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• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

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

Views and Opinions

War and the Churches

MR. DUFF-COOPER, the Minister of War, is not what his warmest admirers would call a man of genius, but even very commonplace individuals are apt occasionally to let out the truth, and are the more apt to do so when the truth is an uncomfortable one, than would men of greater ability. So, when Mr. Duff-Cooper rounded on the Liverpool Cathedral clergy for refusing to pray for Mr. Baldwin and his gallant company, and called the rebellious parsons "ignorant clergymen," he was making for trouble. Personally I should have preferred "unintelligent," or "wanting in understanding" to "ignorant," because a man may not be ignorant—that is he may know a great deal, and yet remain fundamentally a fool. Discerning readers may select plenty of examples of this in all walks of life. Common experience has registered this in the expression "an educated fool." But one has to be thankful for small things, and it is something to have a member of the Government saying anything that is truthful, in spirit if not in so many words, about the present-day parsonry.

Now Mr. Duff-Cooper has added yet another indiscretion to his list. In a recent speech he said, regarding those Church of England people who have been denouncing war and militarism:—

I know that those who are now denouncing the military profession are not the highest people in the Church, but we are entitled to know where the Church of England stands on this subject. I have been awaiting some leadership from those who do lead and do control. The time has come when those who are spreading these doctrines should have these doctrines denounced as heresy. For heresy I believe them to be. They should themselves be reproved by the leaders of the Church of England.

This is an important statement, despite its evident muddle-headedness. "Awaiting some leadership" might mean that Mr. Duff Cooper is waiting for some parson to tell him whether he ought to support war

or not, and for a Minister of War to be in that frame of mind is rather peculiar. Of course, it may be that as a politician he is only waiting for the clergy to tell him whether he is likely to have enough voters on his side if he follows their lead. Again, the desire to have anti-militarism denounced as heresy, may merely indicate that Mr. Duff-Cooper would like to have a lead in the forcible suppression of an anti-war crusade after the fashion of Mussolini and Hitler, to the latter of whom the King lately wished good health and prosperity. Or it may mean that Mr. Duff-Cooper does not mean anything at all, but is just angry.

* * *

A Sheppard and his Flock

Anyway, the remark about the ignorant clergy has angered many parsons, and the latest deliverance has brought the Rev. "Dick" Sheppard, Dean of Canterbury, on the scene. Mr. Sheppard has been advocating a no-more-war campaign, and boasts that he has a hundred thousand promises from men who will not take part in war on any account. I remember that the Rev. Sheppard was responsible, while acting as the chief religious propagandist for the B.B.C., for the statement that no more than 200 protests had been made against the broadcast of religious services. Pressed hard as to the truth of this, he admitted that he had, *quite inadvertently* omitted a nought, and should have written 2,000. I expect that greater pressure might have produced another nought. So, when Mr. Sheppard meets Mr. Duff-Cooper with the concession that "for centuries the Churches have given a modified encouragement" to war, and that "a large measure of blame for the present condition of the world must fall upon the Churches," I am not very much impressed, because I remember the broadcasting parson, and I reflect that it is a very old practice of the Christian clergy to let out a *little* of the truth when the *whole* of the lie cannot be told. It sounds very like the burglar who is caught in the act of breaking into a house, and who remarks, "All right, I'm coming. Its a perfect 'cop.'" Mr. Sheppard now believes, as a follower of Christ, that, "If the words and acts of Christ are considered as a whole," then according to Mr. Duff-Cooper, "Our Lord Himself was a heretic," and concludes, "What I cannot understand is the blindness of the Church to the fact that war is not only wicked, but futile."

But Mr. Sheppard is, I should say, in the neighbourhood of sixty years of age, a little more or a little less, and therefore was preaching during the war years. During those years he was just as "blind" as the rest of the clergy, of whom there is such an excellent record in Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy*. Mr. Sheppard was among the clergy who then helped to create that atmosphere which made a reasonably just peace impossible, and so laid the foundations for the present state of affairs. It is not

just, it is certainly not chivalrous, for Mr. Sheppard now to round on the rest of the clergy for being blind to the teachings of Christ, and accuse them of being false to the teachings of Christ. It would be no more than decent for him to say, "during the war I did all I could to keep the war going and to impress upon the people the righteous character of war. During these times of peace—or in the pause between the last war and the next, I am preaching the futility of war, but when the next war arrives I shall probably find that it is a righteous war also."

* * *

Church and War

Now I am not going to spend any time arguing whether "Our Lord Himself" did or did not condemn war. That in itself is a more or less unintelligent or dishonest procedure. If war is indefensible at any time (to take a very extreme view) or if the impact of organized force *must* be met with organized force, it really does not matter to the value of a brass button whether "Our Lord" agreed with either proposition or not. Making the rightness or wrongness of a teaching depend upon whether a particular person taught it or not, implies either childishness or rascality; and when the person involved is the mythical character of Jesus Christ, who has been made to teach almost everything, then, it is probably an indication of childishness and rascality.

The fact is that the Christian Church has in every generation, since it was strong enough to use force, preached war, practiced war, and been the greatest moralizer of war known to us. Mr. Sheppard speaks of the Church of England clergy whose views are identical with his own. How many? Certainly no more than a mere handful of the nearly twenty-thousand Church of England parsons. He also says that "The times when Christians were not allowed to bear arms have passed." This is a piece of sheer dishonesty. When were Christians forbidden to bear arms? Mr. Sheppard cannot be so ignorant of history not to know that it was the Christian Church that in Europe gave the profession of arms a specially "sacred" character. Look at all our own cathedrals and national churches. They are dotted with monuments to great soldiers and sailors. For every monument to a civilian in our streets there are probably three or four to eminent soldiers and sailors. The clergy serve, with military rank and naval rank as chaplains in the army and navy. They bless guns and battleships. They pray for our armies when they leave for war, and thank God for the slaughter they have made when they return home. Battle flags wave below the roofs of our churches, and not a single Churchman has said a word against these practices. Mr. Sheppard says no word against them, but will he publicly protest against the impetus given to militarism by parades and the like, and by the massing of soldiers at civic functions? Of course he will not. Nor will any of the other professional preachers. Mr. Duff-Cooper is right. To talk against war and militarism is, in the light of Christian history and Christian teaching, rank heresy, and it would be a better manifestation of Mr. Sheppard's sincerity if he resigned office in, and income from, a church which in its official prayer-book contains prayers for the success of our arms in war. "The teaching and example" of Christ "have been there all the time." And its complete worthlessness has been demonstrated by the fact that preachers have made it mean exactly what they pleased.

* * *

The Gospel of Humbugging

The humbuggery of the pretence of Christians against war does not end with what has been said.

The teachings of Christ have always been with us, but while it was considered profitable and fairly safe to wage war, the blessings of all the Christian Churches were given to it. While it could be made profitable religiously and commercially, the Churches were satisfied, and with the upper classes their sons were distributed between the Church, the Army, and Parliament. But things have altered, to-day it is not the wrongness, the barbarity of war, the degradation (gross or subtle), of the military life, that has roused Christians, it is the cost and the danger of it that has awakened their indignation, and the Christian Church is true to its practice of providing the meanest of motives with a moral covering in talking balderdash about the teachings of "Our Lord," and the blessings of peace. During the long reign of Victoria, which our lying publicists and historians perpetually referred to as "Victoria's reign of peace," although there were not ten consecutive years of peace in the whole of her reign, but as we grabbed a very large slice of the earth's surface, there was no great talk from the Churches about war being un-Christian. But war has come closer. War has become very expensive, and the Christian conscience is aroused. That is the secret of the talk of men such as the Rev. "Dick," the day of the nice comfortable, profitable war has passed, and so the teachings of Christ forbid it—now that war is expensive and dangerous.

But actually war is unchanged. Will someone explain the difference between the wars that *were* waged and the wars that *are* waged? Is there any real difference between a battle fought with ten thousand men aside and a million on each side? Is there any substantial difference between fighting tribes armed with old rifles and using against them machines guns or aeroplanes dropping explosive bombs, and Italy using tanks, machine guns, and poison gas against the comparatively unarmed Abyssinians? Is there any moral difference—or is there even greater personal suffering—between a war that kills ten thousand and one that kills a million? A wife suffers neither less nor more because a thousand other wives are suffering at the same time. What is the good of denouncing Italy in the way she is conducting the war when she is only doing, in substance, what every country at war does? Does not every army use whatever weapons it has irrespective of the kind of weapons possessed by the enemy? Is it not the policy of every army to get its enemy into a dangerous position, outnumbering him with men, if possible, establish a superiority over him in arms, if possible, and then bombard him at the least cost to itself? War is not like prize fighting, where men have to be somewhat equal before they are permitted to fight. War is war, and its essence is, as Admiral Fisher put it, to get your enemy down and then jump on his belly. The Christian conscience has been aroused because war is no longer quite so safe as it was for those who foster it; not because Christians have had either a new revelation or because Christian teaching forbids it. And the Christian clergy are acting as usual. To-day *some* of them are denouncing war, but to-morrow—? Well, to-morrow they will be at their old game, and when war does arrive, the clergy will be found acting, as General Crozier said, as "the finest creators of blood-lust we have."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Oh, yes, princes use God as a kind of bogey to frighten grown-up children to bed with, if nothing else avails; that's why they attach so much importance to Deity.—Schopenhauer.

