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Views and Opinions.

Asking Questions.

I CANNOT say with certainty whether I was born asking questions or not, but if any one said, as one having authority, that my first howl took the form of a note of interrogation I must confess I should be inclined to accept the statement at its probable value. For so far as I can remember myself, I appear to have been always either asking questions or saying something for the "other side" of a question. As I grew up this habit seems to have grown instead of diminishing, and I daresay that all my life I have been a bit of a nuisance to those around me, particularly to those in any kind of authority. I suppose I felt it was always useful to question authority or accepted statements. I well remember somewhere about the middle 'eighties, at an age when young men are so prone to make fools of themselves and take pride in the performance, going into a crowded meeting where the Irish question was under discussion. The hall was packed, but I managed to get a stand not far away from the door. Just as I secured my place there came in answer to something said by the speaker a thunderous cry of "Yes." The other side seemed quite unrepresented, so I let out a loud yell of "No." The word was no sooner said than a hand like unto that of providence came down on my head, I was twisted round and found myself on the pavement. What it was I objected to I never knew. At this distance I can congratulate myself on having enough self-control or wisdom in not going back to enquire. It was evident that given the occasion I could curb my propensity for asking questions or taking the other side.

I Believe!

My propensity for asking questions evidently did not grow weaker as I grew older. If a thing existed I found myself asking why it existed. If a number of people believed something or other without apparently

questioning it, I usually found myself asking why it was not questioned. I daresay I made myself a great deal of a nuisance in this way, but it was *my* way, and although I am now very much older I really have never seen cause for regretting the habit. On the contrary I believed and still believe that the habit is a good one. The whole of science has been built up from this eternal note of interrogation. It is uncomfortable to most folk because the beliefs of the majority of the people rest on no knowledge that they have made their own, but only upon what other people have told them what they ought to believe. Every religion in the world, and most systems of politics and ethics are built up on this basis. But the priest of every religion in the world starts his subjects with an affirmation of belief. "I believe" is the beginning of the Christian creed, and if not in so many words, it is in substance the beginning of every religious creed. An enquiry about religion never starts with "What do you know?" but always with "What do you believe?" That is what makes a profession of religion so easy and why the greater the fool the more emphatic is his affirmation of the truth of the religion he professes to follow. This is the one thing that all religionists have in common. When they fall out their quarrel is never more than a conflict of discordant phases of ignorance.

* * *

Understanding and Belief.

Let me note some of the things that I very early began to question. When I was old enough to discuss the question of the nature and importance of belief, and when I complained that I could not believe in certain religious teachings because I could not understand them, I was met with the reply that in this world there were many things we were bound to believe without being able to understand them. If that were so, then it seemed to me that we ought to strive to reduce these things to as small a number as possible, and not multiply them indefinitely. But my questioning apparatus got to work and I asked, "How is it possible to believe a thing without understanding it?" Take an illustration. Suppose I see a man eat a roll of coloured paper, and after undergoing certain contortions he regurgitates a roll of coloured silk. What do I believe about this performance? Do I believe that the roll of paper has been transformed into a roll of silk? Not a bit of it. What I believe is that the man appeared to swallow the paper and then appeared to bring forth silk. That is really all I can believe, and it is all that I understand. If he tells me that he has magically changed the paper into silk, I do not believe it, for the simple reason that I do not understand it. I can form no mental picture of what the statement means. So far as I can understand a process I can believe it, but the thing I cannot understand, how can I believe that? Belief must keep pace

with understanding, and even when it appears to get beyond it, it is still only keeping pace with it; for all that I do is to think of the things or the processes I do understand prolonged to a greater degree. I believe that a man I am told about is six feet in height, because I understand what is meant by "man" and "six feet in height." I can believe if I please that in some part of the world there are men who are twelve feet in height, because the terms of propositions are still within the limits of my understanding. But if I am told that a man is plomplom in plomplum, how can I believe it? I fail to believe because I fail to understand.

* * *

The Things in Themselves.

Now apply the same reasoning to religion. A man tells me he believes in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. I say he believes in nothing of the kind. He is fooling himself. If he adds, not by way of explanation, but by way of piling confusion on confusion, that this belongs to the region of religious mystery, I reply, Nonsense. It is sheer verbiage. If I know anything about the process of procreation my belief in the nature of the birth of any living being will be co-extensive with my understanding of it. If I knew nothing, to be told it is a mystery furnishes me with no information whatever. It is more meaningless than to be told that a stork brought the baby. We state a meaningless proposition, and then add a word for the purpose of stopping further enquiry. To speak of believing in a mystery is the most complete nonsense. No one can do it. Of course, we can say we do, just as we can say that we believe in a square circle or in a line without length. In reality we are only mouthing words. In the absence of understanding the mind is a blank, however much we may school ourselves to repeat phrases.

In religion great play is made in another direction with this confusion of belief and understanding. Religious writers who know nothing of science and scientists who are full of religion are fond of telling us that of course we do not know anything of the real nature of things. We believe in electricity, in life, in gravitation, in a dozen other things, but we know nothing of what these are in themselves. Well, once again, this is not true. Whether our knowledge of gravitation, or electricity, or anything is complete or not is one question, but whether we believe in something of which we know nothing, is quite another and a distinct question. What is it that we believe about gravitation? Just that particles of matter attract each other in a certain way that can be described by a definite formula. What do we believe about electricity? That there are certain material happenings which we describe under the term electricity. This is true of all other things, and of every act of belief. When I say I believe in electricity I do not mean that I believe in the phenomena called electric, and also in something else which I call the real electricity. When I say I believe in gravitation, I do not assert a belief in the mutual attraction of particles of matter, and in something else which is the real gravitation, about which I know nothing. How can I believe in what I know nothing about? The mutual attraction of particles of matter is all I know about gravitation, it is what I mean by gravitation. The assumption that what we know is not the real thing, but that the real thing is something about which we know nothing and never will know anything is just an importation of religion into science and philosophy. The "thing in itself," the "real existence," which is not the existence we know, and about which we know absolutely nothing, is just the ghost of a god which lingers on in science and philosophy.

The Utility of "Mystery."

The important thing to realize is that our belief can only keep pace with our knowledge. Belief in fact is an act of judgment concerning the things we know, not concerning something we do not know. Our belief may outrun our power to demonstrate the truth of a proposition, but they must rest upon the knowledge we possess, or upon an extension of that knowledge in the future—and in that case we are assuming the possession of the knowledge upon which the extension of our belief is based. The statement that we must believe in things we do not and cannot understand is then, not true; it is impossible for it to be true. It is a mere attempt to prevent rational enquiry into the truth of propositions which cannot stand examination. That is the reason why this kind of statement is always used in connection with religion, for if belief is possible in relation to things we do not understand, then there is no reason why we should not swallow any of the crazy propositions that the religions of the world place before us. The use of the word "mystery" in this connexion is also highly suggestive. A derivative word here is "mystify," and to mystify is "to perplex, to bewilder, to befog." That is the real aim of this talk about believing things we cannot understand, of belief in a mystery, and all the other nonsensical jargon which covers primitive superstition with a cloak of pseudo-culture. The aim is to perplex, to bewilder, to befog people. How else can religion live in a modern environment?

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Chaos and Compromise.

"The high price of courage indicates the general timidity."—Emerson.

"I am drawn by conviction like a man, not by a halter like an ass."—Burns.

ONE of the old theological writers, in that halcyon time when Orthodoxy could boast of intellect, described Unitarianism as "a feather-bed to catch a falling Christian." The trouble in this country is that religious persons so often need feather-beds in such circumstances. The Gallic mind is more direct and more honest. When a Frenchman leaves the Romish Church of his fathers he becomes a Freethinker. He does not need a half-way house like the Briton, and that is one of the reasons why Protestantism is a negligible quantity in France. But the pious Briton never seems to leave the shelter of one place of worship unless he sees another one in sight. When he leaves a church he joins a chapel. Should he be dissatisfied with a chapel, he attends a tin-tabernacle. If that fails he will clamber into a mission-tent. And, last, sad, stage of all, he may even join the Spockists, the Christian Scientists, or the Theosophists. Some rare persons, like Annie Besant and the Rev. Blanco White, succeed in boxing the theological compass, a difficult record.

It is this predilection for one step-at-a-time which accounts for the multiplicity of religious beliefs in our Britain. Even in Voltaire's day there was quite sufficient variety to lend point to his joke that this country "had a hundred religions, but only one sauce." Since his day the number of fancy religions has increased enormously, and the milder forms of heterodoxy are now waxing fat at the expense of orthodoxy. The State Church of England and the leading Free Churches are fast losing members, whilst the Christian Scientists, Mormons, and Spiritualists are extending their membership and influence.

It is to be feared that the real cause of this very slow spiritual pilgrim's progress has not been the painful

search for wisdom, but rather a widespread cowardice which nearly always ends in the characteristic British compromise. From this comes the flood of contradictions and anomalies which runs through our jurisprudence and makes foreigners think this nation very hypocritical, or a little mad, and makes the philosophical citizen feel like Alice in Wonderland. The struggle between lovers of Liberty and upholders of Tyranny is never a fight to a finish, but results in a stalemate which gives no real satisfaction to either side.

Take the question of education. Complete priestly control for a thousand years had resulted in 1870 in national ignorance. The old Radicals strongly urged the claims of secular education and the elimination of Priestcraft. The result was a compromise, which included the retention of the Christian Bible in national education, and the most tender treatment for schools still under the control of the Anglican and Romish Churches, who see to it that their superstitions are still taught at the expense of the ordinary citizen. The serious objection to this Act of Parliament is that it is an act of hypocrisy, "gross as a mountain."

