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

Views and Opinions

The Bishop Passes the Buck

THERE are a couple of Americanisms that will serve as a text for this week. These are "Passing the buck," and "left holding the baby." They both imply the same thing. A situation is created leading to unpleasant circumstances, and they who are responsible clear out leaving some poor unfortunate to face the consequences. I was reminded of this practice on reading an article by the Bishop of Chelmsford, Dr. H. A. Wilson, in his Diocesan Chronicle. He says:—

A civilization which can give birth to the shameful persecution of the Jews, the spraying of mustard gas upon Abyssinian villages, the lying and dishonesty which make a mock of treaties and agreements, is a civilization not worth preserving. Western civilization must be cleansed or else it had better make way for something better.

A panic closely resembling insanity is running like an epidemic over the whole world crushing out all the chivalry, decency and humanity in human nature.

We used to hear a great deal about the progress and enlightenment produced by civilization and education. These refining influences are now proved to be absolutely futile in effecting any real change for the better in human nature.

An unbiased judge would be driven to the conclusion that Europe is a much more savage place than it has been for perhaps 1,000 years.

It is strange, for instance, to read that during the Crimean War, Russia, the most backward nation in Europe, continued to pay the interest on its foreign loans to the very nations it was fighting against. This was not considered at the time to be anything extraordinary. The idea never seemed to have occurred that a nation at war was justified in breaking its pledges.

Massacres like those of the general population at Guernica, and women and children in Barcelona, have no parallels in past history; probably even the bloodcurdling records of the doings of the Tartars

and Huns had some redeeming spark of courage and pity for the defenceless.

History has taught us again and again that the only real basis upon which a moral appeal can be built is religion.

With certain qualifications I endorse all that the Bishop of Chelmsford here says, but differ very much with the last sentence in the quotation. I agree that history has nothing to compare with, say, the obscene villainy of what is going on in Germany. I am certain that if during the period when Gladstone set Britain aflame over the Bulgarian atrocities (although the Turk at his alleged worse never equalled the calculated brutality of German rule) there had been a pogrom in Russia, and if either the Turkish or Russian Ambassador had given a society reception here, there would have been a howl of indignation all over the country; nor do I think that in the existing circumstances the reigning monarch would have ventured on publicly sending a quite needless birthday greetings to either the Czar or the Sultan, as was sent to Hitler. Nor is it likely that in those days there would have existed a couple of Home Secretaries, one of whom (Sir John Simon), only after much pressure, granted permission for a number of children to be brought here out of the hell of Spain, provided the number was limited, and there was no charge on the funds of the country and the other (Sir Samuel Hoare) only agreed to allow entrance to the victims of the Austrian terror provided the country was sure that it would gain more than it would lose. Fifty years ago some little attention would have been paid to humanitarian considerations. Decidedly official leadership has undergone a marked deterioration. The people of Britain are as they were; but they are punished in their leadership. Both these Home Secretaries are very sincere Christians.

* * *

Back to the Bible

But I cannot permit the Bishop of Chelmsford to "pass the buck" in the way he does. If the villain of the European situation had been Turkey, I feel fairly confident that we should have had a quite different moral drawn. We should have been asked to note to what a pass Mohammedanism had brought a people, and to note (quite wrongly) that Mohammedanism was a religion of the sword. For it was the Koran, not the Christian's Bible, that said the pen of the scribe is greater than the sword of the warrior. It was the Bible and not the Koran which said that when God had given a city into the hand of his followers:—

Thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself. . . . Of the cities of these people which the Lord

thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.

Mussolini might well have argued, and I am sure the Papacy would have supported him, that when he sprayed poison gas on unarmed Abyssinians, and gunned women and children indiscriminately (as his troops are doing in Spain), he had the authority of God on which to act. And Hitler—in the case of the rape of Austria, in his wholesale robbery of people, and in the beating-up of young girls and old men, and in the starving of children—might have been charged with not having carried out the commands of God with complete thoroughness. He has done his best to carry out the teachings of the Bible. He has declared that "Providence" selected him for a "mission," and "inspired" him to carry out the work as he has done it. There is no doubt of the deep religious quality of Hitler's nature. The Bishop says he believes that a wave of insanity is sweeping over the world. That is mere picturesque language. With greater accuracy the Bishop might have said that the world was getting back to the Bible. Insane people are invariably religious.

* * *

Our Christian Heritage

The Bishop talks of the world as though it were one that had never known Christianity, or a world in which Christianity had never exerted any real influence. And that is not true. So far as war is concerned the world is—with the exception of Japan and China—a Christian world. And Japan was driven to develop its militarism in order to protect itself against the Christian nations, finding its chief instructors in war in Christian Britain and Germany; while China, with a teaching and a tradition of peace, is being driven into militarism in sheer self-protection. But of the European world it may safely be said that it is saturated with the Christian tradition and with Christian belief. Other currents there have, of course, always been, otherwise the world could never have recovered from the barbarism of the Christian ages; but as Dr. Inge and other writers have admitted, the humanitarian movement as a whole, and the movements in favour of the humanizing of life generally have grown up outside the Christian Church.

With these exceptions the traditions of Europe are solidly Christian, and Christians boast that for some fifty generations the predominant power and influence in Europe has been the Christian Church. And of the two villains of the piece at the moment, Italy is the headquarters of the oldest and the most powerful of the Christian Churches, while Germany, which was unduly blamed for the cause of the "great war," had as ruler an Emperor who just before the war was advertised in the English press as always having a Bible by his bedside, and who said, "Whenever I have to make any decision I ask myself what the Bible would teach me to do in that particular case. The Bible is to me the power from which I draw light and strength."

For at least fifteen hundred years the greatest single power in Europe was the Christian Church. It moulded the laws and controlled whatever education existed. It directed life from the cradle to the grave, and with penal laws met any criticism of the Christian religion. Even to-day, when the questioning of the Christian religion is no longer a criminal offence, there are multitudes of men and women, who for business, political, or social reasons are afraid to permit their anti-religious opinions to be known. Christianity figures in the courts, in Parliament, and is still protected by legislation. Putting on one side the

mainly unconscious influence of the permanent factors of social life, there is no influence of which people have been more conscious than that of Christianity. It will not do, therefore, for the Bishop of Chelmsford to "pass the buck," in this manner. Freethinkers may be criminals, but our enemies have not often accused us of being idiots. Christianity is, its followers boast, an historic creed. That is true, and that truth provides the condemnation of Christianity.

* * *

Not so Black—

The *Daily Telegraph* thinks that the Bishop has overstated the case against modern civilization. I am inclined to agree. There are to-day greater opportunities for destruction and killing in warfare than there were, and so the killing and the destruction is greater. One must admit that in past wars the fighting parties often committed whatever destruction was possible, and as Mussolini's airmen "enjoyed" (their own phrase) the bombing and gassing of Abyssinians who could not strike back, so in all warfare there is a corresponding delight in using the destructive power an army has to its full extent. And even as I write, Sir Henry Page Croft, M.P., issues to the world the information that General Franco—the author of the Barcelona massacre that has disgusted and horrified Mr. Chamberlain—is in his opinion "a gallant Christian gentleman." I might differ from Sir Henry, but the word Christian bids me pause. For when I remember the capacity of the Christian religion for moralizing persecution, and lying, and many other forms of ill-doing, I think this phrase of Sir Henry Page Croft may pass. I hope it will not be permitted to die. It is perhaps the one thing that may cause the name of Sir Henry Page Croft to live.

Even Mr. Chamberlain's "disgust and horror" at what is going on in Spain (expressed rather late in the day) manifests nothing more than a lack of imagination, and the absence of a proper sense of values. For the Barcelona bombing was not really worse than other things that have occurred for many generations. Whether fewer or more people were killed at Barcelona is not really of importance. Whether women and children were killed by the "gallant Christian" gentleman's bombing-planes, or whether they were starved to death, or died of disease as a consequence of a blockade, is not of importance. Mr. Chamberlain appears to count things from the standpoint of a short-sighted and not too intelligent tradesman. It is not the number of people who are killed that is of importance, neither is it the mode of death that matters most. Murder is murder whether the killing concerns one person or a thousand. Quantity is not the issue here, but quality. Mr. Chamberlain is disgusted, and helps to ease his conscience by striving to make the position of Mussolini easier.

Civilization has not failed; it is only struggling to adolescence. It may, in some future world-wide catastrophe, go under, but that will not be failure, it will simply be that it was not developed enough to withstand the thinly concealed brutality and savagery of men—and women. But there is a brighter side to the picture. The barbarities—in Spain—that have aroused disgust in Mr. Chamberlain, had also aroused disgust long before Mr. Chamberlain spoke. The brutalities, the denial of human rights, the disregarding of human decency by the Governments of Italy and Germany, the two nations against which our Government is rearming at frantic speed, have aroused disgust all over the world. If in those huge prison camps known as Italy and Germany people could speak, there would be an expression of disgust there also. And this is all to the good. Much has been done by British people to help the sufferings of people in Spain, and to help those who have escaped

from Mussolini and Hitler, and much more would have been done had the mass of the people been in possession of better information, and if they had better leaders than they have. I think that much of what is arousing disgust to-day would in the more Christian ages have passed without much comment. People, as a whole, are better than they were. They are more humane than they were. There is a greater feeling of internationalism than there was—although the "great war" has had in this direction its retrogressive influence. The need of the people to-day is two-fold. They need better leadership and a clearer understanding. And the British deserve better leaders, men who can apply a higher standard than whether we face financial loss or gain in obeying humanitarian impulses.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Continental Christianity

"The great, dominating, all-controlling fact of life is the innate bias of humanity, not towards evil, as priests tell us, but towards good."—*William Archer.*

"It is impossible for a man to be cheated by anyone but himself."—*Emerson.*

THE Christian religion is represented in this country by the so-called Church of England and numerous antagonistic Free Churches. Even in the eighteenth century Voltaire said, wittily, that England possessed "a hundred religions, but only one sauce." On the Continent of Europe, however, the Christian tradition is represented mainly by the Greek and Roman churches, with the many Protestant sects a long way behind. Indeed, Protestantism has made but little progress in Europe since the Reformation four hundred years ago. Both the Greek and Roman Churches are so old that it is disputable as to which has the right of priority. The two compete with the very ancient Coptic Church, which is the religion of the Abyssinian Christians, to whose intellects it seems peculiarly suitable.

