that the nonsense talked by both the Doctor and the Dean can be uttered in connexion with the meetings of a scientific association, and that the members of that association listen to it without protest.

* * *

Who Understands Religion?

But I fancy the preachers are not talking to the British Association at all. They are using the B.A. as a means of speaking to the general public in order to assure that same public that religion is still a vital force in life and contains knowledge superior to that which science can offer. What else is meant by the Doctor saying that "the object of scientific study is God's world, and not the world of Jeans or Eddington?" Such a deliverance is quite meaningless save as a statement of individual blind belief. Or what has the Dean in mind when he says that while theological books of a hundred years ago are dead, they are not so dead as those of the same period written on science? He cannot be such a dullard as not to know that the distinction between the two lies in the fact that the theology of a hundred years ago was given

in the name of God, to doubt which was to merit damnation, while theories given by science were with the proviso that they expressed only a little of the truth, and they would have to be revised in the light of more complete knowledge. Or, again, what had the Dean of Exeter in mind when he cautioned the men of science to whom he was professedly preaching that it was "deplorable when scientific men leave their scientific methods and speak as oracles on subjects which they have not studied?" Surely the Dean knows quite well that it is precisely because men of a scientific bent have taken the subject of religion in hand that we know as much about it as we do. But for the labours of those who have criticized religion from the outside, but for the work of men who have sifted and classified the religious beliefs of mankind from the savage to the Dean of Exeter and his fellows, we should be still mumbling the magical formulas of medieval Christianity and imagining that we understood religion. The last man to understand religion is the man who believes it, and the worst man to teach the truth about it, is he whose whole social status is bound up with people believing it is true.

* * *

The Aim of Science.

One wonders how long this solemn humbug of a number of modern medicine-men preaching "a body of scientific teachers is to be kept up? There is no pretence that in anything that pertains to scientific knowledge the clergy have anything to impart. There is no royal road to knowledge, and there is no avenue of information that is open to the parsons that is not open to anyone who has courage enough to tread it. The day has gone by when the clergy are able to openly stop scientific development with a "Thus saith the Lord!" All they can do is to misstate scientific aims and scientific teaching in the interests of an out-of-date theology. The Dean of Exeter protested, with something approaching a sneer, against those scientists "who attempt to determine grave issues of spiritual philosophy only with an expert knowledge of mathematics and psychology and the memory of that version of religion which they learned from their grandmothers." Well, but if we had depended upon the parsons and the churches the version of religion which was held by our grandmothers would still be the reigning version to-day; nay, it would in such circumstances not be the version of our grandmothers, but of our ancestors still more remote. It is in spite of the bitterest opposition that reforms have been forced upon all religious teachers, and it is in the face of that opposition that science has won the right to take the whole world of possible knowledge for its province. And in that world of possible knowledge religious beliefs take a place. The beliefs of man concerning God and a soul and a future life belong to the sciences of history and psychology and sociology. These alone hold the key to their understanding. And that day of complete understanding will be hastened when scientific men evince a right consciousness of their power and their duty, and publicly display the courage to tell these representatives of primitive superstition to cease their chatter. Problems of religious belief are part of the general problem of human psychology and of human sociology. They are as much a branch of science as is a determination of the nature of the atom, or the motions of the planets. And the leaders of science will never be completely true to their work and to themselves until they claim the whole world of knowledge, actual and possible, as the legitimate field of their operations.

John Locke's God.

THE tercentenary of the birth of John Locke, author of the famous *Essay on the Understanding*, and one of the foremost exponents of true rationalism in this country, has just been celebrated. Until a couple of weeks ago I knew nothing whatever about him or his works. In ignorance of the impending celebrations and in pursuit of my own studies, I happened by chance to order a copy of the *Essay* from my library. And it is this coincidence which has prompted me to the following observations.

My general outlook may be summed up in the one word *Atheism*. For me this word implies *Optimism*, as representing my personal attitude to life; *Secularism*, as representing my views towards society; and *Materialism*, as representing my views of the universe. One of my hobbies is to study the opinions of those who disagree with me on one or more of these matters, in order to discover and remedy any flaws there may be in the reasoning by which I have arrived at my present conclusions. One of my aims is to attain to a more efficient understanding and use of the most important instrument available to us for the discussion, the testing and the elucidation of all problems—the instrument of Language. It was in pursuit of the latter that I came to read Locke's famous work. It is in furtherance of the former that I write this article.

In the midst of a great store of rational and logical comments upon the improper and careless uses of language, and upon the misleading effects of such uses, Locke has set out what purports to be a proof of God's existence. Taken by itself, this "proof" might convince any reader ignorant of the fallacies which Locke condemned, or unaware of the arguments on the opposite side. Taken in conjunction with the logical and obvious conclusions to which the *Essay* drives us, one cannot but be persuaded that he wrote it with his tongue in his cheek. For it seems evident from his replies to criticisms made by the then Bishop of Worcester, that Locke had laid himself open to a suspicion of heresy. And I do not doubt that in those days it was expedient for every man who valued his life to take precious care to present an outward semblance of religious orthodoxy. The fact remains that the "proof" of God's existence, which Locke doubtless cast as a sop to the wolves of the Church, and which they evidently swallowed (even though it were with reluctance), is completely nullified by the arguments that are scattered throughout the rest of his *Essay*.

As essays go, the *Essay on the Understanding* is an immense work. Mr. McCabe, in his *Biographical Dictionary of Modern Rationalists*, states that Locke took seventeen years to complete it; and one can well believe the statement. I do not suppose that many people nowadays would be bothered to wade through it. But despite its length, its redundancies, its inconsistencies and its somewhat archaic diction, there is much in it that is of great value for the present time. Its length makes it a difficult task, for those not given to analysis, to form any consistent synthesis of the conclusions to which it leads. And it is this fact which, on the one hand, probably enabled Locke to hoodwink his clerical critics so easily. On the other hand, perspicacious lay minds which might have seen through his inconsistencies (or, as I believe, his deliberate evasions), would have been deterred from drawing attention to them through fear of religious retribution. To-day we are less hampered by such considerations; largely on account of the knowledge which has been added to us by just those subtle methods which Locke employed. We are free to ex-

pose the fallacies inherent in the very ruses which enabled truth to slip through the guard of bigotry.

Locke proves the existence of God in this way. (1) "Man knows that he himself is,"—or, as we might say, "exists." (2) "Nonentity cannot produce any real being,"—or, as we might say, "nothing can come from nothing." (3) "What was not from eternity had a beginning." (4) "What had a beginning must be produced by something else,"—or, as we might say, "every effect must have a cause." (5) Therefore, "from eternity there has been something."

No Atheist would dispute this argument. He might point out, what Locke appears to miss, that it is impossible to discover anything of which it can be said that, at any precise moment, it "began" or "had a beginning." Even so, Locke proves nothing but the eternity of "something." That this "something" must be a "god" there is no evidence at all—much less that it is "God" as defined by any religion. Apart from this, careful readers will note the introduction of a term which, even at this stage, tends to beg the question. The word "being" in Locke's phraseology corresponds to two distinct ideas, namely, that of a person and that of mere existence. Locke clearly exposed and condemned this type of verbal ambiguity in other parts of his essay. Whether he was unconscious of it in this instance, or whether it was deliberately introduced, the reader is left to guess for himself.

Locke then continues: (6) "This eternal source of all being must also be the source of all power; and so this Eternal Being must be also the most powerful." Here the *double entente* of the word "being" appears quite openly, and is emphasized by the change from a small to a capital letter. Note too that, unlike the God of Christianity, the power of this Being must be perfectly neutral. For since it is the source of all power, it must necessarily be the source of power for evil and good alike.

The next steps are: (7) "A man finds in himself perception and knowledge." (8) Therefore "we are certain that there is not only some being, but some knowing, intelligent being in the world." Here at last, in spite of the small letter, we arrive at the definitely "personal" use of the word "being." In other words, God must be a person because there are other persons in the world. It would be equally valid to assert that God must be a fish or a flea. The fact that man finds in himself stupidity, cruelty, and all the other unpleasant qualities, is calmly ignored—or, as I suggest, deliberately omitted—from the argument because of the obvious danger involved.

Finally Locke says: (9) "Thus from a consideration of ourselves"—as though there were nothing else in the world to consider—"and what we infallibly find in our own constitutions, our reason leads us to the knowledge of this certain and evident truth, that there is an eternal, most powerful and most knowing Being." And, in continuation of the same sentence, he adds, in what seems to be a tone of pure sarcasm: "which, whether any one will please to call 'God' it matters not." He concludes with this sentence: "The thing is evident; and from this idea duly considered, will easily be deduced all those other attributes which we ought to ascribe to this Eternal Being."

That is all! It is true that for a few more pages Locke proceeds to embroider these arguments; but he adds nothing to their force or logicity. Note particularly the insinuations contained in the words "those other attributes which we ought to ascribe." Precisely the attributes which he so carefully avoids mentioning, and which make every god of religion a fantastic nightmare of incongruities and contradic-

tions, and therefore a sheer impossibility. It would be difficult, I think, to produce a more concise example of "proof" and refutation combined, in which the refutation is concealed in what looks like the proof.

