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

Views and Opinions.

Religion as "Dope."

CHRISTIANS very much resent their religion being characterized as "dope." I am not surprised at this, and the resentment shows at least a saving grace. And yet a great many of the arguments (?) actually do properly come within that definition. The plea that religion should not be criticized adversely, because it brings comfort to many, clearly brings it within the definition. As I have so often said, the bald plea of comfort, without regard to ulterior consequences, may just as well be used as a justification for whisky drinking, or opium taking, or a dozen other things as for religion. The plea that religion keeps people in order is another sample from bulk. It is an appeal to the interested classes to maintain religion because it conserves certain interests or institutions; and on the other hand there is the plea that religion brings to the poor certain attentions from the better-placed they would not receive in its absence. In all these arguments the common characteristic is that no attempt is made to prove the truth or the ultimate value of the doctrines championed, but it depends entirely upon their alleged momentarily pleasing consequences. It is, indeed, precisely on account of these comforting consequences that direct discussion of the truth of religion is deprecated. The complete form of the argument is, "Such and such doctrines may be false, but they bring comfort, and therefore let us not do anything that will lead to their rejection as untrue." It is a very low, and a very debased form of the argument from utility.

* * *

Newspaper Dope.

Another form of dope is one that has been in full practice ever since the Christian Church was able to exert a measure of effective social control. This consists in suppressing so far as is possible everything that tends to contest Christian claims, and to give, in the form of teaching, only such information as will substantiate them. The forms taken in carrying out

this policy are numerous. There is the positive suppression of men and teachings by means of legal process or otherwise. All Christian persecution—Catholic and Protestant—comes under this head. There are all sorts of laws against blasphemy or heresy, and also the preparation of special pleadings on behalf of Christianity, circulated among a people that have, in the mass, no opportunity of knowing what the truth is. The consequence is the existence of a Christian public that is simply unaware of truths concerning Christianity that are almost commonplaces among such as have given attention to the subject.

One of the current methods of doping the people where religion is concerned is the press. Generally speaking the press of to-day is not very much concerned with presenting the cold truth about everything, and very many papers are not concerned with giving its readers the truth about anything. They may not always tell a whole lie, but they present a half-lie. They will pretend to be giving their readers a statement of the case when they are really giving them a wholly misleading account of the subject considered. With the consequence that those who depend upon them present the most hopeless exhibitions of ignorance and the most complete examples of doping. The man who knows nothing of a subject, and knows that he knows nothing about it, is often a promising pupil to a conscientious teacher. But the man who has been given half the case as though it were the whole, the man who believes that he has formed an opinion on the whole of the facts, when he is merely repeating a prepared lesson, is the most hopeless of all cases. He represents the hopeless ignorance of *mis-education*.

* * *

The Dope of the Churches.

Of late there has been a very energetic press campaign carried on by the various churches. Most of them exert influence on the press—if only through the advertising columns—and some of the churches exercise considerable power. And there is always the ignorance of the general public to be counted on. Here is a field of enterprise that has been openly dealt with in a number of religious conferences, from the point of view of advertising, and also the writing of religious articles. The publication of articles has been artfully managed in the form of essays written by different men and women, thus giving the appearance of presenting Christianity from *all* points of view. As a matter of fact, an examination of the writers of the articles proves that so far as religion is concerned they are written from one point of view only—generally from the point of view of Christianity, or, at most, from the point of view of religion. No writer who is known to be opposed to Christianity, and who is also known to be able to state his objections, is ever allowed to take a part in the discussion. In all the newspaper symposiums that have been held of late

years on religion the present writer—who has certainly as much right as any other man in the country to speak on behalf of the Freethinkers of Great Britain—has been invited to contribute to but one. This was the case of the *Manchester Evening News*, and that created so great a sensation that a special meeting of the Council of the Churches of Manchester and Salford was immediately called to deal with so unusual a situation. Enough pressure was brought to bear upon the paper to make it likely that it will never repeat the experiment. In nearly every case the discussion is almost pure dope. If the writers are not all on the side of established Christianity, they may safely be trusted to say nothing very drastic against it. Readers are led to believe that they are getting different points of view. All they actually get is the same view from different angles, not one of which offers a flat contradiction of any of the others or a radically different interpretation.

* * *

The Master of the Temple—and Dope.

The latest to join this game of doping the public is the *Daily Telegraph*. It has just closed a series of articles by the Master of the Temple, the Rev. S. C. Carpenter, under the heading of "Religion and Science." I say "under the heading of," because as a matter of cold fact there is nothing in the articles about either genuine religion or real science. Religion is whatever you care to make it, so long as it is understood to be "true Christianity," and science means the opinion of any scientist, although the opinions of scientists are often as far removed from genuine science as the statements of a theologian are from exact truth. So that, in fact, the *Telegraph* articles are pure dope. And the editor of the *Telegraph* may be trusted to see that no exposure of the nature of the mixture will be permitted in his columns. Even in the correspondence columns it is curious that no real criticism of Dr. Carpenter has been permitted to appear. Nothing must be done that will weaken the efficacy of the dope; and now the *Telegraph* will be able to tell its readers that they have had placed before them an impartial statement of the relations between religion and science. The humbug of it all! It used to be said that the pulpit was the coward's castle. It was quite true, but I am sure that its then occupants never expected a time when the term would cover the newspaper also.

Dr. Carpenter makes the most of two things, so far as religion is concerned, but without giving us a clear definition of what he means by religion. He admits that a great deal of the Old Testament is pure myth—not a very great admission in these days when the fact is no longer even discussed by men of reputation. "Abraham and Joseph are real people, but their personal history is rather shadowy"—the former stands for a Semitic migration from Mesopotamia, the latter for the Hebrew people when they were first in Egypt. So while they are both real people, they are really symbolical representations of tribal movements, and are thus just as *real* as is the traditional figure of John Bull. On the other hand "recent explorations in Mesopotamia have revealed the fact that there were constant floods in that area, and once there was a very great flood." Naturally with a Christian apologist the discoveries of Professor Garstang with regard to Jericho are not passed over. Professor Garstang found, says Dr. Carpenter, that the discoveries of the ruins bore out the story of Genesis, and proved that "the Old Testament was not a wilderness of mis-statements." Therefore Dr. Carpenter finds in the Bible stories precisely what the Old Testament has to give, "light on the ways of God with men."

Thimble Rigging

Now Dr. Carpenter is not a fool, and as he is not on the same level as, say the Bishop of London, one wonders whether he really believes that, granting all he has said about researches proving the possibility of a flood so large that it led a semi-civilized people to think the whole world was flooded, and that it has been made plain that a town stood where Jericho may have stood, and that there is evidence that the city walls were overthrown by an earthquake, these "evidences" demonstrate the religious truth of the Old Testament? Why does he not say that further evidence of the truth of the Bible story of the origin of languages is shown by the fact that different languages do actually exist, or that the truth of the tale of the origin of the rainbow is proven every time a rainbow is seen.

To speak quite plainly, this kind of argument is nothing better than a very common kind of religious thimble-rigging. It is an evasion of the real question in such a way that while the unwary reader is asked to assent to one proposition his assent is taken as an agreement with a different kind of proposition altogether. The point we are asked to concede is that certain statements in the Bible—the fall of Jericho, and the probable occurrence of a great flood are substantially true. That done, our agreement is taken as an assent to the truth of the Biblical presentation of these "facts." But the essence of the Bible statement, the only thing that makes it of the slightest value to Christianity, is that these things happened through the special action of God in his dealings with the Jewish people. The Bible statements are that the flood came upon the earth through the direct action of God, who planned to save a single family in order to repeople the earth. And whether the walls of Jericho fell down or stood up is not of the slightest religious value to anyone or to anything. Its only value to the Christian religion is that the walls fell down at the blast of a trumpet because God caused them to fall down. If God was not directly and purposefully behind these actions, then, religiously, the Bible story is not true, and nothing can make it true. In connexion with anything but Christianity such statements as those of Dr. Carpenter's would be denounced as highly misleading. In connexion with the issue of a company prospectus that kind of statement would open one to a criminal prosecution. In ordinary honest intercourse language is not merely taken to mean what it *says*, but also what it implies. Dr. Carpenter is well advised in making his statement in a place where no adequate reply would be admitted.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be continued.)

AMBITION.

No more against my heart to press thee,
No more with fervent lips caress thee,
Nor softly breathe thy name;
To meet but shadows on the wall,
Hear echoes only to my call—
This would be deepest shame!

To lean mine ear against thy breast,
Feeling it well content, at rest,
No highest dream denied;
To have and hold thee mine alone,
And know thee as I, too, am known—
This would be loftiest pride!

J. M. STUART-YOUNG.

Onitsha, Nigeria.

Another Yankee Messiah.

"Freedom is the life-blood of science."—*Oliver Lodge.*

"There are makers of empires, and there are makers of universes."—*Bernard Shaw.*

"So far as a man thinks, he is free."—*Emerson.*

SCIENCE and religion have ever been, not merely antagonistic, but mortal enemies. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with assent to theological dogmas. The entire organization of Priestcraft has invariably been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a most powerful solvent of religious faith. This priestly resistance to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no claim to our respect. When we remember that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian theory were all in turn received with derision by priests, we are inclined to attribute that resistance, not to the weakness of the arguments of the scientists, but to the priestly dislike of knowledge.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of "God," and the early chemists were regarded as agents of "Satan." Physiology and medicine, geology and biology also excited the hostility of the clergy. Even the introduction of chloroform as an anodyne in child-bed was opposed by priests on the ground that it interfered with the alleged primal curse on women by "Jehovah" in the "Garden of Eden."