The Abasement of Abyssinia

"Down to the present day we have been taught little else than falsehood."—*Landor*.

"Nature is made better by no mean
But Nature makes that mean."—*Shakespeare*.

ABYSSINIA has been very prominent in the news for a long time, and much ink has been spilt by journalists concerning that country. Not only have thousands of columns of print appeared in the newspapers, but books on the subject are beginning to cumber the shelves of the libraries and book-shops. Notwithstanding this enormous interest in this little-known country, there is one aspect of the matter which has, with a very few exceptions, been ignored, or slurred over, by the writers of all shades of opinion.

Abyssinia is not only a Christian country, but it has had the benefit of that religion for a longer period than Britain. It has its own hierarchy, including an archbishop, bishops, and clergy. It boasts its own churches, and has its own ritual. The Abyssinian Archbishop writes to His Grace, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as a man and "a brother in the Lord." It will be seen that this remote African people is in an entirely different category to the dark-skinned converts in other countries, who have been roped-in by the machinations of medical-missionaries. They differ altogether from the self-seeking rice-Christians of China, or India. The Abyssinians have had the inestimable benefit of the Gospel of Christ for more centuries than most other countries.

The contention of Christian priests in this country is that civilization and Christianity are one and indivisible. They pretend that their own Bible is the source, not only of our alleged spirituality, which has escaped popular notice, but of our material prosperity, which has excited the envy and despair of other Christian nations. If this contention were true, it would apply to Abyssinia quite as much as Britain. Actually the dark-skinned believers should be more progressive, more civilized, and more humane, than ourselves, because they have had the benefit of this "religion of love" for a longer period than we have.

Yet, in spite of the benefits of the Gospel teaching, the Abyssinians have always been a primitive people, heedless of the sanctity of life, and indifferent to the values of civilization. Slavery not only flourishes within its borders, but is a staple industry in that country. Abyssinian slave-traders have always been accustomed to raid neighbouring territory, and in 1925 the British Government took action and addressed strong remonstrances to the Abyssinians. In 1928 the Abyssinians paid heavy monetary compensations for such raids into British territory. These facts are recorded in White Papers issued by the Foreign Office of the British Government.

Terrible pictures have been drawn by Lady Simon, and by Herr Gruchl, a German traveller, of villages being raided for slaves, the older inhabitants being massacred, and the able-bodied and children being carried off in chains, or strapped to mules. Sir Edward Gregg, Governor of Kenya, has also testified to the terrible practices associated with this slave traffic.

Abhorrent as slavery is, the natural and perpetual habits of these primitive people are almost equally open to criticism. Indeed, Abyssinia is one of the most backward of all countries in the world. It certainly is not for the lack of the Christian Religion that this terrible state of affairs has existed for so many centuries. For scores of generations Christian priests have exercised a position of enormous influ-

ence in Ethiopia. And yet under the influence of this Church of Christ the unfortunate Abyssinians remain among the most brutal and degraded of mankind. Judged by European standards, their social life is an anachronism, a survival of savagery. The Abyssinians are in a somewhat similar position to that of our remote ancestors of two thousand years ago. Whilst the rest of the world, with a few exceptions, has progressed towards a higher life they have stagnated. True, the Abyssinian people have a good share of the simple virtues. They are brave and temperate. Yet they have been trained up under despotism and superstition, and they are capable of the wildest fanaticism. They are proud of their deficiencies, and have an obstinacy in their very natures which often flames into something far worse in the face of opposition.

During nearly two millenniums of time these people have done nothing whatever for human advancement. Their architecture is as simple as that of the Esquimaux, their engineering as negligible as that of South-Sea Islanders. They are illiterate, and as cruel as the hyenas which infest their villages. Yet, according to Christian apologists, these Abyssinians should be in the very van of progress, instead of being the hindmost of the nations.

The argument that civilization is due to one fetish-book out of many is just nonsense. If it were true, the "Book of Mormon" is a far better guide than the Christian Bible, for the condition of Salt Lake City and surrounding country is beyond comparison superior to our own large towns, with their slums, vice, and hoodligans. When Ingersoll was challenged to reply to the statement of Christian Evidence mongers that wherever the Christian Bible was found there was civilization, he said that the same claim could be made as justly for the bowler-hat as for this Bible. Wherever the bowler-hat is found there is civilization; therefore it is due to the hat.

Is it not perfectly plain that fetish-books have nothing to do with the question? Abyssinia is a backward country simply because the inhabitants live in a remote, inaccessible country. Britain, on the other hand, is almost ideally situated, and the very extent of her commerce has resulted in the broadening of her ideas, and the amelioration of her manners and customs. All countries, all nations, and all empires, were built by great men, for it is only men of outstanding ability who can control policy. These men have held all kinds of religious views, and some none, hence it is foolish to regard one creed out of a hundred as being responsible for national greatness.

Abyssinia is being ravaged by war, made on that unfortunate country by a Christian power, whilst other Christian nations behave with supine inattention. And, mark you, who hears the pathetic cry of the dark-skinned humanity in anguish? Is it the thorn-crowned Messiah with his countless thousands of angels, or the Divine Mother with cohorts of cherubim, who come to succour the unhappy victims? Not at all! The unhappy and unfortunate Abyssinians are left to their own very slender resources, whilst the delegates of the League of Nations split hairs and chop straws in order to evade the responsibilities of helping their fellow-men and women in their bitter hour of sorrow and disaster. For any purpose connected with the real welfare of the world, the Christian religion might as well be dead and buried—as it will be when the people see the truth. Devoid of extraneous help, this Oriental superstition explains nothing, and adds nothing to human knowledge. It leaves a country in the meshes of devilry, darkness, and despair, as in the case of Ethiopia.

The Church in Spain and the Workers

So many novels are hailed as great by unintelligent reviewers that we pay no attention when yet another "great novel" is thrust on our attention. I have however, just read a novel to which alone of novels published in England during the last few years I feel impelled to attach the adjective "great." It is *The Olive Field*, by Ralph Bates (Jonathan Cape, 8s. 6d.). The richness of its descriptive passages, the depth of its characterization, the vigour of its historical conception, merit no lesser word. But I will leave the æsthetic qualities aside, and deal with other reasons why this is a book you should read. It will give you an understanding of the situation in Spain as no mere political analysis could possibly do; for it is written by a man who has perfect comprehension of the Spanish character, of the Spanish worker and scene. The earlier part is placed in Andalusia, in an olive-rearing district of the south; the latter part in Asturias in the north.

The book deals with the story of several workers; but the theme behind the events is the clash of the Roman Catholic Church and the secular spirit of awakening Spain which inevitably turns to revolution as the only means of throwing off the heavy chains of age-long oppression. It is here that the profound success of *The Olive Field* lies. It makes us understand the strength of the Anarchist movement in Spain as the fierce reaction from Catholicism; and without any effect of propaganda it reveals to us the birthpangs of the new order of social thought and action which is being born from the Anarchist revolt. This development is symbolized in the book by the development of the worker Joaquin Caro.

No one who wishes to realize what the Catholic Church stands for in Spain can neglect this book. It makes us feel what it has cost the Spaniard to break with his Church into the rituals of which the inner meaning of the old peasant-life had become incorporated. Thus Robledo, a Communist, in a drunken speech interprets the awakening:—

"The sufferings of Christ in the wilderness are a symbol of the hunger of winter and the unrest of brooding days. And though the symbols are remote from the first realities nowadays, and the externals of belief are thrown off, down in here," said Robledo, hammering his body, "there's an older rhythm that goes on. Easter is the spring festivity, of fertility, of seed that germinates and spunk that comes to life and blinks at the sun—and men feel a new hunger. And here is the Church taking hold of all this rhythm and saying it belongs to Jesus Christ—and down in his heart man knows it's a lie. It belongs to his labour and to his fields, and to the womb of his woman, it's something that's in the salts of his blood—and he rebels against the lie and their churches smoke in the sun. . . ."

The pictures of the various field-festivals, the attack on the Catholic procession on Good Friday and the burning of Christ, the horror of the shooting-down of a harmless deputation of workers by the police, the police-tortures, the hailstorm that wrecks the olive-crop, the pathos of the brutish mayordom, the heroism of the revolution in the Asturias which ends with the Catholic-dominated Government sending in the black troops to wipe out the miners and rape their women—all this leaves an unforgettable impression on the reader. Here is the stuff of life, here are the great events of history, interpreted with sureness and passion of understanding—events that occurred 1932-1934. If they do not profoundly interest us, if they do not fire our imagination and our social conscience, then it's time we gave up the ghost.

JACK LINDSAY.

Things Worth Knowing*

XXXIX.

GOD AND EVOLUTION

WITH regard to the earth, the Theist starts with declaring that God's purpose in creating it was the welfare of the sentient beings that inhabit it. . . . It was formerly supposed that they were produced by isolated creative acts; but we now know that they are the results of one orderly process of evolution. The theist of to-day admits this as fully as anybody; but he hastens to point out that organic evolution is a process which, instead of precluding the idea of divine purpose, implies it at every step, and could not take place without it.