Of late years both the Greek and Roman Churches have suffered extreme reverses, and it is very doubtful if they will ever again occupy their old proud positions in Europe. The Russian Revolution practically finished the mischievous activities of the Greek Church over a quarter of the globe. The Roman Catholic Church is in almost as bad a plight. Recent events in Spain tend to show that this most reactionary religious institution is losing its grip on the people in one of its most formidable strongholds. Germany, under Hitler, has actively repudiated the Romish Church, and the recent acquisition of Austria by the Nazis means that Rome will lose still another nation. This will be a bitter blow to the Catholics, for Austria has always been regarded as "the eldest daughter" of that Church, and with her loss goes the last hope of the realization of a Holy Roman Empire, a united Western Christendom under the banner of the Pontiff at Rome.

It is a curious position. In order that the priestly cup of humiliation should be filled to overflowing, all forms of Christianity, but *not* religion, are anathema to the Nazis. The Protestant Evangelicals go with their Romish rivals, for both are in conflict with Hitler's Neo-Paganism. Although German thinkers have attacked Christianity for over a century with originality and thoroughness, it has been reserved for Hitler, with a ready-made creed, to deliver the knock-out blow. This is truly remarkable, for Hitler has succeeded in scotching the "Galilean Serpent" where Bismarck and the doughty French Anti-Clericals failed.

What makes the paradox more complete is that at this time the Roman Pontiff, with a dole from the Italian Dictator, is rehabilitating his trumpery, theatrical court at the Vatican. In a space not many times larger than Hyde Park, the Romish Patriarch plays the sedulous ape to royalty and lords it with a stage army, his own currency, and most of the paraphernalia of kingship. O Punchinello! From Moscow to Madrid the power of Priestcraft is in eclipse, but Papa must still strut and posture upon his tiny stage. What a contrast to the time when monarchs trembled at his frown, and whole nations did him homage:—

"The moving finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on, nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

So far as Western Europe is concerned, the Roman Catholic Church has been the dominating Christian influence for near two thousand years. The events following the Great War 1914-18 showed clearly the ebb-tide of the political power of the Papacy, and the bitterest commentary on the daring double-dealing diplomacy, which, under Cardinal Rampolla, the Papal Secretary for two decades, sought untiringly for the means of restoring the Pope's temporal power. It was the artful and resourceful Rampolla who initiated the Romish Church's remarkable flirtation with Republicanism and also with Socialism. This wily ecclesiastic almost succeeded in nobbling the Democrats, but clerical intrigue destroyed him. When Leo XIII. died Rampolla would have been elected to succeed him, but for the veto of the Emperor of Austria, which was communicated to the conclave by a Polish Cardinal. While the Cardinals hesitated to accept the veto, Rampolla himself accepted it. Another Pope was elected, and Rampolla's dream ended. He lived thenceforward in retirement, and his diplomatic combinations crumbled into nothingness. With the outbreak of the Great War went the last hopes of power of the greatest and most powerful of all the Continental Churches. More recent events in Europe must arouse very doubtful feelings in the breasts of those who still cherish the belief in the infallibility and divine guidance of the Roman hierarchy.

The paralysis of this once all-powerful Romish Church has been a long process of degeneration. In the Ages of Faith she had her intellectual wing, her scholars, her statesmen, her thinkers, who found her borrowed mummeries and stolen creeds susceptible of mystical interpretation. The ignorant, bigoted, evangelical party prevailed gradually over these, and exterminated them by fire and sword, rack and gibbet, leaving themselves more ignorant and more bigoted than before. By slow but sure degrees the whole Romish Church was made over to their leprous likeness.

It required many centuries to produce this dire result. The very triumphs of Freethought throughout Europe indirectly contributed to their end. Every Romanist who became an "Intellectual" assisted this process. The more brains that were drawn out of the Roman Catholic Church the more did the huge mass part with its intellectual leaven and tend to flatten down to a mere conglomeration of superstition and intolerance. What constitutes the obstructive character of this Catholic Church to-day is the abyss which now separates it from the highest intelligence around it; the live, alert brains of the Freethinkers, and the leaden, moveless stereotype of two-thousand-years' old dogmas. To-day the voice of the Roman Patriarch, at which Kings once bent the knees, attracts as little attention as last week's newspaper. Even popes, unless supported by physical force, can-

not turn the clock back, and there is an ever-growing number of people who not only refuse to acknowledge Papal supremacy, but who repudiate Priestcraft in all its many manifestations.

In darkened and superstitious times the power of the Romish Church was enormous, but it has never been quite the same since the French Revolution. Not at any time since that upheaval has Priestcraft been so unquestioned and unresisted as in the Ages of Faith. It can never do its worst again. All antiquity was cruel, but the Romish Church excelled in cold-blooded persecution. Think of the thousands and thousands she burnt alive at the stake. Recall acts like the St. Bartholomew massacre. Imagine the horrors associated with the maintenance of nunneries and monasteries. The preaching of hell-fire, too, is in itself an unforgivable crime against humanity. Priestcraft has no longer a safe seat on men's shoulders, and the present discontent is but the prelude to a process of secularization in which faith will be engulfed in knowledge and childish credulity dismissed as unworthy of the mind of man:—

"The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear,
And naked shingles of the world."

MIMNERMUS.

Symptoms of Saintliness

Mr. A. J. RUSSELL is, we believe, a member of what is known as the "Oxford Group." He is the author of a book entitled *For Sinners Only*. It is to be assumed therefore that he is not only entitled to address sinners, but he knows a sinner when he sees one. Mr. Russell also *knows God*.

To increase the quantity and quality of those who know God on earth Mr. Russell has been giving the public a sample of his style in the *People*.* He writes:—

It is said that the worst men often give the best advice. And Ingersoll, the Freethinker, included in his creed something which all the saints have said:—

Happiness is the only good,
The place to be happy is here,
The time to be happy is now,
The way to be happy is to make others so.

But if that is the creed of the Freethinker, what is wrong with it? The Christian answer is clear and definite. It is impossible to be happy unless we are in tune with the Infinite. We are not on this earth for the purpose of becoming good, we are here to know God.

Mr. Russell, we repeat, knows God, and because of that feels entitled to place Ingersoll amongst the world's worst. This does not surprise us. Mr. Russell, knowing God as he does, is entitled to consider himself as one of the world's best, and as Ingersoll is emphatically the antithesis of Mr. Russell, it follows that Ingersoll is representative of the world's worst. We do not quarrel with Mr. Russell's conclusion. We see that from his premises it is unavoidable. We can even provide Mr. Russell with a little evidence to make Mr. Russell's case water-tight. We will judge Ingersoll out of his own mouth:—

What has our religion done? Of course, it is admitted by Christians that all other religions are

* *If I had Only One Sermon to Preach*, A. J. Russell. *The People*, March 20.

false, and consequently we need examine only our own.

Has Christianity done good? Has it made men nobler, more merciful, nearer honest? When the Church had control were men made better and happier?

What has been the effect of Christianity in Italy, in Spain, in Portugal, in Ireland?

What has religion done for Hungary or Austria? What was the effect of Christianity in Switzerland, in Holland, in Scotland, in England, in America? Let us be honest. Could these countries have been worse without religion? Could they have been worse had they had any other religion than Christianity?

And the things he said about those who, like Mr. Russell, knew God—the Saints!

Would Torquemada have been worse had he been a follower of Zoroaster? Would Calvin have been more bloodthirsty if he had believed in the religion of the South Sea Islanders?

Ingersoll, in his blindness didn't seem to think that knowing God had done Calvin much good.

Calvin was of a pallid, bloodless complexity, thin, sickly, irritable, gloomy, impatient, egotistic, tyrannical, heartless, and infamous. He was a strange compound of revengeful morality, malicious forgiveness, ferocious charity, egoistic humility, and a kind of hellish justice. In other words, he was as near like the God of the Old Testament as his health permitted.

What need is there for further witness? A man who is unimpressed with the saints, plainly writes himself down as a sinner.

If Mr. Russell had only one sermon to preach, he tells us it would include this sentence:—

Every honest seeker hitherto has found God.

If you are still puzzled stop the next parson in the street and ask him to help you. He will do it, for it is his job. But very few seekers ever think of asking him. He will probably show you that the reason why you have not found God already is that you are unwilling to forsake a particular sin.