"I was once," says Locke, "in a meeting of very learned and ingenious physicians, where by chance there arose the question, Whether any liquor passed through the filaments of the nerves? The debate having been managed a good while, by variety of arguments on both sides, I (who had been used to suspect that the greatest part of disputes were more about the signification of words, than a real difference in the conception of things) desired, that before they went any further in this dispute, they would first examine and establish among them what the word 'liquor' signified. They at first were a little surprised at the proposal . . . since there was no one there that thought not himself to understand very perfectly what the word 'liquor' stood for . . . However, they were pleased to comply with my motion; and, upon examination, found that the signification of that word was not so settled and certain as they had all imagined; but that each of them made it a sign of a different complex idea. This made them perceive that the main of their dispute was about the signification of that term."

When we note that, throughout the essay, Locke makes no attempt to "establish what the word 'God' signifies," but merely endeavours to prove the existence of "something, which whether any one will please to call 'God' it matters not," we obtain a clue as to his real views about this subject.

In my next article I purpose giving a précis of those unequivocal statements (quoting verbatim where possible) in support of my contention that Locke's "God" was a mere camouflage, erected to protect the devastatingly atheistic logic contained in the major portion of his work.

C. S. FRASER.

(To be concluded.)

Perpetuating the Primitive.

"What fools these mortals be."—*Shakespeare.*

"Mankind thinks slowly."—*C. R. W. Nevins.*

"People swallow falsehood as a cat laps milk."

G. W. Foote.

"Man's mechanical inventiveness has outstripped his moral development."—*Alfred Ewing.*

ALTHOUGH national compulsory education has now been in existence in this country for over half a century, and priest-controlled education for over a thousand years, both systems have been singularly ineffective in eradicating stupid superstition from the British people. Both have been utterly impotent to remove from the minds of the present generation ignorant and childlike beliefs that used to prevail in bygone ages. For some of these, such as the spilling of salt, and the quaint notion that Friday is a day of ill-luck and misfortune, the origin can be traced to remote times, but for others, which still flourish all over the country, it is difficult to suggest the explanation, except on the grounds of a blind credulity and very defective education.

Why should thirteen be regarded as an unlucky number? There is, of course, no logical explanation for it. The idea is pure bunkum, but that misfortune will befall a person if he is at a dinner which comprises thirteen guests, or if he lives in a house which bears that number, is a silly superstition so widely believed that it has to be considered. So prevalent is the idea that in an hotel or ocean liner you will rarely find a room numbered thirteen. In-

deed, the London County Council was petitioned by a number of residents who lived in houses numbered 13 to change that number to 12a.

Efforts have been made to combat the superstition by forming "Thirteen Clubs," the members of which are pledged to do the things which half-wits regard as hazardous. These clubs, however, are not numerous enough to affect seriously the popularity of the superstitions in question.

The interpretation of dreams is another, and more profitable, form of delusion. Dream books form a lucrative side-line of the low-grade publishers, and range in price from twopence to five shillings. Hundreds of thousands of these publications are sold, and they are purchased at both ends of the social scale, largely by women.

The wearing of charms is widespread. Under our boasted veneer of civilization there is a mass of sheer, unadulterated ignorance which is a wicked heritage from a barbarous and credulous past. This dark underworld, with all its foolish fancies and stupid superstitions, exists in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and other towns and villages of today just as it existed everywhere in the Ages of Faith, when Priestcraft squatted resplendent on its gilded throne. While it belongs chiefly to the working-classes, it is not confined to them, for charms are bought as eagerly in Regent Street and Oxford Street as in Whitechapel or Walworth. Manufacturers suit themselves to all pockets, and make these charms in gold, silver, and baser metals. Motor cars have their mascots no less than donkey-carts.

Quack doctors abound in our large towns, and seek to impose upon their clients by affixing half the alphabet to their names. That they continue in business for years is a sufficient proof that the deception pays, and that Christians will purchase pills to cure earthquakes.

Many modern sailors, like the ancient mariners, believe that a child's caul is a charm against drowning. During the submarine peril of the Great War the price for this charm rose from thirty shillings to three and four pounds. Some time since an exhibition was held in London consisting almost entirely of amulets, "sacred" emblems, and other curious objects, worn by soldiers, sailors, and civilians to avert death, ward off disease, and bring good fortune. There were many hundreds of exhibits, the whole forming a most ironic comment on our boasted Christian civilization.

The plain, unvarnished truth is that the vast majority of our population is not even half-educated, despite two thousand years of Christian teaching. It is as plain as a pikestaff that to be a Christian one need not be educated, nor even intelligent. To be a Freethinker one must learn and think, one must make the pilgrim's progress from ignorance to knowledge. The strength of Priestcraft lies in the unthinking and uninformed masses. In nine cases out of ten the Christian is a man who does not even understand the religion he professes so loudly, who does not know what he believes or disbelieves, and has never given a single hour's thought or study to his own or any other faith.

Britain, like Abyssinia, is a Christian country, but underneath the veneer of superstition there is much to be deplored.

The men who wrote fairy-tales of the Old and New Testaments, and the lives of the saints, were conscious or unconscious liars. But these ridiculous yarns are still in daily use, to promote respect for the clergy, and in order that these gentry may make a comfortable living in a weary world. Children must be taught that there is a three-headed "God," because the dear clergy are his representatives. Little children must be frightened with tales of flaming hell

and damnation, for the lever of fear is the priests' most potent weapon. In order that children shall not outgrow these early impressions they are left half educated. Being fed on fairy-tales at school, is it surprising that scholars fall ready victims to common superstitions in later life?

There is only one way of improving the mentality of the average citizen, and that is by eliminating the priest and all his works from national education. By doing this, and by extending the school age, and also improving the educational programme, there is hope for this country. At present, the average Britisher is no better than his fellow-Christian, the Abyssinian native. He may wear a bowler hat, and a tweed suit, and shave his face-fungus, and the other fellow wear little but a blanket and a smile, but mentally they are so much alike. Each is the slave of the priest, and subject to onerous conditions of living. The only remedy for both the Abyssinian and the Britisher is for them to work out their secular salvation without the aid of the witch-doctors, who have battered upon them far too long. Education must be freed from the grip of barbarism at all costs. Until this is done, the ordinary man is no match for the charlatan, who will continue to have immense opportunities for mischief and spoliation.

MIMNERMUS.

Under the Fifth Rib.

This article is not concerned with knife thrusts, or deeds of gore, as its queer title might indicate. It is the name of Mr. Joad's latest book, *Under the Fifth Rib* (Faber and Faber, 10s. 6d.). The title is a Biblical one, and is derived from the quotation, given on the title-page: "And . . . Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib." (2 Samuel iii. 27.) The subtitle is "A Belligerent Autobiography."

The things that Mr. Joad sets out to smite, under the fifth rib like his near-namesake of Holy Writ, are the shortcomings, follies, and failures of our present day civilization. Our educational system, our philosophy and religion, our moral ideas, and women, are among the principal subjects discussed. Over the last item we fear there is trouble in store for the author. We should not be surprised if some indignant, fair Jael, really smote the author, after the style of Joab. However, that subject is outside our province, we can only admire his courage, without any desire to imitate it. We would sooner hunt tigers.

Mr. Joad is resentful and indignant over the years he was forced to spend learning Latin and Greek. He says: "To-day I would give all my classics for a knowledge of the rudiments of the physical and biological; yet, a middle-aged man, I have lost the capacity of easy learning and fear I shall never acquire it." (p. 12.) We are told, he observes, that Latin and Greek are a key to the most priceless jewels of the world's literature, and Mr. Joad is very fond of good literature, yet, he tells us: "once I had finished with Mods. at Oxford, I never read a Latin or Greek author in the original for pleasure, and since I left Oxford, I have never read one in the original at all. . . . I know half a dozen men, contemporaries of mine at Oxford, who were also good classics, and, as far as I can see, they read no more Latin and Greek than I do." These languages, he adds, are so infernally difficult that only one man in every hundred ever attains sufficient proficiency to read them, and "As for extraordinary people like myself and my friends, who actually managed to read Latin and

Greek, we forgot what we knew as soon as we conveniently could. My belief is that the classics continue to be taught for no other reason than that a great many people's salaries depend upon their being thought valuable enough to be worth learning." (p. 13.)