. . . But when we come to examine this process of evolution in detail, what do we see? If we do not embarrass ourselves by regarding it as the work of an intelligent being . . . we shall see it simply as a process, singularly interesting. . . . But if we are invited to judge it as a process representing the procedure of a Being whose character is to be tried by any known intellectual standard . . . our opinion of the process of evolution undergoes a singular change. Though we still recognize certain features in it which suggest kindly intentions, what will principally strike us in it—and indeed we may say astound us—is firstly its cynical cruelty, and secondly its stupidity.

. . . What we find is this: that God has achieved the production of these living things and their adaptations by a process as little suggestive of skill or even of sanity as the shooting of a man with a rifle would be suggestive of accurate marksmanship, who, daily firing at random a thousand shots at the sea, should twice in his life make a hole in the same bathing machine. For at every stage of the evolutionary process, God—since the Theist compels us to speak thus—succeeds in his divine attempt to produce the result he is aiming at, only by making a thousand, or a hundred thousand, or a million attempts, successive or simultaneous, of which all but one are failures.

. . . The facts I refer to are so notorious that a word or two will be sufficient to indicate them. They are summed up in the statement that the process of organic evolution depends on, involves and is produced by, a sacrifice of the individual to the type. The men and animals whose exquisite adaptation to their circumstances fills the mind of the Theist with such wonder at the divine skill, are merely the siftings of an infinitely greater number whose adaptation to circumstances are so much the reverse of exquisite that they only come into life to suffer the pangs of death from cold, from starvation, or from the hostility of their exquisite brethren.

. . . Theistic sentimentalists will here no doubt interpose that the bitterness of the struggle for existence is now a thing of the past, and we are entering on the period of the struggle for the existence of others, when the true goodness of God will at last be manifested in his works. To this we may answer in passing, that if the struggle for the existence of others is the struggle for the existence of those who are socially not fit to exist, the practical misery in the world will be greater than it is to-day. But let us value this objection altogether. Let us grant that, by a struggle for the existence of the idle, the weak-

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

willed, and the incapable, we may presently turn the earth into a scene of millennial beatitude, we shall not have advanced a single step towards the vindication of God's goodness. Whatever may be God's future there still remains his past. If the lives whom in the future he is to bless are to be witnesses to his divine goodness, the lives whom in the past he has blighted will be still crying to him out of the ground; and since the Theist maintains that he is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the hand which is red with millions of years of murder will never cease to incarnadine all the seas of infinity.

There is, however, a point to be considered which we have hitherto left on one side. If only we assume that in addition to the facts of life which a scientific examination of the processes of nature reveal to us, there are other facts of another life, of which nature reveals nothing—a life in which wrongs of the present life may be righted . . . we have . . . rendered a vindication of his goodness imaginable. This is true; but the Theist forgets one thing, namely, that this assumption which refers to a future life, and the different manner in which God will deal with his creatures, when the natural order shall have given place to a supernatural one is not a conclusion drawn from the observed facts of nature. On the contrary, it is a doctrine imported from a totally different source, for the special purpose of changing the character which these facts present to us.

. . . If we are to deal with this question before us in any reasonable way, if we are honestly to enquire whether it is demonstrable, from observable facts of the universe, that God possesses the character which it is the essence of Theism to ascribe to him, we must previously purge our minds of all beliefs about the matter which have their origin elsewhere than in these facts themselves. We must divest ourselves of all question-begging reverences, and look the facts of the universe steadily in the face.

If Theists will do this, what they will see will astonish them. They will see that if there is anything at the back of this vast process, with a consciousness and a purpose in anyway resembling our own—a Being who knows what he wants and is doing his best to get it—he is, instead of a holy and all-wise God, a scatter-brained, semi-powerful, semi-impotent monster. They will recognize as clearly as they ever did the old familiar facts which seemed to them evidences of God's wisdom, love, and goodness; but they will find that these facts when taken in conjunction with the others, only supply us with a standard in the nature of this Being himself, by which most of his acts are exhibited to us as those of a criminal madman. If he had been blind, he had not had sin; but if we maintain that he can see, then his sin remains. Habitually a bungler as he is, and callous when not actively cruel, we are forced to regard him, when he seems to exhibit benevolence, as not divinely benevolent, but merely weak and capricious, like a boy who fondles a kitten, and the next moment sets a dog at it. And not only does his moral character fall from him bit by bit, but his dignity disappears also. The orderly processes of the stars and the larger phenomena of nature are suggestive of nothing so much as a wearisome Court ceremonial surrounding a King who is unable to understand or to break away from it; whilst the thunder and whirlwind, which have from time immemorial been accepted as special revelations of his awful power and majesty, suggest, if they suggest anything of a personal character at all, merely some blackguardly larrikin kicking his heels in the clouds, not perhaps bent on mischief, but indifferent to the fact that he is using it.

But we need not attempt to fill in the picture further. The truth is, if we consider the universe as a whole, it fails to suggest a conscious and purposive God at all, and it fails to do so not because the processes of evolution as such preclude the idea that a God might have made use of them for a definite purpose, but because when we come to consider these processes in detail, and view them in the only light of the only purposes they suggest, we find them to be such that a God who could deliberately have been guilty of them would be a God too absurd, too monstrous, too mad to be credible.

Religion as a Credible Doctrine,
by W. H. MALLOCK, pp. 164-178.

A Picture

I.

CLOSING my eyes I saw the vision again. It was too vivid to be merely a dream; repeated in too much detail for that vague slumbrous condition of mind, and I was not asleep. It had much the nature of a nightmare, both in its horrific sense of reality and the clearness of its component items.

I gathered more the impression of looking at a picture, painted on a large canvas, executed with verisimilitude, or rather fidelity to the conception in the artist's imagination, bodied forth in colour for the world to share his ecstasy.

In the foreground was the scene after a battle. Corpses of soldiers strewed the ground, together with the debris of broken rifles, bayonets and equipment.

The soldiers retained no individual personality. All had forfeited that when they donned Government uniform. Those prostrate here had lost semblance to human beings. Some lay without arms or legs, other were headless trunks.

Those bodily whole had great gashes or gaping wounds, blackening with mortification as they ceased to ooze blood. Numbers were not dismembered or showing other visible causes of death. Instead they lay in postures which were obscene travesties of normal attitudes assumed by men.

Bodies were doubled backward, forward and sideways. Limbs writhed into knots like agonized worms or snakes. Heads lolled upon shoulders, chests or backs. Faces twisted under arms or between legs, stared sightless skyward or lay buried in the soil. Some shot partially away had holes for eyes, jaws dropped on necks, teeth bared like fangs, cheeks rent open, and gullets torn revealing protruding tubes.

Faces which remained whole were perhaps more horrible. Eyes glared unseeing, or closed tightly as if to shut out the unbearable scenes around. Countenances bore expressions of hate, fear, terror, vengeance, lust, all the gamut of the vilest emotions and bestialities; but not one upon which those who had loved could look without shuddering.

Most prominent in the picture, where none could escape seeing it, lay a soldier disembowelled, his blood-streaked entrails littering the torn-up earth round him. His face was set in a look of intense excruciatingly pained surprise the eyes rolled upward, the lips drawn back till the gums were bared down from the convulsive fangs.

Farther on, the ground was blown by high explosives into holes where lay shattered guns among the dead. Beyond was a great stretch of barbed wire entanglements, a maze of criss-cross strands, upon which in places mangled corpses hung, their grotesque postures grim parodies of gymnasts or acrobats.

Behind this a vast range of trenches intersected, chequering and shadowing the surface. In many spots the parapet, sometimes the whole trench itself had been hurtled into space by the action of the explosives, leaving huge pits, where fragments of human bodies mingled with bits of metal and weapons, or heads and limbs protruded from the earth as if in ghastly vain effort to struggle out.

On a background of low hills, scarred quarrylike, the trees had been denuded of leaves and most branches by the firing, so that gaunt spikes and jags were all that remained.

II.

In my revelation the sky seemed an immensity of height and distance, of a texture and tone which no artist could hope to paint. Its colour was red, not the red of sunset, but of blood, an atmosphere of finely sprayed or rained blood. There must have been a cyclonic wind, for the upper air was moving in vast curves and swirls.

In those folds and curls appeared faces. Not angels. It was no place for them, not even to pity, because pity was futile. Not God himself. Perchance he had fled in shame to hide himself from the torture and torment of his creation.

Not devils, for men had exceeded aught they could ever wish or achieve. Many of the multitude of faces visible were worse than demons, crueller and wicker, beside whom fiends would appear kindly and benignant.

Among the myriad faces were many of children. A few innocent, smiling, plump, cherubic even; but far more were thin, worn, prematurely old, acquainted with suffering before they could lisp; wishing for death when they had barely started life.

Besides men's, women's faces were looking, with every variety of expression; sad, gloomy, insane, agonized, distraught, set with determination to endure woe, or mere passive acquiescence, or despairing.

A small number laughed or smiled, others grinned or grimaced, while some were mere distortions of human countenances, having received and marvelously survived all ills of which flesh and mind are capable of feeling. Fewer portrayed pleasure and fewest happiness. Occasionally were depicted jealous exultation at the misfortunes of others, or base triumph over some petty advantage gained.

Here and there showed the diabolic grin or unintelligent sternness of a dictator.

Faces familiar on the earth, regarded as great and nearly worshipped, were revealed in truer light as stupid, evil, perverse, callous, savage, or dully accepting their position of petty tyranny over their fellows as their due without thought or regret.

