

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · EDITOR 1881-1915 · G·W·FOOTE

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

Vol. XLV.—No. 6

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1925

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Education and the Churches.

Bishop Welldon is not exactly what one would call a genius, judged by even the standard of excellence which prevails in the Christian Church of to-day, but he does now and again say something that is worth while paying attention to. For instance, in a recent letter to the *Times* he very neatly—even if unintentionally—called attention to the sham of the Christian talk of brotherhood and love. His letter was concerned with the question of religious instruction in State schools, and in the opening paragraph he remarked "There is no probability of the religious, or even the Christian, bodies in England coming within any measurable time to an agreement either upon doctrine or practice." And that, I think, is a very pretty comment upon both the moral and intellectual aspect of Christianity. They all agree to believe in Christianity, but they cannot agree upon what exactly Christianity is. They are full of love for each other, but they cannot worship in the same Church. Their religion breeds such brotherly feelings that it is taken as a sign of considerable advance if a preacher belonging to one denomination invites a preacher belonging to another sect to preach in his Church. And if that is done, it is certain that many will be found protesting against such an outrage on their religious feelings. Swift said that most Christians had just enough of Christianity to make them hate each other heartily, and that, as a matter of fact, has been the one uniform and universal consequence of Christian belief. They have a religion which they claim was given them direct from God Almighty himself. But what the deuce he meant by it, or why he gave it them, they cannot say with any decent measure of agreement. And now one of their own leaders protests that there is no likelihood of their ever agreeing upon what their religion teaches, or what they are to do about it. That is the net consequence of many centuries of Christianity. The disagreement is perpetual and fundamental. The agreement is casual and unimportant. And it is these men who claim to lead the nation in some of the most important affairs of life!

An Anti-Social Creed.

Bishop Welldon's letter is, on the whole, a very good one, and—probably without meaning it—it states some very good reasons against religious instruction being given by State paid teachers in State schools. Take for instance the following:—

It is the evident interest of the State that children whose parents belong to different religious bodies should, so far as possible, be educated together; for only by such co-education can they learn in the early impressionable years of their lives to know one another, to see each the good in others, and to work together for a common end. Children who are educated as it were, in watertight compartments..... who regard children of other churches than their own as little aliens and heretics, and who live all their lives in a certain denominational atmosphere. may become in future years good Catholics or good Christians, I cannot say I feel sure that they will deserve that character; but they will certainly not become the best citizens, as they will not have learnt to appreciate the value of the unity which the State naturally desires and pursues in the training of its citizens.

It would be foolish to imagine that a dignitary of the Church could say so much that is sensible without a counterblast in the shape of nonsense, and I will deal with that in a moment. At present I desire to point out that here is a very fair statement of the case for Secular education in one of its most important aspects. It is admitted that by parcelling children into different religious bodies we tend to narrow their outlook, to teach them to look upon the children of other sects as outsiders with whom they have no necessary interests in common, and so strike at the roots of a sense of healthy citizenship. This has been pointed out in these columns times without number, and it is gratifying to have this teaching confirmed by Bishop Welldon. *Religious education is a blow at a healthy sense of citizenship.* That is the lesson which the Bishop inculcates, and it is a perfectly sound one. It teaches the child to regard its fellows from the wrong angle; it dulls the sense of a common citizenship in the adult by habituating him to putting the interests of his religion before aught else. It may produce good Christians. It does not and it cannot make good citizens. Religion in all its forms is, in a modern community, an insidious enemy of social progress. If Bishop Welldon's statements do not imply this then the English language has ceased to be intelligible.

* * *

The Bishop Downs the Man.

But the man behind the Bishop having given us an ounce of sense, the Bishop before the man has to follow it up with a pound of foolishness. In spite of religious instruction undoing what the State is trying to do in the shape of developing a healthy sense of citizenship, there is "no just reason why children of the various denominational bodies, if they are educated in the same schools, should not receive, and receive at the public expense, such special re-

ligious instruction as their parents may desire for them." So, it being agreed that the denominational religious instruction provided by the State prevents the proper training of future citizens, the State is next to pay for such instruction in distinct schools where the separatist influence must be more marked than elsewhere. In the State schools the proximity of children of different denominations will at least reduce the evil to a minimum, but in separate schools, where the denominational influence is at its strongest, and where the sense of justice and toleration in the teacher will be at its weakest, the State is to step in and pay for what is an admitted evil when done under its direct control! In the State schools the teacher would never dream of placing the Secular lessons in a position of inferiority. In a denominational school this is markedly the case. Not only that, but any miserable sect is at liberty to teach that everything that is worth having or doing depends upon an acceptance of its own stupid or fantastic doctrines, and that children who are outside their own favoured circle will be less worthy in this world and irrevocably damned in the next. If Bishop Welldon were a Dean Swift one could assume that he was writing in bitter satire of the influence of religion on the public mind. But he is only a Welldon, and so one is forced to take his folly at its face value. A passing spasm of common-sense is powerless for long against the elaborately acquired foolishness of his education.

* * *

Religion and the Child.

Why is it necessary to bother so much about teach-children religion? It will not seriously be disputed that all the social and intellectual virtues necessary to childhood can be taught in the absence of religion. Granted that with adults there may be plausible philosophical or metaphysical reasons for morality which involve religious belief, it will not be claimed that you can deal with this kind of thing with children. Children must be taught by simple precept, or, better still, by example. Bishop Welldon admits that "children, in elementary schools especially, are too young to enter into the doctrinal or ecclesiastical disputes which occupy only too much of the time and thought of adult Christians; and the less they are troubled about them the better." But if children cannot understand the doctrines of Christianity, religious instruction to children means giving them doctrines and dogmas *ex cathedra*, giving them something they cannot understand, cannot have explained to them, and must be presented to them as teachings which they must believe but may not question. And it is a misuse of language to call that kind of thing education. It is the kind of education which a record gives to a phonographic machine. It does exactly what education should not do—dulls and weakens the spirit of enquiry and mental responsibility. They who are fighting for this kind of thing are fighting—to use Bishop Welldon's own language—to make the children replicas of themselves. Religious instruction in the schools is a blow at the welfare of the State, it lowers the character of the citizen because it strikes at the mental independence and integrity of the child.

* * *

Breeding Clients.

Let us be quite clear on this point. The fiery advocates of religious instruction have no vital interest in education as such. They have no vital interest in the welfare of the child as a potential citizen. They are quite content with an inferior education, they are content to herd the children in insanitary schools, and to provide inefficient instructors, so long as they can get into the children the kind of religion they desire. Their whole object is to turn out promising

members of this or that sect. To set the sectarian brand upon a child in such a way that it can be detected and safely claimed when it grows older. *The fight of the Churches for the control of education is a fight for clients.* They know that without this initial misdirection of the mind of the child it is hopeless to expect they can fight against the forces of a modern civilized environment. The children are so many pawns in a game which the Churches are playing to retain what control they can over the course of civilization. It is vital to the Churches that they shall make this stand over the children. Long ago they fought the same fight for the control of the adult. They can no longer disguise from themselves that in that conflict they have been hopelessly worsted, and they are fighting a rearguard action in a disastrous campaign. But there is still the child, and if that is lost everything goes. It is for these reasons that they fight for the State to provide schools and to pay for education which must, to quote Bishop Welldon, "in the nature of things turn out men and women of a poorer and narrower outlook, because they will not have acquired, like the citizens in the schools provided at the public expense, the habit of co-operation with citizens who differ from themselves and of allegiance not so much to the good of a church or a denomination or a party as to that of the whole community which is called the State."

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Damaging Admission.

THE late Dr. Alexander McLaren, of Manchester, was in the habit of preaching dogmatically strong sermons on the triumph of Christianity. The title of one of his most eloquent discourses was "The All-Conquering Christ." To-day that tone of assurance is not nearly so dominant in the generality of sermons. Dean Inge, for example, has often declared that historically the Christian religion has been and still is a failure. *The Christian World Pulpit*, of January 29, contains a sermon by no less an Anglican dignitary than Bishop Woods, of Winchester, under the gloomy heading of "The Lost Inspiration." The text is a dismal expression, "They have no wine" (John ii., 3). The Bishop's first paragraph strikes a sad note:—

That is the verdict, I think, which would be passed on our civilization by a competent observer from another planet. We are as trim and tidy as they were that evening in Cana, with the house looking the best and the guests in wedding clothes. But they were short of something, and so are we; something invigorating, stimulating, exhilarating, inspiring. They had no wine.

The turning of water into wine at a wedding feast is described as the first miracle Jesus performed. The Bishop boldly characterizes it thus: "To think that the first flash of power exercised by the Incarnate and lighting up the world's dull sky should flame forth in a village wedding, and have as its purpose not the healing of the sick, or the raising of the dead, or any all-compelling demonstration of God's presence, but simply the supply of a deficiency in common hospitality; the Eternal commanding the allegiance of the natural world in order to set at ease an anxious hostess and prevent any disappointment or awkwardness at the village feast. The story is simply inimitable."

Even on the assumption that the story, as it stands, is true, we do not agree with Dr. Woods when he says that we should look through it to the truths which lie behind it, and that its significance is not easily exhausted. To the preacher, however, such a

procedure is inevitable, and the following passage furnishes an interesting example of how easily the Bishop seizes it:—

We are trying to reconstruct our civilization. In Europe, in particular, as never before the attention of multitudes is focussed on systems, institutions, organizations; scientists are studying new methods, economists are working out new plans, but the atmosphere is not exhilarating. Each section of the industrial world is inspecting its armoury with a view to possible warfare. The various groups in social life, though theoretically friendly, are too much aloof to understand each other's point of view. Nor are the national groups much better. The armies of the world are preparing for the next war—at least, this conclusion is irresistible in view of the sums which have been and are being spent in Europe and America—while much toil and energy is spent in the endeavour, by no means unsuccessful, to get the machine going again. There is much forbearance and patience. But there is no wine. The nations are bent on their own concerns, but have little enthusiasm for the larger interests of the great human family. No wave of generous comradeship submerges the often exaggerated barriers of our industrial life.

