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Views and Opinions.

The Oath Question Again.

THE other day one of our County Court Judges, Judge Clements, in the course of a case at Dover, said:—

The amount of perjury committed in the courts in this country is appalling. People take the oath, but you never expect them to speak the truth at all. They say "I swear by Almighty God," and it is an offence against the law and an insult to God in whom they do not believe.

It is common with Judges to take up a pose of innocence and ignorance with regard to matters concerning which other men are neither innocent nor ignorant, but they can hardly be ignorant of the fact that the oath never prevents a liar exercising his art, however clumsily. And Judge Clements is not alone in not expecting a man to tell the truth merely because he is under oath. If a man tells a lie without an oath he will tell a lie with one. He may exercise greater care in making his lie more circumspect, but he will lie just the same. If a liar feels that he can escape a charge of perjury, and the punishment which can be inflicted in this world, he will take his chance with God in the next. God is a long way off, he is not always listening, and what is a little lie among so many millions of his worshippers? Besides, in these days when the number of his followers is diminishing so rapidly, even God Almighty cannot afford to be over scrupulous with his worshippers.

* * *

Insulting God.

There are two statements of Judge Clements that are rather puzzling. He says that the man who takes an oath and tells a lie is insulting God and that he does not believe in Him. But how can a man insult the non-existent? He does, of course, remain a liar whether he believes in God or not; but how can he insult God if he does not believe there is a God to insult? I can insult a man, and if the insult is of a certain character the law will inflict punishment. I can insult the King of Siam, even though the law may

not be able to punish me, because I believe there is some such person. But how do I set about insulting someone whom I do not believe exists? I think that what Judge Clements means is that I am insulting *him*, because I am not paying what he considers is the proper deference to the God he believes in. That is quite a different thing, and Judges, if they wish to retain the respect of men, should really try to talk reasonably. I remember a case in which a certain man prayed during a political crisis, "Oh Lord, grant that we may not think disrespectfully of our rulers, but, Oh Lord, grant that they may not act so that we cannot help doing so." If Judge Clements wishes the world to act respectfully towards his opinions he should take care that his opinions are such that reasonable men and women can listen to them with a straight face.

* * *

Lying for God' Sake.

The Judge is distinctly wrong in assuming that because a man, after taking an oath, proceeds to tell a "whopper" that, therefore he does not believe in a God. The most ordinary experience must have taught him to the contrary. And one wonders! Suppose Judge Clements were upon oath and he were asked whether he thought that men who believe in a God could not tell a lie? What would he reply? Would his answer be in the negative? In that case would he not be disproving in person his very ingenuous theory that because a man on oath told a lie he did not believe in God? And if he replied in the affirmative, what becomes of his statement made in circumstances which prevents anybody contradicting him on the spot?

For Judge Clements must be very, very innocent if he does not know that religious liars have been among the most robust of their craft, and that among these Christianity has provided some simply unapproachable specimens. The Bible, upon which the Judge sees man after man and woman after woman taking the oath is a decisive proof of this. For as it stands, it is only a selected remnant of a very extensive literature which was fabricated and given to the people as the very word of God. And even this selected remnant is, on the admission of Christian scholars, filled with passages that were, they say, interpolated and given to the people as God's word. Then there are the lies Christians have told of other religions, which Catholics have told of Protestants, and each Protestant sect has told of other Protestant sects! Or beyond these lies, the many literary forgeries concocted by Christian writers in defence of their faith, and the lies they have told about unbelievers! Not, be it remembered, mere mistakes, or errors of reporting, but deliberately concocted lies which, when exposed, have never brought a frank denial or repudiation from any Christian pulpit. I do not believe that when a man tells a lie he is insulting God,

although he may be injuring man, but his Honour is insulting the intelligence of the general public when he infers that because a man tells a lie he does not believe in a God. I do not wish to restrict the right of Judge Clements to palter with the truth in his private capacity, but he should restrain himself when on the Bench.

* * *

The Appeal to God.

But if there is a God, and Judge Clements evidently believes there is one, may I ask him to consider whose fault it is that witnesses have no hesitation in telling a lie after taking an oath? The oath is a form of trial by ordeal. It was an appeal to God to punish the man if he was not telling the truth, or to bring him to defeat by battle if he were guilty. It called upon God to decide. It is common among all savages, and although weakened by the Roman and Greek civilizations, it regained strength, as did so many other savage customs, under Christian rule. It flourished in England in the seventeenth century, when old women were tied hand and foot and thrown into the river to see if God would prove their innocence. With the humane common sense of Christians in full power it was held that if she floated for a time she was a witch, and she was killed. If she sank immediately she was innocent—but stood an excellent chance of being drowned.

The oath in a law court is one of the survivals of this form of ordeal. It is really saying "If I do not speak the truth, then may God strike me dead, or punish me otherwise." And in the good old days God did punish those who took an oath falsely. If they swore on the eucharist and ate a little bit of God, that little bit either stuck in their throat, or, when swallowed, their body swelled up to such an extent that they burst. If a man "insulted" God by speaking disrespectfully of him, or by ignoring some of his commands, or, in Puritan times, by gambling or playing or working on Sunday, he was promptly attended to—by God. All that man had to do was to record simply, and with Christian truth, the occurrence. These things made false swearing, or insulting God, a very serious affair. God attended to his own business, and the non-execution of his orders, or an insult to his majesty met with prompt reprisals. Of course, lying for the greater glory of God came under a different category. Lying *for* God and lying *about* him were widely different things. Gods have always looked with great leniency on the former, and have crowned those whom they favoured with great honour here and hereafter.

* * *

Does God Care?

But as time passed God grew careless. He no longer looked after his own interests, he appeared to leave them entirely to others. It is true that there were still good, zealous souls who kept up the habit of lying *for* God, but it became apparent that on the whole God did not favour them more than others. They did not live longer than others, they were not happier than others, they were not freer from disease than others. On the other hand, those who went their way and ignored God, or broke his religious commandments fared no worse than those who kept them. If they told a lie in a court, they often got a verdict in their favour. If they went out cycling, or played games on Sunday, instead of those coming home from Church meeting a saddened procession bearing the corpses of the Sabbath-breakers, they encountered them with happy faces and healthily tired bodies—"and so to bed."

What were believers to make of this? It looked as though God had gone out of business, or had ceased to bother whether or not men held his name sacred.

For many generations Christians had been bidden to watch how promptly the Lord punished those who broke his commandments or acted disrespectfully towards his religion. And now these things were no longer happening. The Atheist could "deny God," and never a flash of lightning appeared in the sky, never a fit overtook the wicked blasphemer! They had been told "God is not Mocked," but men mocked him with impunity. They were told that God would punish them if they took the Lord's name in vain. But thousands of them went into court and lied like—parsons, and nothing happened. Perhaps, after all, God did not bother with these things at all!

A man cannot live without food; an idea or a belief cannot live without sustenance. A belief may live for a considerable time on a lie, but it must have at least the lie on which to live. In the oath men and women, with the sanction of judges, were asking God to punish them if they told a lie. And now when a man takes an oath a Christian Judge informs the world that he never expects the man to tell the truth—that is this Judge never expects God to take any notice of the man lying in His name! It is God's own fault. If he had continued to choke or strike dead or paralyse all those who "insulted" him, people on oath would be careful how they behaved. But when they see that what they have to look out for is human contempt for the liar, and human punishment for the perjurer, and nothing else, is it any wonder that they do not bother about whether they are insulting God or not? It may even flash across their minds that perhaps, after all, the Atheist may be right. There may not be a God about whom one need bother.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Rousseau: The Sentimental Pietist.

(Continued from page 779.)

At the beginning of 1750 Rousseau sent in his Essay competing for the prize offered by the Academy of Dijon, after submitting it to his friends, Diderot and Grimm, who praised it. In the August of the same year he learnt that he had won the prize of a gold medal and three hundred francs. He awoke to find himself famous. He says that he had forgotten all about it. In this *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, Rousseau plays the role of the philosopher denouncing science and art, and declares that all our troubles are due to the poison of culture. His message was "in the deepest sense 'reactionary.'" ¹¹ He asserted that men had once known a happier Eden-like a condition of simplicity and freedom, to which they could return if they chose. Further, he declared:—

Astronomy is due to superstition; eloquence to ambition, falsehood and flattery; geometry to avarice; physics to idle curiosity; like all the others, to human pride. From vices they spring, by vices they are fostered; for what would become of the arts if they were not cherished by luxury? Of jurisprudence, if men were not unjust? If there were no tyrants, no wars, no conspiracies.¹²

And he puts up a prayer to "Almighty God" to "deliver us from the enlightenment and fatal arts of our fathers, and give us the ignorance, innocence, and poverty which alone can make us happy, and which are precious in Thy sight."

Rousseau's delight at his success was unbounded. So highly strung and nervous was his temperament, that good fortune affected him in the same way as

¹¹ Josephson: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*.

¹² Graham: *Rousseau*. pp. 48-49.

misfortune and disaster. The old bladder trouble returned in its severest form, indeed, Morand, the surgeon, gave him only six months to live, and in fact, he kept to his bed for six weeks. In those dark hours, as he lay there racked with pain and the fear of death, poisoned by the toxins of his own body, he reviewed the past and the present. Success had come too late; he was nearly forty. The injustice he had suffered at Venice, and still more the coldness with which society regarded him upon his return to Paris, aroused his anger. Besides, he was never at ease, like one to the manner born, in that gay and cultured society; and he knew that he never could be. He would renounce all that artificial life. In his own words: "My foolish, morbid shyness, which I could not overcome, arose from my fear of violating polite conventions. Shame made me a cynic and a scoffer. I pretended to scorn the courtesy I was unable to practice."¹³

But this admission came many years later, and is by no means the explanation offered to his friends, and to the public. To them he posed as a prophet, another Diogenes or Savonarola. In the meantime, the good Diderot, who could always find time, in spite of his herculean labours and difficulties with the great *Encyclopædia*, to help a friend, had got the *Discourse* printed in book form. It had an enormous success, and Diderot was delighted to report to the sick man that: "It is taking everyone by storm."

