

The FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

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

Registered at the General Post Office as a Newspaper

Vol. XLVI.—No. 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 7, 1926

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Christianity and the World.—The Editor</i>	145
<i>"The Severity of God."—J. T. Lloyd</i>	146
<i>He Who Gets Slapped.—Mimnermus</i>	147
<i>The Story of Evolution.—E. Anderson</i>	148
<i>Is Mind a By-Product?—Keridon</i>	154
<i>Charles Bradlaugh and Birth Control.—H. Cutner</i>	155
<i>Society News</i>	158

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

Views and Opinions.

Christianity and the World.

One is rather puzzled to determine the object that Lord Oxford and Asquith had in writing a couple of articles in the *Sunday Times* on "Christianity and the World." It is certainly not an examination of the influence of Christianity on the world, although it bears that form. And, in any case, it suffers from the customary fault of not saying what in the writer's mind Christianity stands for. Here and there "Christianity" is used as the equivalent of "Christendom," which is both unhelpful and misleading. For Christendom embraces not merely all who are not Christian in outlook or conviction, but also all those social and intellectual forces which have nothing whatever to do with any form of religious belief. To take the world as it is, contrast it with the world as it was many centuries ago, put on one side the persistence of bad or undesirable features, chronicle the good and desirable ones, and straightway put these latter to the credit of Christianity, is the usual policy of the pulpit, but one expects a man of the standing of Lord Oxford to be above that kind of thing. It is a safe assumption that the world would hardly have stood still had Christianity never been heard of. Civilization was not an unknown fact till Christianity came, and the forces that had brought man from a state of pure savagery to the developments, social, ethical, and intellectual, such as meet us in the old Roman and Greek world would not have ceased to operate in the absence of the Christian religion. No one outside of the pulpit would assume that the march of humanity would have stopped there, and to take after times and allow nothing for this, while attributing whatever progress has been made to some undefined and kaleidoscopic "Christianity" is about as unscientific a procedure as one can imagine.

* * *

Paganism and Christianity.

One of the essential distinctions, says Lord Asquith, between Christianity and the religions of the ancient world was that it was not bound up with the civic life of any community. On the face of it the contrast will hold good, but the desired implication will not stand at all. For the assumption is that the Christian religion stood for a higher ethic, a more universal ethic, than did the Pagan civilization, one which aimed at uniting mankind in the terms of a

common humanity. To begin with, one of the features that astonished and repelled the better class Pagan's was Christianity's narrowness and exclusiveness. Loftiness of character made no appeal to it whatever. It aimed, not at a company of developed humans, but at a society of believers in a number of more or less savage doctrines. And in the end it was the prevalence of this conception which materially helped to destroy some of the better elements in the Pagan civilization. So far as ethical teaching is concerned the Pagan world had nothing to learn from the Christian as to the universality of human virtues or human rights. These were taught far more definitely and rationally by the Stoics, the Epicureans, and others schools of philosophers than ever they were by Christians. It is true that the Romans placed great emphasis on the civic and patriotic virtues, but to assume that they did that while ignoring the wider character of intellectual and moral virtues, is to assume something that is entirely wrong. True, again, our modern sense of Nationality did not exist in the ancient Roman world, and it is also true—a point unnoticed by Lord Asquith—that when it did make its appearance, it was accompanied with all the ferocity and intellectual narrowness that had become one of the marked features of the Christian Church. Because of their emphasis on the value of the civic virtues, the Romans with the spread of their dominion paid respect to the customs and beliefs of the peoples over whom they ruled. Because of its religion the Christian Church respected nothing that conflicted with its teaching. All the primitive ferocities which Roman culture had managed to somewhat restrain by its rule, were let loose again under the ægis of the Christian Church, and in the end the ancient civilization went down before—to use Gibbon's phrase—the twin forces of barbarism and religion.

* * *

Savagery and Religion.

That is a damning fact on which too much emphasis cannot be laid. Christianity, in its organized state, inherited a system of jurisprudence which has always claimed and received the admiration of the world. It had traditions of settled and orderly government, upon which much might have been built, and so served as the starting points of new developments. Whatever the Christian Church did it did not save the ancient civilization. That is quite clear, and it is to hide that fact that Christian writers have spent so much time and ingenuity in painting the ancient world as sunk in hopeless corruption. Whatever may have been the saving virtues of Christianity it could not save ancient civilization from destruction. That is at its best. But at its worst it was a very active agent in the decline of that civilization. "The religion of Numa" was tolerant to the end and insistent upon the value of civic duty, while alive to the importance of intellectual culture. Lord Oxford, after noting the general character of the Roman conception of duty, says:—

Nothing can be more different in temper and

motive than the crusade which, after the newly-won ascendancy of Christianity had become officially secure, was carried on by the Emperor Justinian against Heresy and Paganism alike. By the end of the sixth century Orthodoxy had become a condition, not only of admission to the service of the State, but of the enjoyments of the common rights of citizenship.