After these many centuries of opposition between them, a lady attempted to build a bridge between religion and science. This lady hailed from the birth-place of so many fancy religions, and the gospel of Mary Eddy bids fair to rival the older evangel of Jesus Christ. The newest of new Bibles, "Christian Science: A Key to the Scriptures," of which this lady was the author, appeared in 1875, and has now exceeded its two hundredth edition.

The success of the new evangel is an object lesson in human credulity and religious origins. In the number of Christian Science practitioners, London, with 251, already eclipses Boston, U.S.A. Berlin has five churches, and the new evangel is represented in thirty other German towns. Canada has fifty-five, and England a hundred and sixty-five centres of activity. Manchester possesses five churches, and Toronto four. Such are the frailties of human nature that the historian of religious charlatanism will hesitate to affirm that the absurdities of this faith has not contributed to its success among innocent people of all ranks of society.

This Christian Science evangel has been received by large numbers of undeveloped religious men and women. And Ma Eddy, quite as indiscriminating as any of her readers, was equipped with a smattering of theology, metaphysics, a pseudo-scientific vocabulary, and a good memory, to give them the thing they longed for. Words were Ma Eddy's stock-in-trade. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her explanations and definitions are pure nonsense. They are the offspring of unconstrained imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from the scientists, upon resonant polysyllables. For example, here is a—definition! :—

Matter, mythology, mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion, intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality; life resulting in death, and death in life; sensation in the sensationless: mind originating in matter; the opposite of truth: that of which immortal mind takes no cognisance: that which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief.

The author of this farrago of foolery has been ap-

propriately hailed as a teacher "second only to Jesus Christ." It was only proper, therefore, that she should regard matter, mythology, and mortality as synonymous. Even the "Master," who considered a whale was a "fish," could not improve upon Ma Eddy's colossal blunders. The very name of the new evangel is a contradiction in terms, for it is neither Christianity nor science. The high-priestess of this American evangel strutted in borrowed plumes, and charged three hundred dollars for a dozen lessons. No profiteer ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money. Indeed, money is the only material thing in existence which Christian Science allows to be real. Ma Eddy never allowed a dollar that had no friends to get by her alive. In short, she was a religious boss, like the old-time priests who imposed tithes, or the Salvation Army which runs a multiple shop and calls it religion.

This newest of new religions proclaims as unreal and non-existent pain and sickness, fatigue and death, and leaves no room for the emotion of pity, the most beautiful flower in the garden of life. It is an evangel for the rich, not for the poor. What can Christian Science say to a dying pauper in a slum? It will murmur: "Your pain is an illusion, your illness an error, your poverty unreal, your coming death a delusion." To the downcast and the outcast such a religion is a mockery, but Ma Eddy cared nothing for paupers, for they had no dollars. It is highly significant that this new religion is most powerful in Los Angeles, the most favoured health-resort in the continent of America. It is still more significant that this farrago of faith has for its background the historical faith of Christianity. "A Key to the Scriptures" is part of the title of the new Bible.

It was this association with the Christian Religion which caught the ears of believers in America, and, finally, in Europe. It is a clever trick, such as a dramatist uses in a well-trying plot. Joe Smith used the Christian Bible as a springboard when he launched Mormonism. Mahomet adopted the Hebrew Scripture when he started his evangel. Booth, a born showman, used the paraphernalia of militarism, uniforms, bands and all, to attract his dupes.

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of the claims made by Ma Eddy. But this nonsensical system makes us tired; for of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the half-crazy brains of religious maniacs, this book is one of the strangest. It is more incoherent than the tall stories of the Christian Fathers. It is more nonsensical than the ravings of Joanna Southcott. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain, unvarnished tale. The "Forty Coming Wonders" of the late Prophet Baxter is shrinking modesty compared with the impudence of Ma Eddy. This newest of new Bibles makes the head swim. No other less colloquial phrase can so aptly describe such a volume of irresponsible verbosity. Yet, in matters of religion, people will stand almost anything. They will swallow the fairy-tales of the Christian Bible, and allow priests to draw mining royalties, tithes, and church rates, generation after generation. They will even permit bishops of the State Church to impede legislation in the House of Lords. They will permit the clergy to poke their sacred noses into national affairs as if these creatures were men of really profound social importance. It is not surprising that such innocents who can tolerate the absurdities and injustice of Orthodoxy cannot resist the blandishments of yet another Charlatan who uses the same old patter. Are they not taught in the schools to respect their pastors and masters?

MIMNERMUS.



Professor J. S. Haldane on Materialism.

PROFESSOR J. S. HALDANE, the physiologist, has recently published a book entitled *Materialism* (Hodder & Stoughton, 3s. 6d.). The popular price, so small compared with the average price of scientific works, shows that he is very much in earnest and wishes it to reach the general reader, for whom it is intended. Indeed, the professor, even in his most optimistic moments, can scarcely have hoped to make any impression upon his materialistic colleagues, with the contents of this volume, which are very well summed up, on the dust cover, as follows:—

The argument which runs through the book is that, although the physico-chemical interpretation of our experience has endless practical uses, it is only a partial or abstract interpretation, which shows its complete inadequacy when the attempt is made to apply it to the phenomena of life and conscious behaviour. What ultimately takes its place is a spiritual interpretation, with a spiritual universe far better understood than when a spiritual was taken to exist side by side with a physical universe, and consequently as something "supernatural."

This book has been received with joy by the religious press, and by the pseudo-religious journalists of Fleet Street, and the old parrot cry of "Materialism is dead," is again heard in the land. Prof. Haldane is far too well acquainted with modern scientific thought, and too honest, to give any countenance to this pious fiction; for, "the usual present-day view of physiologists is that physiology aims at gradually revealing the mechanism of life—in other words, that it aims at investigating the physics and chemistry of life, and might properly be called bio-physics. This is a view which I cannot share." (pp. 18-19.) It is only charitable to suppose that the pietists who cackle so much about the death of Materialism, are talking out of the profundity of their ignorance of the subject.

Neither will the professor have anything to do with Vitalism, or of a Vital Force, acting independently of physics or chemistry; for when "vitalism was put to the test of experimental investigation, it was found invariably that what was put down to the influence of the vital force depends on the operation of apparent physical and chemical influences of some kind." He declares, without any qualification whatever, that:—

No justification exists for assuming that there is present in the tissues of living organisms some kind of agent which acts independently of what we call physical and chemical conditions. The evidence is all the other way; and this fact is inconsistent with the vitalistic hypothesis. We may rest assured that vitalism in its old sense has disappeared from physiology. (p. 17.)

Why then, it will be asked, does Prof. Haldane reject Materialism? Because it does not explain the activities of living matter, such as reproduction, and "the phenomena of recovery from disease and injuries." And in fact fails to explain anything of the phenomena of life. It is true that scientists have not yet succeeded in experimentally producing life, but they claim to have made great advances in that direction, and it is only a matter of time. And probably when these questions are solved the anti-materialists will still remain unsatisfied, and propound a new set of problems to be solved.

What then is Prof. Haldane's belief? It is spiritual realism; that the universe is not material. That the reality behind the outward form of things is spiritual, and "As our knowledge increases, so must our conception of spiritual reality become enlarged and clearer." (p. 185.) Up to the present, however, the process has been just the reverse of this. At one

time the operation of spirits, good or bad, was seen in everything that happened. The scientist of to-day does not allow for the slightest intrusion of the spiritual when working in the laboratory, and there is not the slightest indication of a return to the earlier view.

As to the idea of God, he says: "I am unable to accept the theological conception of God as a perfect being existing apart from all the evil, sufferings, and disorder of our universe . . . If we consider the conception of a God outside of all suffering and imperfection, we find that it has no real meaning in the world of experience." (pp. 174-5.) His belief seems to be a kind of Pantheism, there is no manifestation of God apart from the universe; and Evolution he regards as "God's creative activity." In other words, he does not believe in a personal God. Neither does he believe in personal immortality, or of a soul independent of the body. He observes: "I therefore cannot see that a belief in mere individual immortality forms any real part of religion." And "I know well that what I am saying on this point runs counter to beliefs which are cherished by both Jewish and Christian Communities." Well, they can hardly be expected to be enthusiastic over a scheme of things that deprives them of a personal God, and a personal future life.

Prof. Haldane writes "as one brought up in Christian traditions." And he finds that the views prevailing since the times of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton, have:—

come to oppress us more and more, in proportion as we realize more and more fully its implications. In the physically interpreted universe man is a mere insignificant item in the physical happenings on a very insignificant planet; and human activity, even if it somehow represents what is spiritual, seems to count for almost nothing. The boundless expanse around us seems also to reveal nothing of the God of religion; and if we cling to our belief in God we seem to be doing so in the face of clear evidence, so that religion appears as if it were no more than a mere remnant of old superstition. (pp. 159-60.)

It does indeed. Prof. Haldane dissents from this view, but it seems to us that this proceeds not from his science, but from his emotions founded upon his early religious training.

W. MANN.

The Story of the Roman Inquisition.