Mr. Joad is equally resentful of the time spent over Scripture. As he observes: "It is astonishing that we should still require young minds to absorb those elementary legends about the universe which science has shown to be untrue, merely because God is said to have compiled them. Not only are they untrue; most of them are disreputable to boot; yet the morals of temperate twentieth-century England are still in theory founded upon the exigencies and expediences of a nomadic Semitic tribe travelling in the torrid zone." We remember that at school, the most studied and the most worn parts of the Bible were those containing the stories, which, if they appeared in any secular book, would cause the puritans to shout for a prosecution and do their utmost to ruin the publisher. The Ten Commandments, says Mr. Joad: "always struck me as particularly irrelevant. I felt, even then, that they should be prefaced with the remark which appears at the head of examination papers: 'Candidates are warned that only six questions should be attempted!'" Mr. Joad continues:—

I achieved considerable proficiency in Scripture, a squalid accomplishment which, so far as I can see, did me no good at all, and which I had much sooner be without. Almost all the agnostics I know have distinguished themselves at Scripture in their youth. This, I suppose, is only to be expected, for it requires intelligence to be an agnostic, or did, and intelligence to win prizes even at Scripture. I have a clever cousin who for the last two years has won prizes for Scripture at his public school. The prizes take, as usual, the form of books, but the school being an enlightened one, the prize-winner is allowed to choose his books for himself. My cousin, an Atheist and a Communist, who holds outrageous opinions on all subjects, chooses the works of Shaw and Wells, Karl Marx, James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, and has now by dint of his expertness in Scripture obtained a fairly complete set of the works of these writers elaborately bound in morocco leather, embellished with the school crest, and duly inscribed in the handwriting of a bishop, who, I suppose, must have signed "a blind." The books in their strange bindings are altogether a remarkable sight. Looking at them one wonders whether bishops were ever so perverted from their proper use. *Ibid* (p. 14.)

People have been much mystified by the fact that notwithstanding the millions of Bibles printed and distributed every year by the Bible Societies the Churches continue to lose members instead of gaining them. The above quotation seem to provide the answer. The study of the Bible causes unbelief. Protestants boast that Wickliffe and Luther, by translating the Bible out of the dead languages into the vernacular, took the book out of the hands of the priest and placed it in the hands of the people. The Church of Rome, on the other hand, knew that all the heresies sprang from the Bible. Luther the arch-heretic, took his stand upon the Bible and defied the Church to prove his interpretation of it to be wrong. Then, to Luther's great indignation, others claimed the right to interpret the book, and Protestantism split up into innumerable sects, all founded on the Bible. And now the Bible itself has been weighed in the balance and found wanting; ignorant in its science, false in its history, defective in its morality, no wonder that the study of it arouses irrepressible doubts and unbelief, not only in the Bible but in all religious belief.

Treating of philosophy, Mr. Joad remarks that after Descartes' time the development of dynamics showed

that, given sufficient data, the movements of material bodies could be mathematically calculated, the atoms, so to speak blindly run. The following results, continues Mr. Joad:—

Now the human body is a material body; therefore the motions of the human body are determined by the laws of dynamics, and the human body too "blindly runs." This result was distasteful to philosophers who wished to think that their minds, at least, were free, and led to the introduction of a radical distinction between the mind and the body. This distinction was elaborated in the theory of parallelism. The mind and body ran on two parallel lines which never intersected; but, owing to the benevolence of God, every event in the one was accompanied by a corresponding event in the other. The pairs of events, in fact, had no causative connexion, since this would involve the interaction between mind and body which was denied, but through the agency of a divine miracle were made to synchronize like two perfectly accurate clocks. This ingenious device was, however, unsuccessful in securing the wished independence of mind, since, as the body events were determined by the laws of physics, so those mental events which kept step with them must also be determined. Moreover, scientists were impatient of the incessantly repeated divine miracles, while rationalists were sceptical of the benevolence which was thought to have inspired them. (p. 139.)

Mr. Joad writes in a very interesting and humorous manner, and provides many a hearty laugh. In fact, he may be said to tickle his readers under the fifth rib.

W. MANN.

The Mortality of Gods.

To view religion as part of the total evolution of man, to see it as a human institution, and to be certain that it is only thus that it can properly be seen and judged, is to lay for ever the ghost of that "something not ourselves" which still haunts the minds of many who have abandoned belief in and the practise of religion. For if religion is of human origin it must perish as all human things perish. How far it has perished we may see in available records of the past. "See how the religions of the old world entwined themselves into every circumstance of man's being; every grove had its faun, every fountain its nymph; the representation in the wide, uncovered theatre was a religious festival; at every meal there was a libation to the gods. Such a system had its roots deep in social life, but because it was only human, the product of man's imagination, it had to pass and perish; it is only a picturesque memory now: its monuments are curiosities for sightseers to see—the grove and wood are deserted; the altar is unsacred; the temple is void of worshippers."

The words quoted are from a volume of sermons popular not many years ago. The preacher appears to have been quite unconscious of the inevitable implications of this passage. He describes "the saddened heart of humanity reaching out for something which shall endure and not be subject to the awful law of change and decay"; and, he goes on to say there is one thing that escapes this "awful law"; it is "the Word of the Lord" which "endureth for ever!"

The "word of the Lord," by which the preacher meant his own variety of religion—evangelical anglicanism—shows no signs of enduring for ever, or of being exempt from the fate that has overtaken the gods before mentioned. The confidence in its "enduring for ever" can only be sustained by denying the plain lessons which mythology, anthropology, archæology, and the history of religion itself have made so clear that "he who runs may read." It is true that religion, including the Christian religion, still exercises power, influence, and pressure on governments, nations and men; but, where men are literate and free, that power is declining, that influence is questioned, that pressure is resisted, and, as we have had recent occasion to notice,

can be resisted successfully. Christianity is everywhere on the defensive, and if the end of the battle is as far off of sight as "the end of the world" that was expected a little more than nineteen centuries ago, its result is as certain as the speculations of present-day theologians on the latter portent are uncertain and contradictory.

There must be great numbers of persons who stand on the threshold of Freethought, kept back, not perhaps by those considerations which appertain to the social, political and professional boycott which adhesion, open adhesion, to militant Freethought may involve, but also by this strange preoccupation. Despite all that science proves and history teaches, may there not still be "something" which makes the god of Christianity, and Christianity itself, an exception to the conclusion irresistible in the case of every other religion that ever was or is? It would be harsh to call this mere "funk." It is harder to find a reason for being afraid of reason, which is what it amounts to.

The sermon quoted ends with a description of religion which is said to be like a trusty staff to a tired traveller on a long dusty road, something he can lean on until he gets to his journey's end. It would, however, be better described as a crutch, only of use to those who cannot stand alone. "The world, without God is a scientific or philosophic problem. The world with God is an outrage on decency and common-sense." The healthy man has no use for crutches, and can have no better aid in his journey through life than that noble conception of Shelley's.

... the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless,
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself.

Once it is grasped that the God of these latter days, whether thought of anthropomorphically, or in some exclusive abstraction to evade definition, is of the same order as the gods whose empty temples and deserted shrines are all that is left to remind us of their sway, religion will be seen to be not merely useless, but a hindrance to clear thinking and sane living. As Mr. Chapman Cohen has said in a happy sentence "explaining the world by God is like trying to cross a gap in two jumps."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Acid Drops.

Positive-Dead; Comparative-Deader; Superlative-Deadeat. Apparently we must assume these degrees if we accept what the saintly Mathews, Dean of Exeter, says in his recent official sermon to the British Association, which has had a big press.

The Dean was castigating a certain section of "slapdash" scientists who presumed to pose as authorities on religious questions. (No mention of the fact that persons pose as authorities on anything and everything!) He is reported as saying that theological books of 100 years might be dead, but they were not so dead as the works of those scientists who were unfriendly to religion.

In the early part of *A Christmas Carol*, Charles Dickens certainly uses the word "deadeat." After stating that Marley (Scrooge's partner) "was as dead as a door nail," he says "Mind! I don't mean to say that I know of my own knowledge what there is particularly dead about a doornail. I might have been inclined myself to regard a coffin nail as the deadeat piece of ironmongery in the trade. But the wisdom of our ancestors is in the simile; and my unhallowed hands shall not disturb it, or the Country's done for."

Perhaps the Dean had this passage in mind when he was preparing his sermon; at least, he has an implicit confidence in the wisdom (or folly) of our ancestors; and is convinced that any hands that meddle with the fundamental beliefs of Christianity are "unhallowed."

Now nobody wants to see the country "done for." And nobody wants to interfere with the freedom of speech of Deans anymore than with the freedom of speech of anybody else. But the country is at any time entitled to withdraw the salaries of Church dignitaries when it believes it can get on more satisfactorily without them. And it is not surprising that the rapidity and ineptitude of such utterances as those of the Dean of Exeter should induce the present generation to again seriously consider the advisability of the disestablishment and disendowment of the State Church.

Certainly the Church is familiar with the power of the "dead hand." And it maintains belief among the unscientific and illiterate by the "holy" relics of the dead and of dead things such as bits of the Cross of Calvary and the toe parings of long-deceased saints. The "evangelical" members of the Church may repudiate such aids to faith; but the Anglo-Catholics don't; and they are moving the Church of England nearer and nearer to Rome, which is waiting for her surrender with open and extended arms.