When Rousseau resumed public life his first act was to discard his sword—a dress sword, worn by all gentlemen in those days—exchange his full wig for a common round one; give up wearing white stockings and gold lace, and sell his watch; saying that, thank goodness he would require it no more, declaring his intention of earning his living in future by copying music.

Now that he had made a success, and a sensation, with his book—"Fancy our little Rousseau. Who would have thought it of him?" was Madame Dupin's comment—the portals of Society were thrown wide, but in vain. Rousseau declined all invitations to dinners and other social functions; although he retained a few personal friends, mostly married ladies who were interested in him; but he never visited even these when they had company.

His friends among the philosophers were surprised, and somewhat startled by his new mode of life. They had welcomed him, and regarded him as one of themselves, animated by the same ideas and ideals. He was intimate with Diderot, and on friendly terms with d'Alembert, Grimm, and Voltaire, with whom he had exchanged friendly letters. His book was hailed as a blow at the tyrannical government; but they did not bargain for his setting up as a prophet, or attempting to carry out his ideas literally. They thought he was riding his hobby rather hard. This was because they were not aware of the real motives for his actions.

They could not see that Rousseau's ideas and aims were fundamentally different from theirs. They wanted reforms. Liberty of speech and printing. The repeal of ancient and oppressive laws. Liberty from arbitrary arrest; and, above all, freedom to discuss subjects which the government said must not be discussed. And they wanted them for the good of all. Rousseau, on the contrary, was governed by personal motives. He could not find a place in that society, therefore he hated it and wished for its abolition. In vulgar parlance, it was a case of, "If I can't have my way, over goes the show." And in the end, the show did go over, for the *Le Contrat Social* became the Bible of the French Revolution.

¹³ Charpentier: *Rousseau: The Child of Nature*. p. 162.

Rousseau, for his part, although upon such intimate terms with Diderot, was no more at ease in the company of the philosophers than he was in polite society. They shocked him by the irreverence with which they discussed the existence of God, and a future life. Upon one occasion he rose and passionately declared that if they did not cease he would leave the room! Brought up in the Calvinist doctrines of Geneva, and after his conversion to Catholicism, under the tutelage of Catholic priests, religion was deeply rooted in his nature. Besides, this child with the passions of man, who never grew up, who always needed the support of a "manum" or a nurse on earth, would also need the support of a spiritual father above to guide and protect him. Those who denied the existence of God he regarded as doing him a personal injury. Later on we find him declaring that the man who did not believe in God and a future life was a danger to the State and should be exiled! Incidentally it may be mentioned, he tells us how he mentally protested against the "infidel hypothesis of Newton," then being expounded and popularized by Voltaire.¹⁴

Rousseau's renunciation of society, and resolve to earn his living by copying music, only heightened the interest and curiosity already excited by the *Discourse*. All sorts of people suddenly developed a passion for music, and came in crowds to see the philosopher who denounced philosophy. They also contributed gifts of fruit, flowers, game; Rousseau refused them, but old Madame Levasseur, the "lieutenant criminal," always intercepted them on the way back; she also wheedled money out of his friends by tales of his poverty.

During the winter of 1746-1747, a child was born to Rousseau by Thérèse Levasseur, and in spite of the wishes of its mother, she was prevailed upon to allow it to be sent to the Foundling Asylum. The following year a second child appeared, and this went on until five children had been consigned to the same institution, and this, with so little care for future identification that when, in later years, his friends attempted to trace them, not one could be found; and considering the way in which these institutions were conducted at that time: "We may well believe that most of Rousseau's five children did not escape death from malnutrition or cruelty or disease."¹⁵ It would have

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 168.

been kinder to treat them like unwanted kittens. Rousseau has offered various excuses for committing this crime but the fact is that he did not want to be troubled with children. Besides, at this time, three years before he won the Academy prize, he was unknown to fame, and if he had remained so he would not have troubled to make any excuses. He may have been extremely sensitive to the beauties of nature and the raptures of religion, but in other matters he was a cold, selfish, and callous sensualist.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

¹⁴ Josephson: *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*. p. 101.

If it be a reproach to be a Freethinker, it must be a merit to think like a slave; and mental bondage, always more degrading than that of the body, must be more honourable than the liberty of both!—*Horace Smith*.

To do anything because others do it, and not because the thing is good, or kind, or honest in its own right, is to resign all moral control and captaincy of yourself, and go post-haste to the devil with the greater number.

R. L. Stevenson.

The Flame as a Factor in Evolution.

WHILE men of the Old Stone Age remained in the food gathering and hunting stage there was very little progress. But with the advent of the Neolithic Period human activities underwent a profound transformation. Then appeared the fabrication of textiles, the making of pottery, the erection of houses, the pursuit of mining, the discovery and use of the wheel, and the custom of exchanging one commodity for another. Moreover, this New Stone Age was the period of the domestication of animals and the cultivation of plants. The horse was tamed and became a beast of burden, and the noble quadruped remained man's most reliable servitor in terrestrial locomotion until the steam engine and, later, the automobile superseded him. The wheel, however, long so closely associated with draught animals, continues indispensable, although innumerable other accessories of animal transport have been doomed to extinction by the constant encroachments of motor-driven machinery.

The generation and utilization of fire, the use of the wheel, and the mining and fusing of metal ores retain all their original importance. Ages before he possessed pack animals, man wandered widely over the face of the earth. With the help of the rotating wheel his powers of locomotion were greatly increased, and if the wheel was to be advantageously utilized the tracks that served in ruder times no longer sufficed for vehicular contrivances. Again, man now navigated the lakes, bays, and rivers and was preparing for the conquest of the ocean. The isolation imposed on Palæolithic peoples was broken. The tribes of the Neolithic Period traded and interbred with neighbouring peoples and, in the succeeding Age of Bronze, at least in Europe, the blending of races had begun.

The subjection of fire to human control was perhaps the most far reaching achievement of primitive times. Painfully familiar with the relentless fury of forest and prairie fires, man was a wondering and terrified spectator of their destructiveness. Feelings of fear and dismay thus generated must have provided much matter for reflection. Whether a conflagration was occasioned by a volcanic eruption, the lightning flash, or from heat arising from friction, or intense sun power in times of drought, its devastations were the same. The green-mantled, waving woodland had become a blackened and still smoking ruin. One truth at least must have dawned on savage humanity, that to sustain a fire fresh fuel was essential, and that a dying flame could be rekindled when combustible material was at hand.

When or where man first learnt the secret of kindling and replenishing fire is still an unsolved problem. This great discovery enabled man to cook his food, and his camp-fire soon became the centre of his tribal and domestic ceremonial. Moreover, man's knowledge of fire conferred on him the power to fuse metals, thus making possible his advance beyond the Age of Stone.

Lord Avebury, long known as Sir John Lubbock, once remarked that "the working up of stone into implements must have been followed sooner or later by the discovery of fire; for in the process of chipping sparks were elicited, and in the process of polishing heat was generated." With this verity in view, Professor MacCurdy in his *Human Origins* very cogently suggests that: "It may be something more than a coincidence that fire can be struck with flint, out of which the first man-made tools were fashioned. If flint had failed to possess this combination of qualities, the first steps towards the taming of fire might have been delayed for untold ages. One of the principal

reasons for the extremely slow progress in the evolution of culture during the Lower (earlier) Palæolithic Period may be due to man's inability to kindle fire at will."

Among the most ancient remains of prehistoric man evidences of the use of fire are common. Implements of scarred flint date back in East Anglia to Eolithic Times, and are said to antedate the remote Chellean culture. But the earliest traces of hearths which at least suggest the ability to kindle fire are not known to extend beyond the Mousterian or Middle Palæolithic Period. Then, the charred remains of combustible substances become comparatively common—and faintly suggest a capacity to restore the extinguished flame. Yet, even the quite recently extinct Tasmanian natives, familiar as they were with the use of fire, are said to have been unable to rekindle it, and the tribal fire was rarely suffered to expire.

Nevertheless, that prehistoric races were capable of fire production is clearly demonstrated by remains recovered from the Upper and most recent Palæolithic Period. Finely fashioned lamps and flints employed as matchlocks (strike-a-lights) were in use at this time. Many of these have been discovered in Stone Age caverns and rock shelters in several lands. And unquestionably it may be claimed that, "Another line of evidence bearing directly on the ability of the Upper Palæolithic races to produce fire at will is afforded by the mural art of dark caverns and the existence of stone lamps, by the light of which the artist executed engravings and frescoes."

Various primitive peoples still generate fire by means of simple friction. The problem of fire production was solved by our early ancestors in various ways. A widespread plan consisted in the use of two pieces of wood. The hard wood was drilled or sawn into the softer wood, and as a result of the heat evolved by the friction, a flame was procured. Other tribes obtained fire by dashing one piece of ore with another. The friction of flint and steel or pieces of flint and bamboo, were also common devices. But what Sir Hercules Reed deemed the most remarkable appliance was invented in South Eastern Asia. This "consists of a small cylinder, stopped at one end, and a closely fitting piston: by means of this appliance the heat engendered by compression of air serves to kindle a piece of tinder placed in a hole at the end of the piston. The method is as follows: the end of the piston is placed in a cylinder, and struck home by a sharp blow of the palm: it is immediately withdrawn and the tinder is found to be alight. It is difficult to imagine what combination of circumstances could have led to the discovery of this apparatus, which was invented independently in Europe as a scientific toy."