And, after noting the bestialities, the cruelties, and the demoralization of life during the Papal period of government, he writes of the Reformation:—

Nor can even the most ardent of Protestants find it easy to vindicate or excuse the political first-fruits of the Reformation itself. There was among the Reformers little to choose in intolerance and uncharitableness between Lutheran and Calvinist. The murder—for such it was—of Servetus (1533) at the instance of Calvin himself, and the Protestant oligarchy which dominated the Republic of Geneva, is a black crime even in the annals of persecution. Yet it had the approval—for Servetus had unsound views on the Trinity—of the gentle and humane Melancthon. The Thirty Years' War in the first half of the seventeenth century, in which the adherents of the Old Faith and the New exhibited an impartial disregard of the teachings of the spirit of the Gospel of Christ, was one of the most purposeless, as well as one of the most cruel and destructive in history. It was a struggle in which the competing fanaticism of Catholics and Protestants over the greater part of the Continent of Europe let loose all the worst passions of dynastic rivalry and territorial lust.

* * *

The Survival of the Unfit.

This is far from an over-statement of the case; indeed, it is a very moderate presentation. But one wonders, if even this mild statement of the case be taken, wherein lies the benefit conferred upon the world by Christianity. Lord Oxford does find some good influence exerted by Christianity—without this saving, if even stultifying, conclusion, it is safe to say the *Sunday Times* would never have published the articles. With that conclusion we will deal later. At present we may note that Christianity, while doing what it could to destroy the patriotic and civic virtues and intellectual toleration of the Roman world, merely encouraged a savage sectarianism which threatened the very foundations of civilized society. It is admitted that belief in Christianity became the condition of, not only admission to the service of the State but to the enjoyment of the rights of common citizenship. And when we bear in mind that the leaders of Christianity for some centuries numbered a group of men with a vision narrower, credulity greater, and a bigotry more savage than any other leading group the world has known, it does not require a very keen imagination to realize its effects on the world at large. Unfortunately, this was not a passing phase of Christian influence. It has been one of the most constant. To within the last century non-belief in Christianity meant exclusion from most of the offices of State, even to the minor ones. They were denied the rights of common citizenship in numerous cases, and are denied many of those rights still, even though the deprivation may not be a legal one. The instrument of boycott still remains, and it is wielded mostly by those who are most convinced of the value of their religion. And in practice this has always resulted in a lower type of mind and character serving the State than would otherwise have been the case. No one can be quite certain what is the opinions of public men to-day about Christianity. They may believe in it when they say they do, or they may not. We do know that in many cases they do not believe, but will not say so, for fear of Christian prejudice and Christian intolerance. And, as I have

often had occasion to point out, this has meant placing a premium upon intellectual dishonesty and moral cowardice, and a tax upon honesty and courage. The last thing the old Roman government would have done would have been to exclude a man from civil office because of a difference in religion. Christianity has always preferred the coward, the liar, and the hypocrite to the brave, truthful unbeliever, and generally it has managed to get them.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

(To be Concluded.)

"The Severity of God."

IN Mr. W. L. George's last novel, *Gifts of Sheba*, we read (p. 234), "He thinks that religion is the refuge of cowards who are afraid to die." He who so thinks is a fairly prosperous stockbroker named Angus Hallam, who is a deep philosopher as well as a successful business man. Although an unbeliever in Supernaturalism, he is a zealous advocate and exemplar of morality, and although professionally a callous, laughing cynic, he treats his fellow-beings with justice, honesty, and kindness. There are multitudes of such people in the world to-day, who, without making any high professions, are yet noble-minded and tender-hearted, leading lives of quiet, unostentatious benevolence, to whom society owes a debt of lasting gratitude. And yet the clergy dogmatically declare that life has no absolute moral sanction except for those who believe in God; but that declaration is an absolutely lying one, as all who look upon life with unprejudiced eyes readily perceive and openly admit. In point of fact, Supernaturalism has always been and still is a hindrance rather than a help to the progress of social morality. The Bible represents God as the friend and protector of good people who believe, and the enemy and destroyer of the wicked who disbelieve. Curiously enough, however, many wicked people are ardent believers, whilst not a few of the best and most useful members of society are convinced unbelievers.

In the *Guardian* of February 19, there is a sermon entitled "The Severity of God," recently preached in Westminster Abbey by Canon H. W. B. Thompson, of Dublin. The Canon says:—

It will hardly be denied, I suppose, by any observant person who looks out upon the tendencies of the age in which we live, that sufficient attention is not given to the truth that because God is good he is also severe; that his goodness towards those who are faithful and obedient implies his severity towards the unbelieving and disobedient. It would be, I think, quite fair to describe the truth of the severity of God as a neglected truth in this age. And, of course, any neglected truth brings about the consequences of its neglect.