It is evident that those who have found God may be saints, but may be, all the same, not nice to know. Ingersoll, then, the *probability* is, was unwilling to forsake a particular sin.

Ingersoll's particular sins were found out after his death. The Rev. Henry M. Field, a man born too soon to show such refreshing fruits of the spirit as the Oxford Group distributes, wrote an article in the *North American Review* on the occasion of Ingersoll's death. Mr. Russell will miss the marks of Grace in Mr. Field that he so zealously and successfully exhibits in his own person:—

The tales of his generosity had gone far and wide, and every morning there was a pile of letters on his desk from poor clerks starving in garrets, and young women who could not find any means of support. To such appeals he responded so bountifully that they came faster and faster. His friends warned him against the impositions that were practised upon him, and told him he ought to have a bureau of enquiry; but he answered that he would rather be cheated a dozen times than leave one poor girl to suffer, and perhaps die.

This was only one side of Ingersoll's character, which, from a purely mundane, lowly, point of view, impresses those who are not saturated with Godliness like Mr. Russell. Mark Twain was impressed in every other direction—but then Mark Twain would be. He had not the privilege of moving in such distinguished circles as Mr. Russell. He only mingled with men and women. Birds of a feather flock together, so all Mark could say was:—

His was a great and beautiful spirit. He was a man—all man from his crown to his foot-soles. I prized his affection for me and returned it with usury.

But then our Christian gentleman—who at a great price obtained his particular type of freedom—would say it was probable that Mark as well was addicted to a particular sin.

All the saints have said, we are told, what Ingersoll said about Happiness. Oh, how delightful it is to know God, and to practise so amiably this Freedom! All the Saints have talked in this way! Indeed! The saints, of course, have said everything, good, bad, and indifferent. They have done everything, good, bad, and indifferent. But most of them were so overwhelmed with finding God and, at the same time, finding salvation for their own shrivelled souls, that their happiness began and ended there. They had no time for making other people happy *here and now*. They had not even the inclination. True they had their own particular brand of happiness. They beamed, they preened themselves, they interfered with others—often their betters; they lied and blackguarded. Not all who found God so unmistakably as Mr. Russell, left their human qualities behind them. In some their endowment of natural virtues was so marked that they could even withstand the shock of having known God. The Rev. Henry Field, and thousands like him, are in that galley. But Mr. Russell belongs to the Old School. He does honour to the Oxford Group. He is a Saint. He knows God. He is in tune with the Infinite. And next time he stands up in a drawing-room and publicly confesses his shortcomings he will have something to talk about.

Just a final proof of Ingersoll's wickedness; five words that justify his eternal torture and the unceasing calumnies of the Saints:—

The Meek are often Malicious.

T. H. ELSTOB.

The Physician

"There seems no human thought so primitive as to have lost its bearing on our own thought, nor so ancient as to have broken its connexion with our own life."

(*Primitive Culture*, Tylor, Vol. II., p. 452).

As medicine-man of his tribe—priest, conjuror, and doctor—the progenitor of the physician first claims our attention. In his triune capacity he met with a success due, doubtless, to the commanding influence of his priestly part. Great medical feasts, attended by men only, were held in those days. They were also religious festivals. Feasting, dancing and singing took place, and an ornamental pipe—the medicine pipe—was smoked, whichever part he played, and this part being always complementary to the other two, success was assured. But such success even in primitive communities could not be expected to last long. Individuals specially gifted for the fulfilment of one of the three parts, to the exclusion of the other two, kept turning up and, making good use of their talent, made it increasingly difficult for the badly-equipped trinitarian to meet with aught save moderate success. Reading between the lines in ancient history many significant suggestions may be noted.

Hippocrates—the father of medicine—was born 410 B.C.; Celsus, say 63 A.D., was a successful surgeon; Erasistratus, of Alexandria, in the third century, introduced the practice of dissecting the human body;

the skill of the surgeon, according to Homer, 900 B.C. (some time after Solomon) was very remarkable; and the medical and sanitary arrangements of the Mosaic Law given in Leviticus, say 338 B.C., and Deuteronomy, say 588 B.C.; all give evidence of an awakening sanity. Strange is it not that a book so much misunderstood as the Bible, getting credit for a hereafter life, where everything denied here would be lavishly supplied there, should be known far and wide, while things necessary to our existence in this world, like the medical and surgical skill just mentioned, for instance, should remain unknown in countries such as this? But the physician had, in more civilized countries, been freeing himself from priestly domination for some time, was he therefore likely to meet with anything but priestly denunciation and misrepresentation? An office of such high degree, and emolument, was too good a thing to be easily relinquished. Here and there in literature written by or coming under the influence of priests, need we be surprised at strangely suggestive comments? Take for example the xxxvii. and xxxviii. chapters of Ecclesiasticus (say 290-280 B.C.) in the Apocrypha chapter xxxvii. some good advice is given—29. "Be not insatiable in any dainty thing, nor too greedy upon meats: 30. For excess of meats bringeth sickness, and surfeiting will turn into cholera. 31. By surfeiting have many perished; but he that taketh heed prolongeth his life." Then in chapter xxxviii. 1. "Honour a physician with the honour due unto him for the uses ye may have of him: for the Lord hath created him." Then the writer speaks of medicines that have been created out of the earth—8. "Of such doth the apothecary [our druggist may be a survival] make a confection; and of his works there is no end; and from him is peace all over the earth. 9. My son in thy sickness be not negligent; but pray unto the Lord, and he will make thee whole." Having left off sinning and done what he could, with evidently not the desired result, he is asked to 12 "give place to the physician, for the Lord hath created him: let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him. 13. There is a time when in their hands there is good success. 14. For they also pray unto the Lord, that he would prosper that which they give for ease and remedy to prolong life." Then as a last resource. 14. "He that sinneth before his maker, let him fall into the hands of the physician." After having neglected to do those things upon which the maintenance of life and good health depend, praying included, or in having done those things inimical to good health—having sinned—the physician must be consulted. Better examples than this might be given, but with much less sense attached to them.

Priestly illnesses, where place had been given to the physician, account for many guarded sayings. And one can understand this phrase as a significant jibe of the priest:—

"There is no health in us."

That a person of such high degree as the medicine-man—A Lord High Everything, like Pooah Bah—could be split into three parts is inconceivable. Each part is so interdependent. Some occupations stamp themselves on the faces of those who follow them. Horsey men for instance. The medicine-man had a face common to the priest, conjuror, and doctor. Each of these three men carry about with them an air of mystery—"a mysterious carriage of the body."

They no longer quarrel. The doctor has taken his stand among the social professions, along with the priest. They seem to have reached a friendly compromise, and the doctor has adopted for his maxim—"The diseased ye have always with you." But up to the sixteenth century they did quarrel. They

competed with each other in medicines, particularly charms, and two thousand years after other parts of the world were fairly civilized monkish remedies were dealt out at Religious Houses in competition with local leeches (doctors).

Monks haunted towns and villages. The ideal in Scotland then was "The clartier the cosier." Dirt and Monks reigned supreme. They meddled in everything—"A fly in every dish, and a friar in every man's business" was the order of the day. And their offices did not end with death. "Corpse presents" were called for immediately after death—such as the best cow of the deceased, the best covering of his bed, or his best body clothes, etc. And here are some of the common monkish remedies prescribed:—

Water of green hemp, good for headache and gout,
Wallflower water, for agues and stitches.

Nettle water, good for cholice, and "grief" of the kidneys, an old cough, and shortness of breath.

Cherry water strengthens the eyes.

Gilliflower water is good for "frenetics" and to comfort the brain.

Daisy water, to procure a good appetite and to profit broken bones.

Water of rotten apples, good for sores and cancers.

Water of doves' dung, good for stone and so on.

And in competition with these sparkling remedies—shades of Æsculapius, Hippocrates, etc.!—the skilful leech of this period prescribed the following:—

2 oz. long pepper, 2 oz. fennel seed, 2 oz. anise seed, and a living mole burned to death, all to be brayed together small as flour. Dose—as much as will lie on a shilling to be taken every morning in four spoonfuls of warm ale. For failing appetite.

Oil of swallows, good for fits.

A confection of frogs, good for ulcers.

Heads and tails of snakes, good for scrofula.

Blood drawn from the veins of a healthy young man of twenty years of age, put in a close glass vessel, then buried for sixteen days in horse dung, then distilled, and the product is to be employed to supple stiffened joints.

The last prescription does not say whether for external or internal use!

It would be an easy and a graceless task to fill a small volume with what doctors have said about each other. They do not need priests to quarrel with now. They quarrel with themselves. Some doctors and many laymen regret that most medical men should be little better than walking text books; think it deplorable that educated men should believe in Vivisection, vaccination, anti-toxins, insulin, etc.; that the only difference between many of them and the monks of the sixteenth century seems to be that while the monks prescribed rotten apples for the cure of cancer, they (the doctors of the twentieth century) prescribe more or less rotten calves, cod, or halibut liver as blood formers; and a few of them still prescribe powdered pigs' toe nails as a remedy for diabetes.

"We grew up with our religious beliefs," says a medical friend, "and when the scales began to fall from our eyes we could only with an effort believe that we had ever been so blind. So is it in our medical world. We grow up just as blindly. Some of us develop sight. Most of us don't. My fifty years connexion with the profession has convinced me that freethinking in religion is not more necessary than it is in medicine and surgery."