There is considerable truth beautifully expressed in those words. It is perfectly true that something of infinite importance is now lacking in the existing attempts to reconstruct a disordered world; but what is it? According to Bishop Woods, it is the sense of the spiritual, or the sense of God; but why is that sense lacking? If the God believed in and proclaimed by the Church actually exists, how can the sense of him be missing? If Christ still lives and loves the world, how can he fail to take an infallible part in setting it right? To say the very least he is not the all-conquering Christ so eloquently belauded by Dr. McLaren in his day. In fact, if the God of the Bible and the Church is veritably a living being he ought to blush with infinite shame as he contemplates the world and its history and feel inexpressibly sorry for himself as its alleged maker and ruler.

Take the crusades which Popes and people regarded as inspired by God. It was in Christ's name that Pope Urban II. urged the people to engage in the first crusade. To everyone who would take up arms against the Turks Urban "offered absolution for all sins (there was no crime—murder, adultery, robbery, arson—which might not be redeemed by this act of obedience to God); absolution without penance." Some of the incidents of the Crusades are related by Dean Milman as follows:—

No barbarian, no infidel, no Saracen, ever perpetrated such wanton and cold-blooded atrocities of cruelty as the wearers of the Cross of Christ (who, it is said, had fallen on their knees and burst into a pious hymn at the first view of the Holy City), on the capture of that city. Murder was mercy, rape and tenderness, simple plunder the mere assertion of the Conqueror's right. Children were seized by their legs, some of them plucked from their mothers' breasts and dashed against the walls, or whirled from the battlements. Others were obliged to leap from the walls; some tortured, roasted by slow fires. They ripped up prisoners to see if they had swallowed gold. Of 70,000 Saracens there were not left enough to bury the dead; poor Christians were hired to perform the office. Everyone surprised in the Temple was slaughtered, till the reek from the dead bodies drove away the slayers. The Jews were burned alive in their synagogue (*Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., p. 188).

Having read full and reliable accounts of the Crusades does the Bishop of Winchester look upon them and their inconceivable horrors as deeds inspired by the wine of God? The right reverend gentleman does not mention the Crusades, nor any other events of a similar character. He treats the Church as an

organization which is full of the wine that makes life exhilarating and jubilant, a feast of the the richest kind. But, as his lordship very well knows, the Church of to-day has lost the tyrannical power which it possessed and exercised with disaster and death to disobedient and heretical members, especially in the Dark Ages of Faith. The Protestant Reformation was the deadliest blow the Church ever received and from which it has never entirely recovered. Ever since it has been an institution with a broken back. Both Catholicism and Protestantism are feebler now than at any former period in their respective careers. The Bishop speaks of "the lost inspiration"; but as a matter of fact it never enjoyed any superhuman inspiration because no such thing has ever existed. Enormous success it has often experienced, but success, like failure, is a purely human product, the only difference between them being that success is a thing of the past, while failure is a present-day reality. Bishop Woods is an orthodox Christian believer, and it is highly significant that even from him comes the admission that the Church has lost its inspiration, and, to a great extent, its self-confidence.

J. T. LLOYD.

English Education.

There is no darkness but ignorance.—*Shakespeare*.

We must mix our music with gymnastics.—*Plato*.

EDUCATION is of first importance to all Freethinkers, especially national education. Prior to 1870 the education of this country was in the hands of the clergy and their catspaws, and so badly was it carried out that Parliament had to take the matter in hand in order to prevent an intellectual disaster of the first magnitude. The Act of 1870 made national education compulsory and gratuitous, and now that over half a century has passed since Parliament undertook the education of the young it is an opportune moment for a little stocktaking.

According to Government statistics, education in this country costs the nation £100,000,000 yearly, and ardent educationalists have had hopes of increasing this amount. The cost of primary national education has risen steadily during the past quarter of a century, and shows a constant increase from £11,000,000 to £100,000,000. The population has, during that time, increased at the rate of about 10 per cent. annually.

It will be seen that the nation has not been stingy in the matter of money, and it is a pertinent question as to whether it is getting value for its large outlay. Are the children of to-day, when they leave the national schools, ten times better educated than the scholars of twenty-five years ago? Are they really well educated, in the strict sense of that term?

It is not easy in the present day to find a grown person who can neither read nor write. Gipsies are mostly illiterate, but the worst of them have sufficient native wit to persuade the average householder to part with a five-pound overcoat in exchange for a fivepenny fern. Gipsies, with all their lack of education, are not a drug on the market like so many of the youngsters who leave the national schools. Any employer will tell you that too many of them write badly, spell worse, and reckon as slowly as South Sea islanders. In fact these pupils, on whose schooling more money has been lavished than middle-class parents spend on the education of their sons and daughters, have to learn in the home what they ought to have learned at school. And would have learned were it not for the interference of the priests, Anglican and Nonconformist, who desire to uphold things as they are, and hate all forms of progress.

In 25 per cent. of the primary national schools the priests have it nearly all their own way. The object of these schools is not to make good citizens but to manufacture good Churchmen, and everything is subordinated to that end. In the remaining 75 per cent. of the national schools an hour daily is wasted in the service of the Christian Superstition, and nothing is permitted in the curriculum which in any way clashes with the priests' point of view. The net result of all this priestly supervision is that the average scholar in the national schools, who can neither write a good letter, nor understand elementary mathematics, can remember the names of the alleged Kings of Israel and Judah, and regards the story of Noah's Ark as sober fact. And the scholar can also remember the repellent stories of faith and filth which fill the pages of what he is taught to regard as the writings of Almighty God.

The truth is that the education given in our primary schools is too theological, and is designed especially to make slaves instead of free citizens. Even the most elementary parts of education, the three R's, reading, writing, and reckoning, are only taught imperfectly. All the singing of "God Save the King" and "Rule Britannia" cannot obliterate this fundamental drawback. And physical culture, which should be a most important part of education, is performed in a most slipshod and haphazard way, when it is done at all. We are writing seriously when we say that few indeed of the scholars in our national schools ever acquire a good education, and when they do so, it will be found to be more largely the work of the parents than the school teachers.

Mind you, it is not the fault of the teachers, who are handicapped terribly by the enormous size of their classes and by the restrictions of the Board of Education. At least double the number of teachers is required, so that the contact between scholars and teachers can be more personal. The worst feature of this public education, for which we pay about a hundred millions a year, is that the scholars do not benefit as they should do. Builders get huge contracts, manufacturers get large orders for school-appliances, but the pupils do not get real education at all. From the national point of view, it is not a profitable investment to turn out tens of thousands of young persons who are unemployable because they have so little education and no manners. Is it common-sense to turn out whole armies of young people unfitted for anything but blind-alley occupations, and who will, sooner or later, swell the ranks of crime?

It is a monstrous fallacy that education is merely a matter of books and examinations. The exercise of a handicraft requires far more intelligence than the passing of an examination, which is too often merely a test of memory. The truth, as usual, lies between the extremes. "We must mix our music with gymnastics," as wise old Plato said long ago. The present system which fills children's minds with theological rubbish, and leaves them imperfectly equipped for the battle of life, must be revised drastically. All citizens should unite in insisting, in return for our rates and taxes, on pupils in national schools being properly educated, so that they may grow up civil, efficient, and contented citizens of a great country. The elimination of the priest from the schools would be an excellent beginning, for no educational system can make civil persons whilst it is rooted in barbarism and ignorance. Clericalism is the hereditary enemy of democracy, and must be fought. The clergy are opposed to the spirit of Liberty which animates the progressive peoples of the world. There should be no room in national education for the priest, but only for the schoolmaster. MIMNERMUS.

Blotted Scandals.

On Monday, January 19, 1925, the Bishop of Southwark declared at a public meeting of Christians in the Central Hall, Westminster:—

Our slums to-day are a blot upon our civilization and a scandal to our Christianity. The over-crowding is appalling. 681,000 people living under these conditions.

On Tuesday, October 21, 1924, the Bishop of Southwark declared in a charge delivered to the clergy of his diocese in the Cathedral, that contraception was contrary both to Nature and to the Christian teaching on marriage.....Ultimately the results might be evil, not only to the individual, but the community.

The Freethinker may well ask: Is the "evil" of contraception likely to be worse than the evil of over-crowding which the Bishop describes as a blot and a scandal? Of course, all the Christian newspapers from the *Daily Herald* to the *Morning Post* are prepared to shed crocodile tears over the slum-dwellers and their miseries. Are they prepared to shed anything else? For example, is the *Daily Herald* prepared to shed its Socialistic Puritanism and come out wholeheartedly in favour of Birth Control for the Workers? Is the *Morning Post* prepared to shed its rapacious landlordism and come out in favour of lower rents and higher wages for the workers? When there is "appalling overcrowding," the two alternatives are: 1. Fewer people; 2. More houses. But the slum-dwellers have no money to pay for houses that are homes at the present rate of rents. The Government cannot provide housing free. The landlords won't give up their hereditary right to levy toll on the people's earnings. The arrears are so enormous that it will take many years to overtake them. The War killed nearly a million young workers and disabled at least another million, and we have yet another million unemployed and mostly unemployable now. Emigration as a remedy is useless; the weak and worn-out and sick and disabled won't go abroad; and even if they would, no young country can afford to take in as new citizens those who are unable to pull their own weight. Thus the "gigantic evil" is not really the bad housing and overcrowding but the specious humbug of well-intentioned Christians who pretend that the housing problem can be solved by holding public meetings about it. The one and only remedy which is practicable at the present time is Birth Control for the Workers, particularly for the unemployed workers.