It is a mistake surely to use the word "truth" in this connection. Neither the goodness nor the severity of God is a truth, but, at best, only a *theory*, or *speculation*, cherished by theologians, but never verified by facts. We may take the whole history of the world and never find the slightest evidence at any point of the activity of God, either for the benefit of those who call themselves his people, or for the downfall of those who know him not. You cannot refer to a single event that ever took place from the beginning until now and truthfully describe it as the work of God. Indeed, the Christian God is a being in whom it is quite impossible for men and women of science and culture honestly to believe. Have you ever read the speech of Pope Urban II., which he delivered in advocacy of the first crusade

at the Council of Clermont in the year 1095? Urban was distinguished for his piety, or religiousness, as Milman calls it; but the Supreme Being in whose name he claimed that he spoke was the God of Battle, who delighted in the slaughter of his enemies. In urging the people to unite in a violent war against the Saracens who were in wicked possession of the Holy Land, "he assured them that the Saviour himself, the God of armies, would be their leader and their guide in battle."—As Milman puts it:—

There was no passion which he left unstirred. "The wealth of your enemies shall be yours; ye shall plunder their treasures. Ye serve a commander who will not permit his soldiers to want bread, or a just reward for their services." He 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 to all who would take up arms in this sacred cause. It was better to fall in battle than not to march to the aid of the Brethren; he promised eternal life to all who should suffer the glorious calamity of death in the Holy Land, or even in the way to it. The Crusader passed at once into Paradise. For himself he must remain aloof; but, like a second Moses, while they were slaughtering the Amalekites, he would be perpetually engaged in the fervent and prevailing prayer for their success. The Pontiff could hardly conclude his speech; he was interrupted by ill-suppressed murmurs of grief and indignation. At its close, one loud and simultaneous cry broke forth: "It is the will of God! it is the will of God." (*Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., 181-2.)

Does Canon Thompson believe that during the hideous Crusades God was exhibiting his goodness towards the Christians and his hatred towards the Saracens? If he does, then we are proud to express our utter unbelief in such a Deity.

The Canon believes that severity is a part of God's goodness, though what exactly he means by such a statement it is difficult to determine. There are expressions in the sermon which seem to indicate that he would approve even of the bloody Crusades. Take the following extract as a sample:—

We are all familiar with the question, so often asked in recent years, How can God be good if he permits such and such events to happen? The events in question probably reveal the severity of God, but because this attribute of his character has not received the attention it deserves, the question is asked. It is as if someone in St. Paul's day had asked, How can God be good towards the Hebrew race when he permitted the seed of Abraham to stumble at the stone of stumbling and rock of offence which God himself laid in Zion? St. Paul answers that question by affirming both the goodness and severity of God. "Towards them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness." And, moreover, St. Paul views both these attributes of God's character as actually having their place within that one purpose of Divine mercy towards all mankind, which alone gives unity to the whole course of human history.

If the teaching of that passage were true, all the events of Christian history, all ruthless wars, all massacres of the innocent, all persecutions of heretics, would stand fully justified, for concerning them all we could say, "Behold the goodness and severity of God." But such teaching is, in reality, false to its very core. How can anybody think well of the Spanish Inquisition, with its unspeakable and innumerable horrors before his eyes? Were the Albigenses in France enemies of God? Certainly not; they believed in and loved him with all their hearts. And yet they were most brutally exterminated. On what grounds can Canon Thompson justify the world war, which resulted in the cruel

slaughter of several millions of promising young men, and in crippling and disfiguring many millions more and rendering their life a painful and hopeless burden? Was there any room whatsoever for the exercise of the goodness of God in that terrific cataclysm? Those young men on the various battle fields were not enemies of God, most of them being his sincere worshippers, and yet they were mown down like flies at all the fronts. The effect of the horrors of that war upon thousands of those who up to that time had been more or less firm Theists was to convert them to positive Atheism.

We have read Canon Thompson's sermon with the utmost care, but the result has been the confirmation of our unbelief. We have been enabled to realize more clearly and fully than ever before how infinitely illogical, unethical, and absurd belief and trust in God really are, and how tenacious a hold superstition still has upon the human mind.

J. T. LLOYD.

He Who Gets Slapped.

The meek shall inherit the earth—in coffins.—G. W. Foote.

Hitch your wagon to a star.—Emerson.

All our knowledge is ourselves to know.—Pope.

IN the columns of an Essex weekly newspaper a reader might have noticed recently the obituary notices of three persons. One was a draper who had amassed wealth by the humanitarian methods peculiar to the legalised slavery of the rag-trade; another was a solicitor who had held many lucrative public positions for over half a century; and the third was a man who was neither wealthy nor respectable. As a fact, the last-mentioned died in the workhouse infirmary, aged seventy-seven, penniless and almost forgotten. Yet of the three men the most lovable, the most useful, was the despised pauper, and his variegated and richly-coloured life deserves a few lines of recognition.