Mark Twain is another great author who suggests the possibility of degrees of deadness. There is the famous instance of that powerful and popular Wild West figure Buck Fausshaw, who committed suicide by taking as much poison as would dispose of a dozen men, shot himself and leaped out of a four-storey window. The weeping and discriminating jury brought in a verdict at the inquest that Buck had died "by the dispensation of Almighty God."

Buck's best friend in engaging the parson, whom he speaks of as "the duck that runs the gospel mill next door," to officiate at the funeral obsequies remarks that Buck is "awful dead now poor chap you bet you." The funeral is a magnificent affair with bands and flags and general mourning.

It was pointed out in these columns recently that in the process of inventing his gods, man deified persons for whom he had the most love, respect or fear. What kind of a God is he whom the Dean of Exeter worships? If a Freethinker wanted to have a God he would choose some enlightened, chummy, good-natured fellow-being with some sense of humour. The Christian God has none of these qualities. He is much more like a Robot!

The poor old Bible is not as popular as it used to be. A pious and indignant gentleman wrote the other day to a religious journal to deplore the absence of a copy of the Bible from a house in which he was staying. His host sent a message to one after another of the neighbours to borrow the needed book. Not one of them "had such a thing in the house." We have, it seems, travelled far from the days when the front windows of respectable houses displayed a Family Bible, often upon a table, and surmounted by an aspidochelone in a pot. Little is seen now of a lurid oleograph depicting her late Majesty Queen Victoria presenting a Bible to a dusky and scantily attired native with the words "The secret of England's greatness." Few regular worshippers at churches and chapels now carry a Bible as part of their go-to-meeting outfit. We may sometimes come across a dusty Bible in a railway waiting-room, or in that kind of temperance hotel which has "God bless our home" over its beds or mantels. The Bible is also to be found in all Courts of civil and criminal jurisdiction, generally in these days in washable covers since it has been discovered that testamentary osculation is not less liable to be charged with disease germs than the common form of that exercise. Perhaps for hygienic as much as for conscientious motives an increasing number of persons dispense with the Bible and avail themselves of their right to affirm given by the Oaths Amendment Act of 1888. The decline in Bible-reading, deplored in a thousand pulpits, suggests that the "sales" of Bibles annually boosted must, like the "circulations" of some periodicals, be swollen by purchases *en masse* for purpose other than personal perusal! When we reflect that "simple Bible

teaching" has been taught in all Board or Council Schools since 1870, we wonder religious persons do not see the folly of teaching children to "mind religion young." What is imposed as a task is apt to become a subject only of resentful recollection.

Dr. F. C. Birkett, Norrison Professor at Cambridge, in an address to the Modern Churchman's Conference at Bristol, said he did not think the clergy always recognized that "a kind of belief in the value of Holy Communion, and in the religion which Holy Communion represents, is sometimes dumbly testified by staying away more than by perfunctory attendance." The explanation of this clerical lack of appreciation of absent worshippers is probably their consciousness that absent worshippers, if they do not mean less worship, at least mean less offertory. Such a mundane matter would doubtless not occur to a Cambridge Professor. Dr. Birkett might, however, upon reflection, perceive that he has enunciated a highly dangerous notion, for if the religion represented by Holy Communion may be "testified" by not attending thereat, why should it be necessary to attend other and minor services? This doctrine will be pleasant reading to the gentry who profess to worship God by taking their dogs for a walk of a Sunday morning.

A stable has been converted into a temporary church for the new Roman Catholic parish of St. Robert Pellermine Orrell. *Vide Press* :—

A church in a stable at Orrell
Is surely a church with a moral,
It would be at least,
If a stable out East
Were not the headquarters of quarrel.

The latest psychic sensation is the "re-appearance" of Edgar Wallace. As all Spiritualists must have been waiting very impatiently for his message from Summerland, it was bound to come, and of course it's all quite quite genuine. One gentleman, a spirit photographer, has managed even to get a portrait of Wallace straight from beyond "under the strictest test conditions." These included the loading of four dark slides by *the spirit photographer himself*, so there can be no possible doubt whatever that the photograph was just as genuine as the script. If only Wallace could get in touch with the poor little Lindbergh baby now . . . but that would really be asking too much.

Once again the *Church Times* warns its readers against those "formidable opponents of the Faith," Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. Walter Lippmann both "highly equipped thinkers." It points out that the attack on Christianity used to be against its creeds, now it is against its ethics and calls the attention of its readers to the new book by Canon Newsome, which sets out to demolish the above gentlemen. Strange to say, however, the Canon's attack according to the reviewer of the Book, "is not based essentially on Christian moral sanctions but rather on social, economic and scientific considerations." Which is not surprising. The idea that the highest morality comes from Christianity is nonsense. There are certain basic ethics which man, the world over, has proved the best for his needs. These belong to society and are not and have never been the property of Christianity. How much for better or for worse, moral values have changed in this age, is certainly a question for discussion, but the fact that the worthy Canon prefers to go to other considerations than purely Christian ones, shows how far the *Church Times* warning is justified.

A press correspondent doubts the news that Peter's grave has been found during excavations in Rome. He mentions the fact that thirty years ago, £1,000 was offered if anybody could prove Peter ever was at Rome, and nobody took the challenge up. It was a safe offer. It would be equally safe to offer the same sum if anybody could prove that Peter—or Jesus—ever lived at all.

A very great deal of Faith is required to believe anything in the New Testament, but nobody offers £1,000 for whatever belief follows Faith. Still it's good to find our dailies are waking up and allowing sceptical letters to appear. Religion is going through bitter trials just now.

Commenting, the *Week-End Review* says, "It is the business of health resorts to cater reasonably for their visitors, not to dictate to them a religion or a code of alleged morals."

A Canadian journalist says that in that country "we are still in that sad stage where not to go to Church is just a little remarkable, arguing a slight mental or moral kink"; and "our public life still suffers from an almost continuous atmosphere of suspected corruption." Trust in the Lord does not apparently stimulate trust in other quarters.

We are indebted to the *Christian World* of September 8, for the information that before the war, in 1907 Primitive Methodists had in the Army one chaplain. To-day while there is no war going on Christian ministers are busy denouncing war. In order to show how earnest they are in this matter, the one army chaplain has grown to twenty-six. All of them, of course, draw public money for their services.

The beauty and authenticity of the marvellous miracle of the loaves and fishes by Christ has once again been indisputably confirmed. Dr. Mader has informed the Vatican—from which repository of truth the information comes—that he has found by the Sea of Galilee an ancient basilica which a pilgrim of the fourth century insisted was built over the exact spot where the miracle took place. This tremendous discovery wonderfully confirms the holy narrative—at least in the hearts of all those who already believe it. Unfortunately there are some horrid sceptics who demand even more proof. We suggest that the readers of the *Universe*, the *Church Times*, the *Methodist Recorder* and the *War Cry* should all contribute to a common fund for excavating the surrounding district and see if it is not possible to find some of the remains of the divine meal. A few fossilized fish heads and tails and crusts from the loaves would surely do more to rope in thousands of unbelievers than all the apologetic works ever written. Praps.

Although we are constantly told that Christ makes no distinction of persons that all are welcome into the Church, it is amusing to find how the various Christian sects throw cold water on the many attempts to bring them really together. Here is a Mission of Fellowship coming to this country all the way from India, headed by such thorough believers as Bishop Bannerji, Prof. Varki, a Syrian, the Rev. Ralli Ram, a Presbyterian and Mrs. Ma Nyeia Tah, a Burmese Baptist, and the *Church Times* actually says, "we are compelled regretfully to add the warning that these interdenominational delegations are apt to lead to compromises . . . which are calculated to have the most unfortunate consequences!" In plain words, Christians of the East (where Christianity really came from) are trying to fraternize with Christians of the West and the result may lead to "unfortunate consequences." But it is quite true as history abundantly testifies. Christians have never agreed among themselves and never will, and the phrase "All in Christ" is just moonshine.

The Rev. Dr. Bicknell, Professor (of King's College, London), regrets that "the Word of God is replaced by the insight or the experience of human minds. Some form of science, that is ordered knowledge, derived from man's growing investigation of the natural order, is put forward as having equal or superior authority to that self disclosure of God which had its fulness in Christ." Christians, according to the Doctor, are constantly tempted "to replace the revelation of God's will," by their own ideas." "Tempted" is surely not the word for

this process. What is "God's will," but the Christians "own idea" of it? If he is taken ill, even if he has not much in the way of "insight" or experience, he will send for a doctor, and, it may well be, in his hurry he will be "tempted" (and yield to the temptation) not to pray! This is the sort of temptation Christians cannot resist.

At the Annual Training Course for Lay Readers at Selwyn College, Cambridge, the ex-Master, Dr. Murray, discussed the question of "Miracles." Considering that one of the absolute essentials of the glorious Faith is believing in miracles, no matter how silly they are, without question, we really cannot understand why any discussion was necessary. "Believe or be damned" is a simple and easy way of settling the matter once for all. Dr. Murray's answers to such questions as "What is a Miracle?" "What is the Gospel of the Resurrection?" "The evidence for the Resurrection and more especially the empty tomb" were, we are told by the *Church Times*, "most illuminating." Here is a specimen:—

The old idea that a miracle was an act wrought by the power of God, which appeared contrary to the known laws of nature, was corrected by realizing that the controversy between the natural and the supernatural is only solved in one way, realizing that everything is both—natural and supernatural. "Every common bush aflame with God." A miracle is "a wonderful happening which sets us thinking."