Nevertheless, the speakers at the Central Hall on January 19 were well-known opponents of Birth Control. Miss Maude Royden is a kind-hearted maiden lady-preacher, at one time quite opposed to contraception, but now partially converted by her second-hand experience of the problems of modern married life. She had heard a mother expressing thankfulness that her baby had been born in the middle of the night in a one-room home where several other children were sound asleep: the mother enduring her agony in silence for fear of waking them.

To put an end to such a state of things, says Miss Maude Royden, such passion should be put into the public demand for better houses that neither Parliament nor the local authorities could withstand it.

Freethinkers would surely suggest that "intelligence" should be substituted for "passion," and that such poor women should be provided with a contraceptive outfit, and taught how to use it efficiently. If Miss Maude Royden as an intellectual and experienced woman of the world, should agree to this, let her try to get any doctor or any midwife employed

by the Ministry of Health, which is also the Ministry of Housing, to render this professional service to the agonized mother, and she will find that the Ministry will reprimand and dismiss both the doctor and the midwife, in the name of Christian morality. And then people wonder what Freethinkers regard so-called Christian morality with contempt!

Another speaker at the Central Hall was the Rev. Father O'Meara, who said, according to the *Times*, that:—

the want of houses, and the sufferings to which it gave rise, afforded the opportunity to all of individual service.

Of course that is all right if you are a Father in God and live in a monastery; but if you are a human parent and live in a slum-room with your wife and family of six or eight half-starved children, you won't be so keen on suffering gladly in order that somebody else may serve opportunely.

The Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett is another well-known exponent of regulating sexual intercourse by having none of it: self-control this is called. The same principle can be applied with no more and no less success in the feeding of starving persons: all you have to do is teach them to suppress their hunger: practise self-control of the bodily appetites. This is a bright idea—for the other fellow. Why doesn't some good kind Christian bring it forward as "evidence" before the present Food Commission. Eat less food—that is the way to reduce the housekeeping bills. Eat no food at all—that is the way to abolish the cost of living. This is no more fantastic than the feeble-minded drivel talked about housing reform. As to the house scarcity problem, the Rev. Dr. Scott Lidgett advocated more bricks, more bricklayers, cheaper rents, and the control of "rings" in the building trade: this for the present. For the future, of course, a freehold mansion in the skies, no doubt with a bathroom, separate bedrooms for boys and girls, twin beds for the father and mother, hot and cold water laid on, etc.; and a palm-garden in front: no need to bother about family limitation because marriage has been abolished in the New Jerusalem, and the problem of "race suicide" overcome by the simple processes of Eternal Life and Unrestricted Immigration.

However, coming down to earth again and its slum-homes, Captain Reiss said at the Central Hall that

they must not grumble if the rates went up for the provision of houses.

and Mr. Sydney W. Pascall, the chief promoter of this meeting of Christians, said that

the scarcity of houses was due in part to the heavy tax that was put upon them when they were built, in the form of rates.

In other words, one gentleman says: "I'll give you more houses as soon as you give me more rates," and the other gentleman says, "As soon as you raise the rates, I'll give you fewer houses." However, it was a very enthusiastic meeting, and the Central Hall was packed from floor to ceiling, and amid great applause a resolution was carried:—

- (1) Urging local authorities to do their duty;
- (2) Appealing to landlords to give up their profits;
- (3) Calling upon the building industry to teach more men how to build houses.

Nobody, of course, said one single solitary syllable about Birth Control. It is only the wicked Freethinkers who suggest that the best way of preventing overcrowding is to produce fewer new citizens. The Christian method is "Let 'em all come." Then when the inevitable overcrowding becomes too gigantic to be ignored, public meetings are held: there is much talk about "scandals" and "blots," and

we are asked to "recognize the public spirit of Mr. Neville Chamberlain in refusing the high office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, so that he might devote himself to the improvement of housing." And the public-spirited Mr. Neville refuses to let Birth Control be taught in the Women's Welfare Centres, gets rid of maternity nurses and doctors who respond to poverty-stricken mothers' agonized appeals for knowledge, and then sits down comfortably in his office-chair receiving deputations on "the problems of housing and slum clearances in London."

"The proceedings were private," says the *London Times*. Well, that's as it should be: why make an ass of yourself in public when there is a good lock on the door?

ETTIE ROU. E

A Materialist Conception of Mind

MANY of the difficulties surrounding the subject of "mind" are due to the common error of contrasting a complex expression of mind (such as the plays of Shakespeare) with a lump of apparently inert matter. Viewed from this standpoint there appears to be an unbridgable gulf between the two phenomena. If, however, we are true to the mechanistic principle necessarily involved in all scientific research, we are bound to regard this apparent duality as the expression of a fundamental unity. Either mind arose in nature or it did not. The purpose of the present article is to show that mind is a natural product, and that it can be explained in terms of reality.

Readers are aware that this subject has already been raised in these columns in the form of a definition by the present writer which failed to merit the approval—or even the understanding—of two gentlemen eminently qualified to discuss the question. Before elaborating my thesis it would be well to recall the definition advanced by "Javali," and endorsed *ipso facto* by "Keridon." "Javali" has submitted that it is the *processes* and *states* obtaining in the protoplasm of living organisms during their adjustment to their environment that constitutes what we term mind. But *processes* and *states* as used here are mere abstract terms, and bring us no nearer to an understanding of what mind is. Mind is not a material or a metaphysical *entity*, but it is something much more vital and tangible than a mere abstraction. Even "Keridon," in *Life, Mind, and Knowledge*, does not attempt an explanation of mind, but rather lamely infers that the essence of mind is inherent in "ultimate substance"—whatever this metaphysical phrase may signify.

It will not, I think, be disputed that all natural manifestations are explicable in terms of energies. The universal phenomenon is change; and this is the result of the conflict between the *gravitant energies* constituting matter and the *radiant energies* constituting the conditions of matter—for the sake of clarity these may be expressed as internal energy (gravitant) and external energy (radiant). [From the standpoint of modern physics matter is the static form of energy; energy is the dynamic form of matter.] The different kinds of external energy: impact, light, and sound, repeating themselves in organic matter through vast ages of time result in the physical sense organs we see in man to-day. For example: the eyespot of the infusorian being repeated in successive generations by heredity and undergoing successive changes due to the varying conditions of the environment results in the complex structure of the human eye.

When an organism first comes into contact with an external object an impression is registered in a

specialized part of that organism—in the higher forms of life, the brain. All subsequent impacts register themselves and arouse the previous impression, which results in what is termed a sense of touch. The underlying principle here involved is also true in the case of the other *physical* senses. Further: when an external energy impinges upon an organism through the physical senses, it not only registers itself and arouses the residuum of previous impressions, but also liberates some of the internal energy. This released energy—according to the Newtonian law of motion—must expend itself along the line of least resistance, and this expenditure is determined by the residuum of an impression (*simple* or *complex*) registered in the brain, resulting in an action of the organism. Thus the controlling factor of the ensuing action is the particular line of least resistance, viz., the particular impression.

It will be noticed that in describing the above phenomenon we have, as yet, made no use of the term "mind." Yet, clearly, mind is involved. What then is mind? We have two factors for determining this, viz., impressions, and the actions (of the organism) resulting from them. The second is obviously an expression of mind; and this leaves us with the first—impressions. What of these? They are "the reaction of the environment on a sensitive form of matter competent to receive it"; in other words, they are the residua of all the registered experiences of the race transmitted through heredity, together with all the registered experiences of the living organism itself. Employ what terminology we choose, but, if this is not mind, then, indeed, is mind inexplicable, and we are the sorry dupes of our own nature.

The power of an organism to act from concepts, instead of from present stimuli, we call *intellect*; the process of selecting *ideas*—viz., lines for the expenditure of internal energy—we term *reasoning*, or *thought*; the origination of mind gives an organism an option on all its lines of reaction, originated in its own life or inherited from its forbears. Life primarily is the action of the internal energies constituting matter, mind the action of the external energies constituting the conditions of matter.

This is a brief yet quite adequate explanation of mind and its becoming; it leaves untouched many aspects of mental phenomena such as the emotions, will, etc., because they are not essential to an explanation of mind itself. The fact that "Javali" and "Keridon" did not find my definition intelligible is, I take it, because the viewpoint is new to them, but this in no way invalidates it. It is, in fact, a naturalistic explanation of mind which—in the words of a distinguished American physicist—"is destined to conquer the philosophical world." Should there be any among the generality of our readers who are interested in the above thesis and who desire an elaboration, or explanation, of any aspect of it, we shall be pleased to deal with any points they care to raise. The present brevity is due to our desire to avoid the interruption of continuity necessitated by an article appearing in serial form.

VINCENT J. HANDS.

I detest the shedding of blood; I labour for the regeneration of humanity, and I love the good for the good's own sake. That which violence wins for us today, another act of violence may wrest from us tomorrow. Those stages of progress are alone durable which have rooted themselves in the mind and conscience of mankind. The only means of realizing what is good is to teach it by education and propagate it by example.
—Francisco Ferrer.

Acid Drops.