John Keith Sykes was, beyond question, a rolling stone, but his native buoyancy and rollicking humour was so pronounced that few remembered that natures such as his gather no moss in the journey of life. He had been so many things in his time: conjurer, circus-clown, song-writer, shopkeeper, ventriloquist, comedian, and even a journalist. For years he wrote two columns weekly for a provincial newspaper under the saucy heading, "Sykes' Singularities," and made thousands laugh with his whimsical reflections upon matters theatrical, with witty and irreverent diversions upon almost every subject under the sun. He had a most facile pen, and, now and again, he would tickle his readers with a column of comicalities almost every word of which would commence with the same letter of the alphabet. He would burst into rhyme, too, on the slightest provocation, and, taken altogether, was an exceedingly merry fellow.

This same gift of humour helped him in his profession as an illusionist. His "patter" was so original, so laughable, that he could easily have made a name for himself. But he would never stay in one profession any length of time, excepting journalism, which he would write under any circumstances; in a circus-tent on an upturned drum, on a railway-station waiting-room table, or on his shop-counter, just as the mood found him.

Curiously, this rollicking jester had his serious side. He was a Freethinker, and had a passion for Liberty, and once in his life, for a brief space, he was cast, as he expressed it, "for the part of Horatius." He took a newsagents' shop at Southend-on-Sea, and

opened on Sundays. The town was then ruled with a rod of iron by a stiff-necked, narrow-eyed Sabbatarian clique, and they determined to stop this "infidel nonsense." Accordingly Sykes was summoned under the musty old Act of Parliament of Charles the Second's reign. The infidel opened again on the next Sunday, and was again summoned. So the game went on, summonses and fines following each week for a long space. Then Sykes remembered that Southend pier was opened each Sunday for payment, and the solicitor applied for a summons against the local Town Council under the same Sunday Observance Act under which he had himself been summoned so often. The result of this bold stroke was that all the summons were withdrawn, and Sunday opening was an accomplished fact. This happened forty years ago, and all those years shops in Southend have been opened on Sundays without molestation.

Sykes was quite a "character." He would always interrupt business in order to conduct Freethought propaganda, and I have seen his shop full of eager disputants bent on argument and not commerce. This failing Sykes shared with a far better known Freethinker, W. Stewart Ross, the renowned "Saladin." Ross had a scholastic publishing office at Holborn Viaduct steps, and he did precisely the same thing. Often a genuine customer had to elbow his way through a crowd of wild-eyed debaters to get to his counter. Saladin had the better audience, for among his frequenters was Gilbert Chesterton, who put him in one of his novels, *The Cross and the Ball*. Ross did not stop at verbal propaganda. His shop windows displayed constantly several open pages of the current issue of *The Agnostic Journal*, which caused a crowd outside as well as inside his office. It was Saladin's boast that he kept the scholastic publications of "Stewart & Co." separate from his Freethought writings; but the fact remained that far more space was given to iconoclastic books and pamphlets than to works of a strictly educational nature. A provincial schoolmaster, in search of mathematical works, would see in his windows books on *The Bottomless Pit* and *The Confessional*, rather than learned commentaries on the earlier books of Euclid. Ross had a beautiful brogue when he was excited, and his "r's" used to roll out of the shop into Farringdon Street with the sonority of a loud speaker.

Sykes had no natural brogue, but he could assume one. He had a trick, too, of imitating the voice of the person he was arguing with. This had the most laughable result. Indeed, he was as high-spirited as any schoolboy, and quite as impish. I recall going with him to a Spiritualistic seance, where he displayed his knowledge of conjuring and ventriloquial powers to the amazement of the audience and our own private amusement. At no seance, probably, were so many and quaint "spirits" called from the vasty deep.

Towards the end of his career he was driven by poverty to adopt strange methods of living. Once I attended a Missionary Exhibition for purely journalistic purposes, and was shown a number of "savages" in full native dress. As I turned to leave, my arm was gently pulled and a voice I recognized whispered: "How are you, old man?" It was Sykes in native regalia, and only a strong sense of duty to his employers prevented him there and then from escorting me to licensed premises to celebrate our reunion.

Self-educated, Sykes was very wide in his literary sympathies. He bought books, mostly second-hand, and his price for each volume was mostly sixpence. Unlike most collectors he read what he had purchased, and he was always ready to expatiate on his

latset "bargain." He knew and admired Dickens's works, and never tired of pointing out that Bill Sikes's name was spelt with an "i," and not like his own surname. Shakespeare's verse was often on his tongue, but, like so many players, he preferred the Bard's bombast to his more serious passages. Curiously, he had a fondness for Marcus Aurelius, and the great Roman's wisdom was often quoted in his conversation, although few greater contrasts could be found than the serenity and majesty of the quotation and the shiftless life of the poor actor who made it. He had a few very favourite passages, and was never weary of repeating Marcus Aurelius's wise words on discontent, as applicable to-day as in the far-off time in which he wrote:—

Think not so much of what thou hast not as what thou hast; and of things which thou hast, select the best, and think how eagerly they would have been sought if thou hadst them not.