If that is not "illuminating" we should like to know what is? The idea that this kind of fudge means anything or proves anything is distinctly illuminating.

Another answer is this:—

Our Lord teaches the fulfilling of the law in the spirit by getting at the root of the wrong act, in the mind and heart . . . The heart of the Gospel of the Resurrection is that God was seen to be God most by the raising of Jesus Christ from the dead, raised to a fullness of divine life which was yet human.

And this kind of drivel proves miracles, the Resurrection and the empty tomb! We give up any attempt to set limits to human stupidity.

Fifty Years Ago.

HEAVEN is our home, say the Christians; yet how reluctant they are to go there! They linger in this miserable vale of tears as long as they can, and never go aloft until they are plucked up by the vulture-beak of inevitable Death, whose black wings shed gloom alike on the sceptic and the pious. And when they have disappeared, are they not wailed over by desolate relatives and friends? Are not their corpses buried amid the sad solemnities of woe? Do the fictions of faith assuage the grief of the mourners, or lessen by one tear the tribute of sorrowing love? Are not all the consolations of religion mere mocking cloud-phantasms in presence of the stern reality of Death? The dear one, loved and lost, is only gone before; he has quitted this dark scene of misery for a bright and happy land; he has exchanged the sorrows of earth for the joys of heaven; he has finished his sojourning in alien places and reached his everlasting home, where all is rest and peace; his cup no longer holds the bitter dregs of mortal life, but overbrims with the rich wine of immortality. And they, who will soon rejoin him and share his bliss, should thrill with gladness and rejoice in his joy. Yet, strange to say they grieve as deeply as the worst sceptics. They act as though all they profess to believe were a cunning lie. And so it is. One cry of the human heart shivers all the creeds, and Rachel, mourning for her children, refuses to be comforted because *they are not*.

If the Christian really believed in heaven he would be anxious to go there; he would welcome Death as a kind deliverer and the best friend. But he does not believe. His interests and affections are rooted here, and cannot be torn up without anguish and tears of blood. He feels like other men that this world is after all better than any land of promise.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

J. MACKINNON.—Thanks for Hume letter. We have seen the Lord's Prayer before, but believe it to be apocryphal.

D.P.S.—Religion has, of course, been associated with all sorts of things, but a scientific enquiry should aim at separating essentials from non-essentials. The feeling of reverence exists quite apart from religion, and has no necessary connexion with it.

PHOENIX ACHESON.—Your religious friend who tells you that Voltaire and Ingersoll died "horrible deaths" is just a very plain and a very ordinary religious liar. Strong religion tends to encourage the development of that type.

W. J. MEALOR.—Pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. Canada seems very much more under the control of the priest than we are in this country. It is curious that religious bigotry should be so much stronger in many of our Colonies than it is at home.

H. H. WINTER.—Thanks. Next week.

A. B. MOSS.—Precise speech is, as you suggest, essential to clear thinking, and nowhere does this rule apply with greater force than in the sphere of religion.

S. GREENBERG.—The God and Watch story has been told of so many others that we should want very strong evidence to believe it is actually true of Mussolini. In any case it is the kind of story that can only affect believers in religion or non-believers who are afraid of it.

H. SENCER.—We place no reliance whatever on the undertaking of any nation to refrain from using poison gas in the next war. The use of gas bombs is already common in the case of civilian disturbances, and it is certain such instruments will not be laid on the shelf in times of war.

G.H.T.—Thanks. Mr. H. S. Salt, as we said, has a lifetime of brave and good work to his credit, and is essentially a man of firm principle. You would find his *Sixty Years Among Savages*, interesting.

J. CLAYTON.—Glad to learn of your successful meetings in Preston. There should be room there for an active branch of the N.S.S.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

How things happen! The *Daily Herald* published on September 10, an illustration showing Mr. Clynes buying a paper before entering the Trades Union Conference Hall at Newcastle. The letterpress accompanying the picture runs "Mr. J. R. Clynes buying his copy of the *Daily Herald* before entering the Conference Hall." As a matter of fact the paper Mr. Clynes is buying is the *Freethinker*, and the one who is selling it is our old friend, Mr. J. Bartram. We wonder how the blunder occurred?

We are pleased to see that in at least one place cinema proprietors have taken a stand against the Government "Racketeering Act," otherwise known as the "Sunday

Performances Act." Cinema proprietors at Hove have decided to offer one guinea per week as their contribution to charity under the Act. They say that rather than hand over their profits on Sunday shows they will close their places altogether. We hope their action will be followed in other places. When the Bill was before Parliament we said that nothing equal to this confiscation of profits made on Sunday had no equal outside the racketeering of Chicago, and we also advised that the only way to end a wholly iniquitous was to ignore it. We sincerely trust that cinema proprietors all over the country will follow the example that has been set. Nothing more contemptible, nothing more radically dishonest than the surrender of the Government to the pressure of mob Sabbatarians in connexion with Sunday entertainments than was indicated in the last Act has been done for many years. Firmness on the part of all who are engaged in the entertainment business will soon make the Act a dead letter.

There has been any amount of pulpit and newspaper chatter concerning religion and science, and a very good antidote may be found in *The Universe of Science*, by Professor H. Levy, Professor of Mathematics in the College of Science in the University of London. We have been for two or three weeks intending to write at some length on Professor Levy's book, but other things have intervened, and even now we can only give a brief word of appreciation. It is a work which we cordially recommend to those of our readers who are not frightened by a course of close and clear reasoning on a rather difficult subject. Professor Levy has really given the world an important work on the philosophy of science. We have read it with the greater appreciation since much of it, and the more fundamental parts of it, follows the reasoning of our own *Materialism Re-stated* and *God and the Universe*. We wish to add a special word of praise to the two concluding chapters on Scientific Determinism and Science—a Social Venture. These chapters are worthy of the closest study, and should do much to correct, with those who are able to follow the author's reasoning, some of the verbal moonshine that has been given to the world in the name of science by men whose conclusions have been determined by the desire to find room for religion in a world that is fast learning to do without it. The work is published by Messrs. Watts & Co., at 7s. 6d.

A Buckinghamshire correspondent writes: Professor Laski's Conway Lecture this year emphasized the evil of "sovereign States." Subjection is the result of sovereignty, and all religion, and especially Christianity, is based on subjection or "obedience" to God or his representatives. The view that obedience is a duty and a virtue is opposed to all modern psychological research; but that man is properly and naturally subject to "higher powers"—secular and "spiritual"—is still an ingredient of all faiths. A writer in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* observes that "the idea that subjection of any sort of one man to another is incompatible with human freedom"—a notion prevalent in religious and political post-Reformation teachings—"is at variance with the constituted nature of things, and with the positive prescriptions of God." To question the divine right of kings led, in logical and thoughtful minds, to questioning the divine right of religious and secular authorities. Surely the rejection of the old claims of our "spiritual pastors and masters" must also lead to the rejection of that idea of national sovereignty which is the main and most fruitful source of international friction. The "subject" citizen—every Christian is one—is not less a danger, in so far as his ideas are influential, than the sovereign State.

Brother-dunces, lend me your ears! not to crop, but that I may whisper into their furry depths: "Do not quarrel with genius. We have none ourselves, and yet we are so constituted that we cannot live without it."

Augustine Birrell.

A French-German Realist.

BARON HOLBACH was a brilliant star in the literary firmament of eighteenth century France. This remarkable period was then, and long subsequently regarded as the Age of Reason. It was adorned by the lives and labours of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Diderot and Voltaire, among other illustrious apostles of modern rationalism.

In eighteenth-century England the names of Gibbon, David Hume and Adam Smith amply recall the reign of enlightenment in cultured circles in our own land. In the succeeding century the Freethought evangel was proclaimed by thinkers such as the two Mills, Bentham, Grote and other expositors of the utilitarian philosophy.

The theory of utility in social affairs postulates the greatest happiness for the greatest number, with the least injury to any, as its leading ideal. This theory when put into practice provides our most serviceable guide in life. Utilitarianism is usually regarded as of purely British origin. Nevertheless, priority must be assigned to the famous French Encyclopædists, Helvétius and Holbach.

Owing to the persecuting attitude of both Church and State, Diderot and his allies on the renowned Encyclopædia were compelled to walk warily. The Jesuits also were athirst for heretical blood. When one of Helvétius' volumes had been publicly burnt by order of the Parlement of Paris, permission to publish the Encyclopædia was withdrawn by the Crown. Driven underground, the French Freethinkers deferred further publication until 1765, when the last ten volumes which completed the vast Encyclopædia were issued surreptitiously with fictitious title pages.