GEORGE WALLACE.

To grow up in a narrow creed and to grow out of it is a tremendous trial of one's nature.

Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Christian Civilization

CHRISTIAN: "If the inhabitants of the world were all good Christians, what a better place it would be."

Sceptic: "Why Christians? Why not good Mahommedans, Buddhists or Hindus?"

C.: "Because Christianity stands for peace, love, charity, mercy, justice, and the other moral attributes which help to mould the world into a place fit for a civilized humanity."

S.: "So do the other religions, or rather, like Christianity, they say they do."

C.: "You cannot compare Christianity with, say Hinduism. The latter brands the Hindu lower classes as inherently inferior beings, and makes no serious efforts to improve their wretched lot."

S.: "Admitting that the treatment of the Hindu depressed classes is far from satisfactory, it cannot be said truthfully that the Hindu religion is responsible for anything like the misery and destruction directly attributable to Christianity."

C.: "No Christian nation would deny spiritual consolation to any section of its people. I understand Hinduism is guilty of this crime."

S.: "That may be so, but there are more serious crimes than withholding spiritual consolation from certain people."

C.: "What are they?"

S.: "I refer particularly to the crime of intolerance which appears inseparable from Christianity. I will not oppress you with details of its religious wars and persecutions which have disgraced civilization from time immemorial, for they are available to all students of history."

C.: "You are speaking of the past. You must admit that Christianity to-day is free from many of its former blemishes."

S.: "If Christianity appears less intolerant than it was, it is due largely to the fact that those who reject its teachings are now sufficiently powerful to prevent it imposing its will upon them. They will not now submit to be the central figure in a triumphal fire to provide a Christian holiday. If, in the improbable event of the Christian authorities again being allowed to assume absolute control of spiritual affairs, I believe the change would be followed by a regime of intolerance almost as bad as anything that preceded it. The leopard cannot change its spots."

C.: "I think you take an exaggerated view of the situation. You appear to overlook the fact that people are more enlightened than they were, say a century ago."

S.: "The spirit of intolerance is so firmly planted in the Christian mind that it will, I imagine, take many more generations finally to eradicate it. Despite the decay of religion it still makes its presence felt offensively in many ways. The sceptical school-teacher has to be diplomatic in his dealings with his Christian superiors; the politician cannot afford to expound heterodox views to his constituents; the tradesman must act warily in his dealings with his Christian customers; the so-called free press dare not offend its Christian readers; the B.B.C. will not permit even a restricted programme of heterodox broadcasts; and even private individuals have to be careful not to offend the religious susceptibilities of their Christian friends if they wish to avoid social ostracism. Recently a Christian acquaintance informed me that if he possessed the power he would not hesitate to suppress all heterodox literature, including the *Freethinker*, and imprison or fine its writers according to the gravity of the offence. He would not revert to the stake for, in his opinion, imprisonment or fine would nowadays fit the crime, a conces-

sion on his part which reflects the slow advance of Christianity towards a more humane and intelligent conception of the attitude of its opponents. Whenever I see or hear a statement to the effect that all that is wanted to produce a satisfactory world, is an era of true Christianity, I am perplexed. Certain parts of the world have experienced nearly 2000 years of every conceivable brand of Christianity, and with sorry results, a fact which makes me wonder what exactly is meant by TRUE Christianity. In what respect would it differ, as an instrument of international peace and concord, from, say, true Mahomedanism, and would it be free from the taint of intolerance?"

PRO REASON.

Acid Drops

After reading Mr. Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons on March 24, we can only cry "Hats off to Mussolini." After careful, but unreported, conversations with Italy the Government "is satisfied" that Mussolini will "loyally assist in the execution of the British plan," and that he has "no territorial, political, or economic aims in Spain or in the Balearic Islands," and "His Majesty's Government place full reliance upon the intention of the Italian Government to make good their plans." We have sadly misjudged Mussolini. He has poured troops, munitions and money into Spain. He has lost thousands of Italian lives, but he desires nothing in return—neither economic exploitation of mines, nor strategic positions on the Mediterranean, nor a position that will enable him to wring concessions from this country in Africa or in the East, all that he wishes is to see the Church re-established in its old position in Spain, and to prevent being established there a form of Government of which he disapproves. He is the Chevalier Bayard, the Good Knight without reproach, the epitome of all that is chivalrous and self-sacrificing. He has no ambitions in Spain, nor any ambitions to use Spain as a means of gratifying ambitions elsewhere. Hats off to Mussolini!

This generosity and grandeur of Mussolini stands out the more brilliantly against the background provided by our Government in refusing permission to land to a mere handful of Austrian refugees from the Hitler Terror in Germany. We say a mere handful because Hitler is not permitting more than a handful to escape his net. He must keep Socialists and Jews in the country, otherwise he will have none to torture and none to blame for the privations inflicted on the German people. But, as Sir Samuel Hoare explained, we will do all we can, but we must see, on balance, whether it will pay us to admit these refugees from Fascist tyranny or not. What a pity that our own Government cannot rise to the self-sacrificing level of Mussolini?

So the prospect is rosy. General Franco is, on the testimony of one of Mr. Chamberlain's loyal supporters, a "gallant Christian gentleman." Mussolini is a man whose word may be taken, and who seeks advantage of no kind for what he has done in Spain; in fact, although "rumours" have reached Mr. Chamberlain that Mussolini has quite recently aided Spain, yet he is convinced that Mussolini has not "materially altered the situation" by sending fresh reinforcements. Last, but not least, Mr. Chamberlain has Hitler's assurance that he has no intention of invading Czecho-Slovakia. May we add that Hitler never invaded Austria. He merely went there on the invitation of the Nazis to prevent their being ill-used. And there are Nazis in Czecho-Slovakia, in Hungary, in Jugo-slavia. There are also Nazis in England.

The "Fancy as It Flies" columnist in the *Universe*, Miss Holywell, who makes a point of noticing "anti-

Catholic bias" in our newspapers and daily life, favours only that which is "inherited, sincere, and full of primal dewy innocence." She does not like and refuses to notice the "rabid frontal attacks on the Faith by Reds, Freethinkers, or Protestant lecturers of a certain type." She thinks that "Almighty God" has deprived "these people" of a sense of humour—so why notice their arguments? Perhaps the real reason why she refuses to notice them is because they are unanswerable. One can joke fun quite easily at some of the half-hearted anti-Catholic arguments which appear in our daily press, arguments put in such a way that they will not altogether offend readers; but a genuine frontal attack is another matter. And anyway, would even their most enthusiastic admirers grant either Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Belloc a sense of humour when they are writing about their religion?

The vigorous campaign, promoted by Roman Catholics to receive all the benefits they can under the Education Act for the building and continuation of Roman Catholic schools, has been in most cases a triumph for them. The education authorities in 27 towns have agreed to the 75 per cent financial aid—and it may be added this was done in many cases with the aid of the Labour Party. The proportion of Catholic teachers in these schools in some of the towns will be 100 per cent; this is the case in South Shields, York, and Stretford, Lanes. Bristol agreed to the maximum grant after a "stormy" debate, the Catholics winning by 10 votes. These schools will cost £45,000, the city granting £33,750, of which the Board of Education will contribute £16,785. Thus, in the year of grace 1938 the outworn creeds of a dying religion about which even its believers cannot agree, will be taught to children as truth, and this at the public expense!

Mr. Isaac Foot, who once was Liberal M.P. for Plymouth, broadcasted, the other week, a variation of the famous saying attributed to Queen Victoria—that the Bible was the source of England's greatness. He said:—

We could survive the breakaway of the Empire, or any blows inflicted by an external enemy, but without the New Testament nothing could save us from becoming derelict.

It would be pathetic were it not amusing. One can only point out that the vast majority of the people in this country simply don't know the New Testament—that is, really *know* it in the proper sense. Merely to gabble about Jesus is not knowing it. In proof of this, one has only got to read how pathetically the Bishops are bewailing all over the country the vast ignorance of the people in Biblical matters. Whether this is causing the Empire to become "derelict," or our handling of foreign affairs, is a matter of opinion.

The "richest" comment on the recent German rape of Austria occurs in the *Catholic Herald*—a journal which has consistently defended Franco against the Spanish loyalists. Here is a case—Austria—where the victim is a Catholic country invaded by a non-Catholic enemy. The Vatican itself says "The fate of religion in Austria is causing great concern" (note, it is the fate of Religion, not of Austria, which causes the Vatican concern). And this is what the *Catholic Herald* says:—

It is important to distinguish between the political consequences to European peace of the *coup*, which have been exaggerated by the class-conscious, and the consequences to the Church whose true remedies are only spiritual.

What do a few million human beings matter?

The movement against the holding of the International Conference in London appears to have taken on a slightly new form. The deliberate lie that the Conference was to be held at the command of Moscow, which was supplying funds for the purpose, having broken down, the movement appears to have become largely a matter for Mothers' Meetings and minor Church gatherings among Protestants, and denunciations of any "god-

less" Conference being held at any time in so Christian a place as Great Britain. A protest has been sent to Sir Samuel Hoare by 60 women from the Worthing Branch of the "Women's World Day of Prayer," asking him to prohibit a godless conference being held in September. (Why wait for September? There is one being held in Glasgow in June). The sum of £5 12s. was subscribed as a kind of campaign fund.