Those who think that Marcus Aurelius is but a dry-as-dust classic beloved of pedants and scholars should have heard the poor player declaim the majestic finale to the "Meditations":—

O man! as a citizen thou hast lived in this great city, the world. Whether just for so many years, or no, what is it unto thee? Thou hast lived, thou mayest be sure, as long as the laws of the city required; which may be the common comfort of all. Why then should it be grievous unto thee, if, not a tyrant, nor an unjust judge, but the same Nature that brought thee in, doth now send thee out of the world.

Owing to his reckless, improvident character, life was not a bed of roses to poor Sykes. He had known comfort, and he had known what it was to go without a meal, or even a bed. His victory against the Sabbatarians cost him dear, for a Christian landlord forced him out of business by the simple expedient of quadrupling his rent. It is true that Sykes tried again, but he was a marked man, and the second attempt spelt failure. He took the buffetings of Fate with a smile. "It is the privilege of a circus-clown to get slapped," he once said, whimsically. And what answer could I give but to press his hand. If John Keith Sykes waged an unequal war against fate, he was, at least, a happy soldier. When his turn came he yielded up his broken, but not dishonoured, sword to fate, the conqueror, with a brave and a humble heart.

MIMNERMUS.

The Story of Evolution.

IV.

(Continued from page 134.)

THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO, OR EAST INDIES.

LET us now cross the Indian Ocean and glance at the savages in the islands to the north of Australia.

When Magellan discovered the Marianne or Ladrone Islands, in 1521, the natives had, till that time, never seen fire, and expressed the utmost astonishment at it. They believed it to be an animal which fixed itself upon wood and fed on it, and when approaching so near as to be burnt, they thought they were bitten by it. The inhabitants of the Phillipine and Canary Islands were, at their first discovery, in a state of equal ignorance. A savage would not readily conceive that fire could be turned to useful purposes; and, therefore, would endeavour to suppress and extinguish it, instead of preserving it; or, if he found it impracticable to destroy it, he would fly from it and leave it to its ravages. Yet at some time some must have found sufficient courage to use fire, and

even to produce it for some primitive purpose, not necessarily for cooking food or for warmth, but rather for hardening and drying wood for arrows and spears used in hunting.

A popular description of this region, which is larger than the whole of Europe, may be read in *The Eastern Archipelago*, published by T. Nelson & Sons (1880), from which some of the following information is obtained.

Borneo is not only the largest island in the East Indies, but it is the largest in the world, and contains a number of tribes, with habits and customs varying from one another, but more or less alike. The principal divisions are the coast tribes and the interior Hill Dyaks. The former are the more advanced, having come into contact with Malays from Asia; Hindoos; Spanish and Portuguese traders and explorers; and, later, the Dutch and English settlers. The Sea Dyaks are, or were, piratical, with a low sense of morality. This may be the effect of meeting civilized people. The Hill Dyaks are truthful, temperate in food and drink, not naturally cruel, though frequent inter-tribal wars have led to the custom of "head hunting"; so no young Dyak can marry until he can present his intended wife with a proof of his prowess in the shape of an enemy's head. The lowest developed tribe attire themselves in tiger-skin and the plumes of the argus pheasant—very handsome. Others make their headdress of the bark of trees, of cloth, embellishing it with feathers, or tufts of fibre to resemble feathers. Some of the tribes are tattooed with complex designs. Being fond of ornaments, they wear immense rings of metal on limbs and shoulders, with collars of human teeth, or the teeth of apes or wild boars, and wear long ear-rings.

Their weapons are simple—a big knife, a shield of hard wood, and a long spear. They have no manufactures, and occupy their time in building ingenious huts or houses, and fifty-foot canoes, while the women do all the hard work; so that they grow old and decrepid before their time.

The men marry only one wife and are faithful to her, while, like all savages, they display strong affection for children. They have no priests nor worship; but they are amenable to many superstitious influences. They have chiefs who, however, possess little power. When "head-hunting" the Dyak carries a basket by his side, ornamented with human hair and shells, with which to carry the head of the first stranger he meets, whom he kills as a matter of course.

The women grind rice and maize, which they make into cakes, kneaded with rancid fat from the kawan fruit, and sweetened with a black syrup from sugarcane or the juice of palm-trees. The boys engage in many games, one of which was similar to the English "prisoners' base."