Ill-gotten wealth had left its mark on many of the faces, marks of gargoyle hideousness whose jaundice hue glittered goldly.

Like those who had become rich on man's ignorance and cupidity the faces of rulers and politicians gibbered through the lurid eddies, seeing the disastrous consequences of their misleading the instinct to follow and the mass trust of mankind.

Hardly one expressed joy or hope or prospect of betterment. Nearly all were heavy with doubt and bafflement; those of the common people from realization that they were powerless to help their kind, or indifferent to doing so, or their eagerness for improvement had been abused or exploited.

They who could alleviate the burdens of humanity were careless or contemptuous, or proud of how they had employed their fellow-men's capabilities and chances for their own aggrandisement:—

"I saw pale kings and princes too,
Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
I saw their starved lips in the gloom
With horrid warning gapéd wide."

A. R. WILLIAMS.

The Secret of Youthfulness

Why do some people keep so young whilst others grow prematurely old?

As this question applies to children as well as adults, years, therefore, would not seem to make us old.

To deal with children first. Children living in country districts may be said to be dull when compared with children living in towns. Town children are spoken of as being *wick* in Lancashire, *wick* meaning *alive*, or *lively*. Wicked may have been derived from *wick*. But if it was, wicked need not mean, *sinful*, *vicious*, *given to or involving immorality*, but may mean *playful*, *mischievous*, or *roguish*.

Wick children, in my youthful days, got more attention at school than the "supinely good."

How many lovely never-to-be-forgotten lines have many of us been fated to write out.

Our lines were chosen from the greatest sources by a heretical old dominy in a free school. Our youthful neighbours were not so fortunate. The Presbyterian schoolmaster gave his children such exhilarating lines to copy out, filthy to a hundred times, as:—

"In the cold grave to which we haste,
There are no acts of pardon passed;
But fixed the doom of all remains,
And everlasting silence reigns."

Punishment was always to be looked for, but pardon never.

And the tender-hearted Wesleyan schoolmaster choose his lines from the hymn book of the brothers Wesley, such as:—

"Hell is crammed with infants damned
Without one day of grace."

which showed conclusively that if infants didn't escape punishment, how then could older children hope to escape it?

Youthfulness was, therefore, not to be looked for amongst children in the districts covered by these two religious teachers, nor in any districts receiving similar treatment.

Now let us, for a moment, consider the adult.

(1) Living under the healthiest surroundings many rich people grow prematurely old, bored with a plethora of good things.

But let it be clearly understood that our question relates to normal people and not to morbid people however interesting they may be. Dr. Tylor tells us (*Primitive Culture*, Vol. II., p. 132) that "Persons whose constitutional unsoundness induces morbid manifestations are indeed marked out by nature to become seers and so-cerers." It is because of their "constitutional unsoundness" that we must pass them by.

(2) Living under the vilest conditions may be found poor people, healthy of body, of a lively disposition, intelligent, with a supreme disregard for material things. Their riches seeming not to "consist in the abundance of their possessions, but in the fewness of their wants."

What, then, is this secret of youthfulness that some people seem to possess?

The secret is a mental one. Shakespeare gave us the key to it: "Tis the mind that makes the body rich." The whole body mark you. George Henry Lewes impressed upon us, some seventy years ago, the interesting truth that "The whole man thinks." And that seems to explain why intelligent, poor men are to be found living healthy lives in filthy places whilst ignorant, wealthy men are to be found living unhealthy lives under ideal conditions.

New ideas are probably of more value than fresh air if one is in quest of good health. Change of mind is

necessary if one wishes to try a change of climate. And the latter is of little use without the former.

Thinking thus I would advise every Christian whose eye this may meet, if he values his health of mind and body to become a regular reader of the *Freethinker*. Should he take my advice I can assure him he may laugh at threats of "woe" henceforth, for our editor will see to it that he will not be found "asleep in Zion." Again the editor will see to it that if the scripture, "The truth shall make you free," is not fulfilled, the fault will not be his. Don't hesitate "Why, of yourselves, judge ye not what is right?" Need I say more?

And thus would I earnestly advise Atheists. Many young people have been brought up Atheists, and in a similar fashion to their fellow-Christians, have accepted their father's views without either study or question. Many of these young Atheists that I have met had one thing in common with their fellow-Christians, bigotry. This ought to be remedied. The young should be carefully taught, and even the old, want putting in remembrance of present truths.

May I remind the adult too that for the studious there lie many glorious passages in Christian literature. One may reject the subject matter, but the beauty and music of language remains.

Many readers have yet to learn of the part played by vowels and consonantal chords in the composition of great passages in both poetry and prose. A brief idea of what I mean may be got from Dr. Tylor's definition of a vowel (see *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I., p. 168).

"An emotional tone may be defined as a vowel, whose particular musical quality is that produced by the vocal organs, when adjusted to a particular state of feeling." "That," as Carlyle would have said, "is significant of much."

And now to conclude, I hope I have made the secret of youthfulness clear to all.

To keep age at bay as long as possible new studies must be taken up. Botany, or Field Geology for preference if they are new to you. These studies get you out of doors, and tend toward your rejuvenation. See that your mind is provided with fresh food, year after year. For "The Mind's the standard of the man." Your youthfulness will then be assured as long as it physically can be.

GEORGE WALLACE.

Acid Drops

Immediately after the rescue of the two survivors of the Moose River gold mine disaster the Salvation Army led the people standing round the pit in "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." All we can say is "Good God!" with additional emphasis on "good." What had they to thank God for? Was it for not preventing the disaster? Was it for not arranging for the other man in the pit to be saved? Or was it that God picked out these two for safety, and didn't care a damn about the other one? Or was it that these two survivors were so selfish that they did not care so long as they were saved? We refuse to entertain the last suggestion for a moment. The incident simply illustrates the stupidity and brutal selfishness that lie at the foundation of "pure Christianity." The two survivors, we feel sure, would have declined to purchase their own lives at the cost of the other. Man is so much better than his gods. That is why it takes so much of the energy of modern civilized believers to try and make their descendants fit for a decently humanized community.

We note from a contemporary that Professor Calhoun has written a book entitled *God and Common Life*. A reviewer says that "The writer's aim is to find the place for God." A great many other people have been trying for the same end, both to find a God and then to find

what he can do, or does, after they have found him. Perhaps the same object inspired the writer of a well-known passage in the Psalms, "If I go down to Hell, lo He is there also." That is certainly finding a place for God, and if said by us the expression would probably be thought blasphemous. It is, according to most theologians the business of God to send humans to hell. Was the Psalmist intending the retort caustic?

The Nazis have now banned the works of Goethe from all German schools. Goethe is, of course, the greatest of all German writers, and, needless to say, he was not only not a Christian, but actually disliked Christianity. Lovers of great literature all over the world naturally love Goethe's works, especially in England, where he has almost always been appreciated. Heine, who ranks very close to Goethe, has already been banned, and they have been followed by a large number of other eminent men in literature, science and art. Just as some stupid Caliph is supposed to have said, in destroying a great library, that the only book the world needs is the Koran, so we can see the Germans eventually boiling down their literature to one book, Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. It is difficult to believe the German people, who have, at least, some tradition of genuine culture behind them, standing for this sort of thing. But one never knows.

We were pleased to note that one of the principal writers on the *Church Times*, after pointing out how difficult it was to suppress a "romantic" untruth (a better description would be a Christian lie) once it had started on its rounds, disclaimed any sympathy for the famous watch story associated with Bradlaugh—and, for that matter, many other Freethinkers. It seems Mr. Hesketh Pearson has resuscitated it in his new life of Labouchere and, quite probably, he believes it really happened. Let Mr. Pearson take heart. He will be, by no means, the last to repeat it. It is extremely difficult to quash a good, healthy, Christian lie.

Our readers will be pleased to hear, according to the newspapers, that the rehearsals for the Coronation of Edward the Eighth next year have now commenced. Understudies of the King and the chief figures in the performance, with dummy copies of the regalia and other "props" are to be used, the horses, etc., with the chief characters will go through their preparation later. But there is a full year for these rehearsals, with every promise that the performance will be carried through without a hitch. It will be a most elaborate spectacle, although we think that time might be saved, and greater smoothness in the "show" guaranteed, if the management was handed over to Elstree or Hollywood.

Mrs. Harton, in her book, *In Pursuit of Perfection*, contends, according to a critic, that the present state of religion "is due to the mediocrity of the lives of those who profess the Christian Faith." Now, what else can she expect? The Christian Faith is the very type of both mediocrity and boredom. How can anyone, who believes in the tedious nonsense of Jesus and his absurd miracles and apostles, become anything else but mediocre? As soon as one loses mediocrity one loses the Faith—or at least goes a long way towards that ideal. Mrs. Harton's book is, we are told, "a simple manual of ascetic theology, written for lay folk." We expect precious few of the "lay folk" will read it or have much to do with "ascetic theology." Does not Mrs. Harton know that we are now living in the twentieth century and not in the thirteenth?