THE Papal Inquisition was the product of a series of sinister events. Its beginnings may be detected as far back as the fourth century of our era. In the days of the infant Church, when the Christian cult was battling for existence in a sceptical and Pagan society, there could be no official persecution of heretics and unbelievers. Bitter dissensions within the Christian fold were common enough, but until the Church obtained the support of the secular power, excommunication or ostracism remained the only instruments available for the repression of unorthodoxy.

In 313 A.D. Constantine, the first Emperor to publicly adopt the Christian creed, proclaimed a period of tolerance at a time when the majority of his subjects were still Pagan. But as the Church increased its authority over the multitude, a persecuting spirit pervaded the policy of the priesthood. Then, during the reigns of Valentinian and Theodosius I. severe laws against freedom of thought and expression were introduced into the Roman Code, and steadily increased in number and severity. Heretics, as a rule, were subjected to banishment, their property was con-

fiscated, and their children denied the right of inheritance, while those detested arch-heretics, the Donatists and Manichæans were done to death. These various punishments were inflicted for the *open* avowal of heretical opinions, for the day was yet to come when men, women, and children who were merely suspected of heresy were terrorized or tortured into confession, and then burnt alive for their crime.

From the sixth till the ninth century little is recorded of the exile or execution of heretics. Where heresy had not been extirpated it had been driven underground. Towards the close of the tenth century, however, an era of intermittent heresy-hunting began which terminated in the opening years of the twelfth century. At this period a multitude of heretics were executed by burning or strangling within the territories of the Holy Roman Empire and elsewhere. What *direct* part was played by the episcopacy in these proceedings is uncertain. Some humane priests were opposed to the punishment of death and recommended peaceful persuasion or, at most, excommunication or imprisonment but even then, the convicted dissenter was evermore shunned as a moral leper.

Throughout the twelfth century there was a tendency to replace haphazard decisions in heresy trials by a system of special legislation. There existed also an increasing desire for the capital punishment of heretics. So dominant had the penalising passion become that even the sceptical and relatively humane Frederick Barbarossa agreed with the Pope Lucius III., in 1184 in legalizing the shameful punishments of banishment, forfeiture of goods or property, deprivation of all civil rights, branding with infamy, and the utter destruction of their dwelling-places on all convicted heretics resident in their dominions. Another ruler, Peter II. of Aragon, in 1197, decreed the cremation alive of heretics who remained within his realm after a given day. But the imperious Pope Innocent III.—our own King John's persistent enemy—was the main cause of the conversion of contemporary princes to the belief that the prosperity of their country depended on the complete suppression of heresy.

Some surmise that the Papal Inquisition was created for the special purpose of extirpating the pestilent Albigenses and other heretics deemed dangerous to the faith. But, as already intimated, this dread tribunal was an engine of slow growth. Although the wholesale slaughter of the Albigenses demonstrated the potency of the Church's influence, there was as yet no organized system such as the Inquisition later became. A provisional tribunal was instituted in Toulouse in 1229, but the Inquisition of history was erected by the Papacy from material provided by the Preaching Orders and, above all, by the Dominican friars. Trials of heretics by bishops and legates were now superseded by monastic jurisdiction. In 1232, a Dominican, Alberic, alarmed Lombardy with a heresy-search, while another clerical commission was sent to harry religious liberty in Germany where the pious, if merciless Conrad of Marburg shocked the Holy Father himself by his excesses.

Soon afterwards, however, in 1233, Gregory IX., in an epistle to the French bishops, declared that he was determined to use the friars in the detection and repression of heresy. Thus was the Inquisition founded, but its jurisdiction was still subject to extension or limitation, as circumstances seemed to require. The itinerant friars, on their visitations, set up a reign of terror in the countryside. Accompanied, as the later Inquisitors were, by armed familiars drawn from the dregs of the population, they called upon heretics to confess, or to betray those

whom they suspected as heretics. Those who confessed were mildly treated, while even those whose heresy had been known were granted days of grace during which they were free from molestation.

At the end of a month, however, this period of respite terminated, and the inquiry began. When the mission had concluded its labours and its victims had been ruined, imprisoned, or burnt alive, heresy was said to be suppressed and the friars departed to purify other heretical districts.

These travelling Inquisitors were soon replaced by permanent heresy-hunters, whose station was the monastery of the Franciscan or Dominican Order of which they were members. Court-houses and prisons were usually provided by the State, while the Bishops were held liable for the prisoners' maintenance and security, but they evaded these liabilities wherever possible.

The procedure of the Inquisition would amaze a modern Court of Justice in any civilized State. In each district the Inquisitors were appointed by the provincials of their Order, but were removable by the Pope alone. The powers of the tribunal were unlimited. The examiners interrogated the suspects in the presence of two witnesses and gave their decision after consultation with leading local men. The learned Dr. P. Alphandéry notes that, "This was the only protection for the accused. It was in vain that the civil lawyers tried to prove that the secular authorities had the right to see the documents bearing on the case; the Inquisition always succeeded in setting aside these claims. The share taken in these proceedings by the bishops, the accused or their representatives, though admitted in principle was as a rule merely illusory."

Apologists admit that the methods of the Inquisition were very arbitrary, and that the trials were secretly conducted. Again, this tribunal was free from the rules observed in the secular courts. The accused was never warned of his impending arrest, and there was no possibility of defence. Moreover, the merest spite might lead to an arrest, and the prisoners were treated as guilty both before and during their trial. The judge was also prosecutor, and therefore predisposed to return a verdict of guilty. The names of the informers against him were withheld from the accused, while even heretics or subjects deprived of civil rights were allowed as witnesses for the prosecution in heresy cases. Women, children, and slaves might testify against the accused, but no one was permitted to speak in his favour. Statements of little children were accepted as evidence. Obviously, in an atmosphere such as this any advocate willing to defend a prisoner would have been charged with heresy himself.

The time soon came, however, when those who were in a position to pay were much more considerately treated by the Inquisitors. As early as the thirteenth century fines were inflicted at the discretion of the authorities. Venial and mortal sins alike were compounded for by a money payment. So disgraceful became these extortions that the Papacy itself was constrained to condemn them, while a Council convened at Vienna talked of the suppression of the scandal.

These after all were but the milder aspects of the Inquisition, whose worst crimes, especially in Spain, were of a later time. Truly, the unspeakable atrocities of the Spanish Inquisition make one marvel at the cruelty and hatred promoted and sanctioned by religion, particularly when directed against Moslem Moors and Arabs, or relapsed Israelites whose property could be obtained by means of confiscation.

The penalization of heretics by fine or forfeiture of personal or landed property exercised an important

economic influence. In several States the secular rulers and the ecclesiastical authorities divided the spoils. This was the case in Italy, Germany and France, and there can be no reasonable doubt that, particularly with the decay of faith, secular princes sanctioned and occasionally encouraged heresy trials when confiscation proved so fruitful. For, whether the princes added the whole of the confiscated wealth to their treasuries or shared it with the clergy, their gain was great. Venice, alone appears to have insisted on the receipts of the Holy Inquisition in full as part of the Republic's revenue.

The great historian of the Papal and Spanish Inquisitions, Dr. Lea, has stressed the far-reaching economic consequences of confiscations throughout the Middle Ages. The uncertainty occasioned by this organized system of plunder, under the guise of outraged piety, is indeed difficult to appraise. Still, it furnishes a striking instance of the influence exerted on religious development by that craving for filthy lucre, or its equivalent, which has ever distinguished mankind.

T. F. PALMER.

The Church and Women.

LORD HUGH CECIL has said that "if women are admitted to the priesthood of the Church of England," he will be "convinced that it has ceased to be a part of the Catholic Church." The *News-Chronicle*, in a leader, remarks, "this statement has stricken us quite dumb." It is, nevertheless, a statement that is in strict conformity with the traditional attitude and action of the Catholic Church. Surprised we might be that his lordship should think the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law "a part of the Catholic Church"; but to be astonished to the point of being dumbfounded at his actual statement, shows a sad lack of knowledge in our contemporary.

The question of the admission of women to the ministry has become topical by reason of a stream of changes that had its source not in pious, but in secular, regions. In the years before 1914, the demand for sex equality, especially in its political implications, grew to clamorous, impressive, and in the opinion of some people, menacing proportions. Then came the War, and most of the "militant" advocates of votes for women, with the late Mrs. Pankhurst at their head, became enthusiastic recruiters both for the armed forces, and for those services which were called for from women. The first post-war Parliament passed measures removing some of the sex disqualifications of women, not because of the merits of the claim for their removal; but, it was said, by way of showing grace and gratitude for what women had done in the war. (A Coalition Government had to find some ground that was not contentious for its action.) Later, a Conservative Government went further, and conferred the franchise on all women on the same terms as it had been conferred on men. As a result of this legislation women entered Parliament, found their way open to the legal and medical professions, and even to commerce, and it was not a far cry, nor a surprising one, to a call for their admission into the only one of the polite professions from which they appeared to be still excluded.

The Nonconformist bodies have, in some cases, admitted women to pastorates. So far as the Church of England is concerned they have been allowed to become deaconesses—not in deacon's "orders," of course—and lay readers, and, in some cases, to preach. Now some pressure is being exerted and some enquiries are being made as to how much further women may be allowed to encroach on priestly preserves. It is the suggestion that they should become priests that has stirred Lord Hugh Cecil to protest. There is not the least likelihood of women being admitted to "holy (Anglican) orders"; but (and this is what Lord Cecil perceives and the *News-Chronicle* does not know), the mere discussion of such

a step makes it clear to all the world that the Church of England is a Protestant denomination. A born Catholic could not conceive, let alone express, the idea of a woman priest.