Daunted by the official attack on the liberty of the press, Helvétius decided to preserve silence. Holbach, on the other hand, determined to continue the conflict with temporal and spiritual tyranny. Indifferent alike to fame and fortune, Holbach published under the names of men no longer living or of those of authors of other lands. Many of his pieces appeared anonymously. In his splendid essay on Helvétius and Holbach, Mr. William H. Wickwar notes the subterfuges to which Holbach was driven in his fight with oppression. "The deception was great," he writes, "as some of these works were actually written by dead men or foreigners. It was five generations since Epicureanism had been revived in France by Gassendi; two generations since scepticism had been popularized by Bayle and Pantheism by Spinoza; and anti-clericalism was then, as always, one of the dominant characteristics of an important part of French society. The private collections of the eighteenth century, many of them now incorporated in the public libraries of France, abound in highly heterodox works written by distinguished French scholars and scientists, copied out of hand, circulated from friend to friend, and seldom openly attributed to their authors until death put them beyond the reach of danger."

Some of the Holbach's numerous publications were translations from leading English Deists, Collins, Toland, and Woolston, among them. Thomas Hobbes' *Treatise on Human Nature*, a pioneer proclamation of scientific Materialism, now appeared in French for the first time. Many other writings were issued including Holbach's own essays, *The System of Society*, *Natural Politics*, and *Universal Morality*. These three publications date from 1772 to 1776. Holbach's eloquent Materialistic manifesto, *The System of Nature* had already appeared in 1770.

All these publications were perforce printed in England or Holland, but they appear to have had a

fair circulation in France. Complete suppression was impossible. Although the *System* was burnt by order of the Parlement its leading features were designedly given a wide publicity. The Crown Prosecutor happened to be a Voltaircan, and he so framed the indictment that it reproduced all the most telling passages in the prosecuted work. The authorities were anxious to suppress this mischievous summary, but it was printed and published by the express command of the King.

Holbach was born in a wealthy family in Germany. In 1748 he settled in Paris and became a naturalized Frenchman. A generous host, a prolific penman, and a magnanimous opponent he was extremely popular in all intellectual circles. Although he was ever an unsparing enemy of Jesuitry, he assisted various Jesuits when disaster overcame them in France.

In sacerdotalism, Holbach discerned the root of all evil. He denounced as socially injurious every rite and ceremony of religion. All the important actions of our lives from birth to death are made to pay tribute to the priesthood. Theological disputes are unending, and the State almost invariably compromised with the Church when religious squabbles were settled. Instead of attending to their proper duties, Governments were distracted into intervention in all the trumpety differences arising among sectarians. It is considered sound statesmanship to placate the priests, and these in return, by soothing and deceiving the people, save the secular rulers the trouble of sound administration or of furnishing remedies for social and economic injustices. In Germany, despite the unspeakable horrors of the 'Thirty Years' War, the Catholics had failed to exterminate the Lutherans. Despite the sinister alliance of Prince and prelate in Holland, the Spanish rule was triumphantly overthrown. One Stuart king ascended the scaffold when he tried to make all his subjects conform to the dogmas of the State Church, while his son James II. lost his throne in his obstinate endeavour to make them obedient to Romanism. And when a monarch like Henry of Navarre preached and practiced toleration—a heinous sin in the eyes of the clergy—the Jesuits embraced the theory of tyrannicide, and the most just and enlightened of French kings was assassinated. When we compare the appalling evils for which theology and its supporters are responsible with the good they have ever accomplished, the former are as the world's oceans and the latter as a droplet of water.

Holbach pictured the universe in terms of matter and motion for what appear to us as distinct modes of existence are essentially different kinds of movement. In fact, Holbach was a logical and consistent Materialist. Molecular attraction or gravitation govern the physical world, while in human life sexual attraction and friendship meet their explanation as the effects of electro-magnetic forces.

If labour be the law of life, justice is the prime virtue. Holbach's political philosophy is well expressed in the appended passage: "It ought to aim," he contends, "at the greatest interest of society—that is to say, it ought to assure to the greatest number of citizens the advantages for which they are leagued together in society. The advantages are liberty, property, and security." With reference to property, Holbach claimed that the possession of property is equitable only in so far as it is the result of honest labour. And it is significant that Holbach foresaw the risks run by modern states if they depend too greatly upon overseas commerce. Britain and Holland, were they permanently merchant-ridden, would share the fate of Venice, Carthage and Tyre. The indebtedness of scientific Materialism and Secu-

larism to the teachings of Holbach has never been adequately acknowledged. Some of his views may now appear crude. But without question, Holbach influenced Godwin, Shelley, Bentham, Mill, Feuerbach, and perhaps, indirectly, Marx and Engels themselves. To be sure, many changes have taken place since Holbach's day. But, as Wickwar justly says, "through all these changes the thought of the Encyclopædists, Helvétius and Holbach, always retains its significance; for they were the founders of a tradition of which we are the heirs; they were the forerunners of all of us who try to envisage social experience in a scientific though not unenthusiastic spirit, and to make our age an age not of blind passion, but of ordered progress enlightened by reason and experience."

T. F. PALMER.

Criticism and the Bible

(Continued from page 581.)

II.

IF we carefully scrutinize the Books of Judges and Samuel, and eliminate the later interpolations, additions and revisions, then the general worship of the *elohim* or tribal-ancestor gods, of the *teraphim* or gentile-ancestor gods, and of the household or family gods, stands out in full view. Truly we can trace much that is of Canaanite or Phœnician origin in those cults. If these influences, however, could with such ease interweave themselves with those which had been brought out of the wilderness and maintain themselves in this way for many centuries, does not all this prove that there must have been very striking points of contact between the ancestor-worship of the Canaanites and the ancestor-worship of the Hebrews?

We are corroborated in this view of the oldest religious practices of Northern Israel, by the fact that even what is set before us as the Yahwe-worship of the Israelites of the north was not Yahwe-worship at all. What, we are entitled to ask the modern pro-Yahwe theologians, has the procedure with which the Yahwe-hero Gideon conducts his offering, to do with the cult of Yahwe? In the Book of Judges this offering is spoken of as a "present" to Yahwe. And Yahwe's representative, "the angel of the Lord," arranges the details of how the offering is to be presented to Yahwe.⁹ Yet to a Yahwe-priest of Judah this procedure would appear as the most repugnant idol-worship. Moreover, what will the theological critics make of the conduct of that veritable pillar of Yahwism, the old man Samuel, who knew so little about the sacrificial usages of the cult of Yahwe that he celebrates the feast of the sacrifice upon "the high place,"¹⁰ that is to say, identifies the paschal sacrifice with the Bama-cult, the old Canaanite sacrifice on the hill-top? What the Yahwist prophets had to say about those "who sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains and burn incense upon the hills under the oaks,"¹¹ was anything but indulgent to the methods of Samuel.

Even in the oldest literary fragments of the Old Testament, there is not the slightest proof that the tribes of Northern Israel had any kind of common places of worship of Yahwe. Each tribe had in the old days its "El" and its chief sanctuary at Mahanaim (*i.e.*, "the double seat of El"), the Beni Benjamin in Bethel (*i.e.*, "the house of El"),

the Beni-Reuben in Phannel (*i.e.*, "the aspect of El"), the Beni-Zebulun on Mount Tabor, the Beni-Manasseh in Shechem, etc. Unfortunately, there is nothing which could tell us in what forms the different *elohim* were worshipped in different localities. We know only the El of Bethel and the El of Shechem were represented in the form of a steer.

We have already referred to that very old piece of Hebrew literature—perhaps the very oldest of all—known as the "Song of Deborah," and the theological critics allege that in this poem there is a proof for their contention that Yahwe was already worshipped in the earliest times in Northern Israel. Since in this "Song of Deborah," Yahwe is called the god of Israel, his cult, it is claimed, must have been in existence in North Palestine in the twelfth and eleventh centuries B.C.

Unfortunately for our simple-minded theologians, this document is not of one piece. Even this old literary memorial was subsequently enlarged and edited, and to prove at that time just what the theologians of our time wish to prove. It would occupy us too long to establish this fact in all its details; but the following few examples will be sufficient for our purpose in this present discussion.

Originally the "Song of Deborah" began with verse 12, of the Book of Judges:—

"Awake, awake, Deborah:
Awake, awake, utter a song
Arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive,
Thou son of Abinoam."

It is one of those old war-songs which we find among so many peoples. The song which may have arisen shortly after the battle between the Hebrews and Canaanites on the river Kishon, described therein in the form of a popular song, was, at first, for all who sang it, quite intelligible, since the events were still more or less fresh in the memory. When later, however, this recollection had faded, another hand added a few stanzas, which were placed at the beginning of the song and in which the author seeks to describe the causes which led to the dispute.