The Rev. "Dick" Sheppard is very hurt at the football crowds who sing "Abide with me." The hymn is far too beautiful to be thus desecrated by a mob of Cup Final fans—or for that matter by a set of high-jinks scantily clad review chorus girls in a theatre. The Rev. "Dick" does not think that because a "win-at-any-

price" spectator gets a cheap emotional thrill out of the hymn, it necessarily makes him as "good sort of a Christian" as a man who goes to church. The truth is that the people who get a crowd of "fans" anywhere to sing hymns are out to get Christianity in at any price—and the Rev. "Dick" knows it. Anyhow, what would he say to the crowd singing, after a few of the unavoidable accidents on the field, "Washed in the Blood of the Lamb"? Would not the hymn be fully appropriate?

Cinema News for April 20, in the course of a leading article, gives the Archbishop of Canterbury a rap over the knuckles with reference to the clerical desire to use the films as an instrument of propaganda—Christian propaganda, of course. It says that it is not the business of Cinema proprietors to work for "a change of heart," on the part of the public, that should be the work of the clergy. Quite a justifiable retort, and we are glad to see a smart rebuff offered to the attempts of the clergy to effect a larger measure of control over films than they already possess. All the same we hope that no "change of heart" will be effected by the clergy, for that is always and inevitably in the wrong direction.

Less than 10 per cent of Londoners attend public worship, and about 25 per cent in the Provinces, says the Rev. T. G. Moran of the Church Pastoral Aid Society:—

Many of our young people, though better educated than their forefathers, are scarcely conversant with the main facts of the New Testament, and there is little hope that their children will know even as much.

Well, as the main facts of the *New Testament* will only imbue people with an anxiety about their *post-mortem* existence and teach them little useful about their duties as citizens and the making of human life tolerable, the news to us, is good news.

Father Martindale, the well known Catholic priest, is "engaged in writing a full length life of Our Lord." "Our Lord" in heaven will no doubt be very pleased at another addition to the thousands of his biographies already in existence. However, we can forecast some of the points in this new life which will be definitely maintained. Jesus is both God himself and his own son. He is very God of very God. He performed every miracle in the gospels exactly as described. His was a Virgin Birth. He rose after crucifixion on the third day, and appeared unto many with a crowd of Jewish saints, who had also arisen from the dead. He flew straight up to heaven. He founded the Roman Catholic Church through Peter, a Rock. The Popes are his direct successors. The sayings and doings of Jesus are infinitely the greatest that have ever appeared on earth. Everybody who came before Jesus is a thief and a robber; and nobody can get to heaven except through Jesus and the Catholic Church. These points duly elaborated will make up a handsome volume and bring grist to the mill—we hope.

Another great addition to the growing numbers of famous Catholics in this country is announced. *The Referee at the Wembley Cup Final is a Catholic.* If this does not help to prove the Divine Nature of the Holy Faith in these strenuous days of sport, what else will? We trust the blatant unbeliever is duly impressed.

We hold no brief for any Christian sect as is well known to readers of this journal. Our stand is for free thought and toleration for other people's beliefs. We are, therefore, pleased to see that Councillor Cormack of Edinburgh was recently heavily fined and cautioned for a year's good behaviour on account of his alleged instigation of the recent anti-Catholic riots. The evidence at the trial showed that Councillor Cormack, as a Protestant, had little to learn from Catholics in downright in-

tolerance. If we are to have Christianity at all, it is necessary for its various sects, who mostly loathe each other, to bear with one another in praising and worshipping "Our Lord." Both Catholics and Protestants seem to forget this sometimes.

As an example of the kind of thing going on in Glasgow, take the case of the "Derry boys," whose purpose it is to frighten people as well as to fight Catholics. One of their jobs is to "go for" any Catholic who is friendly with a Protestant. Details are very piquant. One Catholic had the audacity to wear a green and white scarf, and he was told by a Derry boy to stop wearing it. Not complying, the gallant Protestant admitted later in court that he "struck him over the head with a bottle which broke, another man struck him with a chisel, and when they left him, the Catholic was 'out.'" The Derry boy is now doing time; but how splendidly does all this prove the civilizing influence of true religion!

The old-fashioned preacher lost himself in contemplation of infinitesimal details of Christ's words, acts and ideas. Even parts of His body seem to attract meticulous notice. Dr. Hutton's recent sermon on "I am with you," claims to know that Christ's FACE was of some occult importance. He goes so far as to say—in a vapid peroration—"Jesus Christ has changed the Face of God into His Own, with God's consent." What a queer lot this trinity seems to be, and what quaint amusements they indulge in, if Dr. Hutton is any authority.

We have never been able to understand the Nonconformist attitude of opposition to all kinds of amusements. Years ago, in evangelical homes it was the rule to ban cards, dice, dancing and novel-reading. Theatres and Music-halls were on the black list. To-day anti-Sabbatarianism has made gigantic strides, but we owe to the same Nonconformist-conscience the anomalous interference with the popular amusements which cannot be wholly suppressed. To open a theatre is still a crime all day Sunday. Cinemas must not open till the evening. The most "sacred" of sacred concerts must not use even a scarf, veil or turban to illustrate a commonplace recitation. The current number of the *Christian World* admits that "drink and gambling loom larger with us than sacraments and services." Why don't these churches mind their own business? No, rather, why do our citizens submit to the Nonconformist tyranny?

The *News-Chronicle* proclaims the advent of the Flat Racing Season, and recommends its own staff of Racing Prophets. Mr. Percy Rudd, its "Sports Editor," boasts that the *News-Chronicle* has a "growing army" of readers interested in its sporting predictions. It promises "Overnight hints on runners and their chances," "Wires from the stables," "Anticipations and Selections from Uno," and other tips, including "Naps" by a prophet "whose naps last season showed a profit unsurpassed by any." One day a week the "Religious Editor," Mr. Redwood, is allowed to tell us of the Divine Prophecies of Inspired Revealers of the Will of God. But EVERY day "during the FLAT season" Uno will reveal a much more "profitable" form of prophecy.

Bible contradictions count for precious little nowadays. Prof. J. A. Findlay slides artfully over the contradictions in the gospel narratives about the "Resurrection." "It would have been highly suspicious" if they had agreed, he says! "What we have in the gospels," says he, "represent very well the happy tumult of Easter morning when all had heard or seen something, and when everybody would be talking at once." With more frankness than discretion he adds, "the gospels were never meant to be biographies . . . they were gospels not histories." He might have said they are false whether as history or gospel.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTIE

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. J. WARREN.—Thanks for cuttings.

W. FORBES (Sydney, N.S.W.).—Thanks for paper. We have not succeeded in plumbing the depths of orthodox imbecility.

B. L. BOWERS.—We do not know, but we expect that any thin stick, Hazel or otherwise, will "quiver" if held in a particular manner in the hands. Try it, and do not be deceived by these "mystical" gentlemen.

A.J.D.—Very excellent letters. We are not surprised that the recipient of them refrained from any attempt to answer them in detail. In his position we should not have relished that job.

L. MATHEWS.—We disagree with you entirely. The resort to huge armaments is not at all an exhibition of courage and determination. It is fundamentally due to fear, and an exhibition of cowardice. There is far more courage shown in taking a course, which, while it involves risks, as do most plans, is risking something along lines that are not certain to lead to failure. Militarism, particularly under modern conditions is incurably cowardly. After all, Italy is only giving the world an unmistakable example of what modern militarism is.

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. AND H. IRVING.—Held over till next week.

For Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—W. J. Lamb, 38.

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 offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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Sugar Plums

Arrangements for the National Secular Society's Conference on Whit-Sunday are nearing completion. We publish the Agenda this week, and other details will follow in due course. Meanwhile, will Branch Secretaries send on to the General Secretary as early as possible the names of delegates, and also will those members who are not delegates, but who are equally welcome, let headquarters know what assistance can be given in securing accommodation for them during their stay in London.

There will be a reception at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, on Saturday evening preceding the Conference. Refreshments will be provided, and there will be a little music and singing, with plenty of time for conversation. Mr. Cohen hopes to be present, but he has a heavy day on the Sunday, and is still under medical control—to some extent. Still, he will most probably be there some time during the evening, and will be pleased to meet friends from all parts. The reception will be at 7 o'clock.

It is not easy, but always expensive, to advertise meetings in London. But individual members and London Branches can assist in this if they will apply to the Secretary at 68 Farringdon Street, either in person or by letter for a supply of the advertising slips that are now

ready. Please say how many are required and they will be sent on. But we ask London friends to get to work and make the Sunday evening demonstration the success it ought to be.

The following, from the *Cycle Touring Club Gazette*, has its interest for all who read with their brains as well as with their eyes:—

ROAD ACCIDENTS AND THE CHURCHES

Towards the end of last year, the Watch Committee appointed by the C.T.C. Council decided to approach the various religious denominations in an endeavour to enlist their support in attempting to reduce the casualties on the road. A suggestion was made that a special Sunday should be set aside on which the question of road accidents and road behaviour might be made the subject of an appeal from the pulpit. The result of the Club's enquiries cannot be regarded as satisfactory, as will be seen from the following summary of the replies received:—

Church of England. In sympathy, but cannot agree to set aside a special Sunday.

Roman Catholic Church. No reply.

Jewish Church. Would fall in with arrangements made by other Churches, and approves idea of special Sabbath.

National Free Church Council. Suggested writing to Free Church Denominations separately. This was done, with the following results:—

Methodist Church. Could not agree to special Sunday, as each circuit makes its own local arrangements.