The Bishop of Down and Connor, Ireland, says "It is a strange and tragic thing that a country which claims to be Christian should allow such a Congress to be held." We agree that it is strange for Christians to permit such a Congress. We can only say that a very large number of Christians would stop it if they could. But they won't and they can't. Godless Congresses are held every year and two at least will be held this year. Quite a number of resolutions have been passed by local gatherings of Christians, and there are many appeals for funds to prevent the Congress being held. But as there is no law in England to prevent any such Congress being held, we may regard these religious antics with considerable amusement. They will, however, serve a useful purpose if they serve to remind all concerned that the Freedom Freethinkers have won needs carefully watching. We have always had just the liberty we could demand, and the state of the world serves to show how quickly that liberty may be curtailed or disappear unless those that enjoy it prove themselves worthy of its possession.

One very curious consequence of the situation is that at the request of the Dean of Westminster, the Christian Evidence Society is arranging for a gathering of "Christian opinion" at Westminster Abbey on Sunday, September 11. That is the evening on which a public demonstration will be held by the International Congress, and the *News-Chronicle* regards it as the Dean's reply to the Congress. If the Dean will hold the meeting in the afternoon, we would not mind attending and addressing the gathering.

Times have changed. A few years ago few Ministers would have dared to condemn, even inferentially, the ghastliness and criminalities of Jehovah's commands to the armies of Israel to invade the lands and kill the defenders of countries and nations standing in the way of the "Expansion" of God's Chosen People under Dictator Joshua. To-day, the *Christian World* denounces the invasion of Austria as "Jungle Politics."

Now we challenge the *Christian World* to point to a single act of German Nazis—the beating of young girl medical students in universities for the offence of being either Jewish or Socialist, the robbery of non-Nazis, the ill-treatment of aged men and women, the determination to crush out all who will not worship Hitler, and so forth—that does not find complete justification in the Bible. And it is to get us back to the Bible that there is going on to-day in this country a special crusade.

The Rev. James Frazer, M.A., of Kentish Town calls his church, "A Church that Lives With the People." It must be a new sort of church. All we have known have been churches that lived on the people.

The Rev. Israel H. Noe, of Memphis, Tennessee, has broken into the news. He fasted 22 days without food and water, if we except his weekly sip of Communion Port, his feat being an attempt to prove that Man could live on spiritual strength alone. After that time he commenced to chew cashew nuts and take water and the pulp of oranges. He is now picking up bodily strength. What he set out to prove has not been proved. Can man then live on spiritual food alone? The answer is Noe.

Did they ever really live? asks George Edinger in the *News-Chronicle*, in considering Robin Hood, William Tell and other well known popular and mythical figures. It would have been more than interesting to have found Jesus of Nazareth included in his investigatory tour.

Elizabeth Miller, just before she died in the Georgia Receiving Hospital, Los Angeles, said:—

I had not expressed enough gratitude to the Lord for the things he did for me and I wanted to endure a lot of physical pain for Him.

She poured petrol over herself from head to foot and then set fire to her garments. Still, by her undeniable religious faith, she had presumably made certain of escaping the everlasting bonfire.

The Premier of Alberta, William Aberhart, is said to be praying God daily for a plan by which every inhabitant of Alberta may be given £5 a month. Aberhart claims to have been "chosen by God" to attain this result. It seems very absurd to find Aberhart AND God defeated by the ruling of the Canadian Supreme Court.

A writer in the *Christian World* tells his readers that Jesus is not "perfect" in any absolute sense. He is merely like a steam engine:—

A perfect engine is not an engine of such a kind that it could not be improved upon, but rather an engine which entirely fulfils the purpose for which it was made. It is somewhat in this sense that Jesus used the word "perfect."

We suppose this means it is a matter of "puff-puff." We have often thought this.

The Secretary of the Colonial Missionary Society is the Rev. A. Sleep, but he is by no means asleep when it comes to the propaganda of Christian Missions, although we are happy to see there is a deficit in the C.M.S. funds of about £2,000. Mr. Sleep is quite sure that "we hold our Empire as a sacred trust," and therefore "we cannot neglect" giving these missions financial support and thereby "injuring or retarding the foreign missionary work of the Christian Church." It looks as if notwithstanding God's Revelation of Himself to all the world, the actual cost of conveying this revelation to the world has to be found by human beings; a queer sort of "Divine Revelation."

"The average parson," declares the Rev. Ian Darke of Glasgow, "purrs like a contented tabby cat." Mr. Darke tells his flock:—

He wouldn't do that if he had to face the world you have to face every Monday morning. He would find he needs courage of a high moral order.

Many of our greatest problems would never have been if the Church's highly salaried professional leaders had the guts to face reality.

So far—so true! But by the very fact of his trade, a parson cannot "face reality." It is the attempts of certain parsons to bring "reality" into their rigmarole, which accounts most clearly for Mr. Darke's further complaint that modern preaching "has not enough God or Gospel in it to save the soul of a sparrow." Gods disappear before reality.

Fifty Years Ago

MR. SPURGEON has just been preaching at Mildmay Park on the inspiration of the Bible, and standing up stoutly for the comfortable doctrine of damnation. Among the many flashes of truth which came from his pious lips was this, that the accounts of the deaths of infidels were too horrible to read. We quite agree with Mr. Spurgeon. He was never more accurate in his life. But he omitted to add that those harrowing stories were written by Christians. Ask Freethinkers how Freethinkers die, and they answer "quietly and peacefully." They are absolutely ignorant of those distressing incidents which figure in orthodox stories. But ask the same question of Christians, and they answer "raving mad." The difference is great, and what is its reason? Why simply this. Freethinkers speak from facts and Christians from fancies; Freethinkers report what is, and Christians what ought to be; Freethinkers tell the truth, and Christians lie for the glory of God.

The Freethinker, April 1, 1888.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. SIMPSON, T. BARKER, J. HUMPHREY.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

G. TODHUNTER.—Mr. Cohen is writing you.

S. D. SCOTT.—Pleased to be of service.

L. MENZIES.—We have seen the letter from the Anti-Evolution Society. It is full of ignorance and untruthfulness. Present-day scientists are not opposed to evolution; they are only in doubt as to the efficiency of suggested factors.

F. TOMLINSON.—Why bother to contradict such statements? Mr. Cohen has refused scores of times to debate with people over whom he considers it not worth while wasting time, and he never issues challenges to debate. But, again, why contradict the statements that A or B gave Mr. Cohen a good thrashing? Everyone knows that whether in written or oral discussion it is the easiest thing in the world to give him a thrashing. Let it go at that.

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.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums

Mr. Cohen asks the indulgence of his readers this week. Lecturing on Sunday and Monday prevented his reaching the office before Tuesday afternoon.

The Manchester Branch of the N.S.S. brought its Winter Season to a close with a fine meeting in the Picture House, Market Street, on Sunday last. Mr. Cohen showed—and what is more important felt, little effects from his recent cold, and no lecturer could have wished for a more attentive and more appreciative audience. Mr. F. Monks took the chair with dignity and efficiency, and we believe there was a good sale of literature. We understand that the Manchester Branch will be sending a good quota of representatives to the Glasgow Conference, and we hope all other Branches will follow their example.

Monday night's meeting at Blackburn was also very successful. One good feature of the large audience was that a goodly proportion of it was made up of Christians, and although some of these proved by their questions to be still in the kindergarten stage, the others were obviously interested, and after a little chastening, quiet and attentive. Among the questioners and speakers were a couple of local clergymen, and others were in attendance. There was also a fair demand for literature. Mr. Jack Clayton took the chair.

Another example of petty magistrates ignoring the law with regard to affirmation. In the *Northern Daily Telegraph* there is reported a case which occurred in the Coroner's Court, at Rawtenstall, Lancs. A lady doctor in offering her evidence asked to affirm. On this the Coroner, Mr. F. Rowland, asked her if she was an Agnostic. The reply was "No." Then occurred the following conversation:—

The Coroner: You affirm a belief in the Almighty God?—That has nothing to do with the court, sir.

You're making it very difficult for me.—I have never taken the oath in this or any other court, and it is not necessary legally.

What is your objection?—I don't think it is the concern of the court.

Dr. Edghill went on: I have a religious conviction that I won't take the oath. I have been with you several times before, and I have never taken the oath.

The Coroner then said he would give a burial order, and adjourn the case for further consideration.

Doctor Winifred Edghill was quite within her rights in demanding to affirm; the Coroner was just as clearly using his official position to be guilty of an impertinence to a witness. It is monstrous that a Coroner should so abuse his position. When a witness asks to affirm, the duty of the judge or magistrate or coroner is to see that the affirmation is taken without any impertinent or unnecessary comment. The idea of adjourning the case to consider whether he should hear the witness is ground enough for someone to raise the question in Parliament. We would suggest to Dr. Edghill that she writes a strong protest to the proper authorities, and see whether some redress may not be obtained.

As our readers will have seen from the general press, the Home Office Report on Corporal Punishment has unanimously condemned flogging. This will offend opinion in most of our public schools, a lesser volume of opinion among comparatively incapable and lazy teachers in elementary and secondary schools, a great many very religious folk who disguise their sadistic promptings with a professed concern for morality, and those people who mistake violent denunciation for moral indignation and use it as a substitute for what is to them the serious and tiring work of thinking. Considerable support for physical brutality as a method of securing "discipline" will also be found, we suspect in both the Army and Navy. But if it were proposed that physical punishment should also apply to the higher ranks, we expect it would also find universal condemnation in these quarters.