The same muddle-headed spirit of compromise is seen in many other directions. Authority sees to it that the poor Englishman takes his pleasure sadly. On Sunday, the weekly day of leisure, he must not go to a circus, music-hall, or theatre. Only in select areas may he attend a cinema, and then at six o'clock in the evening. At one minute after ten o'clock at night he must not buy a drink, although aristocrats enjoy their choicest dinner-parties at about that time. The poor Englishman is bullied and dragooned as if he were a degenerate, whilst from Moscow to Madrid millions of people are enjoying themselves to the top of their bent. The farcical nature of these Sunday regulations in actual practice may be seen from the fact that in one place a poor newsagent will be fined for breaking the Sabbath, whilst in another town a hundred shops of all kinds are open the greater part of the day. One seaside town will be wrapped in Sabbath gloom, and another, a few miles distant, will resemble Coney Island.

Gambling is regarded by Authority as unlawful, and the derisive answer is that half the nation engages in a flutter, including our legislators themselves. Poor people are constantly being fined for betting, but wealthy persons may do as they please. English people who want a flutter in a sweepstake are forced to subscribe heavily, not merely to the upkeep of Irish Charities, but also to the revenues of the Free State itself, which is a foreign country. A Royal Commission has been in gestation for nearly a year considering whether English people of adult age should be allowed to gamble, and, if so, under what limitations. The result is certain to be a compromise, under which a very human amusement will, in all probability, emerge as an instrument of exasperation to bishops and bookmakers alike. So, one might go on quoting example after example of this faint-hearted policy, leading to mis-government and mischief.

The world is changing very rapidly, but one of the greatest services that could be performed would be the humanizing of our laws, which smell far too much of the bad, old days when the mailed fist was far more representative of Justice than the fair figure with the scales. Democrats must make an end of cowardly compromise, and continue the battle until common sense prevails.

Another very necessary reform should be the cleaning of the Augean stables of our Feudal methods of Government. There is far too much meddling interference in national affairs by persons who do much

more harm than good. During the last war there was the astonishing fact that a man attended a Cabinet meeting merely because he was a Trustee of the British Museum. "The other day," said Mr. Lloyd George, "when I came to the Cabinet, I found the Archbishop of Canterbury there. I was astonished. I inquired how he came to be there uninvited, and was told that he came as a Trustee of the British Museum on the invitation of Curzon. I was very angry and spoke strongly." Here is exhibited to a presumably Democratic country the spectacle of an ecclesiastic butting-in on affairs of State, a show that priests never tire of presenting all over the world, though the audience may often find it the grossest of all impertinences. It is high time that these clerical mountebanks were restricted to their own narrow sphere, and prevented from posturing before the world as being persons of real importance. The British clergy are not so ornamental nor nearly so useful as their dark-skinned prototypes in other countries, and there is far less excuse for Britishers than for savages in being deceived by a priestly Punch-and-Judy show.

Victor Hugo, nearly seventy years ago, donning the prophetic mantle of the seer, declared that "in the Twentieth Century there will be an extraordinary nation. It will call itself Humanity." But Britain will never really assist this federation of the civilized world until there is an end of this spirit of cowardly compromise. Nations, no more than individuals, can ever achieve great objects and lofty ideals by acting the part of Mr. Facing-both-Ways. Recall the burning words of Abraham Lincoln: "If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong." There is still real slavery all over the world, both mental and physical, and the thing can never be opposed successfully by men who are only half-hearted in their attachment to the ideals of Liberty, which are the only forces making for lasting good in a world dominated by a greedy commercialism and the clutching hand of Superstition.

MIMNERMUS.

Theological Interpretations of Nature.

THE creation legends preserved in the Book of Genesis became an integral feature of the Christian scheme of salvation. As the creation was soon succeeded by the fall, and, as in Adam all fell, so in Christ were all men made alive, the Church was impelled to champion the Mosaic cosmogony as literally true, in substance and in fact; and, as the centuries rolled away, every conceivable subterfuge was adopted to reconcile the discoveries of science with Hebrew mythology.

That the two stories of the creation recorded in the Scriptures were plainly contradictory, did not escape the notice of the Fathers of the Church. They therefore made strenuous efforts to reconcile these conflicting accounts. In the fourth century St. Ambrose asserted that "Moses opened his mouth and poured forth what God had said to him." Then, the able and influential St. Augustine declared in his *Commentary* the doctrine accepted by the Church, ever since, that, "Nothing is to be believed save on the authority of the Scripture, since greater is that authority than all the powers of the human mind." But even then some doubted. The powerful Vincent of Beauvais, however, asserted the literal truth of the story of the six days of creation, and assigned a special sacredness to the number six, as accounting for the six days activity of God.

During the Reformation both Luther and Calvin insisted on the inspired accuracy of the Scriptures. Downright Martin dismissed with withering scorn the suggestion that the Genesis story was an allegory. "Moses," declares Luther, "calls things by their right names . . . I hold that the animals took their being at once upon the Word of God, as did also the fishes of the sea." As for Calvin, that reformer silences all dissent by informing all who dare to differ from him that they insolently insult the Creator, and may "expect a judge who will annihilate them."

These uncompromising sentiments were also those of the Roman hierarchy. So late as the seventeenth century, the celebrated Bossuet, in his *Universal History*, made God create man from clay and apply his divine finger to "corruptible matter," while the ablest Protestant divines of the same period proclaimed the inerrancy of the legend.

Throughout the Dark Ages and onward to the Reformation, the Biblical story was universally accepted by the pious. Dr. A. D. White, in his splendid *Warfare of Science with Theology*, thus writes of this period: "The Almighty was represented in theological literature, in the pictured Bibles, and in works of art generally, as a sort of enlarged and venerable Nuremberg toy-maker. At times the accounts in Genesis were illustrated with even more literal exactness thus, in connexion with a well-known passage in the sacred text, the Creator was shown as a tailor, seated, needle in hand, diligently sewing together the skins of beasts into coats for Adam and Eve."

As knowledge of natural history increased, the forms of plant and lower animal life presented many difficulties to the orthodox. Why, men wondered, did a kind and just divinity create repellent creatures such as poisonous reptiles, bloodthirsty beasts, deadly vegetation, and insects so noxious as lice and fleas? These, it was said, came into existence in consequence of Adam's disobedience. A twelfth century theologian, Peter Lombard, in his *Sentences* assures us that predaceous animals and other inimical organisms "were created harmless, and on account of sin became hurtful."

So recently as the eighteenth century this absurdity survived, for we find John Wesley asserting that before Eve's transgression none of the animals "attempted to devour or in any wise attempt to hurt one another." Indeed, he asserts, that "the spider was as harmless as the fly, and did not lie in wait for blood." Other notable theologians spoke in a similar strain, and long after the prehistoric remains of anciently extinct beasts of prey had been disclosed by science the orthodox tenaciously clung to their fantastic theories.

A deduction even more grotesque was drawn from the doctrine of the primal innocence of the whole organic world. It was solemnly argued that before the eating of the forbidden fruit in Eden's garden, the serpent stood erect, walked abroad, and freely conversed with his friends. This was for centuries the general belief and is admittedly a logical inference from the Scriptural romance. Yet, here and there, men wondered whether the tale were strictly true so, to settle the matter, Dr. Richard Watson, a leading Non-conformist light in the eighteenth century laid down the law on the subject. "We have no reason at all to believe," he declared, "that the animal had a serpentine form in any mode or degree until its transformation; that he was then degraded to a reptile to go upon his belly imports, on the contrary, an entire loss and alteration of the original form."

As God gave man dominion over all the beasts that

perish, and as all sentient creatures were specially designed for human benefit, St. Augustine explained the existence of superfluous or verminous animals by the theory that their disconcerting attentions in giving man toil and trouble bid him remember that his earthly residence is not his eternal home. Moreover, animals unnecessary to man serve to round off and complete the living world. Luther, on the other hand, traced irritating insects to Satan's malevolence, for the flies that bit him in his study were sent there by the Evil One.

The fabulous creatures whose existence is recorded in Sacred Writ naturally gave rise to much theological speculation. The basilisk and phoenix of Pagan writers, in addition to the unicorn and dragons mentioned in the Bible, were included in Christian biological science. During the Middle Ages, so greatly idealized by certain Catholic apologists, fables such as the killing of serpents by the basilisk's breath and the fatal effects of the basilisk's glance on man himself were fully credited by the most enlightened theologians. The pelican was believed to nourish her brood with her own blood, and the hyena constantly conversed with shepherds. The salamander was said to extinguish fire; the fruits of certain trees when they fell into water were transformed into birds; and scores of similar fables and fictions were also received as certain truth.

In the thirteenth century, Bartholomew, a famous Franciscan friar compiled a treatise on *The Properties of Things*. In this production he solemnly propounds as verities the most preposterous stories. The influence of this work on popular belief was long persistent. White notes that this book was "translated into the principal languages of Europe, and was one of those most generally read during the Ages of Faith. It maintained its position nearly three hundred years; even after the invention of printing it held its own, and in the fifteenth century there were issued no less than ten editions of it in Latin, four in French, and various versions of it in Dutch, Spanish and English . . . It was only when the great voyages of discovery substituted ascertained fact for theological reasoning in this province that its authority was broken."

Numerous were the *Bestiaries* which were received as science in those benighted times. One amazing production of this type was deemed so highly edifying that it was extensively utilized in the pulpit. This work was compiled by William of Normandy, and contains the following lesson: "The lioness giveth birth to cubs which remain for three days without life. Then cometh the lion, breatheth upon them, and bringeth them to life. Thus it is that Jesus Christ during three days was deprived of life, but God the Father raised him gloriously."