The trouble that some public officials take to make themselves ridiculous is surprising. At Gateshead-on-Tyne the other day an inquest was held on the body of a girl, aged thirteen, who had drowned herself. At the conclusion of the hearing the Coroner recalled one of the witnesses and enquired whether at the school which the girl attended religious instruction was given. On being told that it was, he remarked, "I am glad it was not entirely Secular." Now if Coroner Graham had exhibited only a moderate amount of common-sense he would have either said nothing at all or made the obvious comment that religious instruction in this case had not much effect. To say what he did implied somewhat less than the degree of intelligence one would like to see in a public official. Suppose the instruction had been completely Secular? The case could not have been worse than it was. There are cases where a man cannot help exhibiting stupidity. There are others where it is quite gratuitous, and this evidently is one of them. We hope Coroner Graham is pleased with the exhibition.

It is quite probable that many of our readers may have overlooked the fact that January 30 was the anniversary of the execution of Charles I. The *Church Times*, however, calls its readers attention to the death of this "glorious martyr," and at the end of its tearful notice explains its reasons for venerating his memory. "Unlike most rulers, he was in a real sense an obedient son of the Church. He realized.....that the Church and its sacraments are higher than all temporal considerations," and in this way "he saved Catholicism for England." Now we know the cause of the tears of the *Church Times*, and that it is ready, as all good Christians should be, to place the interests of the Church before all else. And when that is said it remains the most profoundly anti-social teaching in which one could indulge. It is that which makes Christianity a threat to the well-being of any society in which it exists whenever and wherever the Secular forces are not strong enough to hold it in check.

The *Church Times* boldly avows this doctrine. Other papers representing other forms of Christianity do not avow it, but they practise it so far as they can. They are found ready to sacrifice the interests of education, of social justice, of individual freedom, and of orderly progress in the interests of their particular religious beliefs. A really genuine and sincere Christian cannot help but be a less effective citizen than he would be otherwise. We do not mean by this that everyone who calls himself a Christian is a bad citizen. Fortunately for the world the majority are far less Christian than they know. They are forced to recognize the demands of social justice in cases where a Christian who carried out the principles of his religion thoroughly could not but ignore them.

All the same we are glad to see the *Church Times* continuing to take a more sensible view on this question of Sunday than most Christians take. In its issue for January 23, it says "there is every reason to believe that the Sunday opening of cinemas has, on the whole, been all for the good. It is monstrous that the people with uncomfortable homes should on Sundays evenings have no alternative but the public-house.....It is mere superstition to regard anything allowable on Saturday as wicked on Sunday." All over the country the same testimony as to the beneficial effects of Sunday entertainments is given by those in a position to know. But the average parson is really not aiming at making people either better or happier. He wants to fill his Church or chapel, and damns everything that is likely to enter into competition. A bishop was once credited with the saying that he would sooner see England drunk and free than sober and otherwise. The ordinary parson would far rather see Christians drunk and at Church on Sunday than sober and in a theatre or cinema.

The B.B.C. consulted the Belfast Ecclesiastical Committee as to whether it would like broadcasting on Sunday—or was it if it would permit it? Anyway the Committee said not until after 8.45. So the wish—or the order—was complied with. And yet there are people who say that the British Isles are not priest-ridden! Evidently people with more intelligence, or more courage, or perhaps more of both, need to be in command in the B.B.C. But the idea of the whole of the inhabitants of Belfast being at the mercy of an irresponsible Committee calling itself the Ecclesiastical Committee would not be permitted for a moment with a people who really loved freedom instead of merely talking about it. The B.B.C. should be ashamed of itself.

We believe there used to be exhibited in St. Paul's—we do not know if it is still there—"Please beware of pickpockets during divine service." Now at St. Etheldreda's, Ely Place, there is exhibited: "Ladies are requested not to leave their bags in Church." It appears that ladies leave their bags in their seats while going to the altar, and on returning find that the bags are gone. That we consider a fine example of the "restraining influence of religion. If thieves cannot be kept from operating during divine service we wonder what is the exact moral value of a religious atmosphere. In olden times anyone who attempted to steal during divine service would have been struck blind, or have been paralysed. But the Lord appears to have given up his watchfulness in these matters. It may be, of course, that the falling off of Church attendance has been so marked that he cannot nowadays afford to offend any possible attendants, whatever their quality.

Bishop Welldon charged the railwaymen with being selfish. The railwaymen retorted with the comment that the Bishop was not the one to bring such a charge with his salary of £3,000. As a consequence a discussion was arranged between a railwayman and the Bishop to discuss whether the railwaymen were selfish or not. The Bishop opened the discussion by dealing with his salary. He defended himself on the grounds that he had to pay a large sum of money in income-tax, and over £100 annually to keep his house warm. He also gave money away in charity. So, he said, he did not receive so much as was alleged. That is very telling, but if we all deducted all it cost us to live most of us would be found to be without salary at all. But it appears to us that the real points at issue were not raised. These are: (1) Railwaymen do unquestionably perform a service to the community. The service performed by Bishop Welldon is a matter of some doubt. (2) There is no need for a Bishop to take so large a salary that he is compelled to pay so large an income tax. He can save the tax by reducing his salary. (3) Railwaymen take their salary from those who pay for what they have. The Bishop takes some part of his salary from the whole community whether all want his services or not. (4) The Bishop professes to believe in the blessings of poverty, railwaymen do not. (5) The distinction between a bishop who places the interests of his Church first, and a railwayman who places the interests of his trade union first does not appear very important; if anything the balance of good is on the side of the railwayman. We should liked to have seen the debate conducted on these lines. As it was, the discussion began anywhere and ended up a tree.

With the full-throated regurgitation of the journalists and their subject of Communism we are not concerned. This class of writer thinks at white heat and writes at headlong speed. It was Voltaire, we believe, who said that the adjective was the enemy of the substantive, and, in the *Evening News*, a writer uses the term, "most debased Atheism." He has laid it on too thick. There must, therefore, be debased Atheism and exalted Atheism. The young man ought to get the editorial cane for being generous with his adjectives and admitting that there might be a form of Atheism making demands for a higher type of mind than that which needs to be reminded once a week.

Dean Inge has recently been talking common-sense to his fellow Christians. In the course of the Jowett Lecture of the Mary Ward Settlement for 1924-25, which he delivered in the Hall of the Settlement, Tavistock Place, he remarked that the Gospel was good news, not good advice. Christ's Gospel was plainly that of redemption, not of social reform. They could find no economic precepts in the Gospels, for the conditions of Palestine and those of Western Europe or America were wholly different, and there was not much capitalism in the ancient East, any more than there was to-day. It was a disappointment to many that they had no guidance in the Gospels for the ethics of good citizenship. It was quite useless for either Conservatives or Socialists to look for texts in the Gospel. The mistake so often made by Church social reformers in modern times was that they tried to identify the Church with their own views. The Gospel was, and always would be, individual and universal. It would always be other-worldly, in the sense that it treated all outward conditions rather lightly, and regarded as the highest and best good those spiritual values which could be shared without being diminished, and in which one man's gain was not another man's loss.

We commend the Dean for his frankness in thus admitting that the Gospels are quite valueless as guides to social morality, and that, by implication at least, they inculcate a selfish disregard for one's fellow citizens. We have often argued in these columns that Christian Socialists, Communists, Fascists, and so forth, who try to base their political faith and social ideals upon Biblical texts, or the Sermon on the Mount, are ignorant of the real meaning of their religion; that the genuine, God-fearing, hell-avoiding Christian should have no time for considering the problems of this absurdly short earth-life, but should be concerned only—as the early Christians were—with the fate of his own immortal soul. And we have often pointed out, as the Dean now does, that the Gospels contain no advice on such problems as housing, industrial peace, international disarmament, and the other real problems that trouble thoughtful men and women to-day. If you are anxious about your own felicity in the next world, by all means read the Bible (we have said), read it till you know it by heart, and can repeat it backwards. You will find plenty of instructions for personal salvation—if you are content to wait for that salvation in a future existence. But if you are desirous of leaving this world of blood and flesh people, who need food and clothing and housing, and some chance for intellectual and emotional self-development, a little better than you found it, you will (as we have often said, and the Dean now repeats), find nothing helpful in the Bible. But all the same we fear that even the gloomy Dean will not greatly influence his fellow-Christians. For we have yet to meet two Christians who put the same interpretation upon their holy book. Doubtless choleric half-pay colonels in West End clubs, of a religious turn of mind, will continue to associate Christianity with the forcible "civilization" of "niggers"; whilst East End Christian Communists will see in Jesus a leader of the people who was martyred by the capitalists of his age.

Before leaving the subject, there is one question we should like to ask Dr. Inge. What are those spiritual values which can be shared without being diminished, and in which one man's gain is not another man's loss? Does he mean that whether the Christian has a comfortable competency, or is "down and out" socially and economically, he can still be a highly moral and lovable person? Does he mean that the well-fed, warmly-clad man seated before a comfortable fire, and the social pariah, half-starved and shivering outside his house, are alike able to appreciate the human virtues, the glories of the heavens, the beauty of music, art, and poetry? In short, does the Dean *seriously* suggest that in the absence of the material necessities and amenities of life a man can be a decent citizen, can retain his natural generous impulses, his natural humanity, and his willingness to do his best for others. Perhaps if the Dean would emulate his master for a few weeks, and tramp the country as a vagrant, not knowing where his next meal

and lodging are to come from, he would become even wiser than he is now.

The *Church Times* regrets that the National Union of Teachers is hostile to the teaching of dogmatic religion in the schools. The Union says that denominational religion in the schools will mean that teachers will have to declare their religious beliefs, and this will mean something in the nature of a test for teachers. We agree with the teachers in thinking thus, although we do not know how religion of any kind in the schools can be other than dogmatic. To teach that there is a God, and that he answers prayers is as much teaching dogma as any of the specific doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. It is a great pity that the National Union of Teachers does not go in for confining the school curriculum to purely Secular subjects. So long as religion is in the schools in any form, religious tyranny of some kind will be there. And there are a very large number of teachers—perhaps the majority—who would gladly see religion kept completely outside. It answers no useful purpose, and good teachers make as little use of it as possible.