The verses which constitute this enlargement stand to the battle-hymn proper in a certain degree of opposition, in as far as in the latter the events are considered as of recent happening, while in the later enlargement they are regarded as lying in the remote past. In verse 6, for example, it says:—

"In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath,
In the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied,
And the travellers walked through byways.
The inhabitants of the villages ceased,
They ceased in Israel,
Until that I Deborah arose,
That I arose a mother in Israel."

For this new poet, the events which led up to the war as well as the appearance of Deborah, lay far away back in the past. Perhaps this battle song was sung in that form for centuries until, like so many old Hebrew hymns, it became "improved" for Yahwe's sake and rendered so as to announce the excellence of his virtues; but the Yahwist who carried out the alterations was just such a simpleton as so many of the modern priests in and outside of Israel. He did his work of enlargement so clumsily that to-day the later interpolations stand out clearly.

He begins at once with an outburst of praise to Yahwe:—

"Praise ye the Lord¹² for the avenging of Israel,
When the people willingly offered themselves.
Hear, O ye kings; give ear O ye princes;
I, even I, will sing unto the Lord;
I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel."

This verse is clearly distinguishable from the battle-hymn proper which was sung *in corpore*. Here, an

¹² Yahwe.

⁹ Judges vi. 18-21.

¹⁰ Samuel ix. 12, 13.

¹¹ Hosea iv. 13: Compare also x. 8.

individual appears upon the stage, an "I," and announces, "I will sing"; and this "I" already knows of "kings" and "princes" in Northern Israel. The battle-hymn proper knows of kings among the Canaanites, but only of "nobles" and leaders among the Hebrew tribes. All this shows that the Yahwist laudation belongs to a much later time.

Further:—

"Lord (Yahwe) when thou wentest out of Seir,
When thou marchedst out of the field of Edom,
The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped,
The clouds also dropped water.
The mountains melted from before the Lord,
Even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel."

That is a truly remarkable piece of work! It may well be that according to the opinion of Judah, Yahwe had once resided on Mount Seir. Yet it is surely strange that also the people of Northern Israel in the twelfth century, who had never heard anything about the mountain of Seir in far-away Edom and, indeed, as the oldest parts of the "Song of Deborah" indicate, were blissfully unconscious even of the existence of Judah, should think of their god as residing upon the quite unknown Mount Seir instead of in their own holy place at home! Besides, what a peculiar knowledge of the geography of Palestine this Yahwe must have had? What a singular sense of direction? In his lodgings on Mount Seir, he hears that he is urgently wanted on the plain of Kishon. Yet, instead of making his way direct to the scene of operations *via* the land of Judah and Benjamin, Yahwe goes first to Sinai, conducts an earth-shaking performance there and then makes off to Northern Israel; which would resemble pretty much the case of a man who wanted to travel quickly from Manchester to Liverpool, but who first of all journeys to Leeds and then via Preston to Liverpool; but there—"all things are possible" with Yahwe, or at least for his impossibilist theologians!

Geography does not seem to have been a strong point with the Yahwist revisionist. However, the fact is that this verse is nothing but a paraphrase of a passage out of the "Blessings of Moses,"¹³ adapted to suit the occasion.

There are still some other interesting oddities. In his zeal, the Yahwist has quite overlooked the fact that the previous enlarger of the hymn knew nothing of Yahwe but rather held the view that, at the time of the episode, the Hebrew tribes worshipped different *elohim*. Thus a few lines following the above-cited Yahwist interpolation, there appears the statement:—

"They chose new gods."

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" The Israelites worship different *elohim*, but still they send out an S.O.S. to Yahwe on the distant Seir. In verses 9-11, there is a further crescendo of praise to Yahwe. Then follows the real battle-hymn. It continues "unimproved" as far as verse 23, with the exception of another effort from the Yahwist propagandist-muse in verse 13. This verse now reads:—

"Then he made him that remaineth have dominion
Over the nobles among the people:
The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty."

The second line is interpolated. It contains the characteristic pronoun "me." It signifies "to my satisfaction" or "to my joy."

The Yahwist wishes to express his delight that at the time Yahwe was on the spot, in the midst of the fighting people. Yet the sense of this interpolation is in contradiction to the sense of the war-song. It stands in the sharpest possible opposition to the old text, according to which it is not Yahwe who fights for the Hebrews, but the *elohim* which fight from

heaven in the courses of the stars. Thus in verse 20, it says:—

"They fought from heaven,
The stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

That is certainly not a conception which belongs to the cult of Yahwe, but a Canaanite or Phoenician one, which clearly proves that when this battle-hymn arose, many Canaanite notions about the gods had been absorbed into the ancestor-worship of the Northern Israelites. But the worship of Yahwe was still unknown among them.

Finally, the Yahwist poet has, in verse 23, some more additional lines to his credit. There we read:—
"Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord (Yahwe),
Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
To the help of the Lord against the mighty."

This is a very much mutilated verse. First of all there is no such place as Meroz on the map of Old Palestine. In the earlier writings the word "Massa" or "Mascar" must have appeared in the place of "Meroz." In the old Septuagint, the place is still called Massar and Massor. More important, however, is the singular contradiction which this verse brings to light, namely, that while according to the Yahwe worshipper, Yahwe came all the way from Edom to fight in the midst of his people, this verse tells us that he was not there at all but was represented by one of the staff, who was deputed to do the cursing for him!

These examples are sufficient to show that all the passages in this "Song of Deborah" which speak of Yahwe, are additions which have been made centuries later by the Yahwist editor and reviser. In the old text there is no mention of Yahwe. On the contrary, the protectors of the fighting Hebrew bands are their *elohim*, who fight "from heaven" for them and gain for them the victory.

W. CRAIK.

(To be continued.)

The Sunday Paper.

WHEN Sunday papers largely increased in number, the execrations of the clergy were like to deafen us; but with the lapse of time a great change has come over the clerical attitude towards them. The Sunday Press generally has now merely to sustain the pop-gun shrieks of remote tin bethels. Of course, the best Sunday paper which has lately celebrated its jubilee in the advocacy of the greatest of causes, was never the object of any sustained attack by the boanerges of bigotry. That was too risky. Boycott was found to be the safest policy to adopt in its case. The more astute of the ecclesiastical leaders once they realized that the other Sunday papers had come to stay—having secured popular favour with the many-headed—decided to stop the tap of denunciation. As time went on the clerics even began to reverse their attitude altogether! They saw in the popular Sunday paper a possible medium of conveying their sloppy doctrines to the *hoi polloi*. They found several proprietors of these tuppenny weekly sheets complaisant in that respect, with the result that many popular weekly papers now have a special column in which appears a lay sermon; or some conventional prattle about the beauty and comfort of religion. This big "conversion" is accepted quite complacently by the unthinking—who are likewise quite prepared to acquiesce in the B.B.C. policy of booming religion. Yet notwithstanding these additional means of ecclesiastical propaganda—the jesuitical policy by which they have been secured—and the clever clerical effusions that are now frequently printed in the Sunday papers—the actual adherents of

¹³ Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2.

the Churches do not increase in number; nor does the general indifferentism to religion diminish. Indifference grows into antipathy—antipathy into positive aversion—and in a growing number of instances aversion turns into actual hostility to the Churches—once their meanness and greed have been realized.

Freethinkers are confronted with many serious obstacles put in their way by stupidity, ignorance, fear and veiled autocracy. Clerical castuists are joined together with clerically-minded proprietors and managers of Sunday papers to keep the minds of the poor submissive to religious authoritarianism. The pill is of course always well coated with sugar. But the real scheme is to bless the boss and his relations and keep the blind in their proper stations. Proof of this peeps out occasionally, justifying the assertion that in several respects there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. A "toff" who changes his name when travelling or hiking has adopted an "incognito"—a poor man who changes his in similar circumstances has adopted an "alias." In one column of the Sunday paper can be found the most beautiful arguments in favour of disarmament—general in their terms of course. In another can be found enthusiastic praise of the drilling of school and college cadets; and effusive admiration of military shows and bands. Mum's the word in the Sunday papers concerning international hatred and rivalries and the growing private manufacture of armaments. What! Would you compel a big reduction in the production of these; and thus throw many men into the already swelled ranks of the unemployed? With beautiful impartiality British armament firms supply the means of wholesale murder to other foreign countries. If the poor readers of the popular Sunday Press could perceive that the shells they and their fellow countrymen are making in the munition factories may be used in murdering themselves and their families they might, as the Scots say, "tak a thocht"! Whom are we arming against? And whom are we arming to protect? The big fat profiteers have everything to gain by keeping the poor in blindness to actual facts. If our country is attacked how much of it is the property of the poor to protect? No, it is to be earnestly hoped that when the big international financiers next give the signal for a war, the vast majority of the inhabitants of all the countries concerned will be either out and out pacifists or conscientious objectors who will refuse to handle gun, rifle or revolver.

The Sunday Press, generally speaking, dishes up 25 per cent of fact with 75 per cent of falsehood. We are always just on the edge of prosperity! A boom is coming soon! But it may be the boom of artillery—not a boom in trade!