According to the teaching of the Bible, of historic Christianity, and of the Church of England in its Articles, Homilies and Formularies, "Adam was first made, then Eve." Properly clad, especially as to her head, and with a modest demeanour, a woman may attend public worship. To her husband she must give an obedience second only in faithfulness to that demanded by God and the Church. She was created, like marriage, according to our Prayer Book, "first for the procreation of children." The Apostles forbade her to speak in church meeting. The Fathers and Saints compared her to the foulest reptiles and the lowest beasts.

So long as Christianity was dominant in Europe, and in the few places where it is dominant now, women never had and have not a semblance of freedom. Erasmus in his day denounced the Church's insistence on the inviolability of marriages which were living deaths to women. Down to well on in the eighteenth century Christianity, Protestant and Catholic, never moved a finger to emancipate women. Even to-day they are united in denying to her some of the most essential elements of personal freedom. The *News-Chronicle* may be "stricken dumb" by these facts, but they explain why the Catholic Church (and Lord Hugh Cecil who thinks he belongs "to a part of it") can never allow a woman to hold what, according to Catholic theology, is the noblest office on earth.

So, while the English Bishops and clergy deliberate as to the admission of women, their old enemy in Rome no doubt regards their proceedings much as:—

"The eagle suffers little birds to sing,

And is not careful what they mean thereby."

But in this country, and at a time when the supposed liberality of religion is constantly advertised, and all progress is attributed to its influence, it is useful to have it pointed out that, in regard to the equal rights and status of women, so good a Christian as Lord Hugh Cecil believes that to admit them is to cease to be a Christian in what, to him, is the only proper sense of that word. The Church in this country suffers much, but it will no more suffer a woman to officiate at its "altars" than, in the old days, it would suffer a witch to live. Some advances must be accepted as *faits accomplis*; but equality, a woman the equal of a priest—never!

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Patching up the Bible.

QUITE recently I had the loan of a book (*The Scripture of Truth*, by Sydney Collett), from a broad-minded friend. He thought that it would interest and amuse me apart from convincing me.

In the course of my perusal of the book I came to the chapter headed "Inspiration," from which I quote the following passage: ". . . We readily admit that there are passages in the Bible that we can neither understand nor explain . . . In Isaiah vii. 14, we read: 'A virgin shall conceive and bear a son. . .' If any mere man could thoroughly master the Bible from beginning to end might we not be justified in questioning its divine origin? . . ." No comment from me could add to the lustre of the above gem. I can only proceed to the next chapter named. "The so-called Immorality of the Bible," where the writer waxes plausible and, drawing up the mildest list of obscenities, immoralities, etc., palliates them in the following passage: "Who but God would have recorded Noah's drunkenness, Abraham's deception about his wife, Lot's disgraceful conduct with his daughters, Jacob's cheating his brother and deceiving his father, Moses' outburst of temper, David's sin, Peter's cursing and swearing, and even Paul and Barnabas quarrelling about Mark . . ." All I can say is, who indeed?

Further on, our plausible writer tells us how simple it was for the whale to swallow Jonah, and then he drops a brick on the cavilling critics who deny that the sun stood still for Joshua. Quoting an eminent mathema-

tician who calculated back to that phenomenal day and who found he was a day out, our author closes the argument. And that's that!

Near the end of the book is a chapter entitled "The Science of Scripture." Here I read of the many mistakes science has made in search of truth while all the time that for which it searched lay in the Word of God. With that fine tolerance that the Christian can display our magnanimous writer says. "Alas, for poor science!" Further on we get this superfine quotation: "The first chapter of Genesis contains standards of truth which *scientists have not yet been able to reach*, though it is gratifying to see that as science advances she is slowly coming to these standards, and will some day be also arrayed in the same garments of spotless white." (Italics mine).

Evolution is dismissed in one paragraph to use an Americanism. "He has no time for it." Who is prepared to argue when Gen. ii. 7, declares that it was man, *real man*, and not some far-distant embryo or protoplasm which was formed of the dust.

In a chapter headed "Age of the World," we find the following plaint: "... it is mournful to find Dr. Driver, who ought to know better, saying in his *Book of Genesis*, that the first chapter of Genesis does not accord with the teachings of science. . . . The Bible does not say nor does it imply that the earth was created about six thousand years ago; nor that it was created in six days. . . ." The Bible opens with the majestic statement, "In the beginning God created the heaven and earth. . . ." Again the discussion is closed.

In conclusion, Mr. Collett lays the sacred Books of the East on the table, but he takes care to keep the Bible to one side of the table. Yes, there is only one book for Mr. Collett as the following passage, absolutely devoid of tolerance and sympathy, testifies: ". . . Let us teach the Hindus, Zoroastrians, Confucianists, Buddhists and Mohammedans that there is only one sacred book to be clasped to the heart . . ."

But, enough. Mr. Collett has made a brave attempt to patch up the Bible, and even although he has told the story simply as to a little child, I shall require to have the capacity of Jonah's whale before I can swallow his plausibilities.

HUGH MILLAR.

POMP AND VANITY.

("The Poms and Vanities of this Wicked World."
Vide Prayer Book.)

Glory and grace,
Ermine and lace;
Gems and crowns,
Thrones and gowns;
Purple and gold,
Treasures untold,
Armed hosts;
Guarded coasts;
Gilded cars,
Loud huzzas;
Church bells' chimes,
Laureate's rhymes,
Guns salute,
Sirens hoot;
Riches and rags,
Waving flags,
Peasant and priest,
Highest and least,
Grovel and cheer;
Folly and fear
Greet pomp and vanity;
And poor humanity
Lifts up its face
To glory and grace;
And pomp and vanity
Smile at humanity.

A.C.W.

Acid Drops.

The achievements and the possibilities of wireless can hardly be counted or estimated. It has been left to the Rev. "Pat" McCormack (of St. Martin's) to suggest that the wireless is "God's instrument for breaking down the divisions of men." In a broadcast "sermon" on a recent Sunday this popular preacher devoted all his time to extolling the B.B.C.—and God. He announced the forthcoming new "talks" on religion; was suitably decorous and loyal in his references to the Christmas broadcast of the King; and emphatic as to the advantages of the B.B.C. control of wireless as at present exercised. On the latter point he observed that it was a good thing this great service was not left to private manipulation. In the United States the wireless is, doubtless profitably, used for all kinds of advertising. We confess we should not like to see this example followed here. Our wireless is only allowed to advertise one thing—religion. All its practitioners have the free use of the B.B.C.'s microphone: but none of its competitors can get a word in. No wonder the Vicar of St. Martin's extols the B.B.C. The Church has as much reason to boost it as it has need of something or somebody effective to boost itself.

The presence of the Bishop of Southwark and a prominent Catholic controversialist (Rev. Dr. Arendzen) did not do much to enliven the annual meeting of the Woolwich Branch of the Catholic Evidence Guild. His Lordship thought it was "an achievement to get two hundred people to such a meeting," which was not very complimentary to the two hundred or to the cause. From the annual report it appeared that "no progress had been made during the period under review." All the Committee can say is that "we have just jogged along." An attempt to revive speakers' classes had "proved a failure." Lack of speakers prevented the "re-opening of pitches" hitherto worked. There had been great opposition from Freethinkers, but forty-seven open air meetings had been held, and the treasurer reported 5s. 8d. in hand, this small amount being partly due to "the payment of a liability to the Catholic Truth Society." Altogether a depressing business, and we doubt if those present were much comforted by the announcement that the Catholic Evidence Guild has 1,000 speakers—elsewhere.

Dr. Arendzen made some statements which, however welcome they may have been to the listening Catholics at Woolwich, must be surprising to outsiders who read them in the *Kentish Independent*, from which we quote. First, Dr. Arendzen claimed that "despite what the newspapers say, Catholicism is not failing. England as a whole loathed Protestantism, and this country had always suffered from suppressed Catholicism." The fact is that, if the average Englishman to-day loathes any religion it is the Catholic one—as witness the flare up on such occasions as the Prayer Book Debate. "England as a whole" is doubtless still Protestant in the sense that it is not Catholic; but Dr. Arendzen does not exhibit his usual dialectical skill in this underestimating his opponents and attributing to the public at large a Catholic complex. There is no such complex, not even a repressed one. Then the rev. gentleman went on to advise the Catholic Evidence lecturers "not to enter into fierce controversy with Protestants. Protestantism is dead and best left alone." It was left to the Rev. J. Douch (Plumstead) to suggest that "militant Christianity" should be applied to "a certain individual who had recently been uttering fearful blasphemies in Plumstead." The Catholic Church is "not failing"—but it can only keep going by the old methods of persecution. "Militant" Christianity! Whether as an incitement to assault or by more cultured and less obvious means of repression!

It appears to have come as rather a shock to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark, that the opinions of people other than the pious need to be considered or

respected. The Bishop regards the refusal of the Crown Lands Commissioners to allow a bell to be placed in a new Catholic Church at Mottingham (Kent) as a "humiliating restriction." The Assistant Commissioner to the Crown Lands Commissioners, however, explained to a daily paper, the reason for the refusal, thus:—

There was no question of religious prejudice. In the management of an estate the amenities of the district must be considered. In the opinion of a good many people, church bells, whatever the religion of those who pull them, do not add to these amenities.

