

Is just boring. The only author of Crime Club fame who interests me at all is Agatha Christie, but since she seems to have abandoned Hercule Poirot now, her stories leave me cold. But to have these books on one's bookshelves among one's treasured possessions—a thousand times no! As people must meditate upon characters in fiction I often wonder what is the effect on the mind of studying all the ingenious methods by which murder can be committed and my own answer is that it gives people ideas—and bad ones too.
I.V.H.T. (Hawera).

FREEDOM OF THE AIR

Sir,—Your correspondents Messrs. Hulbert and Bromell are barking up the wrong tree, for the preacher whom they criticise made it clear that he was not attacking every theory of evolution, but the atheistic theory, or as he called it, "the theory of Atheistic Evolutionism." This is a philosophical theory according to which God does not exist and the whole of reality, including man, can be adequately explained in terms of a process of evolution. It could be summed up: "There is no God but Evolution." Even Bishop Barnes would, I think, reject this theory.

Frequently, however, "Evolution" signifies the scientific theory that all living forms have sprung from one of a few primitive stocks. This is presumably the theory which Dr. Barnes describes as a "firmly established principle" and Mr. Bromell as a "well established truth," and which in the opinion of Rev. Prof. Henslow "now stands on an irrefragable basis . . . so that any alternative at the present day is unthinkable." Unfortunately for Mr. Bromell and his clerical camp followers of "Science," an increasing number of scientists are following the lead given by Berg and Vialleton twenty years ago and rejecting this theory of evolution as untenable. Thus Prof. Lemoine, summing up as editor-in-chief of the two volumes on "Life" (IV-V) in the recent (1937) edition of the Encyclopedie Francaise, writes as follows: "Volume IV of this Encyclopaedia will certainly rank as an important event in the history of our ideas on evolution: to read it is to be convinced that this theory seems on the eve of being abandoned. . . . From all that has been written above it is clear that the theory of evolution is impossible. Appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, no one really believes in it any more. . . . We have then to admit, with the majority of zoologists, that evolutionism, whatever be the form it takes, no longer satisfies our intellect. . . . This volume of the Encyclopaedia, which I thought must prove a triumphant vindication of the evolutionary theories, now on the contrary seems to me to sound their death-knell." Lemoine was Director of the National Museum of Natural History and twice President of the Geological Society of France, and the articles in these two volumes of the Encyclopaedia were contributed by thirty savants from the leading universities and museums of France, men of the calibre of Cuenot, Caullery, Guyenot, Arambourg, Carpentier — specialists of the first rank in their several departments of biological science.

Further evidence that this theory is on its last legs is, provided by such books

as J. B. S. Haldane's *The Causes of Evolution* and J. S. Huxley's *Evolution, the Modern Synthesis*. Both these authors reject Lamarck's theory and the Mutationism of de Vries, and they contradict Darwin on almost every point; and on the other hand, they propound no coherent theory of evolution themselves. They do indeed still affirm the "fact" of evolution, but the scientific evidence against this "fact" is now so strong that even this bare assertion will ultimately have to be abandoned.

G.H.D. (Greenmeadows).

Sir,—Your correspondent in supporting the descent of man from the ape, can only quote out-of-date opinions of

modernist clerics. Two eminent biologists, Dr. Bateson and Dr. Osborn, both admit that the "orderly development of the germ" theory has broken down because of absolutely no support from the deepest researches. Dr. Sayce says that "as far back as archaeology can take us, man is already civilised, in fact, the older the country the more perfect it is found to be." Le Conte says: "The evidence of Geology to-day is that species seem to come into existence suddenly and in full perfection remain substantially unchanged during the term of existence, and pass away in full perfection. Other species take their places by substitution, not by transmutation.

"SINCERE" (Auckland).

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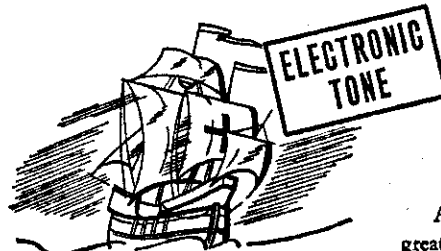
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