The stick and groove method was in vogue in Tahiti at the time of Darwin's visit, and the great naturalist saw a native procure fire by friction in a few seconds. The aptitude of the savage was remarkable, but when Darwin endeavoured to repeat the performance he only succeeded after long effort. The proficiency of savage races in the art of ignition was well exhibited at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904, when a fire-making contest was arranged between several native competitors. The palm was awarded to a negrito, who by means of the friction of bamboo canes produced flame in fifty-eight seconds.

With the widely extended activities of the Neolithic Period fire was not only utilized in household affairs, but assisted in tree-felling, and in shaping rough tree trunks into dugouts for service on the pools and rivers. Hot water, so invaluable for cleansing purposes, became possible. Fire, again, was indispensable for baking clay into ceramic vessels of utility or art. A faithful servant, if imperious master, fire in its multifarious forms in heating, lighting, pre-

servicing, and cooking has rendered inestimable advantages to mankind. Again, with the aid of fire, man has been enabled to settle in lands otherwise uninhabitable, and it has therefore played its part in his conquest of the world. Ancient appreciation of the benefits conferred by fire is reflected in the story of Prometheus who suffered unspeakable agony when he affronted Zeus by bringing to earth the sacred flame so long reserved to the immortal gods.

T. F. PALMER.

Why Christians Fear Atheism.

SEVERAL threats have recently been made by powerful Christian organizations of combining for the purpose of destroying the hateful influence of Atheistic propaganda that they allege is now sweeping in an avalanche, not only over this country, but all over Europe. Russia they allege is sending a host of representatives of the "League of the Godless" over to this and other countries, to spread their insidious doctrines among the mass of the people. Therefore, these Christian organizations, including the Roman Catholics, are combining to stem the tide of what they consider these horrible and wicked teachings of infidelity. Of course the first thing they will do no doubt will be to issue a number of leaflets in which they will declare that the teaching that *there is no God* ruling over the Universe, and no future life for mankind will lead to the most terrible immorality all over the world. Men will think nothing of committing murder, stealing, or any other criminal offence with impunity; their only thought will be how they can commit these offences without being discovered, and thus avoid punishment. And so on and so forth.

But as it has often been pointed out Atheistic times have always been civilized times. Lord (Francis) Bacon the Lord High Chancellor of England, who was himself a pronounced believer in God, over 300 years ago had the fairness to say, "Atheism leaves a man to sense, to philosophy, to natural piety, to a law, to refutation; all which may be guides, to an outward moral virtue, though religion were not; but superstition dismounts all these and erects an absolute monarchy in the minds of men. Therefore, Atheism did never perturb States; for it makes men wary of themselves, as looking no further and we see the times inclined to Atheism as the times of Augustus Cæsar, were civil times. But superstition hath been the confusion of many states and bringeth in a new *primum mobile*, that ravisheth all the spheres of Government. (Bacon's *Essays Civil and Moral*.)

But I suspect that these religious organizations that are out to demonstrate where men are likely to be led who embrace the Philosophy of Atheism will say very little of the beneficial teachings of their own theology. Nor do I expect they will say they believe in the old God of the Bible—the Jahveh of the Pentateuch, the God, who they believe, manufactured Adam out of mixture of dirt and liquid of some sort; and Eve out of a spare rib of Adam.

They will be equally silent about the fiendish conduct of their God who banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden for the awful offence of eating an apple; or of their clergy, of nearly every denomination, who declare that this alleged offence will lead to the damnation of all Christians who do not believe that this silly story of the foundation of the Christian religion is therefore true. Nor will they say anything about the story of the Flood, in which their God

drowned the majority of his children like so many kittens in a great downfall of water from somewhere up above, which covered the whole face of the earth and the mountain of Ararat to the height of 18,000 feet above the level of the sea. In point of fact their God was indeed a horrible sort of creature, but we must remember that man makes all the gods, and as a rule makes them very much like himself. If men are brutal and vicious, so are their gods. If we read Grant Allen's famous work *The Evolution of the Idea of God*, we shall be able to understand how the ideas of God of the savage mind of primitive man up to the most elaborate conception of the most cultivated theologian of the day, have developed. Indeed, the *very name of God* in the past has been most repulsive to the minds of the most cultivated of men.

Take this quotation from Shelley's *Queen Mab* as an example:—

"The name of God
Has fenced about all crime with holiness;
Himself the creature of his worshippers;
Whose names and attributes and passions change—
Seeva, Buddah Toh, Jehovah, God or Lord—
Even with the human dupes who build his shrines,
Still serving o'er the war-polluted world
For desolation's watchword; whether hosts
Stain his death-blushing chariot wheels, as on
Triumphantly they will roll whilst Brahmins raise
A sacred hymn to mingle with the groans;
Or countless partners of his power divide
His tyranny to weakness; or to smoke
Of burning towns, the cries of female helplessness,
Unarmed old age and youth and infancy
Horribly massacred, ascend to heaven
In honour of his name; or last and worst
Earth groans beneath religion's iron age
And priests dare babble of a God of peace
Even whilst their hands are red with guiltless blood;
Murdering the while, uprooting every germ
Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all
Making the earth a slaughter house."

And after this terrific indictment of all religions, Christians prate about the wonderful moral influence of their particular sample of the article; but it is sheer bunkum; experience proves that they are all alike. But in despair they tell us that we must look to Christ, he is the real and only Saviour of mankind.

If by Christ they mean the Jesus of the Gospels, they are making a claim for which they have no warrant. Jesus never claimed to be a God; indeed, at best he only claimed to be *the Son of God*. According to Unitarians we can all make this same claim, for if God is the father of us all, then we are all his children. But according to "Church of England's Creed" Jesus was born of a Virgin, and was the third person of the Blessed Trinity; equal to God the Father and God the Holy Ghost in wisdom and power." But such Gods are of purely mythical origin and can safely be dismissed among the rest of the pagan and dead gods of distant antiquity. Why then do Christians fear the growth of Atheism in this country? Obviously it is because they fear that "a world without a God" would be a more civilized state than any that has preceded it, and thus it would refute the oft repeated slanders of priests and parsons of all denominations. The belief in Gods and Devils, and Ghosts and Goblins, and in Heavens and Hells, have impeded human progress for hundreds of years in most civilized nations, and will continue to do so. We must therefore get rid of the Gods.

In the language of Ingersoll we must say: "Let the Gods go, let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade for ever out of the imaginations of men."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"God, if there be any God, speaks daily in a new language by the tongues of men."—R. L. Stevenson.

Acid Drops.

On November 21, at a meeting of the Hunterian Society, a discussion on "The Influence of Faith on Disease" was opened by the Rev. Father Woodlock. We do not know what line the discussion took, but we do hope that someone in the course of the discussion said something worth the saying, although we suspect from the title and the name of the opener, that there would have been plenty of religious "mush" and timid talk. We have no doubt that Father Woodlock would have seen to the "mush," and we doubt whether anyone would have had the courage to put Father Woodlock in his place.

The Hunterian Society is named after the great John Hunter one of the most famous surgeons this country has produced. Some years ago we were first to call attention to a very significant fact—since repeated by Sir Arthur Keith and others—concerning John Hunter. There is a famous portrait of Hunter, in which he is presented with an open book in front of him, and which displays a series of skulls arranged in true evolutionary order. The open page does not correspond with any known published book, and it may have been a manuscript volume. That is, we think, all that is known about it.

But Hunter left behind him a large number of manuscripts. He also left behind him a brother and a brother-in-law, and thereby hangs a tale which can never be completely told. Many times the question was asked about the publication of the manuscripts. Always the reply was evasive, or that the time was not ripe, or public opinion would be shocked. But the manuscripts were not published, indeed they were destroyed. Here the chief culprit appears to have been the brother-in-law who was fanatically religious. So the fact remains that works that might have set the hypothesis of evolution well on its way a century before Darwin, were deliberately suppressed by a couple of religious fanatics. Hunter himself was probably a Freethinker as Freethought was understood in the eighteenth century.

Now we feel certain that Father Woodlock did not remind his hearers of this episode in the history of the influence of faith on science, and we also feel certain that none of those present did remind him of it. In such cases it is usual for those who know to remain quiet, leaving it to those who do not know to proceed in their ignorance, or to those who do know but will not say, to proceed in their duplicity. What a different place this world might be if every heretic could be attacked by the germs of moral courage and plain speech!

Quite a number of places are now in the throes of seeing what can be done with the Sunday Entertainment Act, that monument of governmental cowardice and incapacity. Some of the Councils are demanding "a rake-off" of seventy-five per cent, before the Gangsters will "let up" on the Cinema people; others want ten per cent, and in one or two cases they are demanding the whole of the profits. In Croydon, which has just decided by a majority poll to have Sunday Cinemas, if nothing happens, Sunday performances may be given some time next March. The opponents point out that the next Council can revoke the licence, and therefore care must be taken to put on the Council only such persons as will vote for revoking the licences. This means that every Council election will mean, as we pointed out while the Bill was before Parliament, that men will be elected by favour of the local chapels instead of an account of their fitness to carry out municipal duties.