Quite so. As a reader of a daily paper pointed out, to be disturbed in the early morning by a clanging bell "is very exasperating to the able-bodied, let alone to invalids and the aged." But, of course, where his religion is concerned, the average Christian has little or no consideration for his fellow citizens. Committing a nuisance for love of God is a very old Christian pastime.

The Most Rev. Dr. Mageean, the Bishop of Down and Connor is very much perturbed at the growth of Communism among Roman Catholics in Ireland. It is really Atheism that he means, but it suits his purpose better to claim the words are synonymous. Neither he nor Miss Mary MacSwiney, a prominent Republican, however, use the word "Atheism" if they can help it. It is always "anti-God Communism," and Miss MacSwiney insists that "a free Ireland cut away from the pagan Capitalism in England and with a social system based on the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI., was an Ireland that would defeat Communism and uphold the honour of Christianity before the nations of the world." The idea that a country in the complete grip of Popery could be free in any sense of the word, must strike anyone with an elementary knowledge of Roman Catholic history as being hopelessly ludicrous. Freedom and the power which priests want are as poles apart.

No matter how much want and misery stalk the countryside, money can always be obtained for religious purposes. The Roman Catholic policemen of Merseyside have just presented a cheque for £340 towards the building of the Liverpool Cathedral. "Their contributions," we are told, "now total over £776." It is much more important to raise a building in honour of the Lord, than to help the Lord's creatures. It makes him so very very happy.

Lord FitzAlan let the cat out of the bag the other day when he deplored the "leakage" from the Roman Catholic Church. From the strident reports in its own press one would never suspect there was any leakage whatever. On the contrary, there was a long list of converts and no "wastage" whatever. The noble Lord, however, insisted that "we cannot allow that wastage to go on without each one of us doing his best to remedy the terrible evil." His advice was to remedy the cases "by sympathy, persuasion and conversation." We would like to know how many Catholics who have once been infected by the Freethought virus, and mastered some of our reasons why Roman Catholicism is false in history, science and philosophy, have ever gone back to the faith and swallowed again its absurd dogmas? Is it one in ten millions?

Catholics have been recently horrified at the terrible sacrilege committed by some boys in their Church at Wells. They played about with and broke some of the holy ornaments, and Father Gray had to close the church "till it had been cleaned and reblessed." The two principal monsters were boys of seven and eight years of age, and the merciful Father took legal proceedings, "simply as a warning." He has been greatly hurt that the Magistrates dismissed the case against "these dear little children, and it ought never to have been brought to a court of law." The *Universe* remarks, "we confess ourselves baffled in any attempt at comment." It is true that Fr. Gray asked for no "vindictive punishment," but really what did he and the fatuous journal expect—boiling oil?

Those people who champion the "rights" of animals as being part of genuine Christian teaching, ought to answer the positive statement of the *Universe*: "The Church teaches quite definitely that in the strict sense of the word, animals have no rights, for rights can belong only to a rational being." That seems to put the matter plainly and categorically. The real defence of dumb animals against ill-treatment and torture was never a part of Christianity, and came into being only with the growth of Secularism and Humanism, and it was mainly Freethinkers who championed the "rights" of animals as they did of slaves. And in any case almost all the people convicted of crimes against animals (and children too, for that matter) are Christians.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton spoke very strongly the other day against our "long succession of bad governments. We have lived," he continued, "under abominable conditions of barbarism and slavery and every kind of evil but none worse than the last phase of modern industrial capitalism—unless it be the next phase of bare-faced Oriental Bolshevism." To people like him, all this is nothing. "In the centre of all these swaying and crazy things, there is a sanity, and though all men are mad we at least know where that sanity resides." Believe it or not, Mr. Chesterton actually means by this "sanity," the Roman Catholic Church! That this crude mixture of saints and filth, relics and miracles, theological rubbish and fiery hell, is *same* is surely the latest revelation!

The Dutch Reformed Church of Cape Town has been engaged in a heresy-hunt. Reports from the *Johannesburg Star* and other papers (thoughtfully sent by a South African Freethinker) are informing and significant. To begin with the heretic, Professor Du Plessis, who is a member of the theological Faculty of Stellenbosch University, has the enthusiastic support of the students, and has not taught anything that is not a commonplace of most present-day theological teaching. The Synod called upon him to resign his Professorship. The Professor declined to resign. An application to the Courts having resulted in the re-instatement of the Professor in his Chair, it was proposed to *dismiss* him, and this was carried by 217 votes to 112. The supreme Court held his views admissible. The Synod itself exonerated him from the charges of heresy made against him. A few days later, its Fundamentalist majority secured the dismissal decision. The Professor, interviewed, stated that he would consider what further action, if any, he would take. A minority clergyman describes the Synod's action, with undue moderation, "as inconsistent, unjust, and hypocritical." Being a clergyman he could not say it was characteristically—Christian.

Fifty Years Ago.

FREETHINKERS can claim Gambetta as one of themselves. He never entered a church even at the burial of a friend, and he publicly professed himself a disciple of Voltaire. He called Comte the greatest thinker of the nineteenth century, and most of his intimate friends were Atheists or Positivists. It was he who uttered the famous word—"Clericalism, there is the enemy." He helped to drive the priest from the schools, to secularize education, to cripple the power of the higher clergy. But he was too sagacious to propose the immediate separation of Church and State, unlike M. Clemenceau and his friends who are anxious to tear them apart at once. Gambetta knew that Catholicism is still a great power in France, and that while its dignitaries might be tied down and its unauthorized orders expelled, it would only provoke a religious reaction if the poor rural clergy were molested. He saw that by secularizing education, and bringing girls as fully as boys under its influence, the future was assured to Freethought. His enemies called this Opportunism. The name is a compliment. The extreme Reds, who are no better Freethinkers than Gambetta and much worse politicians, may have a chance of trying their Opportunism; and it will be strange if they do not set France by the ears and defeat their own object after all.

The "Freethinker," January 7, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

A New Year's Message.

Two anniversaries occur during 1933 that should make the year notable to all Freethinkers, namely the Centenaries of the birth of Colonel Ingersoll and Charles Bradlaugh. Ingersoll is easily the first of American Freethinkers. His lectures and writings, bristling with wit and wisdom and instinct with the warm humanity of the man, achieved a fame throughout the English-speaking world. Both here and in America his writings did much to overthrow that orthodoxy now more generally repudiated even in educated Christian circles. Our American friends are endeavouring to celebrate the occasion by erecting a statue of Ingersoll in Washington, and it is hoped that Congress will give the site. The only thing that may stand in the way will be the difficulty of raising money in the United States at present, but we hope the effort will be successful. Those on this side who would care to contribute should write Mr. Joseph Lewis, 317 East 34th Street, New York. I have promised to attend the ceremony if possible, but it will not be easy for me to leave England.

Bradlaugh's Centenary is a more domestic affair, particularly where the N.S.S. is concerned. Bradlaugh's work, for Freethought and for reform in general, was as great as that of any man of his time. He died before he had reached sixty years of age; but he crowded into his life the activities of three men.

A Centenary Committee has been formed, and a number of men and women well known in public life have agreed to co-operate. It is hoped to make the celebration a national affair, and worthy of the man and the cause he loved. Later there will be a call for funds to do this effectively, and when that call is made the response should be ready and generous.

Members of the National Secular Society will receive about the same time as they get this issue of the *Freethinker* a reminder that their subscriptions fall due on January 1. The National Secular Society was founded by Charles Bradlaugh, and he remained its President until shortly before his death, when he resigned owing to ill-health. The N.S.S. always had first place in Bradlaugh's affections, and as its present President I feel proud that it has been true to the Bradlaugh tradition, and is at present the only recognized monument to his work. It is in the line of Apostolic Succession, and it will, I hope, always remain worthy of its founder.

For this reason members when forwarding their subscriptions should make it worthy of the occasion. The annual subscription is practically voluntary, and those who can might make it a point of doubling their subscription in honour of "Bradlaugh Year." The Society to-day is spending more on propaganda than it has ever spent in its history. But there is no limit to what can be done—save the funds at its disposal. Everybody cannot engage in Freethought work, but all can help to provide the funds to get that work done.

I am not only President of the National Secular Society, I am also Editor of one of the best hated and most loved papers in the country—the *Freethinker*, and I would like all New Year resolutions to include one promising help to this paper. I have no need to dwell upon the services of this journal to the Freethought cause. One can say with confidence that, if there had been no *Freethinker*, the Freethought cause would not be to-day where it is. Its existence to-day is essential to the Freethought movement. It is widely read, and despite the organized conspiracy of silence, it influences the thought of the country more than is usually recognized.

That is why I want those of my readers who are genuinely interested in the paper to do what they can to widen still further its influence. General advertising is, of course, out of the question. That is too expensive a method. But I have already suggested that an inexpensive and serviceable form of help would be for a number of our present readers to send along 7s. 6d. for a six months' subscription for a possible subscriber. A man who reads the paper for six months is likely to become a regular subscriber on his own account: and new readers mean a very material help to the Cause.

Christian bodies are drawing very close together, and we may yet be glad to have friends in every village and every town in the country to resist the combined assault that is almost certain to come one day. We ought to be prepared for this.