Baptist Church. No reply.

Congregational Church. No reply.

Presbyterian Church. No reply.

In the circumstances the Committee were compelled to abandon the project, and it would seem that there is more hope of assistance from secular institutions in attacking the evil that stalks abroad on our roads.

Mr. Feldman, the Secretary of the Leeds Branch, writes that a determined move is being made to extend the Branch's activities. They are requiring a central room suitable for lectures, and as soon as this is obtained a library has been promised by a generous sympathizer, the volumes of which will be loaned out to members. Would all Freethinkers who are willing to help in any way, or can give useful information, do so now, as speedy help at the moment is valuable? Strengthening the Branch Membership is always the best way of doing this, and special facilities and inducements are available for new members. Anyone in Leeds, or the Leeds area, should get into communication with Mr. Feldman, at 58, Meanwood Road, Leeds, who is making a praiseworthy effort, along with his colleagues, to put Leeds in a worthy position on the Freethought map.

London readers will be interested in a "Peace Film Show," which is to take place at the Cambridge Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue, on Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, May 3. The films shown will be of an anti-war character—much to the disgust of the Censor, we expect. Prices range from 1s. 6d. to 5s.

As many of our readers are aware an International Committee has been formed in the United States for celebrating the bi-centenary of the birth of Thomas Paine on January 29, 1937. One of the objects of the Committee is to erect a statue in the United States, and contributions to this end are requested. About fifteen thousand dollars is required. The admirers of Paine throughout the English-speaking world ought to manage to raise this sum, with ease. Contributions should be sent to the Secretary, Paine International Committee, 317 East 34th Street, New York, U.S.A.

The Bethnal Green and Hackney Branch of the N.S.S. starts its summer campaign in Victoria Park to-day (May 3). Mr. R. H. Rosetti will be the speaker. The meeting commences at 6.30 p.m. We hope that East London Freethinkers will see that the Branch has a good send-off for its season's work.

The Pedigree of the Birds

BIRDS, butterflies and other winged insects awaken wide interest and gratify man's æsthetic sense with their wondrous beauty. But of all the flying members of Nature's majestic domain the birds are pre-eminent in variety, plumage, solitary or communal life, nest-building and song. There is also an appearance of pensiveness in many species of feathered bipeds, while, in others, evidences of vivacity are extremely striking.

The lark, the linnet, the nightingale, the melodious blackbird and the tuneful thrush, to name no others, have inspired our poets to pen many masterpieces. Shelley's enraptured ode to the skylark, and Keats' magnificent tribute to the vocal powers of night's lone bird at once recur to memory. Now that the vernal season is with us and the cuckoo and swallow have returned, many of our resident and migrant birds are already pouring forth their songs; and nidification is, or soon will be, the order of the day.

The old saw that a bird is known by its feathers is strictly true, for among all the countless organisms that constitute the living world the birds alone possess a feathered covering. Strange as it may seem, these feathers are modified scales which the earliest birds inherited from their reptilian forebears. The descent of birds from reptiles is now a well-established truth. Indeed, so closely related is the avine order to reptiles in anatomical structure that the famous morphologist, T. H. Huxley, included them in the Order Sauropsida.

What were originally regarded as the footprints of giant birds preserved in the Triassic sandstones are now ascribed to long-extinct reptilian forms. But in the Solenhofen slates of Bavaria deposited in the later Jurassic Period, the remains of an ancient bird have been discovered. These are the most archaic relics so far revealed of an unmistakably true avine organism. They are those of the *Archæopteryx*, an animal with marked reptilian characteristics, but without question a feathered bird. This archaic creature was about the size of a crow, but its upper jaw carried thirteen, and its lower jaw three pointed teeth on each side, which were solidly set in sockets. This weird bird also sported a long, lizard-like tail bearing feathers, while the free digits of its wing were provided with claws. Very little can be inferred concerning the bird's mode of life, but the formation of its feet suggests arboreal habits.

In later geological deposits other avine fossils have been preserved. The *Ornitholites* of Cretaceous Times retained their teeth, but the caudal appendage of the *Archæopteryx* had been discarded. Other fossil remains resembling those of birds of this period are now known to be those of *Pterodactyls*—winged reptiles that abounded when the chalk strata were formed countless ages ago.

In 1858 the remains of extinct birds distantly connected with the present day divers were found in Upper Greensand rocks in Cambridgeshire, while others came to light in Swedish deposits. But it was Professor Marsh of America who enriched palæontology with its finest series of fossil avian forms. These remarkable remains represent as many as seven genera of long-extinct birds, all of which appear to have possessed teeth.

In the succeeding Tertiary deposits the relics of birds show that the teeth of their ancestors had completely disappeared. They were as toothless as the 12,000 species of birds that now inhabit the globe.

Moreover, throughout the ascending strata that lead onwards to our own day, the birds are seen to approximate with steadily increasing closeness to those now living.

Many of these ancient forms were of titanic dimensions. The remains of the *Gastornis* were discovered near Croydon in Surrey, as well as on the European Continent. This giant was larger than an ostrich and equally incapable of flying. Another strange bird's remains were preserved in London Clay deposits at Sheppey. This archaic bird has been named *Odontopteryx*, and is remarkable for its quaint sawlike jaws. During the same period the *Halcorynis* flourished, a bird that foreshadowed the gulls. A further avine organism, the *Proherodius*, resembles the modern herons, while the *Lithornis* suggests both the raptorial birds—the predatory species—and the extant cranes. Others display affinities to the most extensively distributed and dominant order of present-day birds, the *Passeres*, which embraces the swallows, thrushes, finches, robins, and indeed all the perching avifauna scattered throughout the habitable world. As an eminent ornithological writer, the late Charles Dixon, says: "Its representatives are found in every clime, from the ice-bound Arctic Regions to the torrid zone; there is scarcely an island that does not boast a *Passere* of some kind. As a group these birds dominate the earth; in the grand scheme of evolution the present era is particularly theirs."

The Upper Eocene deposits of the Paris Basin are richly stored with the remains of partly-extinct birds. Cuvier and Milne Edwards studied these relics with meticulous care, and the latter described fourteen genera, seven of which still survive, while the others are all distinctly related to living forms. Many other fossil birds flourishing in Eocene times have been preserved in British and Continental deposits which tell the same story. In North America, also, avine remains of this period display close affinities to extant species, while a remarkable penguin of massive proportions standing seven feet in height was dwelling in New Zealand in Eocene days.

As the evolutionist would anticipate, the bird vestiges imbedded in the succeeding Miocene strata betray still nearer affinities to the feathered bipeds of our own day. Some of these types, however, are those of birds now entirely extinct, yet all without exception approximate in character to extant genera and species. Two immense birds, the *Phororhacas* and *Brontornis* flourished in Miocene centuries in South America. Several other genera have been revealed in the same region, and indicate a rich array of avifaunal life in that continent in Miocene times. Dixon in his invaluable volume, *The Story of the Birds*, observes that: "The most remarkable feature of these birds is the enormous size and massive structure of the head, in comparison with the limbs, although some of these are of gigantic proportions. Probably we shall never have any but the faintest idea of what these bird monsters were actually like in life, but that they must have presented a most impressive appearance with their huge laterally compressed beak, cannot be doubted. That they were unable to fly seems certain." Some European fossils of this period are clearly related to the storks and ibises.

The still more recent Pliocene deposits have thus far furnished comparatively few fossil birds, but those that have been discovered closely resemble existing forms, and are almost indistinguishable from contemporary types.

In the very latest formations, those of the Pleistocene, the avine remains not only display their intimate relationship with living birds, but their geo-

graphical distribution was much then what it still remains. Species of pelican, now no more, have left their remains in the fen districts of England. It is also an interesting fact that birds such as the capercaillie and snowy owl which have long since deserted Southern England have deposited their bones in "that wonderful necropolis of an ancient fauna, Kent's Cavern, near Torquay."

The cassowary and ostrich are two titanic birds that in some measure preserve the memory of the giant avifauna of the past. But several representatives of these enormous birds seem to have lingered in these enormous birds seem to have lingered in secluded areas until quite modern centuries. Madagascar and New Zealand were the leading island sanctuaries of these giants. Their remains repose in quite recent deposits, especially in the vicinity of native encampments, as also in drifts, caverns and swamps. In New Zealand various species of moa; a monster bird of prey, *Harpagornis*; and a Gargantuan goose are among these departed birds, all of which had lost the use of their wings, apparently through disuse.

The moas have aroused great interest and eminent anatomists have made their remains a special study, while Maori traditions preserve ancestral acquaintance with the living birds. Presumably when man invaded their island home the fate of these defenceless birds was sealed, for they soon became the prey of the savage hunter. How long they lingered no one can tell, but it seems a fair estimate that their extinction took place from 300 to 500 years ago.

The most celebrated birds of Madagascar are the now extinct *Aepyornithes*. The discovery of these birds' enormous egg shells preceded that of the remains of the birds themselves. Five species of *Aepyornis* have been determined, some of which were comparatively small birds. The larger types, however, were giants indeed, and in the Natural History Museum there is shown an egg-shell of one of these birds which measures some thirteen inches in length by nine and a half inches in breadth. Even larger specimens are in private hands. But here again the bird was exterminated by ruthless man.