Of course, if the Cinema proprietors had the courage of men, they would be able to fight the Act and get justice all round. The great fear of these proprietors is that if they do not obey orders of the Councils or licensing magistrates concerning Sunday they may suffer when they ask for a renewal of their licence for week-days. So they may, if they show their usual lack of both in-

telligence and courage. But it is open to anyone holding a licence to appeal against its cancellation to the higher courts. And the cinema organizations, with their millions of invested money, are well in a position to do so. The National Secular Society, without funds, always set the old Sunday Act at defiance whenever it could, and the authorities knowing whom they had to fight let the Society alone. Every executive body in the country can be brought before the courts to account for the way in which they use the powers that are given them. If these Bumbles were made to realize this, there would not be so much petty tyranny of Councils and Chief Constables as exists at present. But the care of the British public for genuine freedom seems to be weakening. We said during the war that we had to decide whether we wished to crush "Prussianism" in Germany or merely to annex it. It seems that we were anxious to annex it, for the development of "Prussianism" in Britain is one of the clearest outcomes of the war.

Apropos of what we have so often said, on this subject of Sunday entertainments we are glad to see the following in a recent article in the *Newcastle Evening News* :—

But of all the industries harassed by contrary legislation commend us to the cinematic. Watch Committees, social reformers, bishops and busybodies are constantly on its track, and proceedings in London over Sunday opening have become farcical. Licences are granted, and then all of the snags develop. Certain cliques must approve the films, they must be of an "educational" nature, the definition of educational being left to the judgment, not of the cinema world, but the objectors. In Birmingham confusion reigns as to what constitutes six and what seven days' labour for the employees.

We do not know if the cinematograph industry is as tired of this Sunday opening and charity questions as we are; but if they are, we wonder why they do not abandon the whole business and stand quite firmly on their own legs as caterers for public tastes. If it is wrong to open places of amusement as such on Sunday, then it is wrong whether a portion of the proceeds is devoted to charity or not. If it is right to open them, permission should have been long since been granted, devoid of any stipulations as to the destination of the receipts.

We have no doubt that the industry is tired of being bossed by these Christian busybodies, but we much doubt whether it has the courage to do anything. Others who have some regard to public rights will have to do the work, and then these gallant men will step in and get whatever profit is coming. They could have broken the Sunday Act years ago, but between fear of the uniform of a Chief Constable, the whine of a Nonconformist parson, and the gaiters of a bishop they have landed themselves in their present position. Actually they have the governors they deserve.

Mrs. Margaret Sanger is, appropriately, the President of the Birth Control International Information Centre in London. Its literature, which bears a name respected by Freethinkers in its imprint (George Standring) includes a sermon preached at Westminster Abbey by the Rev. Dr. Percy Dearmer. The rev. gentleman, who is a "liberal" theologian, opens his discourse with this remarkable assertion: "The Bible is the frankest and most wholesome book in the world in its dealings with questions of sex and the family." What does Mrs. Sanger, whose name appears on the reprint of this sermon, think of this? Dr. Dearmer also had the temerity to declare that the Bible is free from the tendency, which came over the Church in the Dark Ages, to exalt the unmarried state above that of normal human life."

Nowadays Birth Control propaganda is exceedingly respectable, as witness a big meeting held the other evening with Sir Thomas Horder in the chair and the Countess of Limerick and Lady Denman for speakers. Not a word was said by any of them as to the pioneers who were prosecuted, and slandered, or about the clergy who still slander their successors. While we welcome the ad-

vance of birth control propaganda of all kinds and in all quarters, we hope it will not become a vehicle either of Christian apologetics or of well-to-do patronage. The case for birth control has been established beyond question. The propaganda necessary is not so much for the idea itself as against the reactionary, and mostly religious influences which still result in only a small minority of local authorities giving effect to the arrangements which the Home Office has already assented to for the provision of information and the requisite contraceptives.

We do not suspect the *Sunday Express* of secularist tendencies. It printed recently an article by a clergyman (Rev. E. L. Macassey) entitled "The Powers of the World's Last Autocrat." It is good Freethought propaganda. The autocrat mentioned is the Archbishop of Canterbury who, according to this writer, possesses "powers not allowed to the Pope." In precedence he comes before Dukes. He holds his job, and Lambeth Palace, for life, and "could maintain his ownership, even if he became insane, against all comers." In official documents he describes himself as appointed "by Divine providence," as distinct from the "Divine permission" claimed by the other Bishops who, like the Archbishop are, in fact, appointed by the King on the advice of the Prime Minister for the time being. The Archbishop (if he is a graduate of Oxford or Cambridge) can confer any degree of his university on anyone without any consultation with the university authorities. The article goes on to describe other privileges of Bishops in general, and bluntly admits that "the Church's temporal power traces right back to the times when the Church was of vast political and legislative influence." The readers of the *Sunday Express* can hardly be reckoned on to draw the inevitable conclusions from this revelation of monstrous and antiquated abuses. Thus written and published it is none the less useful and, we must confess, a trifle puzzling.

In Malaya an elderly Chinaman happened on a spring in the jungle which he thought had magical properties. After washing in it he lost the lumbago from which he had suffered for years. He hurried home to spread the news, and, in a few days, the gully was packed with the halt, the maimed, the scrofulous and with lepers. Bottles of the water were taken home, and the fame of the grotto spread far and wide. The authorities soon put an end to the gross superstition. Sikh gendarmes were posted around the "sacred" pool, and, as they did not keep pilgrims away, the Government filled up the spring to its source with cement. Thus the Malayan Lourdes came to an end. A correspondent of the *Sydney Bulletin*, reporting this, observes that "authorities in Asia have a high reputation for tolerance of native beliefs" but the Malayan authorities "failed to live up to it"! "Tolerance," we presume, includes spreading disease among the ignorant.

The *Tithepayers' Bulletin* records that when some notabilities from Cambridge University visited Burwell Church the Vice-Chancellor received on his arrival at the Vicarage a wire as follows: "Your prayers are asked in Burwell Church to-day on behalf of Burwell tithepayers that grace may be given to them in the sore affliction in having to pay exorbitant tithe which does not arise out of their land." Mr. Gains, the Hon. Sec. of the Tithepayers, occupied a prominent seat at the service; but the Vicar, Rev. A. G. Walpole Saver, ignored him, and the telegram to his guest the Vice-Chancellor. Since then the Vicar has received a note from Mr. Gains, which reads: "I was disappointed with your sermon at Burwell on the 24th inst., as this was Tithe Sunday, and considering the extortionate tithe that has been collected in Burwell, I feel that your text should have been taken from 1 Corinthians 6, 10. "No extortioners shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Apparently the rev. gentleman thinks that his dues in this world are more important than his due hereafter.

The Deputy-Mayor of Newcastle-under-Lyme (Alderman R. Beresford), presiding at a Congregational garden party, is reported to have said, "I am strongly in favour of Sunday schools, and I would not complain if the State insisted, irrespective of what parents might think on the matter, on every child being given some religious instruction, *up to the age when it can think for itself.*" The sheer dishonesty of such a proposal is, doubtless unintentionally, admitted in the naive words we have italicized. It is an implicit recognition of the fact that they are not likely to adopt religion after they are of that age. Here, in blunt and bigoted candour, is the whole case for religious instruction in schools, whether on Sundays or week-a-days. If parents, or the State, never "insisted" on children learning religion in their childhood, no healthy child would ever grow up a Christian.

That tremendous question, whether Jesus carried his cross all the way or not, is troubling a *Universe* reader. In spite of the fact that the Church knows all about God and his intentions, everything about Christ, here and in heaven, to say nothing of their minor followers, the *Universe* admits it can't answer the simple query about the cross. "It really is not quite certain," we are told, "whether Our Lord carried His Cross for the whole distance, or whether Simon carried it for part of the way, or again, whether Our Lord carried the front portion and Simon assisted by carrying the rear part from the fifth station onwards." For an infallible Church this makes sad reading and the poor inquirer will, we are certain, heave heavy sighs at such melancholy uncertainty.

The Roman Catholic Archbishop Williams is very dolefully down in the dumps. He can't understand why our daily press should make such tremendous capital out of a scientist or an anglican dignitary "who gives reasons for refusing to believe in the Old Testament account of the creation of man, or of the Flood or in the New Testament account of the miracles of Christ or of his Resurrection." Well, the reason is that you can't dope the people all the time. The thin edge of the wedge of Freethought is slowly but surely penetrating even our hide-bound religious newspapers. It is all to the good that some feel it their bounden duty to tell the truth about disbelief in fairy tales. It seems certain, however, that in spite of the boasting of the Roman Catholic Church about increased conversions, she is feeling a very strong draught. Else why all this whining?

The Mayor of Waterford does not like the attacks made on the Roman Catholic religion in the Free State. He admits "it has always been attacked, but seldom so insidiously, and it was up to the youth of the country to be careful and not be led away by the false doctrines now being preached." The worthy Mayor should do his best to stop all heretical books being published or imported into Ireland, and he should see that any youth caught reading the *Freethinker* should be severely punished. The real way to stop heresy is to nip it in the bud by drastic penalties. In fact a heretic, like the Jew of old, should be declared devoid of a soul. A good idea would be to revive the Inquisition and the Mayor could be the Grand Inquisitor. We are brimful of good ideas for the complete suppression of heresy—though we frankly admit, heresy will out somewhere no matter what is done. The Mayor of Waterford has our sympathy.

The Archbishop of York is against betting and lotteries, but recently admitted that "many men of integrity and uprightness indulged in the habit." He objected to the exploitation of betting "for private profit or charity." Why a man should make a bet unless it was for "private profit" or charity, the Lord only knows. No one has yet proved there is any harm in betting or buying a lottery ticket—unless, of course, the money so spent was stolen or belonged to the family

budget or the betting was carried to some outrageous excess. The real reason why the Church objects to betting is because it gives a pleasurable anticipation of some wealth to the bettors, and any pleasure is condemned at once on Puritanical grounds. As Jesus so clearly puts it, "Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep."