Those who do not care to help in this way can help in another. They can help to make the financial loss on the paper less than it is. There is the Freethought Endowment Trust which is still short of the £10,000 which the Trustees determined to get after the £8,000 aimed at had been subscribed. This Fund may be benefited by direct contribution or by legacy. And, if and when the income from the Trust is no longer required, the capital sum becomes the property of the N.S.S. I shall be pleased to send particulars to anyone who is interested.

Finally, there is the approaching Annual Dinner. This function becomes yearly more popular, and for the past two years applications for tickets have had to be refused. This year the Dinner will take place on Saturday, January 21, at the Imperial Hotel, Russell Square. The tickets will be, as usual, 8s. each, and we hope that those who require them will write as soon as possible. We trust to see a record number of visitors from the provinces. Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool should send strong contingents. We should like to see this year's dinner set up a new record.

That is all I have to say for the present. I wish all my readers the best of good fortune in 1933. Perhaps the best of fortunes will be "Good Health." "Health and a day" does make man the monarch of the world if he is only built on right lines. And, as health should lead to activity, I hope that their activities will take the form of renewed work, and more work for the greatest of all causes. It puts one into line with the greatest and best of the past and also provides vision for a greater future. And what could one wish for more?

CHAPMAN COHEN,

President National Secular Society.

All the religions of the world are based upon error. Humanity is higher than theology; knowledge is preferable to faith, action is better than prayer. The best worship is honest work.—Charles Bradlaugh.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

T. MOSLEY.—There is no report of the published Lunn-Cohen debate. There has been no materializing yet of the crowds of eminent Christians who were anxious to meet Mr. Cohen in debate, written or oral. Their modesty—or their discretion—is to be admired. We must confess that had we as poor a case as they have, we should behave as they do.

A. W. COLEMAN (Norfolk).—We have noted that several letters have appeared lately in the *Radio Times* protesting against the refusal to permit letters attacking Christianity, and, as we know our B.B.C., we assume there must have been hundreds to hand. But we are not surprised that your very straightforward communication was not inserted. Still, the protest does good, and the question of the renewal of the charter will come up in 1936.

T. BREINGER (Dunstable).—Pleased to know that you find the gramophone record so satisfactory. We hope it may be the means of introducing many to our movement.

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

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

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.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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.

We have now just three weeks between ourselves and the Annual Dinner (January 21), and we hope that those who wish to attend will apply for tickets without delay. The task of making arrangements for the Dinner is always a heavy one—if things are to run with accustomed smoothness. It is very much more difficult when there is uncertainty until the last moment as the number that will be present. We do not wish to repeat the experience of the past two years—applications for tickets refused—owing to notice not being given until the last moment. January 21 is a Saturday, so that our provincial friends will be able to take advantage of weekend tickets. Those provincial visitors who wish any arrangements to be made with regard to hotel accommodation must write the Secretary and state their exact requirements. Fuller information about the Dinner will be given next week.

We are glad to be able to announce that the new gramophone record on the "Meaning and Value of Freethought" has caught on to quite an unexpected degree. This is, perhaps, because it is something quite new in Freethought annals, and also because it offers the chance of doing a little Freethought propaganda. We received very many letters expressing appreciation, and we have only space for the following from Mr. W. Collins, of Manchester, who writes:—

To compress into a double-sided record a lecture such as you have done suggests that the age of miracles is not past. Comprehensive, yet precise, instructive without being pedantic, it has the clarity with which we who know you have become so accustomed. . . . To Freethinkers it will be, in addition to a fine propaganda medium, a record of "you" yourself, which will be cherished for all time.

We thank those others who have written us expressing their appreciation of the record, but we do not know about following it up with others. That must remain a question for the future.

The new Brighton Branch is pursuing an active propaganda, and Mr. J. C. Keast appears to be particularly active in the work. Mr. Keast writes that he would be

quite willing to speak at other places along the South Coast if arrangements could be made for his doing so. His address is 54 Kimberley Road, Brighton. Mr. Keast had recently a very successful debate with the Rev. F. G. Fincham of St. Peter's, Brighton.

We have received a very appreciative notice of a recent visit to Manchester of Mr. J. Clayton. Mr. Clayton laid down the case for Freethought propaganda in a very clear and uncompromising manner, and his speech received the close and appreciative attention of his audience. Mr. Clayton we know is a clear and forceful speaker, and he is doing excellent work in his own district.

Following the Walthamstow vote in favour of the Sunday opening of cinemas, one of our readers sends us a letter from a local Baptist preacher, which impudently announces that at the next Parliamentary and Council elections every man will be opposed who is in favour of Sunday entertainments. This is what we said would be bound to happen. The Government by its cowardice in dealing with the issue has helped to turn elections into a sectarian squabble. Men will be voted for on account of their religious opinions, which in the long run will add further demoralization to both municipal and parliamentary government.

Confessions of an Unbeliever, Anonymous (John Long, 2s. 6d.). The author confesses sadly his inability "to feel within himself any belief in a Deity." "Educated unbelievers," he thinks, "envy and esteem those who have "true faith." Belief, "and particularly Christian belief . . . is surely the most beautiful and delightful possession one could desire." These statements indicate the temper of this little book. It puts the case against belief as the author sees it, and he sees it in the light of a pious and Protestant upbringing, and, if we are to judge from some references to Russia, a not too liberal one. He condemns the Church for not having put down the drink trade, and for its indifference to cruelty to animals. The major indictment against Christianity does not emerge at all. An author who can say that the Church of England "makes no use of unfair means to compel acceptance of its teaching," and that that teaching is, "if I understand it rightly, that of Christ without any false aids of man's invention" can hardly be regarded as a robust "Unbeliever" however sincere his doubts may be. The writer's honesty is apparent, so also is the difficulty which he has in throwing off the prohibitions of a religious upbringing.

Messrs. C. W. Daniel have just published a second edition of Mr. E. Douglas Hume's *Béchamp or Pasteur?* (6s. net). Those who are interested in the Germ Theory of Disease and the Vivisection and Vaccination controversies will find this book intensely interesting and provocative. Mr. Hume challenges the prevailing conception of Pasteur's greatness, and insists that honours both in priority and discovery should be given to Antoine Béchamp, who died in 1908 at the age of ninety-two.

Béchamp indeed seems to have been a remarkable man, a doctor of medicine as well as of science, a professor of chemistry, physics and toxicology, a gold and silver medallist in all sorts of things, and had among other titles, that of Chevalier of the Legion of Honour. He seems to have been, however, without the quality of self-advertisement and so his death passed with hardly any comment. Yet Mr. Hume claims that "so interminable were Béchamp's labours, so numerous his discoveries that it is hard to know which to single out."

Pasteur comes out in this book so very badly that it is quite safe to say that those Roman Catholics who trumpet his name as one of the greatest scientists in the world, who remained a humble and devout follower of the Church, will never quote Mr. Hume. *Béchamp or Pasteur?* gives a mine of information on the subjects it deals with, and is an important and necessary work.

Some Christian Types.

III.—FATHER O'FLYNN.

IN England, where he is comparatively little known, the Roman Catholic priest often bears a reputation for being a good fellow and a good sport. Frequently it has been pointed out that he is not a kill-joy Non-conformist, that he does not oppose the working-man having his glass of beer, and that, when once the members of his flock have gone to mass, he lets the rest of the Sunday be their own to spend in enjoyment. To some extent this has always been true, but these advantages are only incidental. The fact is that this kind of bonhomie and good-fellowship has been deliberately cultivated by Mother Church, and songs like Father O'Flynn perpetuate the illusion of the kindly simple human soul:—

Here's a health to you, Father O'Flynn,
 * Slainte and slainte and slainte agin;
 Pow'rfullest preacher, and tenderest teacher,
 And kindest creature in ould Donegal.
 Och Father O'Flynn you've a wonderful way wid you,
 All ould sinners are wishful to pray wid you,
 All young childer are wild for to play wid you,
 You've such a way with you, Father avick.
 Still for all you've so gentle a soul,
 Gad, you've your flock in the grandest control;
 Checking the crazy ones, coaxin' the aisy ones,
 Lifting the lazy ones on wid the stick.
 Here's a health to you, etc.
 And tho' quite avoidin' all foolish frivolity,
 Still at all seasons of innocent jollity,
 Where was the play-boy could claim an equality,
 At comicality, Father, wid you?"

Now let us take the real Father O'Flynn of the world. Eliminating the sop of the glass of beer and the Sunday sports, etc., what do you find? A narrow, ignorant, intolerant, bigoted fanatic, soaked in superstition, cruel and remorseless when the need arises, and all the time prepared to sacrifice humanity on the altar of his Joss-house. Travel through Europe where you will and you will see the real history of the Roman Church written in the implements of torture nowadays exhibited in public museums, and then remember that Father O'Flynn stood by and watched fingers being crushed, limbs broken, bodies burned and mangled, and everywhere the brave and the free and the independent sacrificed for the sake of their thoughts and knowledge and convictions. For hundreds of years the history of Europe is one long series of bloody wars, waged in the name of Christianity with the Holy Mother Church always to the fore.

Coming to our own times in Europe we still find beautiful cathedrals, whose architecture is the pride of the Roman Catholic, but almost always these cathedrals are surrounded by slums—so-called homes, more or less unfit for human habitation—homes where the inmates are often so poor that they cannot provide themselves with the commonest decencies of life, and yet these inmates are exploited for the maintenance of a dangerous non-producing class of pariahs whose object is to prevent the spread of real knowledge and hold up all real freedom of thought. As an example take Malines, the ecclesiastical capital of Belgium, where nearly every house has its cross or shrine. It would be difficult to imagine a town more sordid and dirty or a people who appear more crassly ignorant and superstitious. In Malines there are Sunday games and open cafes, but seldom can one see there any evidence of the open mind.