The same writer announces that the fight for definite religious teaching will not cease, because, it says, without education, "it is useless and probably demoralizing." That is quite plain, it is quite Christian, and it emphasises what we have so often said, namely, that the Christian interest in the schools is a sectarian one pure and simple. What education is with religion the whole history of the country before the State schools were established clearly proves.

The Bishop of Wakefield has propounded a new scheme for religious instruction in the schools. He suggests that a local authority shall be set up in each area, which shall give religious instruction in accordance with the wishes of the parents, and the schools shall be grouped as denominational and undenominational. The teachers appointed shall be those who are willing and able to give such instruction, which means that the chapels and churches will each run their special candidates, and boycott any teacher who had not the right brand of religious belief. The present voluntary schools are to remain the property of the trustees, but maintenance, repair, and extensions are to be paid out of the local rates. When it comes to plundering the public purse the average Christian body will take some beating.

Communist Sunday Schools, froths the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, describe Christianity as a superstition, and it adds darkly, the result of this teaching on a child's mind can be dimly appreciated by adults." We like that "dimly appreciated." It leaves each one free to imagine whatever horrors their ignorance may conjure up, and it commits the paper to nothing definite. We have been saying what the Communists are charged with saying for many years, and we should like the *Chronicle* to tell what adequate description of Christianity can be given other than a superstition? The distinction between a religion and a superstition was pointed out long ago by Hobbes, and it has never been bettered. A religion is superstition established. Superstition is religion not established. When that is said all is said.

Sunday games were discussed by a conference of women at the Metropolitan Asylum Board Offices recently, which met to debate the work of the County Councils. Lady Trustam Eve, L.C.C., who presided, said she had always been in favour of the proposal. She was convinced that it would offer large numbers the opportunity of healthy recreations instead of passing the time in a far less profitable manner both morally and physically. She was glad to say that there was abundance of evidence that, since permission had been given, the result proved that it was one of the best things the Council had done. This view was supported by the police, who testified that the games in the parks took youngsters away from undesirable haunts and from vices previously indulged in.

Some day, perhaps, our Christian compatriots will put the moral and physical health of boys and girls before their own selfish religious notions, and cease their unreasoning opposition to Sunday recreation.

Sell all thou hast and give it to the poor. Among recent wills are the following:—The Rev. Samuel Edwin Bartlett left £10,231 gross, with net personalty £8,667; the Rev. William Burton Eastwood left estate of gross value £7,643, of which £7,513 is net personalty; the Rev. William O'Farrell Hughes left estate of the gross value of £14,618, with net personalty £13,046; the Rev. Andrew Pope left estate of gross value £22,368, with net personalty £20,176; Canon Edward Josselyn Beck left property of value £11,653, with net personalty £11,377; the Rev. Herbert Leslie Hart left estate of gross value £2,605, with net personalty £2,549. Truly Christianity is a most accommodating creed.

Lord Thompson said something in New York that could be well said in London. He admitted that modern warfare meant bombing the enemy's capital, that civilians would suffer more than soldiers, and that if war were declared in the morning enemy planes would be over in the afternoon. The idealism and enthusiasm of our uniformed chaplains during the last war has all helped to stoke up the fires that have reduced war to a massacre of civilians. And the voices of the Church are now busy discussing forms and formalities, ritual and reunion, and with its gratuitous impertinence, giving advice to workmen on questions of wages.

We have often pointed out that in the case of such valuable studies in primitive religions as those of Sir James Frazer their chief value lies in their bearing upon current ideas—which is exactly the aspect of them which is left unnoticed. A very good illustration of this is given in a review of that author's third volume of the *Belief in Immortality* in the *Christian World*. The reviewer fatuously remarks that the main fact about the investigations is that such an idea does exist among the lower races. But that is not the main fact at all. It is not even a very important one. The main and the important fact is that the existing belief in immortality is a direct product of this primitive one, and that the primitive one rests upon no other basis than sheer illusion and delusion. Without the primitive belief the later one would never have existed, and given a better understanding of natural processes—objective and subjective—the primitive belief would never have existed either.

We wonder how long it will be before men like Sir James Frazer summon up sufficient courage to say quite plainly what they know to be true, and thus help their work to exert its proper educational influence? It is all very well for them to say, "There are the facts; I leave it for others to draw the correct conclusions." Some will draw these conclusions, but the vast majority will not do so, and it is left for the writers and preachers who keep the religious delusion going to encourage the belief that these collections of savage beliefs are no better than an interesting and curious collection of illustrations of mental waywardness. Sir James Frazer knows quite well that if his own statements are to be accepted the beliefs in God, in soul, in prayer, in saviour gods, etc., are no better than so many survivals of the most primitive superstitions, and are of no intellectual value whatever. We should like to see Sir James bombarded with questions placing this issue squarely before him, and to know with what success the enquirers met. It is really time that our publicists were brought to the point of showing moral courage with regard to their own researches.

M. Dahl, the Danish Church Minister in the Socialist Government, states the Exchange, is introducing a proposal for the appointment of a committee to consider the question of the separation of Church and State. Another result of the machinations of the wily Atheist Bolsheviks, perhaps. At least, we can imagine some very sincere Church people in Denmark discovering that it is.

To Correspondents.

Those Subscribers who receive their copy of the "Freethinker" in a GREEN WRAPPER will please take it that the renewal of their subscription is due. They will also oblige, if they do not want us to continue sending the paper, by notifying us to that effect.

"SEPH."—Thanks for addresses. Copies of the paper are being sent. Those of our readers who help us to obtain new readers are doing the most valuable of all services to the Cause. The *Freethinker* is the only medium by which the Freethinkers of this country are brought into touch with each other week by week, and if our movement is ever to wield the influence it should wield, a larger circulation of this journal is imperative.

A READER.—We agree with you that the St. Paul's case does look peculiar. We have a frantic appeal for funds on the grounds that the Cathedral is in immediate danger, then when the money is subscribed in a hurry we are told that there is no cause for immediate alarm. Perhaps the lesson to be drawn from this is the poor sense of responsibility which ecclesiastical dignitaries have towards the general public. Any statement which serves their immediate purpose is generally justifiable in their eyes.

WILL Mr. F. Sutherland, who recently sent a year's subscription for the *Freethinker*, be good enough to send his full postal address.

H. FARMER.—Received. Will see what can be done.

I. MASON.—We note your information about the slanderous statements about the lady members of the N.S.S. made by a certain Christian Evidence lecturer. Such degraded specimens of humanity appear to flourish on the Christian Evidence platform. As our predecessor in the editorial chair used to remark, "Christian Evidence usually either finds a man a blackguard or leaves him so." It is, however, possible to take such persons too seriously.

II. DAWSON.—We have no special plan for inducing newsagents to display the *Freethinker* beyond seeing that they are supplied when they desire it, and taking back all unsold copies. Your first estimate of the numbers is correct within two. Mr. Millar is not the first who has read the passage in this sense. And there were some very queer stories current about the earlier generations of Christians. There may have been much more of the sexualistic religion about them than most people are aware of.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—One year, 15s.; half year, 7s. 6d.; three months, 3s. 9d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 8) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham. His subject will be: "Things Christians Ought to Know," and it is to be hoped that there will be a large number of Christians present to hear the lecture.

Our readers will be interested in the following. It is an advertisement which a friend is inserting in some local papers, and we think it is certain to do good:—

Under its present management the *Freethinker* has become one of the liveliest and most instructive of the weeklies. In the course of the past century religious, like other, knowledge has made immense progress, but adequate means have not been employed to diffuse it among the masses. This deficiency the *Freethinker* strives to make good. In a clear, simple, but scholarly way it tells of what Biblical criticism, anthropology and psychology have to say about religion. Everyone interested in this important subject should send postcard for free copy, from 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

One of these days we should like to be able to launch a persistent and adequate advertising plan from this office. The *Freethinker* has never had a twentieth part of the circulation it deserves, and might have, if only its potential readers could be got hold of. For the moment we are the more grateful to those friends who do what they can to help in this way.

We are glad to be able to report that by the will of the late Miss Day, of Ilford, the National Secular Society receives a residual bequest amounting to £418 2s. 1d. Miss Day was a great admirer of the work of the Society, and particularly of the *Freethinker* and the work it has carried on for so long. The bequest was left to the President of the N.S.S. for the benefit of the Society, and has been duly paid over by him to the Trustees.

Mr. Joseph McCabe will lecture to-day (February 8) for the Glasgow Branch in the City Hall (Saloon), at 11.30 and 6.30. In the morning he will speak on the "Pessimism of Bertrand Russell," and in the evening on "The Real Meaning of Tutank-Amen." Admission is free with silver collection.

We are glad to learn that the children's party and social arranged by the Manchester Branch went off very successfully. To-day (February 8) the Branch has arranged for two lectures by Mr. George Whitehead in the Engineer's Hall, Rusholme Road, at 3 and 6.30. His subjects are "Spiritualism" and "Psycho-Analysis." Both topics should prove interesting.

A Handbook for Working Mothers, by Margaret Sanger, a copy of which has just reached us, contains all the usual information regarding the subject, expressed in simple language, on the now almost popular subject of birth control. The pamphlet will be sent post free for 7½d. by the publisher, R. Witcop, 31 Sinclair Gardens, Kensington, W.

Miss Ettie A. Rout will publish through the Pioneer Press, in the course of a week or two, a new work on *Sexual Health and Birth Control*. Miss Rout's articles have been greatly enjoyed by *Freethinker* readers, and there is therefore no need to say that both subjects are those that she has made peculiarly her own. The booklet covers 72 pages, in handsome coloured wrapper, and will be sold at 1s. The book is therefore cheap as well as comprehensive.