There is a lot of "Brer Rabbit" about the proprietors of the chief popular Sunday newspapers. They do not seem to be very keen to have their names actually identified with these organs from which they derive their enormous profits. But many of us know quite well who they are; and by what means they obtain the entrée to the ranks of "High Societee." The names of these weekly sensation-providers are never hard. No, we never mention them. And some of these proprietors who affect a literary interest pose as writers of articles—not, be it observed, in the columns of their own Sunday papers—but in other more reputable and slightly more highbrow week-day periodicals. What a game it is! And how far, even yet, a title will go as a credential—with gaping fools! With *that*, some scissors and paste, and a typist, even the editor of the more literary week-day journal can be accommodating! "Over all as the trail of the serpent of finance." The Calf of Gold has developed into a menacing bull—and bully!

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE ROMAN MENACE.

SIR,—Mr. Mann, in his recent article on The Roman Menace, is too easily scared. Rome regards celibacy as holier than marriage, and so sterilizes its best men and women. It forbids birth-control, so the percentage of its members born from the least capable parents is very great. Now in natural selection, quality counts for more than quantity, as is easily seen where a few thousand members of some relatively robust and capable race rule several millions of negroes or Bengalis. The same is seen in the relative weakening of purely Catholic countries like Spain. Or compare Denmark and Ireland. No doubt the Roman Church is the best organized large church in the world (in that respect it is the Roman Empire applied to religion), and the biggest. But the people who join it because they like to join the biggest crowd do not add strength to it. They lean on each other. Have Chesterton's epigrams or Belloc's dogmatics ever convinced anyone? A few historically-minded people are attracted by the Roman Church's age. I am sentimental that way myself, but it attracts me to the synagogue, not to its parvenu rival.

C. HARPUR.

[A letter from Mr. W. Mann in reply to his critics is held over until next week.]

NATURAL SELECTION.

SIR,—I am surprised to have to correct an error that is almost universal in relation to Herbert Spencer. In your editorial comments for August 21, 1932, you say, "even Herbert Spencer sought to justify natural selection on the grounds of its being a beneficent process."

You are evidently wrong here, considering the general character of his writings. For he simply stated a natural law that is irrefutable. Also, you forgot to add, that even Herbert Spencer stated, that however much the believers in the supernatural might decry against evolution, yet, nowhere does it imply malevolence or vindictiveness, which we would have to apply to an omnipotent usurper of supernatural power, did one exist.

Moreover, in his desire for accuracy and enlightenment and a moral shrinking from anything that would be misleading, he substituted "survival of the fittest" for natural selection, as so many people confounded natural selection with the selection of a breeder of animals, which is a million per cent more direct and powerful than natural selection.

T. H. MAHONY.

[The reference to the survival of the fittest as a beneficent process can be found worked out in detail in chapter 28 of *Social Status*, 1868. The exact phrase "a beneficent process" is used in another passage on which we cannot at the moment place our hand.—EDITOR.]

War.

In the light of comedy one might call the blossom of a chestnut tree upright lanterns, and that of the laburnum tree inverted lanterns for those who seek truth in the daylight.

In early spring, the spirit which has said good-bye to much that is valueless, may have seen a frail child skipping in the shadow of an avenue of chestnut trees. She might have been a canary let loose in the world; her yellow dress whispered the word.

The south-west wind had scattered the early bloom on the pavement in the shadows, making a carpet of pink and white, and this Puck-like spirit was pelting her brother with showers of bloom.

For those who believe that the living move in the Golden Age, it is a truth; perhaps this would be the highest form of animosity in a world where the very spirit desires to make nothing its own.

SOLITAIRE.

Propaganda.

Birmingham Freethinkers have an opportunity of meeting kindred spirits in a friendly chat and ramble amid the charming scenery of the Lickey Hills. The Birmingham Branch N.S.S. has arranged a picnic there to-day (Sunday). Members and friends are invited. Meet at Rednal Tram Terminus at 3.30 p.m. Tea, at a reasonable cost, will be taken under cover in the "Rose and Crown" grounds.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports an active week and successful meetings in Woolwich. There are a number of keen workers in the new local Branch N.S.S., and that usually means good meetings and lively interest. The President of the N.S.S., Mr. Chapman Cohen, may shortly pay a lecture visit to Woolwich, and Freethinkers in the area should keep an eye on these columns for a definite announcement.

The Fulham Branch N.S.S. is ready for Mr. G. Whitehead, who commences a week's campaign in that district to-day (Sunday). Full particulars of meetings to be held will be found in the Lecture Notices column, and the local Secretary appeals to all Freethinkers within reasonable distance to support the special effort, organized and financed by the Executive of the N.S.S., and with the co-operation of the local Branch.

We are asked to announce that the Metropolitan Secular Society (non-political) commences its season's work on Sunday, September 25, at the City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, London, N., at 7.20 p.m. Syllabus of lectures arranged may be obtained at the opening and following meetings.

Obituary.

MARY ANN PARTRIDGE.

WE regret to record the death of Mary Ann Partridge, widow of the late Secretary of the Birmingham Branch, at the age of seventy-seven. Mrs. Partridge was the daughter of a very fine Freethinker, Mr. Ridgway, who for many years took a very active part in Freethought propaganda. Mrs. Partridge was also a quiet but steadfast supporter of the movement. Her death was not unexpected, as for some time her health had been failing, but her passing removes a striking link with the heroic period of nineteenth century Freethought. The interment took place at Lodge Hill Cemetery on September 7, when an address was delivered by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who travelled from London for that purpose.

MAKE UP YOUR MIND.

Logic is the prime necessity of the hour. Decomposition and transformation is going on all around us, but too slowly. Some opinions, bold and erect as they may still stand, are in reality but empty stalls. One shove would be fatal. Why is it not given?

Augustine Birrell.

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INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A.—"What I Saw in Germany."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 3.15, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH (Effie Road, opposite Walham Green Underground Station) : 7.30, Sunday, September 18. Monday, September 19, Shorrolds Road, North End Road, 7.30. Tuesday, September 20, Shorrolds Road, 7.30. Wednesday, September 21, Effie Road, 7.30. Thursday, September 22, Shorrolds Road, 7.30. Friday, September 23, Shorrolds Road, 7.30. Saturday, September 24, Shorrolds Road, 7.30. Mr. Whitehead will address each Meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, September 18, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Monday, September 19, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Mr. Tuson. Thursday, September 22, Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0. A Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.30, Sunday, September 18, Mr. L. Ebury. Wednesday, September 21, Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Mrs. F. Grout.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : Wednesday, September 14, at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Wood, Thursday, September 15, at 7.30, Messrs. F. C. Saphin and W. P. Campbell Everden. Friday, September 16, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. Sunday, September 18, at 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Bryant and Wood; Platform No. 2, Messrs. B. A. Le Maine and Tuson. 6.30, Platform No. 1, Messrs. Wood, Tuson and Bryant; Platform No. 2, Messrs. Hyatt and Saphin. Current Freethinkers can be obtained outside the Park.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common) : 7.30, Friday, September 16, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Sunday, September 18, Beresford Square, 7.30, Mr. G. Mead. Monday, September 19, Lakedale Road, 7.30, Messrs. J. Read and S. Burke. Wednesday, September 21, "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 7.30, Mr. S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH, 7.30, Monday, September 19, Mr. J. Clayton.

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths) : 8.0, Sunday, September 18, Messrs. H. Little and D. Robinson. Tuesday, September 20, Edge Hill Lamp, 8.0, Messrs. H. Little and P. Sherwin. Thursday, September 22, corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Messrs. A. Jackson and J. V. Shortt. Current Freethinkers on sale at all meetings.

LUMB-IN-ROSSENDALE, 6.30, Friday, September 16, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWBIGGIN-BY-SEA : 6.30, Sunday, September 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market) : 7.0, Sunday, September 18, Mr. R. Atkinson.

PRESTON (Covered Market) : 3.0 and 7.0, Sunday, September 18, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street) : 7.30, Saturday, September 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place) : 7.30, Wednesday, September 21, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Lambton Street) : 7.0, Sunday, September 18, Alan Planders.

SUNDERLAND (Lambton Street) : 7.0, Tuesday, September 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, one-third of whom retire (by ballot), each year, but are eligible for re-election.

Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society, Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £..... free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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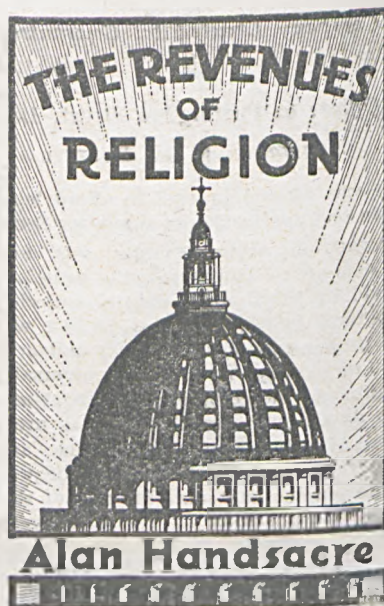
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