But we were struck by a sentence in the *Church Times*, which singled out the Howard League as offering evidence "long ago" as to the inutility of corporal punishment as a check to crime. We have not the slightest desire to detract from the valuable work of the Howard League, but we suspect that the *Church Times* has been swayed in its selection by the fact that the Howard League contains among its members a proportion of avowed Christians. Otherwise it might have recalled the fact that the father of a more reasonable, a less brutal and more scientific view of crime and criminals would have been properly traced back to the Italian Atheist, Beccaria, and the advocacy of his teachings to Voltaire and the group of Freethinkers in this country in the early part of the nineteenth century. Beccaria's book, *Crimes and Punishment* is still available in English translations. In any case, how little Christianity had to do with the scientific study of crime may easily be seen if one turns to a modern history of criminology. Mr. George Ives' *History of Penal Methods*, published some years ago, is a book we can commend for reading.

It has been arranged that the Summer Outing of the West London Branch will be to Brighton, on Sunday, September 4. Adults, 10s. 6d.; Children, 5s. for Rail Fare, Luncheon, Tea and Pier Charge. All details can be obtained from Mrs. S. W. Edridge, 32 Turnpike Lane, Hornsey, N.8. Will any who are likely to join this outing please bear this date in mind.

The Gentle Art of Lying

II.

IF there is one outstanding claim which Christians have made for their converts it is that Christianity has regenerated them—that is, changed their lives for the better. It need hardly be said that in the case of the majority, the claim is untrue or at least exaggerated. Converts will lie about their former life and the converters will embellish the lies still further to heighten their effect and to advertise the value of their capture. This deliberate untruthfulness, or, at its best, distortion of fact, has been a characteristic of Christianity from the earliest times. Perhaps one reason was that Christianity was without a standard of veracity; actual proof was unnecessary in an atmosphere soaked with superstition.

As time went on the habit of untruthfulness grew stronger, and deliberate lying and forgery became part of Christian armoury. This is admitted by Christian historians such as Mosheim, Dean Stanley, and Dr. Giles. Mosheim indeed reverts to the charge very often. In his famous *Ecclesiastical History* he says: "A variety of commentaries [appeared] filled with impostures and fables on our Saviour's life and sentiments, composed soon after his ascent into heaven by men, who, without being bad perhaps, were superstitious, simple, and piously deceitful." Mosheim here was just a little naïve—or was he? The "simple" Christian writers who perhaps were "superstitious" and "piously" deceitful were not quite so simple as Mosheim would have us believe. They were unmitigated liars; their job was to propagate the Christian faith by hook or by crook—and the crook way was the easier way. This can be understood best if it be remembered that they had very little in the way of facts to go upon. Christianity was being "invented." Converts who could write, wrote gospels, or epistles, or commentaries, each trying to better the other. The four "genuine" gospels were four chosen, nobody knows by whom, out of a crowd, and have no more claim to be called genuine than any of the so-called apocryphal gospels. When Mosheim talks about the "impostures and fables on our Saviour's life," meaning, of course, that the New Testament Gospels are not impostures and fables, he is talking arrant nonsense. There is surely nothing sillier in the apocryphal gospels than the story of Jesus being carried about by a devil, or Jesus cursing a fig tree, or commanding a storm to stop. If these are not fables or impostures, the words have no meaning.

It is difficult to fix an exact time when the production of gospels, epistles, etc., slackened down. Perhaps it was when the pious Church Fathers began to write and discuss the various lives of the "Saviour" which were being circulated, as well as to explain the details of this life in relation to Old Testament prophecy and other theological hocus-pocus. Cassels in his Freethought classic, *Supernatural Religion*, said of them that "No fable could be too gross, no invention too transparent for their unsuspecting acceptance if it assumed a pious form or tended to edification. No period in the history of the world ever produced so many spurious works as the first two or three centuries of our era." It is almost impossible to accept any statement made by a Church Father, or about any of them having met somebody who knew an apostle who knew Jesus. These statements at one time constituted the very backbone of Christian evidence, and possibly do now in certain fundamentalist circles. The more scholarly Christian apologist in these days, however, prefers to rely on other ways of proving the truth of the Gospel—that

is, of course, about part of the Gospel. He knows that it is quite hopeless to try and prove some of the stories; they require too much faith.

But if the early Christians lied about their "Saviour," they certainly surpassed themselves when they came to write up the early history of the Church and its "martyrs." Here they found themselves in their element, and they were all the more fortunate in that they could lie quite unchecked. When they commenced to relate the stories of the "persecution" of the early Christians, they allowed their imagination full play; and it would not have mattered very much but for the fact that some of the later historians took them at their word, and actually believed them.

There is, of course, a famous passage in Tacitus which is used by Christian apologists, not only to prove the historicity of Jesus, but to prove the awful persecution Christians suffered under Nero. This particular passage has by no means received the respect it ought to have received, according to believers, by a good number of modern historians. It is admitted as authentic by Gibbon, but a number of books have been written since his day, which cast grave doubts on the passage in question, and some writers believe that the whole of the *Annals* of Tacitus are an unblushing forgery. It is very difficult to take sides as one should have a thorough acquaintance with Latin and all the circumstances connected with the discovery of the manuscript copy of the *Annals* from which it is claimed by some that all the printed copies are made.

The fact that no one mentions the *Annals* for something like 1,400 years, that not a single Christian apologist quotes it during that time, and that they rely for the Neronian persecution on other writers, is surely highly suspicious.

It is equally difficult to believe that numbers of Christians were put to death in Nero's time, mainly because it seems impossible to believe that there could have been many Christians in Rome then. After the fall of Jerusalem perhaps—there is then some justification for the belief that some of the scattered remnants of Jews and Christians may have found themselves in Rome. But before—it is very hard to believe that there was much travelling and emigration in those days. And it is an extraordinary fact that although the names of the martyrs in other persecutions have been kept by the "martyrologies," not a single name from the large numbers put to death under Nero has come down to us. Perhaps the reason is that when these stories of Christian martyrs were compiled, the writers could find nothing about the Neronian persecution.

There seems to have been no law directed against Christians as such, or against any religion or religious opinion. The Romans tolerated, in their vast Empire, all religions—perhaps believing them to be equally false or at least equally useless and harmless. That Christianity was allowed to be preached in Rome without hindrance is admitted in the Book of Acts. There Paul is shown to have dwelt two years in Rome in 63 A.D., "preaching the kingdom of God . . . with all confidence, no man forbidding him." And this was in Nero's time. If the story of Paul is true, then it is possible that he may have made converts among the Roman citizens; but how many can a man make in a year or two? Certainly there could have been comparatively few for Nero to persecute in 64 A.D.; and in any case if Paul was allowed to preach, it is difficult to imagine why his converts should have been put to death in the horrible manner reported by Tacitus.

Eusebius quotes Tertullian as his authority for the Neronian persecution; both writers seem quite un-

aware of the passage in Tacitus—which is surprising only if the *Annals* had been in existence. In fact when the matter is examined without the eye of faith, the only conclusion truth and logic can come to, is that if any Christians were put to death in Rome under Nero, it was probably for the same reason that they are put to death here and now in this country, and not at all for their religion. The whole story is a lie, and like many other lies, it is believed because it has been repeated so often and so loudly.

Christian truth has been likened to Punic faith; and of the Church historians, few can equal Eusebius for both credulity and falsehoods. Yet we are assured that Christianity regenerates Man. This really proves how one falsehood generates another.

H. CUTNER.

Rationalism in Ancient Hellas

THE discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans and his assistants in Crete have modified the older view that prehistoric Mediterranean culture was mainly dependent upon the civilizations of the Egyptians, Phenicians and Pelasgians. It is now evident that the Minoan culture of Crete made very extensive contributions to ancient Hellas in addition to those of Oriental and Nilotic lands.

Although many distinguished scholars have claimed for the Greeks a capacity for original thought unequalled by other races, this contention is no longer tenable. As the late J. M. Robertson notes in his *History of Freethought*, 2 Vols., Watts, 1935: "In the very dawn of history the Greeks are found to be a composite stock, growing still more composite; and the very beginnings of its higher culture are traced to the non-Grecian people of Thrace." And, as Prof. Gilbert Murray states, the early Hellenes so successfully established their sway that surrounding tribes were so impressed by their prowess that they imitated the Greeks and adopted their name. Sparta became Grecian while even the originally Pelasgian Athenians converted themselves into Hellenes and learnt the Greek language. Again, while inclining to the opinion that Oriental culture borrowed more from the Mediterranean than it bestowed, Prof. Burnet nevertheless allows that: "It would, however, be quite another thing to say that Greek philosophy originated quite independently of Oriental influence."

The comparatively secular character of Greek civilization distinguishes it from the sacerdotal cultures of Egypt, Persia, Babylonia and India. The absence in the Greek communities of a highly organized hierarchy is partly accountable for this. The head of the household officiated in sacred ceremonies, and it is justly urged that: "To the last, many of the Greek cults exhibited their original character as the *sacra* of private families."

From the absence of a sacerdotal order arose important advantages. There were no priestly dogmas, no distinct codes of religion and, above all, no Sacred Scriptures. The multitudinous mythology appears to have arisen from the circumstance that the various cults of the Greek City States were of local origin.