Some distance to the east is Papua, or New Guinea, a large and a smaller island close together, which are of greater extent than the British Isles. The interior tribes have not been visited, owing to their hostility to strangers, but many of the coast-dwelling tribes are well known to traders, and explorers, and we can gain much knowledge of them in the travels of Wallace and Bickmore, and also those of Capt. Blackwood and the naturalist, J. Bute Jukes.

Although the Papuan islands are close to the equator, and to an arid district of Australia, they have a very wet climate. This is caused by the high mountains of the interior attracting and condensing clouds; therefore we find, on the south coast, vast forests and swamps, and with close undergrowth which are impassable without an axe. The result is that the natives live among, and travel through, the trees like

monkeys, and display remarkable agility in climbing and leaping from branch to branch. They obtain their principal sustenance from the sea which swarms with fish; they possess only bows and arrows and throwing spears, the points being simply hardened with fire. They have no knowledge of poisoning the arrows, and their ideas of clothing are very vague. The men wear a band round the lower part of the body, about five or six inches broad, but they decorate themselves with bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings, and breast-fringes made of ratan, and sometimes hang small ovals of wood to the ends.

The colour of their skin is a blueish-black, which may come from a stain; they use oil and grease over their bodies to protect them from the sun and the rain, and smear the forehead, under the nose and round the chin, with red clay; the effect is hideous to a European. The hair is crisp, like the African negroes, and pitch black in colour, and is worn in various fashions; some of the men plaiting and twisting it into a tail which descends from the back of the head, others weaving it in round rushes, so as to form an erect crest, or coronal.

The language of these southern Papuans is very primitive and limited, they indulge in piercing yells and shrill laughter, which jar on the ear like musical discords. There are no chiefs, or priests, or medicine-men, or any ideas of spirits among this tribe, nor do they cultivate any plant.

Capt. Frank Hurley has recently returned from New Guinea, and on November 7, 1924, he showed a film at the London Polytechnic, being a record of his travels. He said: "The natives are pure Communists; everything is communal property, communally produced, and the whole tribe lives in communal houses." Having given an axe to one man, being something they could not produce, "they fought to possess the axe." The report of the Captain's lecture does not state which tribe that was, but probably one of those on the south-west of the large island.

Here is to be found a people differing from those of the south coast. They live on the banks of the Outanata River, the males are taller than the others, well-made, and muscular. Their dark brown skin is glossed over with a blueish tinge, apparently communicated by a decoction of dye-wood. The women are of middle stature, generally darker complexioned than the men, and carry their children on their backs, suspended in a shawl made of woven leaves and bark. Both men and women smear their bodies with clay or mud, and their only clothing is a patch of coarse cloth about six inches square.

In character they are good-natured and honest. No trace of a religious creed, or of any religious ceremonies, has been discovered among them.

Their weapons consist of bows and arrows, javelins, and neatly carved clubs, the points of the arrows and javelins are of wood, hardened by fire. They have also a kind of axe; that is a stick with a large sharp stone lashed to it with ratan, and with this they are said to cut down the largest trees. They hollow out the trunks of trees by means of fire and thus make prahus, sometimes as long as sixty feet. Both ends are flat and they are handsomely carved. They build a long series of huts, side by side, of bamboo, with a centre passage, and thatched with leaves. The only entrance to the huts is at the end of the row or corridor; and as it extends for some hundred feet in length, and only five feet in height, some idea may be gathered of the closeness of the interior. No passage is provided for the outlet of the smoke except the central passage. They have no pots nor pans, the household paraphernalia of the Outanatas

being of the most limited character, and chiefly confined to baskets of various textures and sizes.

On the north coast of Papua we find a number of tribes which are a little more advanced towards civilization. They have come into contact with other races and the women occupy part of their time in cultivating maize, millet, and yams; there are no "women's rights" here. Besides working on the plantations, they do the household work, carrying wood and water, making earthen pots, weaving mats and cloth. The men hunt, fish, build houses, and make weapons and canoes. Both sexes display great skill in managing the canoe and swim and dive with equal boldness and dexterity.

There are no religious ceremonies among this race, but some "medicine-men" interpret dreams and omens, and give advice in cases of sickness. They make no sacrifices, though they have an idol called "Karwar," a clumsy figure of which, carved in wood, holding a shield, and distinguished by an abnormally large head, with a sharp nose and wide mouth, is kept in every house. In every emergency its owner crouches before it, bowing repeatedly, with hands clasped upon his forehead. If he feels any doubt or despondency while doing this, he will give up whatever may have been his intentions, but if he feels resolute, he will assume he has the approval of his Karwar. It is probably a remnant of ages old ancestor worship.

There are numerous other tribes in New Guinea and the surrounding islands, all having their peculiar habits and customs, but sufficient has been given now to serve our purpose of showing how primitive civil customs arose, we will pass to a race which is still savage, but far more advanced than the Papuan, namely, the Ainos, of Northern Japan. From mere animal habits we shall see that progress is sure, if slow, and is helped greatly by intercourse with other races. At the same time unless the savage is capable of learning and conditions favour a change, the savage is far more likely to be wiped out of existence.