By means of this perverted reasoning the phoenix ascending from its ashes established the truth of the resurrection. Then to crown all the tailless apes prove that the Devil's glory is dimmed, while the form and mischievous antics of monkeys provide irrefutable proof of the existence of demons.

T. F. PALMER.

As the delicate rose
To the sun's sweet strength
Doth herself unclose,
Breadth and length;
So spreads my heart to thee.

D. G. Rossetti.

Getting on Without God.

A Paper presented to the N.S.S. Conference.

Pious folk express themselves puzzled as to how we manage to keep going without God. In their eyes our world would seem to be devoid of everything worth while, for they have successfully persuaded themselves that only from the great central idea of God does life derive a meaning or death a consolation; that only from this divine fountain-head does Man draw his inspiration and hope. It is abundantly clear that the religious world has not succeeded, even with the most strenuous efforts of imagination, in glimpsing a picture of the atheistic universe, and I have thought it appropriate, on the occasion of our annual gathering, to place on record in a brief sketch the colour and form which life assumes to our eyes. I would commence by saying that the main feature of our outlook is its simplicity, and by reminding you how this comes about. We see the world as the product of non-conscious forces, and when life reaches a stage of development at which conscious factors come into play we are dealing, in our view, only with mentality in a natural sense. Thus we are never troubled with the task of attempting to trace the inner thoughts and motives of an inscrutable being conceived as the author and governor of the world. The Christian plea that religion makes life "understandable" seems to us quite naive, for all that religion does, as far as we can see, is to create a number of gratuitous problems and then to offer solutions so inadequate as to leave people constantly struggling with philosophic and moral difficulties that never ought to have existed. When the Christian tells us, as a clergyman friend of mine told me recently, that the postulate of God throws a light upon all life and enables him to understand the apparent mysteries of the world, we are left wondering, when we discover that he cannot tell us what he means by God, how a man can understand something by referring his mind to something else that he understands no better.

Our position as we face the world and its problems reminds me always of Einstein's approach to astronomical physics. He said, in effect, "Let us for a moment neglect the theory of ether entirely, and commence only from the basis of observed facts." We are in like case with regard to God. We say, "Let us neglect the time-worn theory of God entirely, and commence our study of life from the basis of actual experience." This simplifies our work to an enormous extent, for experience is the common property and heritage of mankind. Making life "understandable" then consists merely in reducing complicated or obscure experience into ever simpler and more familiar forms, at the same time correlating the various departments of this work into a coherent and self-consistent whole. We do not attempt to force the parts into an artificial fit by introducing theories, the sacredness of which absolutely demands adjustment, or by asking meaningless questions which owe their existence to some preconceived yet sovereign idea, commanding allegiance at all costs. Such theories as we employ are vassals not monarchs in their realm. They must at all times pay homage to the facts. Nature becomes a great jig-saw puzzle, and our's the task of piecing it together. When a section refuses to fit we do not mutilate it, but continue to work patiently, and we are able to say with pride that by keeping faith with nature, by refusing to distort or ignore facts, we have so far succeeded in producing an intelligible picture. The constant taunt that it is not finished does not

worry us in the least. We had rather show a cow half completed than produce a whole cow with its legs stuck on to its head.

This keeping faith with nature, this concern only with actual experience, is what makes life appear to us such a plain, straightforward affair. When we encounter cruelty, injustice, sorrow or pain, we do not have to ask how we are to view these things so that they may appear not to be what they are, nor how we are to look upon evil so that it may seem to be ultimately good. In short, we do not require to square the facts in order to preserve God's reputation or our own peace of mind. We merely observe that these disagreeable qualities exist, and our next step is to discover the conditions under which they develop and flourish, with a view to removing them. Misfortune never throws us into an attitude of impotent rebellion, but only into action. To us there is nothing to rebel against, but only an adverse situation to be dealt with. We are thus spared a good deal of anger, bitterness, disillusionment and perplexity, and the serenity which we are able to preserve greatly favours the success of our endeavours and the solution of our difficulties.

In the attempt to order and direct our lives, from the hearthstone to the stage of international affairs, we arrogate to ourselves the right to look after our own business, for indeed there is no one else to do it for us. We meet in the councils of men to decide what is wisest and best, guided only by knowledge and the principles of decency; moreover we face these responsibilities with gratification and a sense of enhanced dignity, for we are playing the part of grown men and women, and not of school children dependent always upon the oracular utterances of the teacher.

The fundamental incentives of life we feel to be instinct in our organic nature, and this feeling is confirmed by our scientific knowledge. In order to live and strive we no more require a God who is fulfilling his purpose through our lives than we would need some other man whose more comprehensive motives enveloped and inspired our own. We can wish well to our fellow man, and have the courage of this fellow-feeling, without bothering whether or not God is of the same bent. All this is what Christians sometimes call our arrogance, but to us it appears merely as the measure of maturity.

On the great question of sex our keynote is again simplicity. We have no sacred lore and no taboos demanding that we should regard it as a dirty thing. We are not frightened or embarrassed, we do not blush nor make sidelong glances nor bridle up, when mention is made of this important section of biology. We understand its science and its poetry alike, and feel that it has no department too intimate to be treated with frankness, dignity and sympathy. We do not have to tackle, in our adolescents, difficulties that we have ourselves created in their earlier years. We do not occupy the pitiable position of those who teach their children that even God himself could not look sex straight in the face, and who then proceed to cry out in bewilderment because there is prurience in the world. Our teaching is that sex is just a fact, having a biological, a moral and an emotional side; that the knowledge of it is on a level with all other knowledge whatsoever, and that in the practice of it we need only the qualities of kindness, delicacy and wisdom.

Truth, Beauty and Goodness, the so-called permanent values, we do not look upon as in any sense absolute; none the less we count them as real ingredients of life, for our relative conceptions of all things, in harmony as they are with the requirements of modern philosophy, do not in the least weaken our

sense of reality. Christians sometimes warn us that any view which transforms the higher values from that which is absolute and eternal into something existing as a relationship not necessarily permanent is bound to take away the feeling that we are journeying to a destination and life is robbed of its ultimate goal.

This indeed we readily admit, but do not mourn the loss. We point out that the dynamic has steadily replaced the static conception throughout the history of philosophy. We have grown quite accustomed to the idea that life is a cruise and not a voyage to port. We have no destination, but we possess something even better, namely direction, which gives to our activities a trend without the depressing prospect of a full stop. We form conceptions of upwards and downwards, and are able to judge whether we are rising or falling. This manner of looking at life nourishes our efforts to the full, and has the additional advantage that it tallies with experience and conforms to the possibilities of thought much more closely than do the ideas of fixed points and final destinations in a universe of which change is the fundamental note. Indeed, the high values and the richness of the world, far from suffering a loss, seem to us to be augmented and rendered more vivid and substantial by their separation from external authorship; for they are then seen to be rooted in the organic nature of things, to be as wide as the human race and as deep as life. They cannot be annihilated either from above or from below. No fiat of any celestial panjandrum can shake the foundations of mankind, nor any individual change of belief disturb their security.

Thus, when we bend our shoulders to the great labours of life, or mass ourselves in great causes to help lift the burdens of Man, we are not actuated by anything more than the profound tribal feeling which, ever expanding, binds the world more and more closely together. We cannot imagine how anyone should want a motive deeper than this fellow-feeling, or a goal ulterior to Man's happiness.

Likewise, when life draws to a close, we find it difficult to understand the feeling that it was worthless except as the preparation for some other. It seems most curious to us how people cannot see that a worthy object, well worked for and accomplished, consummates our efforts at the moment of its achievement; and that this attainment will crown our struggles and satisfy our hearts even if the world were to end the moment after.

What I have said has only been a sketch, and, even at that, executed after the impressionist school. I have endeavoured to suggest rather than to depict an outlook, more or less faithful in its general form and tone, which you would all feel to be yours. I have tried to suggest a world and a life that are self-contained and self-sufficient; a world without God in which nevertheless the grass is green and the sky is blue, and the skylark still singing; a life without God in which nevertheless there is good cheer and good fellowship and good sense; in which, moreover, we look upon the past with profit and the future with hope. I shall not apologise if I have echoed only your thoughts. Some of us do not hear all the music of our own thoughts, and the echo is not unpleasing to us.

C. H. ROSS CARMICHAEL.

As good breeding is an expedient to make fools and wise men equals, so etiquette is the invention of wise men to keep fools at a distance.

Sir Richard Steele.

Ethel Mannin's New Novel.

ETHEL MANNIN has again written a novel whose characters are alive—but whereas in *Ragged Banners*, she gave us a study of an introvert, in *Venetian Blinds*. (Jarrolds, 7s. 6d.), we have the story of a boy's development from babyhood to manhood with an intimate exposition of his adolescence. Stephen, the very ordinary hero, is reflected against his parents, and his relatives—in their “not uncomfortable poverty,” and his dislike of his mother's kin is heard in his prayer on news of their intended visit. “Please God, make it rain, for Jesus Christ's sake, Amen.” And his resentment at the coming of his baby sister, and of the nurse's bossing him about, is just that of a three-year-old who feels “his nose put out” by this strange invasion.

His father who has climbed from the gutter to the pavement is content with his first house; and Stephen loves his father's careless gaiety, but he has to reckon with his mother's gospel of “getting on,” and being respectable, which leads to constant rebukes. But Stephen is his mother's son as well as his father's, and after “an affaire” with Dorothy, he becomes engaged to a girl clerk in the same department as himself, and he thinks now that their common “ideals” and getting-on-in-life are synonymous.