In prehistoric times sacred hymns were recited and sung to the people by the bards. Written epics came later, but very few have survived the ravages of time. Great reverence was paid to the works ascribed to Hesiod and Homer, but they never impeded independent thinking or penalized Freethought like the Bible in Christendom or the Koran in Moslem lands. Even the renowned Delphian abode of the oracle of Pythian

Apollo tended to disguise its civic influences. Thus with the evolution of a leisured class devoted to culture, the advent of an independent philosophy was inevitable.

The science and philosophy of ancient Greece dawned in the commercial colonies of Ionia in Asia Minor. Thales of Miletus (586 B.C.) whose doctrines betray the influence of Babylonian thought traced the origin of the cosmos to water. His standpoint was strictly physical, and he seems to have attached little importance to the gods. But the fragmentary references to this early thinker that have descended to us are open to discordant interpretations. Still, it is fairly certain that his system was pantheistic, and that he postulated a world regulated by law or necessity, and declared that the sun and planets were not divinities, but bodies similar to the earth which he pictured as a sphere reposing on water. He also studied meteorology and the science of the stars, and is said to have forecasted a solar eclipse, which clearly indicates Chaldean influence. Thales is credited with the introduction of geometry into Ionia from Egypt and, centuries before Christ, he proclaimed the Golden Rule as a supreme moral law. He was a pioneer introspectionist as his maxim "know thyself" proves, and his high standing was well recognized by George Henry Lewes when he stated that: "The position occupied by Thales is that of the father of Philosophy; since he was the first in Greece to furnish a formula from which to reason deductively."

Despite intermittent relapses, when once initiated, Greek rationalism made constant advances until the Roman invasion. The mathematician Anaximander succeeded Thales as the leader of the physical school of philosophy. He, however, rejected his master's theory that water constitutes the primordial substance and postulated in its place an infinite and eternal energy, and it is asserted that he advanced the theory of the earth's motion. His views were evolutionary, and he meditated over the possibility of man's ascent from some aquatic form of life. Indeed, his outlook was more modern than that of succeeding centuries and certainly suggests that a long anterior succession of sages whose very names are lost must have contributed to Anaximander's philosophy. It has been shrewdly remarked that this thinker's thesis "that man must have descended from a different species because 'while other animals quickly found food for themselves, man alone requires a long period for suckling: had he been originally such as he is now, he could never have survived,' is a quite masterly anticipation of modern evolutionary science."

In preference to Anaximander, Anaximenes is ranked by Ritter and Lewes as the true disciple and successor of Thales. This philosopher postulated air as the primary mode of matter from which all things were formed by compression. In an atmosphere our planet is suspended, he said. Speculation at this period—approximately 500 B.C.—seems to have been largely concerned with natural genesis, and thus put forth opinions decidedly antagonistic to current beliefs.

From the scanty testimony available it is a fair inference that these ancient philosophers were united in corporations which afforded them security from religious rancour. The Greek physicians became an organized body, and so were the adherents of Pythagoras. Moreover, the several philosophic sects of later centuries preserved the corporate system.

It is plainly apparent that from early times the gods of the crowd were scorned and rejected by many thoughtful and cultured Greeks. But unfortunately, the philosophers displayed little desire to emancipate

the multitude who remained deeply tarnished with superstition to the very last.

A contemporary of Anaximander, Xenophanes of Colophon was another pioneer Freethinker. A widely travelled poet and philosopher, he appears to have acted as a bard in various regal Courts, and sought repose in his declining years in the newly-formed colony of Elea. Fragments, merely, remain of his epic, *On Nature*, while the precise character of his teaching is still conjectural. That he affirmed the unity of existence seems certain, but his interpretation of Nature seems less monistic than pantheistic. Still, many Greek scholars have acclaimed him as the morning star of monotheism. A very eminent authority, Professor Burnet, however, considers that: "His contemporaries would have been more likely to call Xenophanes an Atheist than anything else."

Xenophanes is perhaps better known for his attack on anthropomorphism than for his monistic theories. He even denounced Hesiod and Homer as mythmongers, and he declares that: "They attributed to the gods all things that which men are of ill-fame and blame; they told of them countless nefarious things—thefts, adulteries, and deceptions of each other." Then noting that man paints himself in his gods, he scornfully says that: "Ethiopians made their gods black and snub-nosed; the Thracians say theirs have reddish hair and blue eyes; so also they conceive the spirits of the gods to be like themselves."

Even more striking is the passage from Xenophanes which Tyndall prefaced to his celebrated *Bel-fast Address*. There is one Supreme Power which resembles mankind neither physically or mentally, the sage urges:—

"But men foolishly think that gods are born like as men,
And have too a dress like their own, and their voice and
their figure:

But if oxen and lions had hands like ours, and fingers,
Then would horses like unto horses, and oxen to oxen,
Paint and fashion their God-forms, and give to them bodies
Of like shape to their own, as they themselves too are
fashioned."

Again, Xenophanes anticipates the modern conclusion that no ultimate fact in Nature is ascertainable, when he asserts that "no man knows truly anything, and no man ever will."

Heraclitus of Ephesus was another early Rationalist, whose scepticism seems more penetrative than any of his forerunners or contemporaries. Herodotus lived in a later generation, and in his case the critical spirit was very pronounced. Sophocles never openly assailed popular superstition, but he helped to secularize the drama by dealing with the world of men in preference to the contests and characters of the immortal gods delineated in the plays of Æschylus. Euripides proved more provocative and challenged the cults of his period in explicit terms.

Still, it is mournful to remember that, even in Athens, the attribution of physical phenomena to natural causes by Anaxagoras led to his trial for impiety and a sentence of death, which was only commuted through the eloquence of Pericles.

T. F. PALMER.

It is essential for the community and State that each citizen should be brought up to fully understand that his one duty towards himself and others is to make the most out of life, to develop in himself the possibilities nature has given him, and be as happy as possible. Life is in itself beautiful, and full of possibilities. Let the young man learn to see that, and not pine for what is not.—*Dr. Fridtjof Nansen.*

The Doctrine of Accommodation

(Concluded from page 204)

THE Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church are meant in their literal sense, and

General acceptance, implicit if not explicit, of the authoritative formularies, doctrinal and liturgical . . . may reasonably be expected from members of the Church.

But,

Assent to formularies and the use of liturgical language in public worship should be understood as signifying such general acceptance without implying detailed assent to every phrase or proposition thus employed.

Easy, isn't it? If thou canst believe, all things are possible. It takes a Christian to give literal but not detailed assent to a basic truth as a spiritual symbol corresponding to a subjective truth of an objective reality that may have no historical existence!

Even the Commission must have been doubtful of the way this bit would be received, for they add:—

Subject to the above, a member of the Church should not be held to be involved in dishonesty merely on the ground that, in spite of some divergence from the tradition of the Church, he has assented to formularies, or makes use of the Church's liturgical language in public worship.

Could anything be more accommodating, or less honest? The Articles, which are literal, can be kept provided they are regarded symbolically where it suits. You can, on vital points of the Christian belief, be a literal believer or a symbolic believer or a reverent agnostic; in fact, you can believe in practically any damned thing you like short of reverent Atheism. You can assent in your ordination to all the Church's literal creeds and doctrines, crude and otherwise, but with any mental reservations you choose on points you don't agree with; you can diverge from the belief and tradition of the Church on all things that matter; you can use language that you don't believe—and you still remain an honest Anglican clergyman. Once you've got God, all things are possible to you.

One other bargain with the devil for the souls of men is worth attention. As regards the authority of the Church itself, the Commission tells us:—

All Christians are bound to allow very high authority to doctrines which the Church has generally united in teaching; for each believer has a limited range, and the basis of the Church's belief is far wider than that of his own can ever be.

An individual Christian who rejects any part of that belief is guilty of presumption, unless he feels himself bound in conscience so to do and has substantial reasons for holding that which he rejects is not essential to the truth and value of Christianity.

The Church should recognize as necessary to the fullness of its own life, the activity of those of its members who carry forward the apprehension of truth by freely testing and criticizing its traditional doctrine.

It is presumptuous to disbelieve what the Church teaches unless you conscientiously don't believe what the Church teaches! The Church knows best, but the individual may know better. You should believe what the Church teaches unless you disbelieve what the Church teaches for reasons which everyone has always claimed who ever conscientiously disbelieved anything.

So the process of mutual self-defence and accommodation goes on: believe as much of the Church's teaching as you possibly can, say the Commission, and we hope the Church will reciprocate by blessing your freedom to believe anything else you blessed well like; only for Christ's sake let us all believe something or other.

Oh, but this is mere quibbling, some Christian readers might object. And so it would be if we were dealing with the attempt of a group of thinkers to find a "common front" on some secular subject. But we are not. We are confronted by the Christian Church in England; the Church that claims to have a revelation from God Almighty himself, and to have a special mission from God to interpret his revelation for him; the Church that tries to dominate our public and private life because of that revelation; the Church which dominates our schools and other public institutions, which dominates one day in every seven, which imposes an anti-social inhuman morality wherever it has the power, which blocks and obstructs humanity's economic, social, and sexual progress, which takes millions of pounds from the public annually, and dodges millions of pounds more of taxation and rate-assessment, which helps to engineer the abdication of kings who do not bow to its authority—all on the ground that it is the source of all truth and morality because it is the custodian of God's revelation.