Nothing is more significant of the complete uselessness of the Church and Christianity than the way in which week by week, the *Church Times* discusses the political situation. As leading articles in a completely secular paper they would be admirable. As a rule, our Blessed Saviour, the Holy (Anglo-Catholic) Church and the dear apostles are never mentioned. In the current number there are two columns of opinions and statements on current affairs without a suggestion that we should put our complete faith in the Cross and all will be well. The argument from silence in this case is pretty powerful.

The flabby Christians of to-day, trying to run with the hare of knowledge and hunt with the hounds of superstition give a new relish to those old ardent pietists who had the honesty of bigotry. Such a one must have been the Rev. Richard Standfast—surely a happy patronymic—Rector of Christ Church, Bristol in 1683. He preached, and printed *A Caveat against Seducers*, that is to say septicis, in which there are some passages that would make Dr. Barnes and his like squirm. For instance:—

They that desire the health of their Bodies, are careful to shun all places of infection. And so should we be too if our desire be the health of our souls. 'Tis dangerous for the unlearned to be hearers of such men, or to read their Books, or to hold discourse with them, though it be with an intent not to be led by them. Dinah had no intent to be defiled, when her curiosity sent her forth to see the daughters of the Land. But tis not good to be gadding, or to walk in tempting ways. *God hath made no promise to preserve us from evil when we lead ourselves into temptation.*

The final play on words in the Lord's Prayer suggests that Mr. Standfast, like many others before his time and since, was not too happy about that petition to God not to "lead us into temptation." If God does not do so, but leaves men to their own devices, and takes no responsibility for the consequences, what is the use of the prayer?

The Bishop of Kensington referred to the "grave situation" in the growing outskirts of London, where in newly developed areas they had "all the resources of modern civilization—shops, transport, doctors, amusements, and other self-supporting services and municipal services that could be charged to sales or taxes, but neither reckoned to provide religion." Why should they? Religion is not a "resource of modern civilization," and, fortunately, cannot be charged to rates or taxes on new areas as it is in the old towns, cities and villages. It must have gone against the grain for his Lordship of Kensington to have to tell the new residents at Hillingdon "that those who believed in religion must supply it themselves."

The Autumn Session of the Church Assembly debated unemployment. The Bishop of London moved a resolution expressing "deep sympathy" with the unemployed. He attacked the recent hunger marches which, he said, "were not organized for the benefit of the genuine unemployed, but for purposes of agitation." This lie is contradicted by the fact that at every place at which the marchers halted for a night en route to London, those who made provision for some, not excluding clergymen in some places, were impressed by the obvious genuineness of the vast majority of them. The Bishop of Durham sneered at his brother of London and his sympathy. "I think," said Dr. Henson, "that the philanthropist who said to the indigent—'go in peace—be ye warmed and filled,'—and gave them nothing was the more repulsive because of that Pecksniffian introduction

to his refusal." Dr. Henson added that "the unemployed are not unintelligent, and they know that we clergy do not possess powers to cure this problem." The Archbishop of Canterbury wound up the debate with another cold douche, and told the parsons that even if they did think they had some solutions "they had no right to invest them with the august sanction of the will of God." God, like the unemployed, has the clergy taped; but it is not often an Archbishop admits that the most helpful products of clerical thinking are merely mundane opinions, like those of the rest of us.

The Christian Evidence Society has just had its annual meeting. According to the Bishop of Southwark, who presided, the C.E.S. "specializes in meeting the doubts of people of all levels of culture." This is news to us for, in our long experience of the society, it has been concerned rather to throw doubts on the *bona fides* of doubters than to meet their doubts. The assembled supporters were told by the Bishop of Winchester that "what they were faced with was not hostility to religion so much as a rival to religion—humanism." Not only a rival to it, but a substitute for it. The Hon. Secretary (Rev. C. L. Drawbridge)—who will never be drawn himself—says he "studies the movements of Atheist societies." We should never have suspected it, though we have often had occasion to note the need for such study on the part of the rev. gentleman and his trainees.

Where do they come from? We refer to the lower grade of the magistracy and their extraordinary judgments. For example. At Enfield Police Court, on December 5, a woman was before Sir Henry Bowles charged with travelling on the L.N.E.R. without having paid her fare. So this judicial Solomon proceeded to deliver an exordium of this kind:—

Women it seems have no moral misgivings either about trying to defraud the tax commissioners or the railway companies. They even try to smuggle merchandise into the country.

It is little use trying to argue with a brain of this description, the only thing to do would be to relieve him of his magisterial office and send him to Parliament. Other men know quite well that defrauding railway companies, evading income tax, and smuggling is quite as common with men as with women. We wonder what Lady Bowles—if there is such a person, thinks of her husband's deliverance. But again, where do these men come from? What are they picked for, and where are they picked from? If they are appointed to make the law ridiculous they manage their jobs excellently well.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE truth is that there is in England *one* law for the rich and for the poor; that is beyond dispute; but as only the rich can pay for it, the poor might just as well have no law at all; for they could usually take care of themselves if all disputes were settled in the primitive fashion by fisticuffs. Take our own case. We are prosecuted criminally by a private speculator. To get something like fair play, we have our own case removed to the Court of Queen's Bench by a writ of *certiorari*. The writ involves the finding of sureties for the prosecutor's costs; and even then many pounds have to be expended in acting for ourselves, without paying a farthing to lawyers. What could a penniless man do in such a case? Why, just lie down, and let the rich man kick him till satisfied. If the defence of all three defendants in our prosecution had been entrusted to solicitors in the ordinary way, it would probably have cost two or three thousand pounds before the end. This is a free country! So it is; and you can get as much of that commodity as you can afford to buy. We could say much more on the subject, but for the present this must suffice.

The "Freethinker," December 10, 1882.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

CINE CERE.—Capital. Has been forwarded as requested.

W.R.R.—Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

G. F. GREEN.—Hope you will soon get rid of your cold.

HUGH MILLAR.—Shall appear as soon as possible.

H. MARTIN.—Pleased to have your tribute to the "forceful" character of our Armistice Day article. But as it stands it would hardly do for a pamphlet or leaflet. A new one on the whole question of war and peace would be better. Perhaps during the Christmas season Mr. Cohen may find time to do it.

A. KIRKHAM.—We should say that the reason why Mr. Myers could produce spirit portraits on one slide and not on the others is due to the same cause that allows a trick being worked at one time and prevents its being worked at another. Such a simple and natural explanation would at once suggest itself if people were dealing with anything but the spiritual world.

W. PARRY (Liverpool).—Thanks for useful cuttings.

W. B. HEDLEY.—It is impossible to run an annual dinner at a lower price than is at present paid. In a wide sense the Annual Dinner is one of the most profitable functions.

W. L. ROWE (Transvaal).—Good wishes reciprocated. Thanks for the cuttings.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

There will be a little delay in delivering the gramophone records of Mr. Cohen's address on the "Meaning and Value of Freethought," but they will be delivered well this side of Christmas. It will be a nice present, and will serve a useful purpose if Freethinkers make a point of presenting one to a liberal-minded friend. The record will be sent safely packed for 2s. 6d.

While we are on seasonable gifts there are three other things that are suitable for such a purpose. Number one is a copy of Mr. Cohen's *Opinions*, price 3s. 6d., the other is *Selected Heresies*, also 3s. 6d., the last is to send along 7s. 6d. for a half-year's subscription for the *Freethinker* for a likely subscriber. We like the last suggestion the best of the lot.

Stratford Town Hall was well filled on Sunday evening last, on the occasion of Mr. Cohen's lecture on "The Psychology of Belief." There were a number of ques-

tions at the end of the address, although many were rather wide of the subject. The chair was occupied by Mr. Alan Handsacre, who introduced the lecturer with a neatly delivered short speech that formed a capital introduction to the lecture. Mr. Handsacre has a good platform manner, and as he is a man of experience on the platform, we should like to see him take an active part in Freethought meetings.

In another part of this issue, in replying to a criticism of our able contributor, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Arnold Lunn refers to his recent debate with Mr. Cohen. Mr. Lunn appears to feel that he was debating at a disadvantage inasmuch as he opened, which gave Mr. Cohen the last speech, and also that he had only twelve supporters in the Hall. For the first, we can only say we fail to see how Mr. Lunn could know he had only twelve supporters, we feel sure there were many more Christians present than that, but that should not have affected Mr. Lunn's presentation of his case. Mr. Cohen does not feel that he ought to apologize for having a strong personal following. On the contrary, he is proud of it, and hopes that he will never do anything to decrease it. On the Freethought platform a man who has a personal following has to earn it, and to deserve its continuance. Mr. Cohen thanks Mr. Lunn for the compliment.

For the rest, Mr. Cohen is not anxious to debate with Mr. Lunn or anyone else for the mere pleasure of debating or mounting a platform. He is on the platform for a purpose, and so far as he is concerned the more Christians present the better. And it is a matter of indifference to him whether he opens the debate or not, but if he does the subject must be one on which he takes the affirmative. He cannot open with a negative. With regard to another debate, at the Conway Hall, Mr. Lunn spoke of numbers of Christians who were anxious to meet Mr. Cohen. Well, Mr. Cohen will be ready to meet them at any time when arrangements can be made. And so far as the audience is concerned he suggests that it shall be held in a church or in a Church hall and that only Christians be admitted. Known Freethinkers to be excluded. That should give the Christian quite a sympathetic atmosphere. A report of the debate could be taken and published. Mr. Cohen's discomfiture would then be broadcast to the world.