The War is set as the background of Stephen's early adolescence, and as the cause of the loss of his deep friendship with the Lieder family—the father, a German with an English wife. It is the severance from the naturalness of this delightful family that stunts Stephen's full development, because from these and an Irish family (whom his mother despises) Stephen had derived a real love of children and of life. How this feeling is thwarted by Stephen's “young lady” is told with that directness and strength which Miss Mannin possesses in so unusual a degree. But we must not tell all this story. It would be unfair to the reader and to Miss Mannin. *Venetian Blinds* must not be missed.

M.G.

Acid Drops.

When a Christian clergyman begins to talk about freedom and liberty one needs to keep one's eyes open. The other day there was a meeting held in Birmingham to protest against the outrages in Germany on Jews. Archbishop Williams, who spoke at the meeting, and who resented Roman Catholicism, said that caution must be observed. He said that the formal plea for the persecution was that the Jews were Communists, and added:—

If this is true then with the example near at hand of what Communism is doing in Russia, my sympathy is with the Nazis, though their methods may not be wise.

That is what one would expect from a Roman Catholic Archbishop who can never condemn persecution without bringing a charge by implication against his own Church. The argument that Jews, as such, are Communists is simply ridiculous. There are all sorts of political and economic views among Jews as among others. But even if they were all Communists the idea that Communists ought to be suppressed by force, and force brutally applied, is monstrous. Communism has the same right of a hearing as any other 'ism, political or religious. We have nothing here to do with the goodness or badness of Communism, but we do demand for Communist opinion, as we demand for Catholic and all other opinion, the right to be heard. The notion that one is entitled to persecute because one does not believe in the opinion persecuted is quite Christian, and fairly common, and many Communists agree with Catholics in saying so, but it is detestable to all who know what freedom of thought means.

The *Christian World* points out that the conclusive argument against gambling is that the gambler aims at taking, the Christian aims at giving. That is very illuminating. We can understand in the light of that description why the Christian nations are the most poverty-

stricken in the world, own the least land, make the least money, never cease to protest against excessive gains, and why so many Christians die poor. Their aim is to give, and as it is the aim of all Christians to give, it follows that the gifts must be bestowed upon non-Christians, or at most upon Christians whose religion is of a negligible character. On the other hand the gambler also gives. Every time he backs a horse either he or the bookmaker enjoys the precious pleasure of giving; every time a man loses at cards he gives to the other fellow; and he can never be certain that the other fellow will give back in return. On the contrary, when the Christian gives to man he only lends to the Lord, and he is certain that the Lord will repay him tenfold. The gambler's investment is uncertain, it may never yield a dividend. The Christian's investment is sure of a return, and he is candid enough to say that if there would be no certain dividend for his giving, then there would be no reason for his beneficence.

As a recent example of the readiness of Christians to give, we may note a matter which has just cropped up in Kingsbridge, Devon. A Baptist Chapel has been using town's water for religious purposes and the Christians concerned do not like to give too much to the local Council. So the question came up and was debated whether the water could be said to be used for "domestic purposes" or not. The local Solomons decided, as it was used for "the washing away of sins," the water came under the head of "domestic," and was to be charged for at that rate. Like Ingersoll we hope that the domestic purpose will be accompanied with a supply of soap.

Things are going none too well in the pious city of Belfast. It seems since the opening of the Zoo on Sundays the attendance has been nearly 3,000 children and about 6,000 adults on the Sabbath. Naturally the Churches are upset, for, as one of the Lord's representatives says, the children are being encouraged to attend the Zoo, when they might be at Sunday school. We are not surprised. Interesting as a collection of Sunday school superintendents and Sunday school teachers would be to a body of anthropologists, we can hardly expect children to view them from that enlightened point of view. What child would not prefer the sight of a group of monkeys to looking at some of their degenerate descendants in a Sunday school?

Leon Feuchtwanger the famous author of *Jew Suss*, recently wrote an article on Judaism, in which he declared that one of its fundamental principles was the "belief in the God Jehovah." He then goes on to say that "the figures and occurrences in the Old Testament became mere mythology for the Jews at a very early age, and the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah believed just as much and just as little in the corporeal existence of Jehovah as Plato or Aristotle in the physical actuality of Jupiter or Venus." Now this is very disingenuous, for while it is true the modern Jew may look upon Jehovah as a "spirit," his forbears certainly made the Pentateuch a "divine revelation," and therein is a picture of a God who speaks, eats and talks, and has, in short, all the physical attributes of man even to sex. Feuchtwanger may believe it is all mythology, but the orthodox Jew never did and does not now.

In spite of the scorn put on the proposal of "laying on hands" by the Bishop of Birmingham, "the Sacrament of Holy Unction" has been passed by the Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury, "for use in ministrations to the sick, which include unction and the laying on of hands." This, we are told, would have rejoiced Keble and Pusey had they lived to see the proposal passed. Bishop Barnes scathingly attacked the gross superstitions always associated with "unction," and "the laying on of hands," but to no purpose, and Anglo-Catholics are delighted that so much credulity and rubbish are creeping back to the faith. We agree. The only true and genuine Christianity is that preached by Jesus and his disciples, and any attempt to shed its

primitive and naive superstitions should be sternly suppressed. The whole faith and nothing else should be the Divine slogan.

It is delightful to come across the truth sometimes. A pious editor answers one of his correspondents thus:—

The real question is not of the originality of our Lord's utterances. He began his teaching on the basis of the religion of Israel, and frequently quoted from older sources. What our Lord quoted acquires its value by His endorsement.

One wonders which to admire most, the cool admission that after all there is no originality (or very little) in "Our Lord's" utterances, or that the value of some Jewish or Pagan teaching is enhanced because of "Our Lord's" endorsement." The teaching of the church has been that Jesus taught an absolutely new Gospel never taught or known by anybody else previously—something quite unique. We wonder how reverend and whole-hearted believers in "Our Lord" will get over the above passage. We venture the opinion they will *not* get over it; they will do their best, indeed, to forget it.

A church writer points out that now in Liverpool, there are two Holy Altars raised up, one belonging to the Roman Catholic Church and the other, to the English Church, and that they are "irreconcilable." It is good for truth that this should be pointed out, for if there is one thing which the Roman Church intends to do—as is admitted by the writer—it is to destroy the English Church. This attitude gives another sweet picture of how Christians love one another; and the fact that the Roman Church is getting increased publicity in the press and Parliament, and is certainly gaining distinguished converts, will only intensify the "love." Standing aside as an unrepentant unbeliever, we can say with force and conviction, "a plague on both your houses!"

In a discussion on the housing question in the House of Convocation of Canterbury, Bishop Barnes pointed out it was not entirely a question of bricks and mortar. "It was one concerned with the quality and quantity of the people." He advocated a decrease in population, and hoped the mentally defective would be eliminated. Dr. Mosley, the Bishop of Southwell, opposed Dr. Barnes and was entirely against any proposal to eliminate the "feckless and reckless" people. "They responded," he declared, "to religion, due perhaps to the fact that they were the products of large families." Why bother, in other words, about large families living in slums, some mentally defective, in the grip of poverty and disease, so long as they "responded" to religion? Reading this kind of thing makes us wonder sometimes whether the mentally defective are confined only to the poor and the slums.

Mr. Arnold Lunn can always be depended upon to make a Freethinker chuckle. His latest pronouncement is that "the difference between Catholics and non-Catholics is that non-Catholics are on the defensive." If he means by "non-Catholics," Freethinkers, then we are bound to have a few more chuckles. For if anybody has been on the defensive and is still on the defensive as far as his own particular creed is concerned, it is Mr. Arnold Lunn. It reminds one of that other famous assertion from Mr. G. K. Chesterton, that Christians are always "jolly," and Freethinkers always "gloomy." Anyone can prove the truth of this statement by looking at a body of Christians watching a priest turn a wafer into a real Jesus by mumbling some ridiculous Latin words. The scene may be funny—but "jolly" . . . !

Our financial correspondent writes from Ireland:—

The General Synod of the Church of Ireland recently met in Dublin in the church made famous by the wit of Dean Swift. The next Synod will be held in 1934, on May 15, in case any Freethinkers are interested in this company. Mr. W. B. Thrift, Trinity College, Professor and Member of the Free State Parliament, T.D., S.F., T.C.D., etc., read the financial report, which took up

more time than any other subject under discussion and occupied four columns in the official press of the organization, *Irish Times*. The capital accounts, exclusive of reserve investments, amount to £10,622,511 13s. 7d. "The birds of the air have their nests . . ." But the Church of Ireland has over ten million pounds. The wages of the various ministers, etc., rose by £99,228. The main fund is the endowment which amounts to £7,000,000. The treasurer, in reporting, states it is the *important fund* because "it provides in a very large measure the stipend of the clergy." The revenue from general funds for last year, after allowing for bank interest, amounted to £429,499, a reduction of £2,137 on the previous year. This was due to a gross lack of care by God in permitting a fall in the money market and a depreciation of the shares on the Great Southern Railways of Ireland. On the other hand the situation in America, where much money has been invested, has brought them in an extra £6,000 per year. The market valuation of the investments has increased during the past year by no less a sum than £1,458,725.

Thus does the Lord look after the worldly welfare of his people.