Actually the Church deals with the institutions of religion as human things, but it refuses to acknowledge that it does so. The contrast between theory and practice shows the imposture of the Church. All its theory and its arrogant claims are based on Church and Bible as supposed divine inspirations and mouth-pieces of God; all its action is based on the fact that in reality it recognizes religion as a human dream, and that when it deals with Church, Bible or even God himself it is dealing with essentially human things, with fallible, questionable, changing products of the evolution of the human mind. The Commission recognize this in their concessions to the questioning spirit of man; and it is the attempt to deal with human products as divine institutions that leads Churches, men, and Commissions out into the religious wilderness of mental bewilderment.

When one considers the power and privileges accorded the Anglican Church, and on the other hand finds that even its own leaders cannot agree on what the Church or its precious revelation represents—and in a desperate bid for survival have to stretch their own doctrine in order to stay in the magic circle themselves—what can he say of such a Church except that it is a vast fraud upon the people it dominates? The Church isn't even an honest failure: it receives power and money because it claims to be the Divine keeper of spiritual truth and the source of virtue—power and money which, on its own showing, are obtained by what are known in less accommodating and respectable circles as false pretences.

RONALD STANDFAST.

The conceptions with which sociological science is concerned, are complex beyond all others. In the absence of faculty having a corresponding complexity, they cannot be grasped. Here, however, as in other cases, the absence of an adequately-complex faculty is not accompanied by any consciousness of incapacity. Rather do we find that deficiency in the required kind of mental grasp, is accompanied by extreme confidence of judgment on sociological questions, and a ridicule of those who, after long discipline, begin to perceive what there is to be understood, and how difficult is the right understanding of it.—*"The Study of Sociology," Spencer.*

Satanic Soliloquy

I.

TRUTH ABOUT TRUTH

WHAT is Truth? Let's be reasonable! Make me a modest cash offer, and I'll publicly affirm a belief in any Christian imbecility you care to mention. Double the offer, and I'll repeat the affirmation in conjunction with a lusty bawling of *Onward, Christian Soldiers*, and conclude with a rendering of the Thirty-Nine Articles, gabbled backwards in Yiddish, as a grand finale. After all, every man has his price. And all men, as God made them, are incurable liars.

HONESTY

To Hell with St. Peter, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, and the Archangel Gabriel for favours *not* received. Publication threatened.

TIT FOR TAT

I fear that an enterprising tribe of African natives, pestered in these days of disgrace by Christian colporteurs, who replied by despatching their chief witch-doctor to the Archbishop of Canterbury, with instructions to convert him and his flock to voodooism, polygamy, and cannibalism, though enacting a procedure indisputably logical, would nevertheless earn the disapproval of all right-thinking, and hence Christian, men.

DILEMMA

Is it, I wonder, required of a good Christian, to whom there has been administered a kick in the pants, that he present the other cheek?

THE NATURE OF FAITH

I verily believe that if all the Churches of Christendom paused in their internecine squabbling, and combined formally and solemnly to announce, say to-morrow at noon, that there was no God, much less an earthly offspring and a sacred spook, they would experience not the slightest difficulty in persuading most of their erstwhile dupes to subscribe to any substitutive nonsense they cared to set up. Such is the nature of Faith.

THE DOUBLE CROSS

Memory of the Copernician Catastrophe grows dim. But what of the Darwinian Débauché? It seems but yesterday that Bishop Wilberforce roared that Darwinism "contradicts the revealed relations of creation to its Creator"; that Cardinal Manning whooped that it was "a brutal philosophy . . . to wit, there is no God, and the ape is our Adam"; that a clergyman howled that it was "an attempt to dethrone God"; and that a brother witchburner wailed that if it were true, then "God is dead. . . ." And so on, and so on.

Well, the theory of organic evolution has swept all before it, including God. Thus the Bible stands exposed as "an unbearable fiction"; thus there has been caused "the entire scheme of man's salvation to collapse"; and thus for nearly two millennia, Christians, by their own showing, have "been duped by a monstrous lie." We lack only a divine epitaph. And surely this must be: Deicide . . . a *double* cross!

THE CHRISTIAN CREDO

That after an earthquake, tornado, or volcanic eruption has caused the death of fifty thousand people, including three bishops and a platoon of the Salvation Army, the only decent thing to do is to kneel and give thanks to God.

* * *

That it is better to give than to receive—especially counterfeit coin, a punch on the nose, and a dose of chicken pox.

* * *

That the penalty of gin is breath.

* * *

That Henry Louis Mencken will soon be safely in Hell.

* * *

That God is in Heaven, and all's well with the world.

P. E. CLEATOR.

Correspondence

PARASITICAL GROWTHS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—The article, in the *Freethinker* of March 13, 1938, by Bayard Simmons, on the tendency to human parasitical growths is interesting and suggestive. Undoubtedly, that tendency has been—and is—an important factor in Human Social Evolution. Still, there is something more fundamental than that: something which enables us to *understand* how such parasitical growths have developed and persisted—as long as they did, or do, persist.

Our friend, Bayard Simmons, wisely warns us against the danger of reading "history according to a theory which you have accepted beforehand." Too often such a theory is "justified" by a—more or less—"judicious" selection of facts. If the theory doesn't work out correctly, then, the selection and interpretation of facts has to be varied: never, the theory. That is a too-prevalent practice among some present-day Social Science Practitioners in Politics. It is a practice about which the *Freethinker* with a Scientific Atheist Philosophy has always to be on guard. Otherwise, it may prove to be a pitfall.

Among the horrible, confusing, and frightening, events that are taking place, there are some which no one seems able to understand. Many of the most capable have frankly admitted that they are unable to understand or explain some of these happenings. At the same time, from these very events may develop dangers of the worst description to us.

To me, there seems to be no difficulty in understanding these dreadful doings. There *ought* to be no difficulty in understanding them, to anyone who understands the Scientific Atheist Philosophy, of which our Editor is the leading exponent. The matter is too big to be dealt with in a letter; but, if I can "find" or "make" the time which is necessary for the doing of the job, I will try to make it clear. Always provided—of course—that Parasitical Growths, of one type or another, do not develop too quickly!

H. STEWART WISHART.

SIR.—Mr. Bayard Simmons and myself are certainly too much agreed on the nature of the enemy to quarrel over the precise relation of mind and body. However, it is perhaps the use of the word "precede" in the phrase "material states preceding psychic ones," which causes the disagreement. Marxist theory does not presuppose that psychic states proceed automatically from material ones. That is Behaviourism, and is rejected as mechanist by Marxism. Mind is a real agent. Marxism holds mental activity to be a quality of matter at a certain stage of development.

As I am writing, may I verify the statement in the "Answers to Correspondence" that the Bible is not banned or burned in the Soviet Union. On the contrary, it is printed at the request of any religious group that requires it, as are prayer books, etc. The following quotation from a travel book dealing with the Kuzbas is of interest. (*Men of Siberia*, by Hugo Huppert).

I read on the title page, "Confessions of Faith for the Community of the Lord, followed by Songs of Zion, collected and published for Zion Pilgrims. Pocket Edition. Third Series, Odessa, 1928. By order of the German Section of the All-Ukrainian League of Baptist Unions." And on the back of the same leaf I read: "Okrglavlit, No. 137. The Lenin State Printshop, Odessa, Pushkinskaya, No. 18. Tel. 5-49. Order No. 2773. Issue, 3,000 copies." One more proof of the famous persecution of religion in the Soviet Union, I thought aloud, prayer books published by a Soviet Publishing House, running into three editions and printed on such fine paper too.

On the back of the pasteboard cover a short note was scribbled in pencil: "Gave up praying forever on the first day of the Collective Spring Sowing, 1931."

JACK LINDSAY.

THE GODLESS CONFERENCE

SIR,—Residents in this neighbourhood have recently been invited to subscribe to a "Fighting Fund" for the purpose of protesting against the holding of the, so-called, "Godless Conference."

This invitation is circulated by the Honorary Treasurer of The Order of the Child, Lieut-Col. Vincent Wright, D.S.O.

I have replied to this gentleman enclosing an excerpt from the *Freethinker*, and indicate that it expresses the attitude of my wife and myself in this matter.

Other Freethinkers to whom this appeal is made will, I hope, do likewise.

EDGAR SYERS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Saturday night and Sunday night, Mr. J. W. Barker will speak at each meeting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, Hampstead, 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson and Miss E. Millard, M.A.

INDOOR

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE (Caxton Hall): 8.15, Friday, April 8, Dr. Har Dayal—"Professor H. Levy's Philosophy."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, J. P. Gilmour—"The Ethical Merits and Demerits of the English Novel."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (The Mound): 7.0, Debate—"That the Bible is the Word of God." *Affir.*: Mr. T. T. Edwards. *Neg.*: Mr. P. Smithies. Chairman: Mrs. Whitefield (Glasgow N.S.S.).

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square): 3.0, "Introduction to Science." 7.0, "Religion and the Modern World." Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at both meetings.

INDOOR

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Albion Court, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. H. Day—"Political and Economic Democracy."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dramatic Performance by the Secular Players. "No Trifling with Love," by Alfred de Musset.

MIDDLESBROUGH (Labour Hall, Newport Road): 7.0, Monday, April 4, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Lord Nelson): 7.0, Tuesday, April 5, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Religious Liars."

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