

Mr. Lunn, now lecturing
at the University, will
contribute to the.....

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
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.....Bulletin frequently
(we hope) within the next
few months.

Mr. Brisbane on Miracles!
By Arnold Lunn.

Mr. Brisbane is always interesting but he is not always well informed. His lay sermon for October 2nd invites comments.

He concedes handsomely that it was not unreasonable to believe in miracles when the earth was regarded as the center of the universe, but now that we know that the universe contains "millions of other universes" it is unreasonable to expect "the Ruler of so vast a realm to suspend laws that He has made."

Mr. Brisbane would be easier to follow if he had a more precise sense of the meaning of words. Like many other unscientifically minded people he uses the word "universe" sometimes to signify the sum total of created things (its correct sense), sometimes to signify our particular solar system. "Many universes" is a contradiction in terms.

And what are these "laws" that God cannot suspend? Science recognizes sequences which can be predicted with a fair approximation to accuracy but, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a scientific law. The human will can modify the normal effects of what are popularly called natural laws, o.g. by arresting the flight of an apple to the ground, and as Mill, a clear-thinking skeptic once remarked, if the interference with the effects of natural law by a human will is not a violation of law, neither is the interference with the effects by a divine will. It is far easier for God to produce new "sequences" than for a man to neutralize the effects of gravity on an apple.

There is no evidence to support Mr. Brisbane's view, implied in this article, that the universe teems with inhabited planets. Eddington, the great British astronomer-mathematician tells us that the chances are incredibly great against the formation of a planetary system capable of supporting life. He is inclined to think that this world may well be unique in this respect.

Mr. Brisbane's idea of God is rather funny. He does not realize that to an infinite God the problem of looking after billions of Brisbanes rationed out among billions of planets is no more troublesome than the problem of persuading one Mr. Brisbane to stop writing about science and begin reading it.

His theology is the theology of big business. Immense difficulty in getting an interview with the president of the concern. I envy him his uncritical faith in the exploded dogma, 'Miracles don't occur.' It is nice to think of Mr. Brisbane reading a portion of Darwin every night before omitting to say his prayers.

I wonder whether Mr. Brisbane would like to debate the proposition, "Modern science has greatly strengthened the case for the miraculous?" I fancy not. And, of course, I should hate to wound the simple piety of a believer in popular science of the late nineties.

Thanks From The Hottentots.

Last June we sent your contribution of \$135.75 to Sister Emelia of Holy Family Orphanage, S. W. Africa. She writes in reply: "...I have received your letter with enclosed generous cheque for \$128.75, also your second cheque for \$7. They were truly a God-send and came when our finances were lowest. May our dear Lord bless your generous hearts, and be sure that the Sisters and our poor little Hottentots will daily pray for you. etc., etc."

MASS WEDNESDAY of the Most Holy Rosary, p. 1005.

PRAYERS: (deceased) father of John Toomey (Badin); aunt of Don Partlan, '33; Fr. Tillman, C.S.C.; grandmother of Gene Ling (Walsh). Ill, mother of Clifford Mihm (O.C.); mother of J. Bookwalter ('34); mother of Joseph M. Connelly, N.Y. Five special ints.