HOUDINI TESTS THE SPIRITS.

After twenty-five years of ardent research and endeavour I declare that nothing has been revealed to convince me that intercommunication has been established between the spirits of the departed and those still in the flesh.

I have made compacts with fourteen different persons that whichever of us died first would communicate with the other if it were possible, but I have never received a word. The first of these compacts was made more than twenty-five years ago and I am certain that if any one of the persons could have reached me he would have done so.—Houdini, "A Magician Among the Spirits."

Clerical Schools in Rural Areas.

IN previous articles in the *Freethinker* I have shown how completely the pernicious Balfour Education legislation of twenty years ago has broken down, after (to use the words of Mr. Frank J. Leslie, M.A.), "twenty years of difficulty, discord, and disorder to the cause of national education." I have drawn attention to the scandalous condition of the denominational school buildings, which, in return for full public maintenance of the schools controlled by the denominational managers, these latter are under statutory obligation to keep in proper repair.

This obligation the clerical forces have been permitted to evade, even during post-war years of unemployment, thanks to the traditional tenderness of a reactionary Board of Education, saturated with the pro-clerical traditions of the Cecil family, and strongly biased in favour of denominationalism in public-supported education. Thanks also to the ignoble silence of those who, while knowing the facts, have chosen to acquiesce.

Among the thousands of child victims of the scandal, a very large proportion are in rural areas, for in the villages there is generally but the one school, and that under the soul-crushing domination of the parson and the squire. There is, however, some hope of a better state of things, and that the workers of the rural area may be roused to a sense of their responsibility to their children.

Losovsky, a Moscow leader, writing some months ago in an international journal, said that the British workers were so disgusted with the failures of the Labour Government that they saw no way out but Revolution. However, even after the Labour defeats at the election, the British Labour organizations did not turn their eyes to the barricades, but in the usual dogged British manner at once turned their attention to the weak points of the political side of the movement, and found that Labour had been most badly beaten in the rural areas. Therefore a well-organized educational campaign in the principles of the Labour movement has been started, and we may hope that in this campaign the village schools will come under review by the various speakers, who will do well to take stock of the schools and judge them by the standard of the best urban schools they know. It would be interesting to ascertain from the rural workers, how far they realize that the Church schools *are maintained out of public funds*. Steps should be taken to learn how far the villagers control by their votes those who control their schools, and they should be made to understand, that their agricultural labourers' union, together with the great Trade Union movement of the country, is strong enough to secure that when a village school is required for a political meeting or a social gathering, the villagers should go, not cap in hand to the parson or the squire, but "heads up, eyes front," as man to man, *to their own directly elected representative on the Public Education Authority*.

Thus in a very simple way, but on the bed-rock principle of direct public control of publicly supported education, even the backward rural workers can be brought to contribute their share to the well-informed body of public opinion, which will be necessary when the next Education Bill comes along.

It is now becoming clear in educational and political circles that a new Education Bill will be necessary in the not distant future, if only in view of the scandalous condition of the denominational schools. There are other factors also to be considered. For at long last, after long years of educational work by the rank and file, there is actually a prospect of the school age being raised, and questions of reorganization

will arise. There will be difficulties with the denominational schools, for even now, there are cases where the managers will not allow their upper standard pupils to go to a central upper standard school because the teaching there is not denominational!

Dr. Temple, Bishop of Manchester, ex-President of the Workers' Educational Association and a leader of the Diehard denominationalists in publicly-supported education, tells us that education legislation will probably come within five years. There are indications that the Ecclesiastical forces are mobilizing for a fight. Those of us whose attitude towards those forces in education politics is to "sack the lot," must also mobilize, by persistent educational work based on bed-rock principles, in all circles, but especially among the parents of the children attending our elementary schools—including the rural workers.

It is good to see that the National Union of Teachers are out to fight clerical control of education. The *Schoolmaster* has been especially outspoken in the terrible condition of the denominational schools. The teachers will have nothing to do with religious tests and with the "Right of Entry" of representatives of different religious denominations into the people's schools—a policy which involves a credal register, theological camps in the schools, with consequent sectional "atmosphere." In this they will be supported by the Labour organizations, which are now in no mood for "sectionalizing" influences, and will look upon the credal register as a religious test for parents, and at the theological camps, as a blow through the children, at the principle of Labour solidarity.

For many, many years in pre-war days the Trade Union movement gave a strong lead in education, as may be seen from official Trade Union Congress reports, and also from the reports of Congress deputations, which were such a worry to successive Ministers of Education.

The "lead" will now doubtless pass into the hands of a very important educational movement, which has grown up from within the Trade Union movement itself—the National Council of Labour Colleges. It is good to see that, under its auspices, lectures on local government are being given to trade unionist students, and no doubt the administration of education will receive the attention its importance deserves. Habits of study and investigation will be brought to bear upon the schools in their own districts, and the students will see how admirably the high Tory clerical Balfour legislation was planned to remove the control of education as far as possible from the workers; and in time no doubt a "lead" will come for the direct election of members of education authorities and the elimination of the "Great Co-opted," those of whom Lord Balfour said, that there were many people fit to take part in the administration of education who were nevertheless unsuited for the rough and tumble of elections.

The National Council of Labour Colleges, free from compromising association with the Church, the Universities and the Board of Education, and owing allegiance only to the working class organizations which control and support the movement, will be at liberty to study even such a frankly *political* subject as the history of the struggle for a national democratic system of education, and will be free also to translate the knowledge so gained into *action*, into a *political* assault upon a reactionary Board of Education, which dares to show traditional tenderness to insanitary, badly built, badly equipped denominational schools in urban, and more especially in rural areas.

There are hopes also in other quarters, for about a week ago, sixty-one young Cambridge undergraduates, voted after an interesting debate at the Cam-

bridge Union, for a resolution affirming the existence of a "Class War."

These young men will be able to reinforce the pronouncements of Mr. Wheatley, M.P.—the great protagonist of this Marxian doctrine—by showing, after careful study of our educational system, that in the field of education there is something very like a "class war" and that on one very important "front," the chief combatants are, on the one side well organised, wealthy, politically powerful, law-evading Ecclesiastical forces, and on the other, with alas! so many pitiful casualties, 1,350,000 working class children being "educated" in 6,000 denominational schools which "in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, are unfit for the purpose for which they are being used" (Mr. F. J. Leslie's paper).

Mr. Wheatley and the numerous ardent young Marxian undergraduates at Cambridge and other Universities, will not turn a deaf ear to the cry of those child victims of the "class war" in education.

And who knows? Perhaps the "New Liberalism" may take its courage in both hands and in education politics go back to the traditions of the old Liberalism of a generation and more ago.

There is a large body of enlightened public opinion ready to be mobilized on this question, and we may, I know, look with confidence to readers of the *Freethinker* in Labour and other circles to do their share of the strenuous work which lies before us.

For there must be no mistake about it. The fight to free publicly-supported education from clerical domination is not going to be an easy one. We must fight honourably—a clean fight—but, while giving our opponents full credit for all the virtues they possess, *we must not make the fatal mistake of including stupidity in the list.* MARY BRIDGES ADAMS.

Bible Miracles Filmed.

FROM time to time dramatic authors have tried their practised hands upon the adaptation of Biblical stories for the English stage. Thus we have had the story of "The Prodigal Son," the "Adam and Eve" story in George Bernard Shaw's extraordinary play, "Back to Methuselah"; but more often than not the censor has put his foot down and prohibited the production of plays dealing with Biblical subjects. It seems, however, that what cannot be safely produced on the English stage, under the present condition of the law, can be easily accomplished on the cinema. Only recently a play dealing with the exodus of the Israelites following their bondage under Pharaoh, has been produced on the film under the title of "The Ten Commandments," and exhibited in picture palaces all over the country. And a very wonderful film it is, without a doubt. It opens with a scene depicting, in a most vivid fashion, the terrible sufferings of the Israelites during their sojourn in Egypt, the almost impossible tasks set them by the reigning Pharaoh or his representatives, and how while they are pulling along great cars with the aid of ropes, if they fall in the performance of their task, they are crushed beneath the wheels of succeeding cars as under a great Juggernaut. But the Hebrew God has appeared to Moses, as in the story in the Book of Exodus, and instructed him to go down to Egypt in company of Aaron, and demand of Pharaoh the release of the children of Israel, and if Pharaoh asks him the name of the God he represents he is to answer, "I am, that I am."

Accordingly Moses undertakes the task, taking with him the invincible rod by the aid of which he is to perform most of his miracles. Wisely the producer of this film does not show us how some of these

miracles were accomplished; he merely mentions that many miracles were performed and leaves us to imagine how Aaron's rod was turned into a serpent, and how Pharaoh's magicians accomplished the same kind of feat, and how Aaron's serpent gobbled up all the others, and thus proved the superiority of his trick; how all the water in all the rivers was turned into blood, how the plagues of frogs and lice and flies were produced; how the murrain of beasts, the plague of hail, of locusts, and of darkness followed; but we have a scene in which Moses warns Pharaoh that unless he lets the children of Israel go the Lord will destroy the first born among the Egyptians, and another in which we see the first born lying upon the ground dead. And then we have the great scene of the release of the Israelites, and how they are marched down to the Red Sea, with men, women, children and cattle all together marching, as it were, with one accord in the same direction. And behold, we see the Egyptians following after them with their chariots and horsemen; and when the Israelites reach the Red Sea—wonder of wonders! we see Moses strike the ground with his rod and the waters of the sea divide and stand up like a wall on either side, and the children of Israel pass safely through. It is a wonderful piece of faked photography; and, behold, when the Egyptians reach the sea the surging waves return and they are engulfed beneath a perfect avalanche of raging waters. This, in my judgment, is the greatest achievement the cinema has yet accomplished. Then we pass on to the main story of the film, the discontent of the children of Israel, their worship of other gods—among them the Golden Calf—and the formulation by Moses of the "Ten Commandments." There is no need to specify them in detail, for most of them appear upon the screen in bright letters, but those mostly emphasized in the plot of the modern drama that follows are:—

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.