Mr. Oliver Baldwin (in the *Daily Herald*) regards the present state of affairs among the European nations—their dictators and its interference with freedom of speech and publication—as a "Farewell to Liberty." Apropos of the Nazist regime in Germany he says: "This denial of liberty, this acceptance of tyranny, this acquiescence to evil is the portent of a Godless future." This piece of pulpit rhetoric will no doubt go down well with pious readers, who, like Mr. Baldwin, have apparently never learnt that part of history which reveals the denial of liberty, the introduction of tyranny, as a direct consequence of the belief in God.

Later, Mr. Baldwin says:—

Freedom of speech and freedom of the Press were not won without a struggle. Freedom to retain Freedom will not be won without unity.

One may be pardoned for expressing a doubt whether the present-day race of politicians (of any party) or journalists are the breed to fight to retain Freedom. Most of them have little appreciation of genuine Freedom of Thought and Speech. All that they care about is liberty to express their own particular views.

A writer in the *Methodist Recorder* fancies he discerns "Signs of Revival." He leads off thus:—

Every now and again some Christian publicist declares that things have taken a turn for the better. Sometimes we have a feeling that "the wish is father to the thought," but at least we must admit that the fact that people are thinking of matters in the religious world taking a turn for the better shows that we are conscious of the need for such a change.

Quite so! The more the religious are conscious of the need for a revival of religion, the more they will imagine things have taken a turn for the better. The more Christian publicists assert that religion is reviving, the more we know that, by the psychological art of "suggestion," they are trying to get their "wish" believed, in order to encourage the pious. It seems rather a shame to give the game away so completely like that.

From the *Church Times* we learn that, "The ideal of a Christian Church exists nowhere on earth. But in the historic Church of England is to be found everything that is by divine appointment generally necessary for salvation." This irresistibly reminds one of the warning issued from time to time by patent-medicine vendors. "We have the original genuine remedy, accept no substitute!" However, there are so many firms in the supernatural business making similar claims that scepticism as to the firms themselves, the claims they make, and the necessity for "salvation" is quite pardonable. The Christian churches offer salvation to mankind, but there can be no salvation for the Christian religion. Ultimately it must perish, and nothing can save it from interment in the cemetery of forgotten superstitions.

Someone has presented the following puzzle to a newspaper. Although everybody seems to want "more freedom," yet how is it that Parliament spends much of its time in passing Bills that restrict freedom? One answer might be that our M.P.'s are making a minor attempt to cope with the unemployed problem among the middle-classes, by creating the necessity for more inspectors and general busy-bodies. Another possible answer is that among people to-day there is merely a desire for more freedom, but not a deep passion for freedom which is based on principle and conviction. Then, again, the Christian minority, in its organized form, is very active and is always pressing for restrictions on something and somebody—which is how the newly discovered Christian passion for "social reform" invariably shapes itself in practice. And our present-day race of spineless M.P.'s will pass anything in order not to lose votes.

Apropos of the Church and State in Spain, a Nonconformist paper remarks:—

There can be no doubt that the legislation is wise from the standpoints of national reconstruction. For centuries the political influence of the Church and of the Army has retarded Spanish development, and their privilege and power had to be broken before the Republic could go forward, untrammelled, along its path of progress. But the people, and the country folk in particular, still dominated by a superstitious respect for Rome are hardly likely to see the matter in this light . . .

Quite so; it is also worth mentioning that other countries have, in the past, found that the privilege and power of the *Protestant Church* had to be broken before the nations could progress. But one can hardly expect a Nonconformist paper to mention this fact.

Fifty Years Ago.

PHYSIOLOGICAL facts are never more interesting than when they are found to confirm the great truths of our religion, and to afford a satisfactory explanation of phenomena which infidels have treated with derision, without the necessity of resorting to a miraculous agency. Dr. Pearson, of George Street, Hanover Square, in lecturing a few days ago upon the stomach, observed that this organ had no power over substances endowed with vitality; and that this circumstance accounted for the fact of the prophet Jonah having remained undigested in the stomach of the whale for the space of three days and three nights. Dr. Pearson's discovery is highly important, both in a medical and theological point of view: it furnishes a complete answer to all the objections which have been urged by sceptics, against that part of the sacred volume in which this singular adventure is related. How the prophet passed his time in the cavity of the whale's stomach, how far the confinement affected his organs of respiration, in what manner he derived his sustenance, or whether he required any sustenance at all, are all questions of minor importance. The fact of the stomach having no power over vital substances having been once established by Dr. Pearson, the corollary is obvious. The argument may be thus stated: "When Jonah entered the whale's stomach, either he was alive or he was not alive. If he was not alive, the stomach would have had the same power over him as over any other inanimate substance, and the prophet would have been digested in the ordinary way; but he was vomited out alive on the fourth day; consequently he was alive when he entered the stomach. Now as he was alive when he entered the stomach, and as the stomach has no power over a living substance, it is evident that he must have continued to live. Hence, when the action of vomiting was excited, and he was thrown up on the fourth day, he was deposited on the dry land, probably without any other inconvenience than some trifling derangement of his canonicals." Dr. Pearson deserves the thanks of the pious, as well as the philosophical part of the community, for having explained this phenomenon in a manner which renders it as demonstrable as any of the propositions of Euclid.

The "Freethinker," June 24, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. SPENCE (N.S.W.)—Received, and given to the General Secretary. Thanks for cutting.

MR. W. S. WISHART, President of the West Ham Branch writes.—“Perhaps as a result of the successful Annual Conference, the attendance at the West Ham evening meetings have been much better than usual. The officers of the Branch are much gratified with this renewed support.” We hope the support will continue.

A. WILSON.—Mr. Joad's suggestion that after death “the psychic factor which combines with the body to produce a mind” may survive is just gibberish. Neither he nor anyone else can have the slightest idea as to what is meant by such an absurdity, but it is exactly the kind of nonsense that they who are pleased with this sort of nonsense will like.

C. S. FRASER and G. H. TAYLOR.—Received, will appear next week.

A. S. LEWIS.—We are obliged for copy of the Palestine Code. It may prove useful.

S. ARTHUR.—We are always pleased to have copies of old Freethought pamphlets, or anything else published by Freethinkers in the last half of the nineteenth century. Few are aware of the amount and the quality of the work done during this period.

A. COHEN.—We greatly appreciate the attitude you take up. “Jew” has not, and never has had a National significance. It means no more than adherence to a particular form of religion, and therefore the correct description is of Jewish parents, as one would say of Christian or Buddhist parents. And we share your feeling for those “Jews” who are anxious to be taken to be of Christian descent. We think very little of boasting about something over which no man has any control, and which owes nothing to his endeavours for its existence. Mainly it occurs as exhibition of ignorance, or worse.

C. TOWNSEND.—We have one or two bound volumes of last year's *Freethinker* available, but the supply is definitely limited.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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 are glad to see Mr. Justice Avory raising a word against the abolition of Grand Juries, although that has already been accomplished. He says quite rightly that it means another barrier broken down which guarded the liberty of the subject. Many a time the Grand Jury has stood between the vindictive prosecution of the powers

that may be and their intended victim, this in addition to their materially helping in the removal of bad laws by a refusal to return a “true Bill.” But the tendency to-day of nearly all political parties is to ignore the rights of the subject as much as possible and extend the rule of officials as far as this can be done.

The following appears in the *Bradford Daily Telegraph* of June 9, taken from its issue of a similar date in 1883:—

Last evening Mr. Charles Bradlaugh addressed a meeting of about 2,000 persons in the Industrial Hall, Dewsbury. The following resolution was moved: “That this meeting records its emphatic protest against the exclusion of the thrice duly and legally elected Member for Northampton, and condemns the action of the House of Commons in subverting the rights of the people in their free choice, and thereby committing treason to the Constitution of the United Kingdom.” Mr. Bradlaugh contended that if the House of Commons were to be permitted to prevent a man, not disabled by law, from representing the constituency that had chosen him, our representative institutions became a sham. It had been said that the feeling in the country was against him. He had not found it so thus far, but if it were, that should not count, for no constituency had the right to judge the choice of another. His opponents called those who supported him the scum of the country. He would make the fluid boil, and the scum come where they thought not, before he had done with them. The resolution was carried, there being only two dissentients, and copies of it were ordered to be sent to the Prime Minister, Sir Stafford Northcote, the Speaker, Mr. Sergeant Siman, the Member for the Borough, and the Hon. H. W. Fitzwilliam.

Before painting a portrait of Charles Bradlaugh Mr. Walter Sickert made a number of sketches. In connexion with the Centenary proceedings the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee are desirous of discovering the whereabouts of some of these sketches. Can any of our readers help in their location? We should be obliged with the information if they can give it.

A Conference on “Sex Education at Home, School, and After,” is to be held in the Conway Hall, on July 1 and 2, at 2.30 and 6.30 each day. A number of Headmasters of schools will take part in the proceedings as well as Mrs. Janet Chance and other well known workers in the movement. Tickets for the two days are 2s. 6d., or for single sessions 1s. These may be obtained from the Secretary of Progressive Societies, Room 21, St. Stephen's House, S.W.1.

There has been some little disturbance at the open-air Freethought meetings at Brighton. Mr. Rosetti went down there on Sunday last and delivered a lecture, but reports that the disturbance came mainly from one individual, who is much better ignored than taken notice of. From his report we gather that there is not much there that good humour and tact—two indispensable qualities in the conduct of open-air meetings—might not soon overcome. Speakers should bear in mind that in open-air meetings greater allowance must be made for the rudeness of excitable Christians than is usual in a hall.