Better still. Let Mr. Lunn's religious friends arrange with the B.B.C. to have a real broadcast debate—not one of the dummy debates arranged by the B.B.C., when all that each speaker is to say is settled beforehand, but a real debate, in which each speaker acts as he would on an open platform. Every Church in the country could then fix up a loud speaker and the discomfiture of the President of the N.S.S. could be made manifest to the world. Now will Mr. Lunn's religious friends help with the exposure?

Walthamstow has decided to have Sunday films on a vote of about two to one. Up to date every place that has voted on the question of Sunday opening, has decided in its favour. We wonder whether that will end the palpable official and non-official lie that there is no demand for Sunday entertainments? We doubt it. It is hard to kill any lie, but a lie that is told in the interests of religion comes near to achieving immortality.

We are pleased to learn that the meetings of the Liverpool Branch continue to be highly successful. The lecturer on Sunday last was Mr. A. D. McLaren, and the public paid the speaker the compliment of crowding the hall. And we are quite sure that everyone present would have felt repaid for attending. Our knowledge of the speaker enables us to say that with authority.

Mr. A. D. McLaren will speak for the Brighton Branch N.S.S. to-day (Sunday), in the Labour Institute, London Road, Brighton, at 7.3 p.m., on "What is the Good of

Religion?" The numerous Freethinkers in the area will no doubt take full advantage of Mr. McLaren's visit, the subject offers a splendid opportunity for introducing a Christian friend.

Freethinkers in the Stockport district are reminded that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will speak twice to-day (Sunday) on behalf of the Stockport Labour Fellowship, in the Central Hall, Hillgate, Stockport, the subjects are, 3.0 p.m., "Do We Need Religion," and at 7.0 p.m., "Christianity v. Science; Anthropology." Admission is free, and questions and discussion follow each lecture.

The Swansea Branch N.S.S. is making every effort to establish a permanent headquarters and instruction and recreation centre in the town. Premises have been taken at 26 Beach Street, just off Hospital Square, Swansea, and the development is going on very satisfactorily. On Saturday, December 17, Mr. Ithel Davies, B.A., will lecture on "The Basis of International Peace," at 7.0 p.m. Admission is free. Members are of course essential if the undertaking is to succeed, and all local saints not yet enrolled are asked to get into touch with the local Secretary, Mr. B. G. Howells, 1 Baptist Well Place, Swansea.

We regret to learn from the last copy of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand that this paper is ceasing publication. The cause is the usual one, lack of financial support. We deeply regret this, and we appreciate the pang it must give to its editor to close the career of the journal after nearly sixty years of life. Keeping a Free-thought journal alive is no light task, and can only be done with a considerable amount of what people rather inaptly call "self-sacrifice." But we have had seventeen years experience of what it means, so we know what we are talking about.

A Queensland Freethinker sends us a note to show that both secular education and a rational Sunday have even clerical advocates in that part of the British Commonwealth. Rev. P. Watkins addressing the Congregational Union at Brisbane, said "the more he saw of denominational schools the less he liked them." He did not agree that the Church had the right to carry on religious instruction at the expense of the State. "Secular education was the work of the State, and religious education the work of the Church." The Archbishop of Melbourne (Dr. Mannix) said Sunday in Melbourne was a very gloomy day because the vast majority of people stayed in bed. Catholics got up early, went to mass, then played golf or tennis, or went for a run in the country. This did not break the Sabbath, which was meant for any reasonable and rational recreation. Many people with "misguided and misdirected zeal" thought people should not walk in the country on Sunday. "They could do many worse things." This is all very well, but the Sabbath, the *real* Sabbath, was certainly not meant for recreation. In this, as in other matters, the Roman Catholic Church contrives to make the best of both worlds. It never did pretend to ignore this world!

A TASTE OF MR. DOOLEY.

Socialism: I'm afraid it won't happen in our day. That alone wud make me a Socialist. I'm sthrong f'r any revolution thet aint goin' t' happen in me day. But th' thruth is, me boy, thet nawthin' happens annyhow. I see gr-great changes takin' place iv'ry day, but no change at all ivry fifty years.

War: A couple iv stout middled-aged gintlemin git into a controversy. Instead iv layin' their stove-pipe hats on th' table an' mixin' it up, they hurry home an' invite ivrybody in th' house to go an' do their war-making f'r thim. They sit upon th' roof an' encourage th' scrap . . . Whin a government or a man raysorts to blows it shows they're eithed afraid, or have lost their timpers.

"Powder and Shot."

In *Ecclesiastica* (February 6, 1932) the following information was given showing how the various religions are distributed in the world according to the population:—

Roman Catholics	...	351,839,665	that is	19.0%
Confucians	...	304,027,114	" "	16.4%
Hindus	...	233,997,819	" "	12.6%
Mohammedans	...	229,008,599	" "	12.5%
Buddhists	...	199,461,632	" "	10.8%
Protestants	...	164,683,026	" "	8.9%
Orthodox (Greek)	...	131,460,822	" "	7.1%
Idol Worshippers	...	122,239,817	" "	6.6%
Non-members of any				
Church	...	76,598,195	" "	4.1%
Shintoists	...	16,644,437	" "	0.9%
Jews	...	15,731,475	" "	0.9%
Unknown	...	4,481,733	" "	0.2%
Total	...	1,850,174,334		100.0%

The most outstanding feature which calls for remark is the striking confirmation of what has constantly been maintained in the columns of the *Freethinker*. Roman Catholicism predominates numerically over every other individual religion and other figures, not given here, show that it has, by a substantial margin, the greatest following in the two continents of Europe and America. The well-known characteristics of the Roman Catholic Church; its internationalism, its disciplined priesthood, and its uncompromising attachment to its first principles, have doubtless earned for it this foremost place amongst the religions of the world. Its success is all the more remarkable seeing that it is an infant in years compared with older religions like Hinduism and Confucianism. When we compare this success with the figures given for those who are not members of any Church we conclude, and genuine Freethinkers will agree with us, that there is still much to be done before we can say that our task is ended. Only 4.1% of the population of the world are not members of a Church and of these, how many are active Freethinkers? Only 2.2% of the population of Europe are in this same category, in a Continent where nearly half the population is Roman Catholic. So far as age is concerned, perhaps we are entitled to point out that the Freethought movement compared with even the youngest branch of religion is but a new-born babe. But that is small comfort when we consider that the forces against us can and may prove strong enough to strangle it in its infancy. The methods adopted with such success by the most progressive and vigorous of the enemies to Freethought should commend themselves in many ways to Freethinkers. There are many examples which go to show how the clamant Roman Catholic minority in England, for instance, has won concessions, not by the justice of its claims, but by bringing organized political force to bear on pliant Governments. The Vatican gave a lead to the Catholics to extend their Christian charity to the unemployed. This move has received a practical interpretation at the hands of the "faithful," who have opened soup-kitchens, social clubs, built schools and churches in many countries. In this way the Catholic Hierarchy hopes to win the universal approval of masses of the people for Catholicism. In view of all this, is it too much to ask Freethinkers, of Europe in particular, whether it is not worth our while to consider methods by which we can form an international anti-clerical front?

In *Der Atheist* (December 1, 1932) there are published some particulars of the wealth of the Churches in Czecho-Slovakia :—

They hold approximately 950,000 acres of land. Their other possessions are worth one milliard Krone (more than £6 million at par value).

They receive 330 million Krone a year from the State (more than £2 million at par value) in subventions for churches and schools.

In England the Established Church owns 317,833 acres of land (excluding the land held by the clergy as private land-owners) and receives a large income in rent and royalties.

It receives approximately £3 million a year in Tithes, £7 million from endowments (mostly filched in the past from the poor) and £9 million from voluntary offerings. The clergy pay over one million pounds in income tax a year, although their incomes are, in part, exempted from income tax. Buildings used for religious purposes are exempted from local rates and national taxes so that the non-church-going tax-payers are further mulcted by an increased share of taxation. Apart from the direct cost to the State which the employment of chaplains in the armed forces entails, the British taxpayers contribute a further £28 million a year to the maintenance of denominational schools, under the control of the clerical hierarchies.

In Czecho-Slovakia the Finance Minister has suggested that he may have to cut down the payment of the 330 million Krone to the Churches and to their schools which provide religious teaching. The Freethinkers in that country point out that this subvention is being paid when the salaries of State employees are to be cut down by 600 million Krone (over £3½ million at par value). They have taken the very practical course of agitating for the complete cancellation of the clerical subvention. Fifty-two public meetings have been called in important towns, and handbills have been distributed in 150 places, upon which is set out their case for the abolition of the subsidies to the Churches.

In England the Economy Committee set up by private members of the House of Commons calls for further economies in the cost of education amounting to £14 million. But they do not propose to limit the amounts paid annually towards the cost of maintaining denominational schools. They say :—

... we believe that many voluntary school authorities would agree to allow their school accommodation to be given for religious instruction in those voluntary schools which were transferred to local authorities. We would urge the President of the Board of Education to make every possible effort to arrive at a satisfactory concordat with the voluntary school authorities. (*Universe*, November 25, 1932.)

The Catholics naturally take the view that the State schools were introduced to *supplement* denominational schools not to *supplant* them. They accuse the local authorities, therefore, of waste in building schools where adequate educational facilities already existed. That means of course where out of date black-listed schools "unfit for the housing of pigs" exist. We would remind the Economy Committee, though that is not of much practical value, that it is a pious hope they are entertaining. This they would realize if they recalled the circumstances in which the report of the Liverpool Education Authority, that condemned sixteen Catholic schools within its area, was made in 1924. The Archbishop of Liverpool then said :—

I want to let it be known to the Government and to all concerned that, having put up these schools and provided places for every Catholic child, we do not mean to be swindled out of what we have done. Catholic children are going to stop in their Catholic schools, and if a score of other places were provided our children are not going there. (*The Case for*

Secular Education, published by the Secular Education League, p. 33.)