Honour thy father and thy mother.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

In this modern drama there is a widow with two sons. One is a young man of the world who says that he has no belief in God and is prepared to break all the Commandments, the other is a good young man, a carpenter and a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus. The first of these marries, and soon a fashionable young lady of doubtful morality appears, tempts him, and we are led to believe that he breaks the commandment by being unfaithful to his wife. He then becomes a builder, and contracts to build a large Church. His brother, the carpenter, is employed to carry out some portion of the work, and while he is engaged in the performance of his duty he discovers that the cement of the building is of inferior quality and crumbles in his hands. He informs his brother of his discovery and warns him of the consequences, but the young man is out to make money and cares nothing of the risk he is running. The consequence is that one day the cement gives way and the building falls and kills the mother of the boys, who has come to visit them on important business. And thus, one after another, the unbelieving son breaks the Commandments and Nemesis follows close upon his heels. Experience, however, shows that believers do often, indeed sometimes, more often, break the commandments, than unbelievers, but I suppose scenario writers have to please "the groundlings" in this so-called Christian country. Of course, the writer cares nothing as to whether the story of the exodus is historically true or not, nor is he troubled with the

question as to whether such a person as Moses ever lived, or if he did, whether he was the first to formulate what are called "The Ten Commandments." He probably was quite ignorant of Colenso's critical examination of "The Pentateuch" or other Biblical critics on the question. No doubt the Egyptians had "Ten Commandments" in their archives quite as authoritative as those attributed to Moses. But the writer of the scenario was quite satisfied that the story, whether true or false, was a good one for the film, and he has certainly used it with fine dramatic effect and the makers of the film, the photographers and the producer have combined to make of their materials one of the finest series of pictures ever put upon the screen.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

The Church and the Cinema.

I am writing under the assumption that Freethinkers do not know of the activities of a company known as the Catholic Educational Company, London. At the Diocesan Church House, Houldsworth Hall, Deansgate, Manchester, the above Company recently advertised that next week:—

FOR THE FIRST IN ENGLAND
they will present
THE HISTORY OF THE VATICAN,
to be told by the Film.

Shows are once nightly (commencing January 10), with matinee on the Wednesday. Prices, 2s. 6d., 1s. 4d., and 9d. (including tax).

One thing we may be certain of; that a true History of the Vatican will never be presented to the public. Film propaganda by the Church—any denomination—is not new. Its possibilities were seen long ago, and exploitation of the public by its means will certainly in the future be regularly practised.

The Barnums of the Roman Catholic Church can give "the knock-out" to Leverhulme, Lipton, or Harrod in advertising stunts, any and every day of the week. They will see to it that Houldsworth Hall gets plenty of patronage, for I guess that the priests of Manchester have imperative instructions to inform their congregations that it is their bounden duty to see the film. I wonder if the manager of the hall has also been instructed to besprinkle the film with Holy Water before each show, and whether His Holiness the Pope has blessed it before exhibition date?

Keep your eye on the Catholic Educational Cinema Co. It is out for business. Its directors are members of a Church that has always preached that to lie for the Lord's sake shall be counted for righteousness. "The History of the Vatican" I condemn before exhibition as a lie; for were it true it would never be presented. It is the latest commodity of:—

ROME & CO.,
The oldest established Church in the business.
Candle Merchants.....Image Suppliers.
Incense and Smell purveyors.
The only True Mystery Mongers.
Specialists in Faith-healing.
Super Ceremonial Showmen.

Rome & Co. are sellers first, last, and all the time. Rome & Co. sell everything and anybody. The recollection of the wares the firm deals in and their keen advertising stunts inspires this outburst:—

SONG OF THE RAG AND RELIC MERCHANTS.

We cure aching souls—for a fee.
Ope' wide Heaven's door—for a fee.
Litho hearts dripping red,
And prayers for the dead,
We hawk these to you—for a fee.

Chalk Virgins we sell—for a fee,
Magic lamps for your shrine—for a fee.
Wine turned to blood
That in Holy Grail stood,
We offer to you—for a fee.

Holy Candles we quote—at a fee,
And playthings called beads—at a fee.
Bones of dead Martyr's leg,
And "Nails" by the keg,
We show you at times—for a fee.

We've put on the Screen—for a fee.
"Red Hats" and Popes—for a fee.
Though Cohens say nay,
It's History we say;
And we'll show you the dope—for a fee.

ARTHUR ROGERSON.

Shakespeare's Comic Spirit in Bottom the Weaver.

It is the peculiar advantage of genius that it can divine things higher and deeper than ordinary mortals. Witness the terrific insight into human character of a Balzac, the light and colour of a Turner, or the designs of, say, a poet and artist such as Blake. These saw, and felt, and imagined in a degree that surpasses all ordinary experiences of others who dwell in the valley of thought and not on the heights occupied by the masters. The day is past when anyone should challenge the universal genius manifested in the plays of Shakespeare. We do not say all the plays, as we should not say *all* the poetry of Wordsworth, or *all* the poetry of Milton—to genius even, there are altitudes. When men have mastered ideas, dramatic, philosophic, artistic, then and then only can they *play* with them, and we believe that Shakespeare deliberately played with the comic spirit through the medium of Bottom the Weaver.

What is the outstanding feature of this character? His occupation, his desire to play all the parts in Pyramus and Thisbe, his behaviour whilst translated, or his rusticity?—to none of these can we assent. In our opinion we believe the comic element centres on one feature only, and that is the *sincerity* of Bottom. Without this trait in his character, it fails as a portrayal of the burlesque or grotesque. By sharp contrast we see this spirit of blundering sincerity at work amid a surrounding of aristocratic and fairyland figures and influences—the burly frame of Bottom, with that of "Good Master Cobweb," or that of the Fairy Queen Titania. If he were not sincere and did not believe in himself, we could not tolerate him as one forming part of the unity of this comedy.

As a creation of Shakespeare, we have in Bottom the comic spirit without malice. We do not think it possible for any French or German dramatist to handle such a character and preserve the spectators' tolerance of this deluded buffoon. He blunders magnificently, but never loses our sympathy. He is human, and we feel that, in his position, we could not act differently, and, if we probe a little deeper, we shall find the mind of Shakespeare at work tossing the idea about—he has mastered all tricks and devices. In the words of Nietzsche, "What is divine runs with light feet," and the simplicity of the idea in the hands of Shakespeare, shows him to be the master of this spirit making for the innocent tears of laughter. In effect, he says, "I will make you laugh"—it shall be a closed book to the superficial as to how it is done.

Is it accident or design, that Bottom and his friends never come in contact with the Athenian aristocrats except when their play is presented? This, we think, is a point that rather proves the theory of contrast for humour. The players belong to another exclusive world: from the dramatic point of view it would dis-

turb or minimize the full humorous effect of the awkwardness of their appearance before the nuptial party. If Shakespeare fully understands the comic spirit, he also is aware of its appropriate setting.

Bottom is a creation for all time. In "Hamlet" the sense of tragedy overweighs the clown part although this acts as light to shade. Yet, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream," the burlesque is not overshadowed by any other element. It has free play. Shakespeare takes both liberty and license with Bottom, and the comic spirit riots through a series of joyousness, and the play ends with a parody of the suffering of the lovers.

As the whole is greater than the part, we cannot speak of Bottom without the name of his creator. Joy and laughter, bright dreams and gaiety of heart are the birthright of youth. Incomparable in youth Shakespeare touched with divine fire this aspect of life, and gave to it a flame of immortality. Our diagnosis of his characters is but a diagnosis of his mind. All that we write and speak of his characters is but a criticism of his creative force—the mystery of genius. That Bottom should bluster—forget his cue, fill up his lines himself, explain to a spectator that it will "all fall out pat," this is relatively superficial although laughable and wholesome. We stand in admiration of the master who seems to know all hearts, all human foibles and weaknesses, who gives us in due season his puck-like spirit of comedy with the same prodigality that at a later date is equalled in measure in the spirit of tragedy. And so, like Bottom ourselves, we "grow to a point." If we take away Bottom's *sincerity* the creation falls to the ground. Lucky for us that, in this age of half-truths and half-lights we are the inheritors of this legacy of Shakespeare. No matter to us that Bottom was ignorant, that he lacked the advantages of his Athenian audience, he was sincere. He sounded his note; and Dante consigned to hell all the incontinent, the cyphers, the shadows of men being neither one thing nor another. Can we not hear the words of all *men* in the two lines of Theseus?—

For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.

Can we not also see that Shakespeare was master of his art? a duke could divine the intentions of Bottom and the players, and in the above generous words, these—

Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
Which never laboured in their minds till now,

were but frames on which to hang the clothes of the comic spirit with its outstanding figure of Bottom the Weaver all, being wholly the poet's creation.

WILLIAM REPTON.

An Almost Unknown Volume.

THE Bible begins with a naked man in a garden, and finishes with a visionary man on an island. Very little is known about its authorship, except in the case of Paul, who seems an authentic and fixed object, but the oldest book must have been written before the days of Abraham. This is the only way to explain why Job and his friends failed to mention Abraham. Very little is known, either, about the contents of Holy Writ. As an instance, the good and learned men who compiled the *Oxford Cyclo-pædic Concordance*, printed, in a helpful way, at the end of the more high-class and costly Scriptures, tell, among other things, which is the shortest verse in the Old Testament. And they tell the wrong one.