E. ANDERSON.

(To be Continued.)

Acid Drops.

The Drapers' Chamber of Commerce at a recent meeting raised a very strong protest against the blackmail levied on them by churches and chapels by way of getting goods for their bazaars. The request for gifts evidently takes the nature of a threat. If the gifts are not forthcoming, there is a promised boycott in trade. If they are, the goods, received for nothing, are sold at a lower price than the drapers themselves can sell them. We sympathize with the protest, but it is all of a part with the game as played by the churches. If you oppose them, and are in trade, there is boycott. If you refuse to help there is another boycott. The more one knows of the ramifications of the religious world, the greater becomes one's contempt for it.

After all, this policy is only part of a general game. Politics never makes for a very lofty standard of honesty, but the association of politics with religion makes for a decided lowering of the standard of political honesty; political leaders of all parties go out of their way to play to the churches, and so do not say honestly what they think about religion. Newspapers watch vigilantly lest something shall appear in their columns which may offend the churches. Scientific men and men of letters either refrain from saying what they know about religion, or express their dissent with so many reservations and qualifications that what they do say is worth very little. In all directions it is the same.

And while doing this the clergy have the impudence to stand on their hind legs and tell us of the high idealism and lofty morality encouraged by religion. If the world could awaken one morning forgetting that such a thing as Christianity ever existed, honesty and cleanliness would stand a much greater chance of a rapid development.

The dearth of Sunday-school scholars still worries our godly friends. In a recent symposium printed in a Sunday-school journal, one writer declares that the main deterrents which keep away scholars are, the modern atmosphere of pleasure, Sunday cinemas and games; lack of encouragement of the religious spirit in the child's home; unattractive lessons compared with the more interesting teaching now given in the day-schools. His remedy for this sad state of affairs includes the organizing of the social side of the Sunday-school—socials, clubs, dances, and outdoor sports. This appears to indicate that our recent prediction—that the schools would endeavour to compete with outside amusement by turning the Sunday-school into places of entertainment—is likely to be fulfilled in the near future.

The Rev. A. J. G. Seaton (Sec., Wesleyan Methodist Sunday-school Dept.), declares that twenty years ago there was nothing for the child to do on Sunday afternoon except go for a walk or go to Sunday-school. Today these conditions are changed—games and amusements have made the work of the schools harder. Hence the schools must alter their methods, especially as they have now to deal with a better-educated community. From this it is evident that the old twaddle is no longer acceptable. The modern child does not like fairy tales told as fact. Dr. W. C. Poole attributes the decline to the secularization of Sunday, to the reflected indifference and hostility to religion on the part of some parents, and to the confusion in the minds of some people as to the conflict between religion and science. The factor within the control of the church and Sunday-schools is, he thinks, the claiming of life at its beginning, instead of trying to reclaim it when adult. The Church, he says, "must see in the child the greatest asset of the kingdom of God." Dr. Poole is evidently a wise man. He knows that his irrational and childish creed is not likely to be accepted by the adult mind left uncontaminated in youth.

From a London daily paper we cull the following:—

We salute with respect, with gratitude, that New York legislator, Mr. Hackenburgh, who has introduced a Bill to stop the crime of hypocrisy. He will not stop it. It is eternal. But he has defined it, called it a crime. He has also described hypocrites. They are "persons who solicit and collect funds to promote laws restraining the exercise of personal liberty."

Continuing, the leader-writer says that few dare to attack them, because we all share their highly developed malady. We are all, in varying degrees, of them. We are all hypocrites, and we think that if we denounce the latest Bill for making it impossible to drink whisky, we shall stand convicted of drunkenness. So we play into the hypocrites' hands. And they, being full of energy, rule us and sadden our lives.

That New York legislator appears to be a little astray in his definition. A hypocrite is one who pretends to a virtue or goodness. But those who seek to restrict personal liberty do so not from motives of hypocrisy but from desire to make everyone conform to their very narrow conception of virtue. They are not hypocrites but religious fanatics and killjoys. Whereas the true hypocrites are those who, while they may resent it, fear to oppose the bigot's interference with personal liberty, and refrain from expressing their real opinions. Thus they tacitly pretend to the bigots' virtue. And it is unlovely characters such as these which the Christian religion has done more to create and encourage than has anything else, by consistently boycotting and suppressing the more fearless and honest types of characters who openly let their opinions be known. The

English leader-writer declares we are all hypocrites, by which he means we are all mental cowards. It would be surprising were English people otherwise, nurtured as they are by the most cowardly creed with which the world has ever been afflicted. So in this well-Christianized England—and America, too—the plums are all reserved for the cowardly, and the kicks for the intellectually honest. That is the result we get from Christianity when put into practice. Hypocrisy is eternal, we are told. Evidently the writer thinks Christianity has come to say. Whereas it is obviously beating a retreat, and by a strange coincidence hypocrisy appears also to be going with it. But here is a heap more to go yet, before Englishmen can claim to be better than their Christian forebears.