We are pleased to note that the Glasgow Branch intends working up a vigorous campaign not only in its own district but in some of the big towns nearby. A move will be made on Saturday, June 24. A number of friends are going from Glasgow, and we hope that Edinburgh and District Freethinkers will make a point of being present. The meeting will be held at the Mound at 8 p.m. Special attention will be made to the sale of literature at these meetings.

The Ashington Branch N.S.S. is doing excellent work, not only locally, but in surrounding districts. Arising from that, an open-air debate has been arranged to take place at Morpeth on Saturday, June 24, at 7 p.m., between Mr. J. T. Brighton and a local Inspector of Education. The subject for debate will be, “Did Christianity Abolish Child Slavery?” Mr. Brighton takes the negative. An

effort is being made to form a Branch of the N.S.S. at Morpeth, and local saints attending the debate, and prepared to help in the formation should approach the officials at the debate.

Mr. G. Whitehead reports very good meetings at Birmingham, which should be a very active centre for Free-thought. There is much local sympathy with our movement, but many of the Branch members appear to be shy. We feel quite sure that once that shyness is overcome, the compensation will be a strong, active, and appreciated propaganda in Birmingham.

Determinism and Evolution.

EVOLUTION is the process of the diversification of existence. The keynote to its study has been biology, which is the study of the properties of living pieces of matter, and the relations between them and their environment. Like other branches of science, biology follows the principle of Determinism, which states that no event is causally isolated. This, however, is not enough, and mechanism goes further, with the hypothesis that the deterministic process is dependent ultimately on the simpler, or "lower," causal agents, as against teleological determinism, which asserts that the root deterministic forces are final ends, or purposes. In theory, some biologists still profess adherence to this theory (*e.g.*, Prof. Haldane), but in the laboratory they are with the vast majority of their colleagues in adopting the mechanistic procedure, explaining the complex by the simple, instead of *vice versa*. Finally, Materialism is the philosophy constructed on the working hypothesis of mechanistic determinism.

We are sometimes told that it is more certain *that* evolution has occurred than *how* it has occurred. Such problems, however, relating to the "how," of evolution are being almost daily solved. In the series *Biological Concepts*, it was pointed out that the once unexplored Darwinian postulates have now been analysed as labels for classes of living properties. The promise of modern biology, to a great extent fulfilled, is that heredity, variation, selection and adaptation can be fitted into our causal scheme, and therein treated as concepts, instead of being left high and dry, serving as principles for purposive philosophies.

This progress has been facilitated by the approach to evolution, not as something which once occurred, or something which may be inferred to be still going on, but as something which is happening *now*, and which can be observed under the microscope. "Above all," writes Prof. T. H. Morgan, "it has come to be realized that the theory of evolution can be studied by the same methods that have been successful in other branches of science," so that evolution, besides being a study of the past, is also an investigation of what is taking place now (see *Scientific Basis of Evolution*).

Evolution has been likened to a clock. We cannot see the hour-hand of a clock moving, but if we look closely enough we may see the minute-hand in motion. So it is with evolution. Some birds, jelly-fish and butterflies are continually producing novelties (see Thomson's *Outline of Science*). The peppered moth is coming; genius, dwarf, calculating boy, cock with ten feet of tail, horse with mane reaching to the ground; the hornless calf, the tailless cat, and so forth are all possible. Yea, even unto the white blackbird.

There are many definite possibilities in the germ-cell for this kind of thing. As was intimated in the article on variation, it is frequently possible to determine, now in the infancy of science, exactly what

happens to make a mutant or "sport." The chromosomes may be broken in upon by strong light-rays, or, to use Morgan's expression, clumped; while artificial agencies have been successfully employed to produce mutations. The history of this dates back to the work of De Vries on the evening primrose.

What inferences are to be made? "Since the results show," writes Morgan, "that mutation can be produced by a physical agent, a strong presumption is created in favour of the view that other physical agents may also produce them."

Prof. Hogben suggests temperature and the chemical constituents of food.

Another successful application of determinism concerns the origin of species *sensu stricto*. Fundamentalists in particular are fond of pointing out the sterile hybrid which comes from the union of horse and donkey. Even where true, it would be difficult logically to enlist such cases in support of Special Creation. But modern biology is successfully attacking the problem of species incompatibility.¹

"Infertility between species is by no means universal," says Morgan; "all degrees of success are found in different crosses." Not one, but many and various, factors may be at work. One is the unsuitability of foreign pollen, which may not fit the egg-cell. Here a series of complex events occurs; "failure in any one leads to the death of the potential embryo" (*ibidem*.) Again, if a mutant type should establish itself and be separated from the parent stock long enough to accumulate more and more differences, some of the latter may affect the fertilization process, and infertility be caused. Anatomical difference in the copulative structures may give the same result.² Complementary chromosomal incompatibility accounts for the mule (see also Crew's *Animal Genetics*).

The conclusion? That "infertility does not appear to be an event that has been prepared for, to prevent crossing, but a natural consequence of differences of various kinds between different types." (Morgan.)

Evolution, diversification, depends on mutation, which depends on determinable conditions; the purposeful Evolving Hand is not required. Therefore, says Morgan, "when even a mathematician, Eddington, advises us to cherish whatever of our juvenile longings still persist, we can only raise the question, whether we cannot to-day find a more satisfactory substitute for ethics than one based on a sentimental liking for finalistic principles which may be no more than conditioned reflexes established in childhood."

We conclude with a quotation from each of the two investigators dealt with in this series. First, Morgan:—

"Modern biology rests its case on the assumption . . . that the properties of living things are the outcome of their physical and chemical composition and configuration."

And Hogben:—

Though "many of our postulates have had to be re-examined" [*e.g.*, atoms], this "does not mean the abandonment of the principle of mechanism," while "the old mechanics remains as valid as ever for the realm in which it was developed to operate." Hogben has done much to further the interest in Morgan's work.

Well, Darwin had *his* bulldog.

G. H. TAYLOR.

¹ In the writings of Darwin and Wallace there are, it is true, vague references to the tendency to infertility as forms become more widely separated.

² Cf., the two strains Barbadoes and Rumpies.

Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

XVI.—BRADLAUGH AND THE STATE CHURCH.

WITH an emasculated measure of disestablishment—minus disendowment—in the offing, it is worth glancing at the case for that measure put by Bradlaugh. It may be found in his debate with Simpson (Liverpool, 1876). The atmosphere of this controversy has completely changed since then. The most insistent demand for disestablishment to-day comes, not from Freethinkers or Nonconformists, but from within the Church itself. It is obvious, therefore, that the odium which, in Christian circles, attaches to other secularist proposals, does not now attach to this one, although it might still attach to any *real* measure of disestablishment and disendowment. Bradlaugh eloquently exposed the wrong and scandal of State religion. He began at the top with the King. "I affirm to you that to make the temporal Head of the nation the actual head of one Church of many in the nation is an invidious distinction in favour of that Church against others." It is the unpardonable crime in party politics to "drag in the King": but all the wrangling elements which compose the Church of England to-day commit this crime. The Anglo-Catholics would sooner have the Pope than the King and the militant evangelicals would seem to prefer the King to the Deity, as head of the Church. It is surely not calculated to increase respect for Royalty that it may be Anglican in England and Presbyterian in Scotland, and that it should be burdened and bothered at this time of day by the unpleasant theological consequences of Henry VIII's row with Rome.

Bradlaugh was equally clear and forcible on the main case then and now for disestablishment and disendowment. "There ought not to be any distinction made in respect of the opinions or professions of any man or body of men on religious matters. I affirm that no man, or body of men ought to enjoy, in a free country, any exclusive privileges on account of his or their belonging to a particular church, and that no man, or body of men ought to suffer any disabilities on account of his or their not conforming to any particular church." There is the case in a nutshell, and if there is any perception of, or respect for, the implications of democratic principles in this country to-day, it should not need re-inforcement.

In the absence, in the electorate, of any such firm adherence to first principles in politics, it is always possible that the question of Disestablishment will be "settled" on similar lines as the varied sects composed their differences on that other question, Secular Education. The Church of England will secure their freedom from irritating State interference (such as they consider occurred in the case of the Revision of the Prayer Book), and at the same time hold as substantially as possible to the material interests involved in their connexion with the State. This may be able only to be achieved, owing to their yearly decreasing numbers and political importance, by their allowing the other religious denominations a share in the "pickings." It is to be hoped that there will be an effectually active body of opposition to any such compromise. As Alan Handsacre says in *The Revenues of Religion*: "That Parliament shall rightly determine the financial part of any measure for the separation of Church and State is, especially in these times, a vital matter. It is to be hoped that, if and when the relations of Church and State are brought to an issue, the average citizen will see to it that the inevitable divorce is not accompanied by a permanent provision of alimony for the guilty partner of what has long been an intolerable alliance."

T.H.E.

Notes from Scotland.

It is in keeping no doubt with democratic ideas that the Lord High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland should at times be a commoner. Thus Ramsay Macdonald when head of the Labour Government was supposed to have made a fine gesture to the working classes (whom, as fate would have it, he was soon to betray!) by nominating "Jimmy Brown," an Ayrshire miner for the office. Jimmy filled the place quite as efficiently as any nobleman. But the scene has changed with the change of Ramsay's political associates. Last year we had a Baronet in the position. This year we have had a subservient servant of Conservatism—a novelist—who is a great pal of Ramsay's, in the person of Colonel John Buchan, as the King's Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Kirk. Military titles are being retained here, and are as plentiful as they were in America after the Civil War.