That argument has been, if anything, strengthened by the activities of the Catholic Hierarchy in consolidating Dual Control in education, thanks to the very timely assistance afforded it by the Labour Government of 1929. Already since 1931 substantial economies have been made in State expenditure. The Unemployed were deprived of £26 million and given a means test, and Education costs (including a 10% cut in teachers salaries) were reduced by £10,300,000. We Freethinkers cannot agree that State education exists to *supplement* the teaching of Christian dogma at our expense. Is it not more in accordance with our principles to imitate our Czecho-Slovakian friends and strike a blow now for the secularization of the schools by agitating for education economies at the expense of the denominations?

* * *

The Pope is perturbed by the repressive anti-clerical legislation enacted in thirteen States and the Federal District of Mexico. In an area of 408,078 square miles only 314 priests are permitted to administer to the religious needs of some eight million people, and in Tabasco the Government has hit upon the neat device of permitting only married priests to enter the State. (*Universe*, October 7, 1932.)

It is a pity the Pope is so short-sighted as to overlook the Brüning Emergency Decree of 1931, which prohibits public meetings that *may* insult or treat with contempt institutions, customs or objects of worship respected by the recognized religious bodies of Germany. He also appears to be too near the Island of Malta to notice that :—

... the Maltese Minister of Justice, has introduced a Bill into the Legislative Assembly for dealing with "offenders against religious sentiment." It lays down that whoever vilifies the Catholic religion, or articles forming an object of worship, or who impedes or disturbs the performance of Catholic services, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment ranging from three months to two years.

In addition we have just learned that the "Civil Peace Decree," which prevents Freethinkers from holding public meetings in Germany from November 19 to January 2, where they offend the Catholic authorities, has just been re-enacted.

We are aware, of course, that for the Pope there is only one philosophy, that of the Catholic Church. He may be quite sincere in believing that it is so. It does occur to us, however, that in Mexico the Government is equally sincere, and the vigour of its policy assists us in our view, in thinking that Catholicism is a philosophy which must be exercised. If we might offer the Pope a suggestion, which, by some, might even be construed as a compliment, we should like to point out that the attitude of the Mexican Government is at best a case of "monkey see, monkey do," and a more vulgar imitation of his own pontifical example.

G.F.G.

Happiness and goodness, according to canting moralists, stand in the relation of cause and effect. There was never anything less proved or less probable.

R. L. Stevenson.

The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection.

John Stuart Mill.

Biological Concepts.

I.—HEREDITY.

IN a previous article (October 30) it was indicated that since Darwin's time purposive philosophy has drawn largely from the vague use of such terms as heredity, variation, selection and adaptation, which have been treated variously as the tools of evolution in the control of an evolver, or as characteristics in the behaviour of a life force. And so long as these terms were bare and unexplained, they served as principles, unanalysable and final.

In the present century, however, they have been successfully treated as concepts—labels for groups of properties awaiting investigation. As such they owe their origin, not to a transcendent agent or an immanent vital force, but to the same type of law (determinism) as other phenomena.

* * *

Darwin spoke of "the strong principle of inheritance," and left it at that. He did not enquire whether it had any determinable material basis. Nietzsche appreciated the situation in his book, *The Will to Power*: "Heredity as something quite incomprehensible cannot be used as an explanation, but only as a designation for the identification of a problem."

For the Darwinians, the parent passed on his goods to the offspring in some unknown way, and there was an end of it. At the same time, the offspring were always slightly different; heredity and variation being more or less co-extensive: the resemblance constituted heredity, the difference variation.

Thirty years' work by Prof. T. H. Morgan, and his colleagues, based on Mendel's atomistic conception of inheritance, have shown that *heredity has a material basis in the chromosomes.*

Mendel called his units of heredity "genes." Morgan has extended Mendelism, and arrived at an exact theory of the interrelation of genetic factors based on the observed behaviour of the chromosomes.¹ It is now possible for him to identify which chromosomes are associated with particular "mutant" characters, and he can even localize the region of an individual chromosome in which resides (or which is) a given Mendelian factor.

For details as to the exact nature of these vehicles of heredity, the chromosomes (dark, staining rod-shaped bodies within the nucleus of a reproductive cell), Prof. J. B. Haldane's recent *Causes of Evolution* and Prof. L. Hogben's *Nature of Living Matter* may be consulted. It is from the latter that the following passage is taken:—

"The study of heredity has become more and more explicitly materialistic." The hypotheses of the modern geneticist "are conceived in physical units. The gene has space time dimensions. Mental inheritance is a meaningless collocation of words, unless it is possible to bring the concept of mentality within the mechanistic framework."

G. H. TAYLOR.

¹ See *The Atomistic View of Parenthood*, a lecture by Prof. L. Hogben, author of *The Nature of Living Matter* (Kegan Paul).

We but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor.

(Shakespeare, "Macbeth," 1.7.10.)

The Flight from Reason.

A REPLY TO MR. TAYLOR.

MR. TAYLOR'S criticism of my book, *The Flight from Reason* has just reached me. I was interested in his article, but I should have enjoyed it more had he not adopted the easy line of travestying, rather than of meeting his opponent's arguments.

"To the modern logician the *Summum Bonum Theologica* is quite obsolete," writes Mr. Taylor. I agree: if a book that has never been written can be described as obsolete, Mr. Taylor is correct. Mr. Taylor, like many other people who refer to St. Thomas, has never read a line of the *Summa Theologica*, or he would at least have got the title right.

"Materialism, we are next informed, abolishes conscience." My point was that Materialism cannot provide a reasoned case for conscience, a very different matter. Most Materialists are far better than their creed.

"Determinism, says Mr. Lunn, offers no criterion of truth. To the question, what is 7×9 , one boy will answer 65, and another 63. Both answers were determined; how does the determinist know which is correct? Now a good way would be to count 7 groups of 9, and check the answer a sufficient number of times."

It is not my argument this time, but Sir Arthur Eddington's, which Mr. Taylor has travestied. Mr. Taylor may think me a half-wit, but he will not bring that accusation against Sir Arthur Eddington. A man would have to be a half-wit indeed to maintain that a determinist was unable to discover whether 7×9 equalled 65 or 63. I suggest that Mr. Taylor should, in the next issue of the *Freethinker*, re-produce the entire passage from Sir Arthur Eddington as quoted in my book, and then proceed to criticize it. I shall be amused at his efforts to reconcile the passage in question with the passage as travestied in this article.

"Thought has no influence on action," says Mr. Lunn's Materialist." To this remark Mr. Taylor adds a footnote: "G. J. Romanes appears to have made the blunder." Why "appears"? This is most disingenuous. The reader is left with the impression that I have travestied Materialist doctrine. Let me quote the operative sentence. "Professor Huxley, says Mr. Romanes in his Rede Lecture of 1885, 'argues by way of perfectly logical deduction from this statement, that thought and feeling have nothing to do with determining action.'"

A large and influential school of Materialists, the Behaviourists, have adopted the view. I do not know by what authority Mr. Taylor condemns Behaviourists as heretics, or what entitles him to assert pontifically that Mr. Romanes "made the blunder." Are we to believe that the *Freethinker* alone represents orthodox Materialism, and that Mr. Cohen, the Pope of Materialism, cannot err?

"Would anyone trust the convictions of a monkey's mind?" asks Mr. Lunn in triumph." The remark Mr. Taylor quotes is not the triumphant exclamation of Mr. Lunn, but the despairing exclamation of Mr. Charles Darwin, who writes as follows: "But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of a man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust the convictions of a monkey's mind?"

"However, Mr. Lunn is not quite irretrievably Catholic, for he admits on p. 27 that as regards Copernicus the Holy Office (of an alleged infallible church) made 'a great blunder.'"

Catholics, retrievable and irretrievable,¹ all agree that the Holy Office and the Pope blundered badly on that occasion. No Catholic believes that the Holy Office is infallible, or that Popes never err. It is a thousand pities that those who criticize Catholic doctrine do not take the trouble to master, in outline at least, Catholic philosophy.

I much prefer Mr. Taylor's second article to his first. My point about evolution, which I have developed at

greater length in the second edition, is that evolution is a probable hypothesis, but by no means a proven fact. As that great scientist and convinced evolutionist, Yves Delage, said, "I am, however, persuaded that one is or is not a transformist, not so much for reasons deduced from natural history as for motives based on personal philosophic opinions. If one takes one's stand upon the *exclusive ground of facts*, it must be acknowledged that the formation of one species from another species has not been demonstrated at all."

In other words the underlying assumption of modern thought that only fundamentalists and fools can possibly reject evolution, is unwarrantable. We accept evolution because the mental fashion of the day makes it difficult for us to believe in a deity who creates different species at different points in time. Apart from this purely *a priori* prejudice, the available scientific facts tell us strongly against evolution as for it.

Mr. Taylor's second article raises a good many very interesting points to which I am glad to have my attention called.

There are two types of reviewers. Those whose object is to prevent a reader buying a book of which the reviewer disapproves, and those who are more interested in refuting by fair argument than by misrepresenting a thesis which they are anxious to discredit.

Mr. Taylor is, I hope, ambitious to be a reviewer of the better type. May I therefore in all friendliness suggest that he should in future take more trouble to check his quotations and to master his opponent's case.