The avifauna of Miocene Europe included various genera now confined to the tropics. Among these were parrots, a secretary bird, trogons, adjutants and others. The warm climate of Miocene Times probably accounts for this, but with the cooler conditions of the succeeding Pliocene Period, which heralded the coming of the Glacial Ages, the tropical aves either migrated to more genial climes or perished in the rigours of icebound Europe.

In conclusion, we may justly claim that all the evidence available concerning the lives of birds, both past and present, points unswervingly to the truth of evolution. The entire order of birds has plainly ascended from an early reptilian stock in a more or less direct line. The birds have evolved from ancestors which depart ever more widely from living forms as they are traced back into the ever receding past, until, at last, we encounter those semi-reptilian organisms which appear to be the primitive forerunners of the magnificent and now highly specialized avine order made up of some 12,000 species ranging in size from the ostrich to diminutive humming birds little larger than bees.

T. F. PALMER.

It is false that state, justice, law cannot be upheld without the assistance of religion and its dogmas; and that justice and public order need religion as a necessary complement, if legislative enactments are to be carried out. It is false, were it repeated a hundred times.

Schopenhauer.

The National Secular Society

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AGENDA

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report.
3. Financial Report.
4. Election of President.
Motion by South London, West London, Manchester, Liverpool, West Ham, Chester-le-Street, Burnley, and North London Branches:—
"That Mr. Chapman Cohen be re-elected President of the N.S.S."
5. Election of Secretary.
Motion by the Executive:—
"That Mr. R. H. Rosetti be appointed Secretary."
6. Election of Treasurer.
Motion by North London, West Ham, and West London Branches.
"That Mr. C. G. Quinton be re-elected Treasurer."
7. Election of Auditor
Messrs. H. Theobald and Co., the retiring auditors, are eligible and offer themselves for re-election.
8. Nominations for Executive.
SCOTLAND.—Mr. F. A. Hornibrook, nominated by Glasgow Branch.
WALES.—Mr. T. Gorniot and Mr. A. C. Rosetti, nominated by Swansea Branch.
N.E. GROUP.—Miss K. B. Kough, nominated by Newcastle and Chester-le-Street Branches.
Mr. A. B. Moss, nominated by South Shields Branch.
N.W. GROUP.—Mr. H. R. Clifton and Mrs. E. Venton, nominated by Liverpool and Birkenhead Branches.
S.W. GROUP.—Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook, nominated by Plymouth Branch.
MIDLAND GROUP.—Mrs. C. G. Quinton (Junn.) nominated by Birmingham Branch.
SOUTHERN GROUP.—Mr. L. M. Werrey-Easterbrook nominated by Hants and Dorset Branch.
SOUTH LONDON.—Mr. H. Preece, nominated by South London Branch.
NORTH LONDON.—Mr. I. Ebury, nominated by North London Branch.
EAST LONDON.—Mr. H. Silvester, nominated by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches.
WEST LONDON.—Mr. E. C. Saphin and Mr. C. Tuson, nominated by West London Branch.
9. Motion by Manchester Branch:—
"That the office of Vice-President be instituted."
10. Motion by the Executive:—
"That this Conference offers its sincere congratulations to its President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, on reaching the twenty-first year of his editorship of the *Freethinker*, and desires to place on record its sense of the debt that British Freethought owes to its courageous and continuous advocacy of freedom of thought, speech, and publication."
11. Motion by Birkenhead Branch:—
"That this Conference deprecates the undue time spent on Motions during the Morning Sessions and resolves:—
(a) "That the Annual Report be printed in the *Freethinker*, one week prior to the Annual Conference.
(b) "That a time limit be adopted for motions.
(c) "That Branch Motions should take precedence over individual motions.
(d) "That Motions which have a direct bearing on the activities of the N.S.S. should take precedence over Motions which affect the Society only indirectly."
12. Motion by West Ham Branch:—
"That Freethinkers be asked to offer the most strenuous opposition to the efforts being made by ministers of religion, to secure greater influence in the control of municipal government."

13. Motion by E. Saphin :—
 "That this Conference protests against the special advantages given by the B.B.C. to religious bodies for sectarian propaganda, while excluding all deliberate and direct criticism of religious teaching."
14. Motion by Manchester Branch :—
 "That the Executive Report be circulated among members prior to the Annual Conference."
15. Motion by Mr. L. Ebury :—
 "That in view of the growing tendency of the police in many parts of the country to interfere with and to restrict the rights of public meeting in the open air, this Conference urges upon all the necessity of preserving freedom of speech as an essential part of reform propaganda."
16. Motion by West London and West Ham Branches, and North Eastern Area, and Mrs. M. Saran.
 "That in view of the Education Bill, now before Parliament, this Conference, in protesting against the further extension of grants of public money for sectarian religious teaching, calls upon Freethinkers to press for the establishment of Council Schools adequate to local demands in all areas, and to the restriction of the education given in such schools to purely Secular subjects."
17. Motion by G. Bedborough :—
 "That in order to concentrate upon the promotion of the Principles of Secularism, all, save the first six items, should be eliminated from the Immediate Practical Objects."
18. Motion by Leeds Branch :—
 "That this Conference in the interests of the development of sound citizenship and in vindication of the principle of equal liberty for all, urges upon all Branches of the Society to promote intensive local activity with a view to secure the same liberty of opening for places of amusement or recreation on Sunday that exists on other days of the week."
19. Motion by Birkenhead Branch :—
 "That a Committee be elected for the purpose of revising the Immediate Practical Objects of the Society."
20. Motion by Executive :—
 "This Conference views with the greatest apprehension the suicidal competition in armaments now being pursued by the leading nations of the world, which demonstrates the breakdown of European statesmanship, and can but end in a second world-war; it also regards the existing international situation as a crowning proof of the ineffectiveness of the Christian Churches—which still represent the greatest single organized force in Europe—and their inability to contribute anything effective to the development of civilization; and, finally, affirms the conviction that only by the establishment of a non-national court which shall exert the same authority as is exercised by courts of law in civilized countries, can the era of national wars be brought to a close."
21. Motion by the Leeds Branch N.S.S. :—
 "That the abolition of the State supervision of Broadcast Services should be added to the Immediate Practical Objects of the N.S.S."

The Conference will sit in Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4. Morning Session, 10.30 to 12.30; Afternoon Session, 2.30 to 4.30. Delegates will be required to produce their credentials at the door; Members, the current card of membership. Only Members of the Society are entitled to be present. A Luncheon for delegates and visitors at 1 p.m., price 3s., will be provided in Anderton's Hotel. There will be a reception of Members and Delegates at 7 o'clock, on Saturday evening in Anderton's Hotel, and a Public Demonstration on Sunday evening at 7, in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London, W.C.1.

By order of the Executive,

CHAPMAN COHEN, *President.*

R. H. ROSETTI, *Secretary.*

Tu Quoque

SCENE: Lady inspecting carved Hindu gods, the property of her host.

Lady: "What is the name of that dreadful looking thing?"

Host: "That is an important Hindu god named Ganapati, the son of Siva and his wife Durgé."

L.: "Do the natives really worship such monstrosities?"

H.: "Yes."

L.: "Isn't it astonishing! Why they should have faith in such gods is beyond my understanding. When you were living in India and saw them worshipping, were you not concerned, witnessing people so ignorant, and so steeped in superstition?"

H.: "I cannot say that I was."

L.: "I am surprised. Presumably, you never attempted to persuade any of them to embrace the simple Christian faith."

H.: "I left that to the missionaries. By the way, have you ever studied the religions of the East?"

L.: "No. All I know of Hinduism is that its gods are fearful looking creatures; that an impostor named Mahommed founded the Mahommedan religion, and that Buddha is the solemn looking figure so often to be found in our museums, and totally unlike my conception of a real god."

H.: "That being the extent of your knowledge you must admit that you know practically nothing of these religions."

L.: "That is so, nevertheless I cannot believe in any religion which has for its gods grotesque objects which are an offence to one's reason."

H.: "That is because you have been reared in England. A particular religion, like an individual conscience, is usually the product of environment. If you had been born in India of Hindu parents, you would have adored their gods, and treated as rank blasphemy any reflection on their appearances. If your parents had been Mahommedans, you would have been a devout follower of the false prophet; if Buddhists, you would have been an adherent of that faith. Do you really think that the Christian religion can correctly be described as simple?"

L.: "Most certainly; so simple that even a child is capable of understanding it."

H.: "Even the dogma of the Trinity which says 'None is afore, or after other, none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal,' a mystery which the clergy, when attempting to explain, seek refuge in unintelligible jargon, the only effect of which is to make confusion worse confounded? Does not your reason reject this absurdity?"

L.: "No; because when I encounter dogmas difficult to understand, I make my reason subordinate to my faith. This is a Christian precept, and I derive comfort by observing it."

H.: "That attitude is impossible to reconcile with your assertion that the Christian religion is so simple that a child can understand it. Personally I feel that no question, secular or spiritual, can be settled unless the reason is fully satisfied, that is to say I am convinced of the supremacy of reason in all matters, including even the interpretation of abstruse man-made Christian dogmas. Christians employ their reason to reject religions which they deem false, and discard it to accept the "truth" of their own. To me such inconsistency is amazing."

PRO REASON.

Memory is to me a wondrous thing, and the power to summon up the past just as strange a gift, and a far better than the power of reading the future.