Thus clearly giving of permission to play games on Sundays, to drink alcohol, and generally to enjoy yourself at your own expense, is merely a sop thrown to the people for the purpose of inculcating the utterly false notion that the Church stands for freedom of

personal enjoyment. Or to change the metaphor, the bonhomie of the Father O'Flynn is a fog-screen under cover of which the Church can enthrall the minds of the people—and keep them enthralled.

CRITICUS.

Giordano Bruno in England.

IN the year 1548, at Nola near Naples (wherefrom his other name Nolano) there was born a man destined to mark out a new era in philosophy—Giordano Bruno. Among the innumerable victims of religious intransigence no one suffered more both in life and death. Religion silenced his fearless tongue, and fanatical persecution ending in the agonies of martyrdom.

In vain the Church has applied the maxim, "Throw mud, some will stick!" to his life, work and memory. For Bruno was the precursor of modern science; we owe to him not, perhaps, specific discoveries but the spirit and mood of modern science. Bruno was burned because he said that all religions are nothing, that everything is transformed by internal virtue.

The Roman pontificate arrogated to itself the attributes, and has done through all the ages of its history, of *deo in terra*, and it is therefore not surprising that this God, or at least *alter ego in deo*, should desire to put its nose in the secrets of the nature and control the laws according to the limits that theologians attribute to God in Heaven. But science contradicts theology, so long ago Theology took to its aid torture, prison, and the stake to sustain its theories and maintain its prestige. It cast Galileo in prison and led the philosopher Bruno to the stake (February 17, 1600) in the Campo dei Fiori, Rome.

Bruno, in his wanderings to find amenable surroundings at length turned to England. He was at the Court of Elizabeth from 1583 to 1585.

Towards the end of 1583 Bruno left Paris where he had given not only illuminating proofs of his philosophic doctrine but also proved himself a worthy writer by publishing his *Candelaio* (1582). He travelled to London furnished with letters from H.M. Henry III. (of France) to Michele Castelnau de Mauvissiere, His Majesty's ambassador at the court of the "good Queen Bess." The England of those days was of but slender proportions compared with the crowded isle of to-day. The country was weak. Ireland unruly; Scotland had a strong party of Catholics to whom the Protestant Crown was anathema; France was the ally of the Scotch and humble servant of the Pope. London numbered only about one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, to whom one hundred churches administered godly aid, while the sanitary conditions were left to the devil's care.

The enlightened and scholarly qualities of Elizabeth were not shared generally by her people. The London mob hated foreigners. The Queen spoke the Italian language and took great pleasure in practising it with Italians, which was fortunate for Bruno, for he could not speak English. With the favour shown by the Court, added to his own gifts in oratory and philosophy, which were best displayed in Latin, he had a fair prospect of advancement in London, where he printed several works on the *Art of Memory*.

Monsieur Castelnau received him kindly and offered generous hospitality in his house, so that Italian philosophy especially in general, owes this Catholic a debt for the freedom which resulted in that the Nolano could attend to his studies and philosophise on the banks of the Thames, and print in Bruno's

*Pronounced *Slawntia*, meaning "Your Health."

mother-tongue some of the most beautiful books that have come from his pen.

In testimony of how much Castelnau did for Bruno, the latter has remembered him in his books and dedicated four of his works to Castelnau, to whom he gives the credit that "the philosophy of the Nolano was not withered in its swaddling-clothes."

It was at Castelnau's house, more than elsewhere, that Bruno was able to forget the bitterness of exile, and his stay in London was as sweet as life under the paternal roof, to which sweetness one of the daughters by name Mary, of Castelnau contributed not a little. She was hardly six years of age, yet at that tender age already able to speak good Italian, French and English, and could play with skill "the musical instruments, so that one doubted whether she had not rather been a daughter of heaven than of earth." These words in the mouth of the philosopher whose life was denied the consolation of brotherly and sisterly affection, express so keenly the sweetness and suavity of feeling, that we are compelled to believe that the kindly and innocent character of this child and her vivacious, infantile talks, helped greatly and not seldom to cheer and calm the afflicted heart of Bruno.

Bruno was able to attend to his studies in Castelnau's home, undisturbed by the worries of office or burdens of fate, and freed from the necessity of procuring the necessary sustenance for himself. Although the French Ambassador was a very sincere Catholic, he still had so much regard for the ideas and person of Nolano that he treated him with much liberality, and Bruno was not obliged to attend Mass, which was said in the house and which all of Castelnau household attended daily.

These years passed by Bruno in the circle of so good and simple a family were without doubt the most beautiful of his life, notwithstanding the many and fierce enemies who even in London continued to persecute him. This tranquillity of life is reflected in the works which he wrote at this time, and which appear at first sight much superior to those written in Paris.

During his sojourn here Bruno had the leisure to learn and describe accurately many customs and characteristics of the English, all of which did not in reality have his sympathy, because, being an attentive and keen observer and truthful in the exposition of his observations, he did not hold his silence regarding that which was vulgar and worthy of reproof in the customs of the people.

There was little life in the English universities of that period. Oxford "the right eye and the light of the whole realm," was under the rule of the intriguer Leicester, and the circumspect Burleigh governed Cambridge. Edinburgh and Durham were only at the outset of their careers. The universities, too, were subject to the infamous Star Chamber, which checked the growth of learning, and printers were limited to London, Oxford and Cambridge; every publication being rigorously examined, and more than one press was demolished by order.

Except on such sterile subjects as arose out of the dissensions of the Church, free discussion was impossible and sect rose against sect and all Protestant sects rose together against the Catholics. Bruno had little in common with these people. Oxford, in its intolerance, had become an Anglican Rome.

He describes the Dons of Oxford as men arrayed in long velvet robes, with golden chains around the neck, with hands rendered valuable by the twelve rings per two fingers that they wore, so that they appeared like rich jewellers, with manners as void of courtesy as cowards. The description proves that he was no boot-licker to the powers and brow-beater of the humble, as some detractors of Bruno have asserted.

In June, 1585 Bruno was permitted to hold a public disputation in Oxford before the Chancellor and an illustrious visitor. He went up to Oxford and lectured on the *Immortality of the Soul* and the *Quintuple Sphere*, which provoke so many disputes and so much opposition that he had to break off very soon. Really, his doctrine was in open contradiction to the opinions of the learned doctors of Oxford. The soul and the body are both immortal; and as the first dissolves and transforms itself, so the latter passes from one body to another (transcorporation) and by infinite process, agglomerating around itself atom upon atom, finally builds up and forms new bodies. "The soul is the same in specific and generic essence with the soul of flies, oysters and plants, and of every other thing which possesses a soul or lives." He forecasts the theories of modern science regarding evolution and the eternity of matter. These theories are to be found in the books published by Bruno in England and in his philosophic disquisitions. The whole are too great to be dealt with here, but will well repay study.

His teaching at Oxford, which had not lasted more than three months, and of which the last dispute occurred in December of 1583, turned on the question of the *Quintuple Sphere* more particularly, and was a vigorous endeavour to sustain the daring induction based upon the Copernican system, and derided the ignorance of the Peripatetics. With profound conviction Bruno spoke romantically of the inhabitants of other worlds than ours, as people not unlike ourselves, situated in place not worse than our own location. 'Thousands and thousands of worlds he saw in that infinitude of *burning bodies*, that "like ambassadors announce the excellence of glory and majesty of God, and indicate to us the method of discovering the infinite effects of the infinite cause."

L. CORINNA.

(To be concluded.)

A Prayer for Preachers.

THE following from *A Prayer for Teachers*, by Glen Frank, published by the McClure Newspaper Syndicate might well be applied to parsons and preachers of every creed, and all over the world:—

O Lord of learning and of learners, we are at best blunderers in the Godlike business of teaching.

Our shortcomings shame us, for we are not alone in paying the penalty for them.

We have been content to be merchants of dead yesterday, when we should have been guides into unborn to-morrows.

We have put conformity to old customs above curiosity about new ideas.

We have counted knowledge more precious than wisdom.

We have tried to teach our students what to think instead of how to think.

We have thought it our business to furnish the minds of our students, when we should have been labouring to free their minds.

Give us to see that a student's memory should be a tool as well as a treasure chest.

Help us to say "do" oftener than we say "DON'T." May we so awaken interest that discipline will be less and less necessary.

Help us to realize that, in the deepest sense, we cannot teach anybody anything; that the best we can do is to help them to learn for themselves.

Help us to see that education, is after all, but the adventure of trying to make ourselves at home in the modern world.

May we be shepherds of the mind as well as masters of the spirit.

Give us, Oh Lord of learners, a sense of divinity of our undertaking.

B. A. LE MAINE.

John Snow.

A MODERN PROTESTANT MIRACLE.

THERE is a Christian society in Edinburgh which issues a monthly tract known as the *Monthly Visitor*; and what follows furnishes an idea of the opinion that the editors of this tract have formed of the mentality of the average Scotsman.