It may be mere coincidence, but just after Mr. Buchan's selection was announced, His Grace the Duke of Montrose, in introducing General Higgins of the Salvation Army to a religious meeting at Glasgow gave the Church a comprehensive slating for unbrotherliness, and held up the Salvation Army as an example of cohesion. His Grace no doubt would make a very acceptable Commissioner to most of the members of the Scotch Kirk—only he is a Scotch Home Ruler—and you haven't to be too Scotch. You have to have a cosmopolitan touch to be the King's representative at the Assembly of the State Church of Scotland. Scotch Presbyterians and English Episcopalians are conferring at Lambeth with a view to closer relations, and at the moment a Scotch Nationalist, who inveighs against the tyranny of England over Scotland endangers his chances of selection by doing so. There are few Scotchmen in whom you do not find a streak of snobbish and sneaking and imitative subserviency towards England and English ideas, customs and institutions. Mr. Buchan fills the rôle nicely, for he has assimilated much that is English, and all highly successful Scotchmen, as is well known, now gravitate to London. Well, you have *everything* in London! Edinburgh once was a centre for gentry, aristocracy and litterateurs and artists. Edinburgh has now become a mere show place and a place of residence for retired members of the trading community. The Royal Mile, the Castle, St. Giles and Holyrood are the extinct volcanoes that mark Scotland's decadence and decay. There is little that looks Royal about the Royal Mile in these later days. Princes Street is merely a promenade fronting big Jewish shops. They are not unattractive shops for those who are interested in shops; and they probably sell good enough wares. But the point is that even the Scotch trader has not been able to retain his position and is being ousted by incomers.

Despite all the frenzied appeals to the Auld Kirk of Scotland to assert herself as militant—as the leader of a Renaissance—things are not bettered. For in point of fact there will not in future be only one Presbyterian Assembly in Edinburgh; but three. The Wee Frees and the U.F.s. (continuing) retain big sections of the believing people of Scotland. The claim of the Auld Kirk to be a national Church is merely spectacular. It is hollow and false. Even in Edinburgh Freethought is finding a foothold. Baptists, Wesleyans and Congregationalists form big communities in Scotland. But we must have our Annual Puppet Show and give the Fathers and Brothers their chance. Glory Be!

IGNOTUS.

Causality and Probability.

THERE is a reasonable saying, quoted by Peter Panter in the *Prager Tagblatt* of August 18, 1932: "It is the task of historical Materialism to show how things are to happen, and if they do not turn out that way to show why that could not be so."

It is the same with meteorology, and strictly viewed with any science. There is no providence which would turn out to be correct in every part. The fault is not with science but with the fact that we do not correctly appraise its task. Who is expecting too much will easily be disappointed. In such cases his spiritual pendulum moves to the other side and he is satisfied, if he has to content himself with the minor of the evils. Some people are even inclined to let things go as "God pleases."

Science is not for the purpose of miracles. In order to value science correctly we have to make ourselves clear what it is in a position to perform in any particular case. It certainly seems to border upon the marvellous, if from the irregularities of one planet the existence of another planet may be correctly inferred. It must, however, be remembered that the causal-relations in astronomy are comparatively simple, and it would be rash to expect similar performances in biology, for example.

The relation between cause and effect is only in the most simple cases so transparent as to show, metaphorically speaking, how the cog-wheels of occurrences move one against the other. Moreover, in our imagination of causal-coherence a strong anthropomorphic method of thought is reflected, on the pattern of the will and action of man. It is very much simpler to declare retrospectively why things happened as they did than to look into the future and say how they will happen.

In general it is not easy to separate cause from effect. A cause may have many effects and many causes may join in a resulting effect. If, *e.g.*, a nail is hammered into some material, only part of the energy is spent for the effect intended, a considerable part of energy being turned into sound, and thermal effects. In the case of a sailing ship pressure of wind and resistance of water result in a moving force, etc. In meteorology many a cause comes into consideration, thereby making the relations rather indistinct.

It is determinative to separate the essential from the unessential, in order to pick out the causal-relations which are of importance for the current needs. *Theoretically* seen, the swing of an insect's wing makes the air of the whole world tremble, whereas even the gravitation of the earth, over and above certain limits, need not be taken into consideration.

If we conclude causally, we tacitly suppose that there are repetitions in nature. If A, then also B. Strictly taken, however, there is no second A in the constant flow of events, therefore also no second B. There are not two equal leaves on a tree and in the most favourable case two things are equal only like "one egg to another."

All our decisions are eventually based on the fact that in spite of all differences we recognize the relative likeness. Schlick quite correctly points out in his doctrine of perception that what we call perception does not, in the common use as well as in science, mean anything else than "to find a likeness in diversity."

Where close likeness is lacking, man notices also remote likeness. However, human perception always endeavours to trace back the unknown to the known, the unusual to the usual. It appears that our own "I" is the nearest to the primitive man, and he, therefore, endeavours to understand the whole external world on the basis of his own image.

Very much later, man discovers how little he knows himself, and he then examines how far he, as a perceiving being is, out of his own constitution, able to delineate reality by conceptual illustration. The progress of man in that direction is not very great. Even in the fundamental points of science there are many unclear notions regarding the ability of the human intellect which in the opinion of metaphysicians is hovering above reality as once hovered "God's spirit above the waters."

Out of such imaginings there result the well known boasting ideas of the so-called "logical necessities of thought," on the Procrustean bed of which lies the whole reality, although David Hume had pointed to the absurdity of such a mode of thinking.

Human intellect as an instrument of our perception of reality is itself a product of such reality and its organization can be understood by its actions. The laws of biologic assimilation apply to our thinking just as *e.g.*, for the web feet of water-fowls.

The picture of the world is made up by systems of signs, such as language, writing, etc. Especially suitable for the purposes of our perception has been the system of mathematical signs, and in this connexion also Kant said in his *Rudiments of Metaphysics in Natural Sciences* that "in any lectures on nature only so much real science can be found as mathematics are to be found therein." The exact science rather begins with the measuring, *i.e.*, the indicating of qualities by quantities.

In the course of time, however, a prejudice found its way into measurements. The real successes achieved by science seem to have overwhelmed us, and we are prepared to believe that it is only a question of time to raise the exactness of measurement *ad infinitum*. If we have sufficiently exact measurements or knowledge at hand we ought to succeed—as even Laplace thought—to dissolve all the events in the world's system into differential equations.

In particular it was thought that the last secrets of the makrokosmos could be unveiled if only we would succeed in penetrating into the miraculous world of the mikrokosmos. However, that way proved to be a great disillusion—and afterwards it can easily be understood that it could not be otherwise—as a measuring instrument can only be used successfully if it is, so to say, more subtle than the object to be measured. The electron determines the limit of exactness of all our measurements. This is contrary to the fact as found by Einstein, *i.e.*, that the velocity of light must limit all signals of communication.

Heisenberg succeeded in proving that in measuring the position and the velocity of electrons we must reach a limit: either the one or the other measurement becomes inexact.

A causal theory, concluding from the cause A to an effect B can, however, be of use only if it can be based on a sufficiently exact statement of the position of A and B. In any other case a statement must be made under reserve, *i.e.*, with greater or lesser probability.

The law of causality can, therefore be only applied for—so to say—rough measurements. As more exact measurements result—as with much used guns—there is a field of spread gunshots within certain limits, which deviations are already taken into account in technical calculations. It is, therefore, not at all an act of despair of modern physics, but modesty and conscientiousness, which leaves the heretofore used way of rigid formulæ and prefers to express causal connexions in statistics as warranting "only" a high degree of probability.

Practically, therefore, nothing has changed, and those doubtful gentlemen who are triumphing at the "abandonment of the causal laws" only prove that they do not know what they are talking about.

When speaking of statistical laws we have in the first place to characterize the sort of statistics we are using. Statistics of prices or births are something quite different from statistics of the results of a number of physical experiments. With the number of our observations the exactness of the statistical method increases. Often no close observation is necessary in order to recognize the inefficiency of the law of the big figures.

For example, if we compress to one half the volume of gas in a receptacle, the force of expansion becomes twice as great. According to the kinetic laws of gases this Boyle-Mariotte's law is, in fact, a statistical law, because what we term in makrokosmos as force of expansion, elasticity or gas-pressure is, mikrokosmosically seen, nothing else but the sum of thrusts of the compressed gas-molecules against the walls of the receptacle. An immense number of molecules participate in such bombardment, spreading in every direction and also colliding one with the other. Isolated standing cases do not count; what determines the matter is the average result which will the more closely coincide with the formulæ accepted by or derived from mathematical methods, the more molecules there are in movement.

In the case of a considerable dilution of gas where it depends, so to speak, on any single molecule, the law will have to undergo a certain correction as regards the limit, as is more or less the case with all laws. It was not, however, therefore he said that natural laws are not reliable, on the contrary, we have only to limit the extent of their validity.

It is disguising the facts, if probability is confounded with accident. All scientific theories depend essentially on the degree of probability which they possess. In daily life we are working only with a sort of logic of probabilities and we have to, as there is no action without a certain amount of daring. Of course, we thereby risk some errors, and if we desired to avoid such risks, there would remain nothing else but to become "statues," as Lenin once said.

Well, we cannot use statues in science. Without action no progress. It is sufficient for us to know between what limits we are moving. We are in a position to forecast a solar eclipse with an exactness nearing certainty. Meteorologists must be more careful, as they encounter more complicated conditions. Even more difficult becomes a sociologic forecast, and here we revert to the saying quoted in the beginning. Of course, a mathematical formula is more simple to deal with than statistics, but sometimes it fails. Then the formula requires a corresponding correction.

The atom-physicists are in that respect at a considerable advantage as they are dealing with billions and, besides, with ideally-equal "entities." Therefore forecasts in respect of them are very reliable and are precisely confirmed by experiments.