Anatole France.

Correspondence

AS OTHERS SEE US

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—When Athoso Zenoo says, "Whether Mr. Fisher be right or wrong . . . there is nothing in his letters to merit the implications of Medicus," I feel I must ask your permission to refer to Mr. Fisher's original letter. My article, by the way, was written about this and sent away before any of the subsequent correspondence appeared.

Mr. Fisher's letter had a background of truth that would have glowed through his far-fetched analogies, and given them point had they been presented with the rallery of an after-dinner speech. But the writer seemed quite in earnest and gave us the following:—

Medicine and religion in early times "traded" on the "terrors of unrelieved death," and now that religion was decaying, medicine would aim at inheriting some of its effects. The implication is obvious from the context, and I leave readers to judge of that picture of the Medical Profession. The public should know their doctors; let the verdict rest with them.

Then we come to this: As religion loses its grip, "essentially religious tendencies" become transferred to medicine. The writer gives as an example the principle of remediable imperfection at birth, and develops the idea that a true parallel exists here between religion and medicine. If there is anyone who does not see through this pseudo-classification, let him toy with the idea of the connexion between being born in sin and being born with a hare-lip, and the further connexion between getting redeemed through the blood of Christ and getting the hare-lip successfully operated on by a surgeon. Anyone still hazy is advised to glance at a text book on Teratology, and he will then discover that, far from going to religion for the idea of imperfection at birth, we need go no further than our eyes. As far as I interpret Mr. Fisher, Jenner is not so much to blame for vaccination as John the Baptist, for "the Medicine-man may have received the preliminary inspiration from the old idea." Ye Gods! But there is more to come. Next we get the parallel of religious and medical sacrifice. Vivisection is the rite of animal sacrifice, but sterilization and euthanasia may bring us up to date with human sacrifice. Here the writer seems to me to have done better than a Seventh Day Adventist. And so it goes on. The vested interests of the Church are shifted to the Pathological Laboratory, and the Medical Profession, from whose ranks a member is immediately removed for the offence of advertising, is accused of "spreading knowledge of wonderful cures." Finally, as if the writer were trying to see just how far he could draw the bow, we are told that the Profession has stepped into the shoes of the Church "more or less consciously."

When I read all this I am not distressed about the Medical Profession; I am distressed about Freethought and anxious about our reputation. And Athoso Zenoo's comment, with which this letter opens, does not help me.

MEDICUS.

VACCINATION

SIR,—In his article (*Freethinker*, April 12), Athoso Zenoo says he is convinced from logical enquiry that Vaccination is a superstition.

The *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ed. 1926, says that the facts are, that Vaccination diminishes the liability to being attacked by smallpox, and that smallpox is practically unknown amongst well-vaccinated children.

Now this was the considered opinion of the Royal Commission on Vaccination, of which Lord Herschell was President, and of which Charles Bradlaugh was a member. The Commission sat for six years, and on the evidence of witnesses of all shades of opinion, came to the conclusion that Vaccination is a definite safeguard

against smallpox. I do not wish to enter into a controversy, but as the *Freethinker* is used to attack vivisection, vaccination, etc., and it may be that people might be confused into taking these *personal* opinions as authoritative, it is right to put the above facts on record.

W. L. ENGLISH, M.B.

RELIGION IN THE SCHOOLS

SIR,—The Government's Education Bill raises important issues for all supporters of secular education. The elastic "exemptions" clause and the lack of any provision in the Bill for maintenance grants, even for struggling parents, have led to a widespread protest, which we can whole-heartedly support. But as Rationalists and Freethinkers we must surely concern ourselves with the clerical aspects of the Bill, which are receiving little public treatment except from the clerical position.

The present legislation which affords the recognized church schools public money to meet all their running costs, such as teachers' salaries, equipment, etc., is to be extended to sanction the giving of further grants towards the building of new, or the extending of existing church schools in so far as this is rendered necessary by the raising of the school-leaving age and reorganization under the Hadow System. This further concession means, of course, a deeper encroachment upon public money for private religious ends, and a strengthening of the Dual System of Education to which we are opposed. Although officially the representatives of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches have grumbled a good deal about the Bill, and are seeking in its present Committee stage to secure amendments which will make it even more favourable for their purposes, we should not be deceived by this strategy. At this Easter's N.U.T. Conference, the Rev. Walter Traynor confessed that in his opinion "the Education Bill is a good Bill," and he also mentioned that this was the "private view" of his Catholic Archbishop, Dr. Downey. Also the Archbishop of Canterbury has pleaded that the Bill should be dealt with gently, lest its present provisions should be lost by over-zealous churchmen demanding too much. These unsolicited testimonials should be sufficient reason to put us on the alert.

As most of our politicians in Parliament are afraid to antagonize the religious voters in their constituency (Mr. Thurtle being a notable exception) there is little hope of the clerical parts of the Bill being prevented from becoming law. But it must be noted that the legislation regarding the giving of building grants to church schools will only be *permissive*; the Local Education Authorities are to be the *final* authority determining in each locality whether or not grants will be given. What a wonderful opportunity this will provide for secular action! Are we making sufficient preparation to utilize this opportunity to the full?

At a recent meeting of the District Council of Secular Societies in the North-East Area, we discussed the situation, and concluded that we should set up a fund which would provide us with the finance to organize conferences and meetings on the question when the Bill became law. We intend to concentrate on those districts where our forces are strongest, and there to mobilize opinion in order to urge on the Local Authorities the advisability of re-organizing and improving Council Schools in preference to further subsidizing Church Schools. We should be able to obtain the active support also of progressive educational and teachers' movements and of sincere Nonconformists. But all this latent opposition will be lost unless we rise to the occasion and take the initiative.

In conclusion, we have two general requests. First, we would like to hear whether a similar course of action is being adopted in other localities. Secondly, we should like those who sympathize with this work, and who are unable to be active themselves, to give us financial support. All wishing to contribute to the North East District Council Fund, which we are setting

up for this specific purpose, should send their donations to Mr. A. Flanders, Garden Place, East Herrington, Sunderland.

JOHN T. BRIGHTON (*President*)

ALLAN FLANDERS (*Secretary*)

North East Group of Branches of National Secular Society.

ANNIHILATION—OR STERILIZATION?

SIR,—I have read with considerable interest the article hereon by Mr. A. F. Williams, and would like to ask him six questions:—

1. What exactly does he mean by the term "sterilization"?
2. What exactly is the process or operation whereby a male is sterilized?
3. What exactly is the process or operation whereby a female is sterilized?
4. What is the best age at which sterilization might be performed for each sex?
5. Who is to decide as to who is to be sterilized?
6. If, as Mr. Williams states "sterilization must come," what guarantee have we that it will produce any better results (in relation to the prevention of warfare) than he himself admits it is doing for Germany?

ROBERT WAY.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD APRIL 23, 1936

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Quinton, Hornibrook, Clifton, Saphin, Tuson, Silvester, Ebury, Preece, Mrs. Quinton, Junr., Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the last Executive Meeting read and accepted. The monthly financial statement presented. New members were admitted to North London, West London, Glasgow, Burnley, Leeds, Bradford, South Shields, and Accra Branches, and the Parent Society. Permission was given for the formation of a Branch at Accra, West Africa, to be known as the Accra Branch of the N.S.S. Plans were submitted for Mr. Whitehead's Summer Season lecture tour, and received approval. A report of proceedings at the recent International Congress of Freethinkers at Prague was before the meeting, and discussed at some length. Correspondence was dealt with from Brighton, Preston, Stockport, and the N.E. Federation of N.S.S. Branches. The Agenda Committee presented its report on the Agenda for the Annual Conference at Whit-Sun. The Annual Balance Sheet was before the meeting, and duly accepted. Speakers were appointed for the Public Demonstration to be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on Whit-Sunday evening, following the Annual Conference. The co-operation of Branches, and other details connected with the Conference were dealt with, and the proceedings closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on Thursday, May 21, 1936.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

Nothing in Aristophanes, or Petronius, gives a picture of more bestial depravity than the one drawn by the Cardinal known as the Blessed Prince Damiani, (1073 A.D.) of his clerical contemporaries. Unfortunately, the very nature of the crimes with which he charges the clergy is so monstrous that it is impossible, even "in the obscurity of a learned language" as Gibbon said, to give an idea of their character.

Cotter Morison in "The Service of Man."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Sunday, Mr. Leacey. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, Mr. Saphin.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, May 5, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, May 8, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30 and 6.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Wood, Evans and Tuson. 7.30, Thursday, Mr. E. Saphin. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Professor F. Aveling, D.Sc.—"The Christian Theory of the Human Will."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

LEEDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Trades Hall, Room C, Upper Fountain Street, Leeds): 8.0, Mr. H. L. Searle—"Ice Ages and the Evolution of Man."

OUTDOOR.

COLNE (North Valley Road): 7.30, Sunday, May 3, Mr. J. Clayton.

HETTON (Colliery, Hotel Corner): 8.0, Wednesday, May 6, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HUNCOAT: 7.30, Monday, May 4, Mr. J. Clayton.

LUMP-IN-ROSSENDALE: 7.30, Friday, May 1, Mr. J. Clayton.

PADIHAM: 7.30, Wednesday, May 6, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, May 2, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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