The early part of the Bible consists of legend, and there are giants in it, as there should be in all good legend. This develops into history of a loose sort, with gaps of various sizes, but still it is history, and appears reliable in places. There are a few detached stories like

those of Job, Ruth, Esther and Jonah, all without dates and mostly without address. The Psalms are many and eloquent, full of sorrow and rejoicing. They are apparently the work of many hands spread over many years, and they are so vague that it is hardly possible to decide what is being sorrowed over or rejoiced about. The prophecies are fine but lugubrious works, interspersed with imaginings which seem utterly crazed, as when one attests that Babylon, which is still dry, had been already in his time drowned by the sea, and another swears that Damascus, which still stands and prospers, had been wiped off the map. These, and many other quaint mental and spiritual gyrations, lend excitement to the foretellings. Sometimes the prophet is so enveloped in a dust of words that what he is prophesying about is matter for the wildest conjecture. However, much these good men were able to foresee the future, they didn't foretell, and thus speed up, one useful invention, and they worked in a painfully narrow orbit. They could spend a lifetime's anger on some principality one half-day's ass-ride across.

The proverbial philosophy of the Scripture, which centres round the legendary figure of Solomon, constitutes fine literature, far superior to Martin Tupper or Walt Whitman, and better spelt than Josh Billings. The two Chronicles read like a clumsy and incapable rehash, by the junior sub-editor, of far better work, the purpose being to make a case for the family of his employer, some scion of the House of David. In their low literary quality they stand practically alone. There is no excuse for the existence of Chronicles, with its tales of how little Judah had a standing army of (at times) as many as 1,160,000 soldiers in addition to garrisons, yet could apparently only find a corporal's guard of men when men were most wanted.

The practical interest of the Bible largely centres in the fact that it is so full of things which few people imagine, and so empty of things which most people imagine. To a new student it might seem as if a work had been accepted without question as a cookery book, and then, after many years, some act of inspection had broken the spell and proved it to be a dictionary. The Scripture takes slavery for granted, and the Scriptural writers left that institution much as they found it. It makes no clear allusion to penance, and it has a low opinion of women. Only two Scriptural books are named after women, and they are unimportant. Members of the sex weren't supposed to succeed to the throne. If there had been Parliaments then they wouldn't have possessed a vote. It is laid down even in the later and more progressive New Testament that they aren't to teach, or to wear pretty clothes, or to rule over men in any way, but are to be squashed "in silence," with *all* subjection—not merely some subjection, but the whole lot of it. About divorce the Book speaks with two voices, or even with three—a Deuteronomy voice, a Matthew voice, and a Mark voice.

It is rather an inversion of ideas that the Scripture has an objection to polygamy, and has an objection to, or a total ignorance of, clerical celibacy. The Old Testament says that the priest must not marry a dissipated or divorced female, but apparently he may marry several respectable women. It goes on to say that the high priest "shall take a virgin of his own people to wife." In a sort of parenthesis it is added that if a priest's daughter becomes a lady with a past she is to be burned "with fire," which is probably the best article to use for the purpose. And it is laid down in the New Testament that every priest and deacon *must* be the husband of one wife, and so he must not overdo things. Also they are not to be really heavy drinkers. Contrary to a general and wholly inverted opinion held by some of the more ignorant sects, the sacred volume not only permits but commands woman's marriage with her deceased husband's brother. At least it commands him to marry her and takes the widow's consent for granted, she being a female and of small account. And the nearest it seems to get to prohibiting marriage with a deceased wife's sister is that it bids a man not to marry the wife's sister before the wife is deceased.

Opponents of capital punishment find little or nothing to go upon in Holy Writ. The prohibition against homicide appears to have been directed against push outrage and private feud, though even the latter was recog-

nized after a liberal fashion in the legislation concerning cities of refuge. But execution by legal process, and often by very casual process, was as common as Sunday. One day there were 3,000 executions. Mostly death was by the throwing of bricks. Sometimes, when there was a lack of brickthrowers, the victims were mugged up with a sword. The priest's too-festive daughter had a road of her own, as already mentioned. The execution of sculptors was probably extra prompt, for the prohibitions against the making of things like Captain Cook's statue were of great intensity. In addition to providing against Nelson Illingworth and his tribe, the old law was solid on capital punishment for witches and wizards, but the definition was loose, and there was a little of it. So a time came when any old woman with a cat, especially if she also possessed a beard, or any solitary young woman with a kitten, or any one who cured people unusually well or invented things unusually strange, was ripe for a hurried and very unpleasant exit.

JAMES EDMOND.

Sydney Bulletin.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY,
JANUARY 29, 1925.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Corrigan, Samuels and Silverstein, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough, and the Secretary. Messrs. Neate, Quinton and Rosetti were absent in consequence of indisposition.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly financial statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Glasgow, Hull, Manchester, Newcastle, North London, Swansea, West Ham, and the Parent Society.

Correspondence, which included letters from Glasgow, Derwent, Plymouth, and Birmingham, was dealt with.

The President reported that a legacy to the Society under the will of the late Miss Jane Day, had been received, amounting to £418.

The summer outdoor propaganda in the provinces was discussed, and it was resolved to re-engage Mr. G. Whitehead from May to September on the same terms as last year.

The Secretary reported the recent lectures delivered in Birmingham. It was further reported that the Annual Dinner had been an unqualified success.

The date previously fixed for a Social Evening was found to be impracticable, and the Secretary was instructed to make other arrangements.

The meeting then closed.

E. M. VANCE,
General Secretary.

Obituary.

We regret to report the passing of another veteran in the Freethought army in the person of Mr. D. Shindle, at the age of 74. He was actively associated with work in London for many years, and for a long time sat on the Executive as a representative of the Kingsland Branch. Quiet in manner, his attachment to Freethought was thorough and sustained to the end. He died as he would have wished, in harness. Freethought had no more loyal servant, and those who were privileged with his friendship appreciated his sterling character and fearless mentality. The world of to-day would not be quite so easy as it is for heretics but for the quiet and unselfish labours of men of his stamp. We pay the appreciation of a colleague to a fallen warrior in the army of progress.—C.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

Mrs. C. B. S. Hodson's lecture at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Sunday last evoked much interest and an animated discussion preceded by many questions to the lecturer, followed, mainly on the transmission of acquired characteristics. We hope for a good rally next Sunday to hear the debate between Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe and Mr. Pell on "The Existence of a Benevolent Deity." We have been provided with better seating accommodation, which we hope to see well filled.—K.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

ETHICS BASED ON THE LAWS OF NATURE.—(Emerson Club, 14 Great George Street, Westminster, Side Entrance: 3.30, Lecture in French by Madame de Gilève on "How to Remain Young." All invited.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (160 Great Portland Street, W.): 8, Mr. E. Baker, "Unemployment—Its Remedy." The Discussion Circle meets every Thursday at 8 at "The Castle," Shouldham Street, Edgware Road, W.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7, Debate—"Are the Facts of Life Inconsistent with the Existence of a Benevolent Deity?" Affirmative, Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe; Negative, Mr. C. E. Pell.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham Road): 7, Mr. E. Burke, "What Socialism will mean to the Human Race."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. Harry Snell, "Belief, Customs, and Habits of Primitive African Races."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, M.P., "Ethics of Political Life."

OUTDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Marble Arch): Friday, February 6, at 8.30, Debate—"Is There a God?" Wednesday, February 11, at 8.30, Debate—"Secularism v. Christianity," Mr. C. H. Keeling v. Mr. Chellis, M.A. Meetings every night and Sunday as usual. Speakers: Messrs. Baker, Constable, Hanson, Hart, and Keeling.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Brassworkers' Hall, 70 Lionel Street, Birmingham): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Things Christians Ought to Know."

BOLTON SECULAR SOCIETY (Socialist Club, 16 Wood Street): 2.30, Mr. W. Addison, "Was Jesus Christ a Social or Political Reformer?"

GLASGOW BRANCH N.S.S. (Saloon Hall, Candleriggs): Mr. Jospeli McCabe, 11.30, "The Pessimism of Bertrand Russell"; 6.30, "The Real Meaning of Tuth-unk-Amen." Questions and discussion. (Silver Collection.)

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. R. Wilberforce Allen, a Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, 120 Rusholme Road, All Saints', Manchester): Mr. George Whitehead, 3, "Spiritualism Explained"; 6.30, "Psycho-Analysis."

LECTURERS WANTED.—Opportunity for good speakers.—Apply Box 99, Freethinker Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

MAN IS A NOBLE ANIMAL, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave—so it's up to us to serve you nobly, treat you splendidly, and provide the good clothes which are the chief pomp 'twixt cradle and the hearse. We shall expect your postcard to-morrow for any of the following:—*Entirely new 1925 patterns—Gents' A to H Book, suits from 56s.; Gents' I to N Book, suits from 99s.; Gents' Overcoat Book, prices from 48s. 6d.; or Ladies' Coat and Costume Book, coats from 46s., costumes from 60s.* The folk who "fittingly" fulfil their promises.—MACCONNELL & MABE, New Street, Bakewell, Derbyshire.

THE weather is dull, the outlook is dull; but there is nothing dull about *THE EVERLASTING GEMS*. If you wish to brighten your evenings and make your family and friends laugh, read this caustic book. 2s., post free, from THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

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In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to
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THE SECULAR SOCIETY, Ltd.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office : 62 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4.

Secretary : MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A *Form of Bequest*.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators :—

I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy.

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