I am sorry Mr. Taylor did not wait to criticize the new and greatly enlarged edition of *The Flight from Reason*, which has just appeared, an edition which contains supplementary chapters on Behaviourism and the New Psychology. I suggest that Mr. Taylor, instead of travestying the arguments in the Introduction to the new edition, should reproduce in full two passages which deal with Mr. Cohen and the *Freethinker*—in full, mind—and should then proceed to refute these passages, if he can.²

One word more about another subject. In a recent issue, the *Freethinker* commented on a debate between Mr. Cohen and myself. The comments were not unfriendly or unfair. I was far from satisfied with my own performance on that occasion. I am, however, disposed to criticize the assumption of your critic—I have mislaid the cutting and quote from memory—that Mr. Cohen was gallantly conceding tactical advantages to his opponent. This is rather artless. I knew that I was taking on a formidable task. I was challenging Mr. Cohen on his own pet subject, Materialism, to the defence of which he has devoted many years of his life. I offered Mr. Cohen the last word, which he graciously accepted. Every debater knows that the last word is a tremendous advantage. Finally, I was debating before an audience which was intensely unsympathetic to my thesis, and tremendously appreciative of Mr. Cohen and of every point which Mr. Cohen made. As I said at the time, the only occasions when they applauded me were the occasions when I made complimentary remarks about Mr. Cohen. My own few supporters, some twelve in number, had no similar opportunities for applauding Mr. Cohen. Mr. Cohen knew his audience, and could play on them like a pianist. My main preoccupation was to study the pitch, learn something of Mr. Cohen's methods, keep my temper and educate myself for a second round. It was an interesting and valuable experience for which I am grateful. I hereby challenge Mr. Cohen to debate my beliefs and to give me the last word. A suitable subject for such a debate is the general question of whether miracles do or do not occur. I hope that it may be possible to arrange a debate with Mr. Cohen on the miraculous before the same audience next year.

ARNOLD LUNN.

¹ "Mr. Arnold Lunn, poor fellow, pathetically believing himself to be a Catholic" (Alan Handsacre in *Freethinker* November 20). I am not and do not claim to be a Catholic.

² That is from "I opened a copy" (page xiii.) to "erupting lava" p. xiv., and "Mr. Cutner ends his article (p. xvi.) to . . . I hope be clean."

On Clerical Morality.

THIS journal was alone in pointing out the real significance of the commotion, in the Church, in the Press, and, perhaps rather less, by the public, over the case of the Stiffkey parson. That hubbub would have been impossible but for the common delusion that attributes to, and expects from, clergymen a higher standard of conduct than passes muster with the laity. Of all misconceptions this is at once the most stubborn and the least reasonable. The Churches, *ex-officio*, never believed it for a moment, whatever may be their pretensions. Every denomination with a regular ministry is provided with disciplinary machinery for the trial and punishment of offending members of that ministry. In the case of a State Church it may be, as it is in England, a tribunal of the State. In the Roman Church episcopal and canonical jurisdiction is provided. In the Dissenting Churches Boards of Conference, Synod or Assembly are constituted for the same purpose. In all cases in this country, if a cleric breaks the criminal or civil law, he is amenable to the appropriate Court, magisterial or judicial. This notwithstanding, denominations other than the Established Church may and do avoid the scandal of the latter course by justice securing through their own action, and if necessary and possible, apology or retribution for all parties concerned, including the offender. One other preliminary point is to be observed. All these bodies before mentioned are intended to deal and do deal not only or mostly with offences of an ecclesiastical character, but with offences against morals; errors of conduct as well as errors of faith or practice, in short they assume that the clergy are liable to exactly the same temptations and crimes as laymen, and not only liable to them but sometimes guilty of them. If it were not so these various Courts and Boards would not exist. In the case of the Church of England a separate Act (the Church Discipline Act, 1892) was passed expressly to deal with crimes against morals or persons, as distinct from offences of doctrine or discipline.

So much for the evidence which is, or should be, patent to all, that clergymen are as good or as bad as any other men would be in their position, and with their physical mental and environmental conditions. When we come to examine the somewhat sultry tomes of Moral Theology we find that the learned and experienced professors of that craft are in no doubt whatever that clergymen are not merely as likely to err as laymen, but by reason of their profession they are more likely to "fall" than laymen, especially into certain classes of "sin" or misconduct.

One of the most consulted of such writers, Frassinetti (his *Priest's Manual* has been translated into several languages and in English has had numerous editions) says that "a priest must be good or *very bad*." Clerical conduct has, in general, risen or fallen with the general level in nations. Where, as in England, there is a high standard, if not of morality, at least of its profession and appearance, the graver crimes are rare among the clergy. Dissenting ministers are indeed often offensively virtuous—as they reckon that quality. Yet in this country, no later than the eighteenth century, the Protestant clergy were little if any better than the priests in Catholic countries at the same period. Mr. Belloc, no hostile witness, makes no attempt to defend the French clergy, especially the higher clergy, at that time. (See his *French Revolution H.U.L.*)

It is not only priests who are the "spiritual directors" of their flocks. Dr. R. J. Campbell is reported to have heard more confessions in his City Temple days than some Catholic priests of that time. And if, as even Mr. McCabe has said, "the Confessional is one of nature's institutions" (see his *Church Discipline*) it is reasonably certain that there are few religious persons who do not have resort to something of the kind. Non-religious persons may also desire to confer with a trusted consultant in difficulty or emergency; but no question then arises of a special relation between the parties. One is not a priest, and the other is not a penitent. Quite apart from this matter of the intimate relations that may exist between ministers of religion and their church members, the minister has, by the fact of his ministry, a freedom

vouchsafed to no other outside person to enter houses and to discharge what he thinks are his "pastoral" obligations. As it is admitted that a very large proportion of almost every congregation consists of old and young women, it is unnecessary to say more than that few ordinary healthy laymen would feel comfortable as pastors.

It is abundantly clear that, following on the Stiffkey Case, a desperate effort will be made to extend to Consistory or other Ecclesiastical Courts, the provisions which now apply to Divorce Court press reports. It will be a gross breach of justice if this is done. Of all the evidence given and reported in the Stiffkey Case, how much was of a character that would have justified action in a secular court? It is as much in the interest of the clergy as of the public that clerical offenders shall be amenable to the secular courts if they break the law of the land. There is no "news value" in ritual cases, and cases of heresy are, to the great disgust of the *Church Times*, rare.

Newspapers are much more inclined to publish the evil deeds of unorthodox persons than to malign the clergy, or to call attention to their occasional misdemeanours. Canon Law is no part of the common or statute law of England. According to the law of the land clerical criminals—the law is not concerned with ritual, nor much with doctrine, except in the case of Atheists—must be tried by the same processes as lay persons, and the proceedings should have as much or as little publicity as the law, or the "news sense" of Fleet Street decide to give to them. One of the curious privileges of clergymen of the Church of England is that they may not be arrested during "divine service." Such a privilege could not be exercised except by a person who, even by clerical standards, ought not to possess it. Given such a person, he could by a perfectly simple, if somewhat drastic method, use it to cheat the law.

What the Stiffkey Case has done is to prove that clerical courts offer no example of superiority to secular ones and that clerical deeds have nothing to distinguish them from the actions of persons not in "holy orders." Human nature, including that of clergymen, being what it is, we no more want one law for the clergy and one law for the laity than we want one law for the rich and another law for the poor.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Obituary.

DOUGLAS MILLAR CLARK.

ON November 30, Douglas Millar Clark (son of Mr. A. Clark, President Glasgow N.S.S.) was buried in Hillfoot Cemetery. The boy (aged seven) succumbed to an attack of pneumonia, and Mr. Clark's other two children were in hospital. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. Buntin, Secretary of the Branch at the home of the parents, and at the graveside where the coffin awaited the mourners. A large number of relatives and friends paid their last tribute to the child, and extended their sympathy to his sorrowing parents. We add our own.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. H. Cutner—"Spiritualism."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, John Katz, B.A.—"The World Crisis." Questions invited.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. J. C. Flugel, D.Sc.—"The Birth of Modern Psychology."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, December 12, Mr. P. Goldman—"Evolutionary Morals."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.0, Tuesday, December 13, J. P. Gilmour—"The Cerebral Conditions of Character."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.): 6.30, Mr. C. M. Kohan (The New Health Society)—"A Mere Man in the Kitchen."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, December 11, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, December 11, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Sunday, December 11, Mr. G. Malton (Bradford)—"The Physical Basis of Mind and Morals."

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, F. Edwin Monks (Manchester)—"The Problems of Divorce."

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Institute, London Road, Brighton): 7.30, Mr. A. D. McLaren (London)—"What is the Good of Religion?"

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (Branch Rooms, Font Street): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, Lecture and discussion.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, December 11, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Ritualism and Morals."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, A. Sneddon will lecture. Questions and discussion.—Silver collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Sunday, December 11, Mrs. A. Williams-Ellis—"Right and Wrong in Modern Russia."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, Councillor Maurice Eschwege, J.P. (Liverpool)—"The Magisterial Bench through Humane Eyes."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, Mr. Easterbrook—"Cosmography."

STOCKPORT LABOUR FELLOWSHIP (Central Hall, Hillgate, Stockport): 3.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"Do We Need Religion?" 7.0. "Christianity v. Science: Anthropology."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Buildings, Green Street): 7.0, Sunday, December 11, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Sunderland's Sunless Sunday."

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (26 Beach Street, Swansea): 7.0, Saturday, December 17, Mr. Ithel Davies, B.A.—"The Basis of International Peace."

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