The situation is, therefore, such that by using statistical laws we reach more quickly the comprehension of reality than by synthesis on the basis of a singular case, as in the latter case the mathematical notion very soon becomes complicated. In astronomy the so-called "Problem of Three" offers considerable difficulties, and as regards analytic geometry of the plane we have not mastered much more than curves of second degree. An equation of the fifth degree cannot solve even a mathematical "god" such as that of Jeans.

Science deduces, in general, on the strength of a few presuppositions, and the results obtained always require a certain correction in order to approximate to reality. If the presuppositions are augmented, the difficulties of a deduction grow; and only when deal-

ing with the components themselves, is the large increase of connexions complicating the matter distinctly perceived.

The man who is using only the results of science may be very much astonished to learn that matters are not as simple as he expects them to be; and it may occur to him as to a certain Shah of Persia. He wondered about the modesty of the inventor of chess who "only" asked from the Shah a number of pieces of corn, viz., one for the first square of the chess-board, two for the next, four for the third, and for any further square twice the number of the preceding one. The result yielded so large a number of grains that they could not be procured in the whole of Persia.

It is the same with science. The difficulties accumulate to a gigantic degree the more we try to assimilate ourselves to the mixed-up conditions given by nature. The whole progress of modern astronomy was correctly expressed as "the fight for the tenth part of a geographical second." It is easily said "a tenth of a second," but what it means in practical use only the specialist correctly appreciates. In most cases we will have to content ourselves with approximate statements, and the same applies to all statistical data. In this spirit the statistical data can be denoted as approximate causality. The approximation becomes more reliable the larger the number of the respective observations.

In the scientific world there is no question of everything or nothing, but every step on the way to perception of nature is very important for us and serves our purposes. Any foot of cultivable soil which is won from the sea of ignorance is of greater value than the keenest speculations which in practice turn out to be soap-bubbles, bursting into nothing.

In any case we need not let ourselves be diverted from our course by the yelping of reactionaries, as "their yelping only proves that we are advancing!"

(Professor) THEODOR HARTWIG.

Prague.

Current Religious Propaganda.

To the wide dissemination of superstition by the press, the B.B.C. and other agencies, we have to add the use of learned societies for the purpose. At educational conferences we may get interspersed, among rational and valuable papers and addresses, fervid pleas for religious education in schools, extending to such stupid statements as the following: "Rightly considered, all education is religious education." A lecturer at the City of London Education Conference, attended by some 600 teachers, divided the curriculum into two sections, the literary—artistic—imaginative, and the religious. In the latter he included, in a rather hesitating way ("dare I venture on the word?")—"Worship." Not a word was said about the essentials, world knowledge, scientific, historical and geographical; nor was there any reference to the more practical side of school work, such as handiwork, domestic economy, laboratory work, or physical training.

Similar use is evidently made of the Historical Association by at least one fervent religionist. He offers to the branches lectures possessing titles which smack of religion. If these are selected by local committees the meetings afford fine opportunities for propaganda—the more valuable (from the lecturer's point of view) because among the majority of more or less orthodox "sheep" present at the meetings there will probably be a sprinkling of freer-thinking "goats"; and the advantage of preaching to the "unconverted" is, of course, proverbial.

At our branch we have had in successive years lectures by the gentleman referred to on "Reading the Old Testament for pleasure," and "Christian and Pagan in the Roman Empire."

The former consisted mainly of an entirely uncritical eulogy of old Hebrew literature, and its alleged beneficial influence on the Western World. There was no reference to the chief value of the literature, viz., as an indication of the evolution of a barbarian people and a barbarian god into those of the early civilized type.

The second lecture was much more objectionable, because it was the one chosen as a "special lecture for schools"; and a large number of secondary school pupils were present. The matter presented, of a quasi-historical type, was scarcely veiled inculcation of Christianity, and included practically no genuine history. The visions of Augustine and Paul were referred to as if they were objective realities; and the idea that miracles do not happen was dismissed with considerable emphasis and contempt.

The lecturer repeatedly referred to the persecution of the Christians, including the "bloody" Diocletian outbreak. But we heard nothing of the fact that such repression was not due to religious intolerance (liberty of thought being general in the Empire), but to other causes. This point is well put by Westermarck (*Early Beliefs and their Social Influence*): "That it (liberty) was denied to the Christians was due to their own aggressiveness, and also to political suspicion. Their proselytism disturbed the peace of families and towns. Their secret meetings aroused suspicion of political danger . . . They considered the Roman Empire a manifestation of Antichrist, they looked forward with longing to its destruction, and many of them refused to take part in its defence. The greatest and best among the Pagans spoke of the Christians as 'enemies' or 'haters of the human race.'" No hint was given of the persecution by Christians, nor of their sanguinary quarrels, extending to murder and massacre, on account of ridiculous theological differences.

The establishment of Christianity was represented as a natural result of its inherent truth and excellence. There was no reference to the principal reason for the "triumph," viz., the imposition by despotic Roman Emperors of punishments, culminating in the death penalty, for practising Roman religious rites, together with the forced closure of the temples. It will be recalled that decrees included in the Theodosian Code run as follows: "Let superstition cease. Let there be an end of this insanity of sacrifices. Whoever, in opposition to the law . . . shall dare to offer sacrifice shall be visited with condign punishment and speedy sentence"; "It is our pleasure that the temples be closed at once in all localities, that access to them be forbidden to all, and thus the opportunity of transgressing be removed from wicked men. We require also that no one shall offer sacrifice. And if any do perpetrate anything of this kind let him perish by the sword of vengeance." In 356 A.D., the decree was repeated: "We command that the death sentence shall be passed on any who are convicted of offering sacrifices or worshipping idols."

Thus, following the institution by the ancient Hebrews of religious persecution unto death, heresy in early Christian times became a capital crime.

J. REEVES.

SEX EDUCATION CONFERENCE.

A Conference on "Sex Education at Home, School and After," will be held at CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on Saturday and Sunday, July 1 and 2, at 2.30 and 6.30 p.m. Saturday, 2.30 p.m.: J. H. BADLEY (Headmaster, Bedales) on, "The Bearing of Co-Education on Sex Education." Dr. WINFRED DE KOK on, "Sex Education in the Nursery." 6.30, ALEC CRAIG on, "An Experiment in Adult Sex Education," and A. K. C. OTTAWAY on, "Sex Instruction Through Biology." Sunday, 2.30 p.m.: Dr. FREEMAN (Headmaster, Peter Symonds School, Winchester) on, "Sex Education in the Secondary School." 6.30, JANET CHANCE on, "Four Years in a Sex Education Centre." Questions and discussion at each session. Tickets 2s. 6d. for whole Conference, 1s. per Session, from Secretary, Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals, Room 21, St. Stephens House, S.W.1 (Telephone: Whitehall 2408), or at door.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

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

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—"Religion and Intolerance."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, June 25, Mr. L. Ebury. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, June 25, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, June 26, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Thursday, June 29, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, June 25, Mr. C. Tuson. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town 8.0, Wednesday, June 28, Mr. L. Ebury. Clapham Junction, Friday, June 30.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. McLaren.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, A. H. Hyatt, E. C. Saphin, and others. Wednesdays, 7.30, W. P. Campbell Everden. Thursdays, 7.30, E. C. Saphin. Fridays, 7.30, Bryant and Le Maine.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, June 25, Mr. S. Burke, A Lecture. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, June 28, Messrs. S. Burke and F. W. Smith. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, June 30, Messrs. S. Burke and F. W. Smith.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

OXFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Club, 22 St. John Street, Oxford): 7.0, W. W. Hawley—"Has Christianity Retarded Civilization?"

OUTDOOR.

ASHINGTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Morpeth): 7.0, Saturday, June 24, "Did Christianity Abolish Child Slavery?"

BOLTON (Town Hall Steps): 7.0, Sunday, June 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level, Brighton): 3.0, Mr. J. Cecil Keast, A Lecture.

BURNLEY MARKET, 7.30, Tuesday, June 27, Mr. J. Clayton.

DARLINGTON (Market Steps): 7.30, Friday, June 30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (The Mound, Edinburgh): 8.0, Saturday, June 24, Messrs. MacKwan and Buntin and Mrs. Whitefield. Freethought literature and *Freethinkers* on sale at above meeting. Will Edinburgh Freethinkers please support this meeting. West Regent Street, 8.0, Sunday, June 25, Mrs. Whitefield and R. Buntin. Notice of meetings to be held outside Glasgow will be given at this meeting. *Freethinker* and Freethought literature on sale at above and all other meetings.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, June 25, Messrs. C. McKelvie and J. V. Short. Grierson Street, Monday, June 26, H. Little and D. Robinson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, Thursday, June 29, A. Jackson and E. S. Wollen. All at 8.0 p.m. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at all meetings.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble in the Wirral, Sunday, June 25, Meet at Landing Stage for Birkenhead Boat, 2.30. Food to be carried. Return expenses will not exceed 2s.

LUMB-IN-ROSENDALE (near Bus Terminus): 7.30, Friday, June 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Platt Fields, Platt Lane, Manchester): 7.0, Mr. Sam Cohen (Manchester).

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, June 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWBIGGIN, 6.30, Sunday, June 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. Allan Flanders.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Pier Head near Marine Park): 7.0, Wednesday, June 28, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SWANSEA BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. G. Whitehead will speak on the sands each evening. If wet the meetings will be held at Branch Headquarters.

TRAWDEN, 7.45, Friday, June 30, Mr. J. Clayton.

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