The number for November, 1932 is headed "The Story of John Snow and his Paralysed Arm," by the late Rev. Dr. W. Y. Fullerton of London, for many years a Baptist clergyman in Leicester. The writer understands that Leicester is famed for several things—one being its important Secular Hall. This in the first information he has had about the astounding case of John Snow. The writer of the tract, however, declares that the story is strictly true, and that to its truth there are many witnesses. Should any judicial investigation of the circumstances be decided upon, unfortunately the investigators would be deprived of the testimony of Dr. Fullerton, himself the principal witness, for he is dead.

In substance the story is this: John Snow of Leicester was a drunkard, despite the fact that he had a good home, a good wife and a good son and daughter. Wife and children were Christian believers and did all they could to wean John from the pub. Mrs. Snow prayed to God regularly for her husband. Her first success was in receiving an answer to her prayer that one Saturday her husband should be constrained to come home to tea at 5.30 p.m.—a thing which he never did. However on the day and at the time stated John arrived home "stumbling in, saying he could put up with his cronies no longer that day." As he seemed to be expected, John asked his wife how she knew he was coming just at that particular time (for his cup of tea was actually then poured out). She told him it was in answer to her prayer to God. This apparently had a temporary effect in restraining John from his bibulous habit, but after a time he went back to it again.

Mrs. Snow now decided upon enlisting the collaboration in prayer of several believing friends. We are informed "they met and prayed definitely." One Saturday, when John was out in the country on a drinking spree with some friends, they met in the evening to continue their prayers. (By this time John was back in town in a public house across the road from his home). "As they prayed on the opposite side he ordered a half pint of beer and found that he could not put forth his hand to grasp it when it was laid on the counter. Such a thing had never happened before. He tried again and again to raise the beer to his mouth and could not manage it. His arm seemed to be paralysed. Humiliated by his failure, he put on a bold face and called for aerated waters all round. But while the others drank he still found himself unable to raise his glass. Try as he would he failed, and he could not account for his failure. His mates looked at him wondering what was the matter. They thought at first he was playing a game." Ultimately John, not knowing how to cover his confusion, rushed out drawn irresistibly to his home, and burst into the midst of the group that was praying for him. That night, we are told, "he came to himself like the prodigal son, and soon through grace he came to the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The prayer of those simple folk had so to speak crossed the street and laid hold of him. Their prayer prevailed in Heaven and brought salvation to this drunkard's soul . . . He has never turned back . . . John is now one of the most respected members of the

Church."

In conclusion Dr. Fullerton asked, "How can psychologists account for what happened? How by anything but supernatural power could the arm be rendered powerless at that moment? Why at that moment rather than at any other? The simple explanation is the true one—it all came in answer to prayer, and prayer still moves the Hand that moves the Universe."

That is the substance of the astounding story of John Snow's paralysed arm. The rest is rhetoric. One conceives that the story must be of absorbing interest to Freethinkers in Leicester; and it would be helpful to find out how long it is since the incident occurred, who were the eye-witnesses of it and whether there was any immediate publication of it in Leicester. On the main point, namely, the sudden paralysis of the man's arm, Dr. Fullerton does not go deep or far enough. He only asks, "How can psychologists account for what happened?" This is a ridiculously irrelevant question. It is not a subject for the psychologist but for the pathologist. Medical men of experience tell us of cases in which a drunkard after a long drinking bout may become so affected in his nervous system and so racked and disordered in his prehensile faculties that he actually cannot raise a glass of liquor to his lips. Dipsomania like any other mania has never been cured by what is called "the Grace of God." This is the doctor's job, not the priest's. If John Snow be still available one would, if permitted, be pleased to have an opportunity of getting a full explanation of the circumstances from him. The peculiar fact is that most cured drunkards blame the drink and not their own vicious selfishness for their former condition. Many of us have known some of that type. A great number of those chargeable with the most reprehensible anti-social conduct have become the most respected of Church members and Church office bearers. True salvation lies in obeying the dictates of human wisdom, commonsense and fraternal feeling. One does not feel greatly attracted by John Snow if Dr. Fullerton was. John appears to have lived for years as a parasite on his relatives while he was enjoying his boozing expeditions. Had Mrs. Snow no male relative who could have used some effective persuasion with him?

But if this be a typical trophy of the gospel, and all the kind of proof that can be offered of the effectiveness of prayer, and the power of salvation through Christ, the Churches are indeed in a sorry plight. It is all so puerile and mean, squalid and sordid. Modern sociologists and humanists dig far deeper down, just as they have far wider horizons, than the Christians. How comparatively little do we get to know of the potency of heredity and environment? Man is the creature not of God but of circumstance. Let us get down to the roots of things, and stop this stream of cant, sentimental slop and humbug!

IGNOTUS.

Deliverance comes from below, from those who are bound, not from those who bind. It is easy to quench a gleaming light caught by the eyes of a few; but not the light of the noon-day sun—of knowledge that has become objective and valid for all.—George Tyrrell.

'Tis a good thing preachers don't go to Congress. Whin they're ca'm they's wipe out all th' laws, and whin they're excited they'd wipe out all th' population. They're niver two jumps fr'm th' thumbscrew.

Mr. Dooley.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

RELIGION AND THE B.B.C.

SIR,—On December 17 the B.B.C. Broadcast a mock trial. The B.B.C. versus The Scorchlight Press This was an action for libel. The performance was a clever, not to say cunning one. There were four counts in the Plaintiff's case, one of which is of interest here, viz., that the B.B.C. has shown partiality in excluding the advocacy of "rationalist" opinions. The Counsel for the defendant put the case against the B.B.C. on the other counts with force and conviction. He was less effective in dealing with the charge concerning "rationalism." Nor did he refute the flagrant mis-statement of his learned brother for the Plaintiff, that "the vast majority of the people of this country are Christians." Even the Judge, leaned, if he leaned at all, to the side of the defendant. At the end the Jury—that is, the listeners—were no doubt all thinking how brave and fair it was of the B.B.C. to have the case against them stated with such effect. That is, no doubt, exactly what the B.B.C. played for. The real charge that had been made—it has been published in letters in the *Radio Times* for the last three weeks—was not mentioned. It has nothing to do with "rationalist" opinions. It is the charge that the B.B.C. does not recognize the existence of or ever to give a hearing to the only militant Freethought movement in this country. Its broadcasting "counsel" waxed eloquent upon the insult to pious feelings of replacing religious services on Sunday by talks "offensive" to religious people. This has never been suggested or proposed by anyone. We do not care about the day or the time. The point is, and it is a scandalous misleading of the public to pretend otherwise, that the B.B.C. allows Freethought and Freethinkers to be misrepresented and abused and never permits any representative Freethinker of the militant school to speak at all. One of the lesser charges in the mock trial was about the B.B.C. getting its gramophone records free on condition that it broadcasts the maker's names and the numbers of the Records. The Edison Bell, Co., have just made a record of a speech by Mr. Chapman Cohen. If the B.B.C. want to know what he would be likely to say at the microphone, they will doubtless be able to obtain this record on the same terms as they obtain the others.

A.E.

ROUSSEAU.

SIR,—Apropos of Mr. Mann's article Jean Jacques when in Edinburgh in 1766 had his Portrait painted by Allan Ramsay (son of the Poet) who was a friend and correspondent of Rousseau for another friend, David Hume. This portrait is now in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh. I quote from the catalogue "Head and shoulders; the figure in profile to the left, the keen face looking over the shoulders. He wears Armenian dress—a dark fur cap and a purple gown trimmed with dark fur. The light is concentrated on the face and the top of the shoulder; the hand raised to the breast is in shadow; the background is low in tone. Canvas 30" by 25"."

J. MACKINNON.

Obituary.

ROSE SKIDMORE.

It is with deep regret that we have to record the death of Mrs. Rose Skidmore, which took place on Saturday, December 17, in the sixty-ninth year of her age. She had been in failing health for some time, and the end was not altogether unexpected. Pneumonia was the immediate cause of death. A Freethinker of many years standing, she was a quiet modest woman, living her life in accordance with the principles she had learned and made her own, and which she held intact to the very end. The last scene, marked by simplicity and dignity, took place at Golders Green Crematorium on Tuesday, Decem-

ber 20 in the presence of members of the family, relatives and friends. A Secular Service was read by the General Secretary of the National Secular Society. We offer sincere sympathy to the Manager of the Pioneer Press in the loss of his mother, and to all other members of the family.—R.H.R.

OF LEARNING.

Apply thy mind
To learning and Science,
For learning in need
Will be thy defence.
Nothing to science
Compare we may well,
The sweetness whereof
All things doth excel.
And Cato the wise
This worthy saying hath,
That man wanting learning
Is as the image of death.
The roots of learning
Most bitter we deem,
The fruits at last
Most pleasant do seem.
Then labour for learning
While here thou shalt live,
The ignorant to teach
And good example give.
So shalt thou be thought
A member most worthy,
The common wealth to serve
In time of necessity.

Francis Seager (1557.)

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N) : 7.0, Members' Meeting. 7.45, A Lecture.

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

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4) : 8.0, Monday, January 2, Mr. A. D. McLaren will speak on "Has Judaism any Religious Future?"

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, January 1, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12.0, Sunday, January 1, 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.

BIKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square) : 7.0, Sunday, January 1, G. H. Taylor (Macclesfield)—"The Present Status of Disbelief."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, Sunday, January 1, E. S. Wollen (Liverpool)—"The Hypocrisy of the Clergy."

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