Can Christians claim to be better than their fathers? asks a Methodist writer. He is inclined to think they can. "We do not regard the Bible quite as they did, we do not pray so long or so loud as they did," he says, and these facts distress the older people. But he believes that Christian character and conduct is, on the whole, an advance upon that of bygone generations. His reasons for thinking Christians have improved are rather peculiar. They, he says, have got beyond the idea that religious disciplineship is a matter of taboos. Wesley, for example, was most severe in his condemnation of laughter and jesting. But, says this writer, though one may laugh and jest like a fool or cad, yet that does not mean that a Christian should not laugh or jest at all. To see a play, to smoke, to play cards, or to use a billiard table were all held to be sinful in practically every English Methodist home within the time of people now living. But are Christians worse or better because they have abandoned these views? He thinks they are. And so do we, considerably better. For on his own showing, they have become less narrowminded and less gloomy. As this happy and long-deferred improvement is the result of their sloughing off a few long-cherished religious conceptions, we suggest that our pious friends might continue the good work. For instance, they could remove the present taboo placed on the day of rest and recreation—Sunday. And to that end, they could repeal the barbarous Lord's Day Observance Acts. Again, Christian conduct could be improved still further by removing the present despicable Christian fetters on free speech—the iniquitous Blasphemy Laws. But in making these suggestions, we perhaps are taking too optimistic a view of the progress achieved by Christians. We doubt if their character and conduct has improved sufficiently to allow the pious to do justice to Freethinkers or to permit the majority of citizens employing Sunday as each one thinks fit.

The town-dweller is rapidly becoming the most helpless of creatures, affirms Sir David Hall. There is, however, one good thing to be said for the town-dweller, he is no longer the helpless tool of the parson and priest.

To-day, says Prebendary F. N. Thicknesse, thousands of clergymen are "down to the bone." Well, that is nothing to whine about. Let them count the Christian blessings such a state of affairs enables them to enjoy. They have the blessed consolation of religion to soothe them in their sad affliction. They are now in a better position to sympathize with the poor—which we are to have always with us. They are becoming more Christ-like, inasmuch as they, like him, can depend upon charity for their raiment and sustenance. They cannot be accused of laying up treasure on earth, and thus are assured of a place in Abraham's bosom. What more could a disciple of the poor Nazarene possibly desire? There's no satisfying some people. Let them remember the Crusader's motto—"God wills it!"

The Rev. Basil Bouchier, of Hampstead Garden Suburb, is seriously alarmed at the plight in which the Church is likely to be in the near future. He does not put it quite like that. Instead, in a popular woman's

paper, he professes concern at the state of modern society—"restless, artificial, and undisciplined"—and with the kind of children modern parents are turning out. Unless the parents have instilled into the receptive young minds, he says, the great idea of a Creator, they have failed utterly, almost unpardonably, as parents. He thinks that with the majority of children their acquaintance with religion begins and ends with baptism. The average parent seems to regard baptism as "a fetish very much on a par with vaccination..... the fond mother refers to having 'had it done.'" The reverend gentleman is right about this ancient savage ritual; most people do regard it as a charm against future consignment to hell-fire. And what else is it but that?

Mr. Bouchier also declares that unless children have instructions in religion they will go through life with hungry souls, with nothing to live up to, and precious little to live for. Therefore, he implores, "teach them early, very early, to know about God." He then quotes J. H. Newman: "Give me the moral and spiritual training of any child for the first eleven years of his life and I will teach him such truths about God and his Saviour as time will never efface." Yes, says Mr. Bouchier, because these years are the most impressionable period in the whole of man's life; yet modern parents are neglecting this opportunity wholesale. "God! What a tragedy it is!..... Just as the childless family vanishes, so is the childless Church bound to disappear. Sterility menaces the Church of to-day!" A tragedy indeed, we think—for him and his brother clerics. He knows that, unless during the unreflecting years the child is infected with the deadly germs of the God idea and the "sin" irrationality, the disease of religion will not fruitfully develop later when the child is able to reason for himself. The priest knows that dogmas depending on faith, not reason, must be implanted during the child's "age of faith," when the virgin soil of the mind is in its richest state of credulity. "What, are we to go on telling our children about Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark?" parents will exclaim, says Mr. Bouchier. Yes, he replies, why not? Tell them the stories and what the stories stand for: how they illustrate the fruits of disobedience to God in the one case, and in the other the blessing of obedience. We think this clerical advice illustrates how doubtful a blessing to civilization is the Christian conscience. For this reverend gentleman can see nothing immoral in teaching innocent children as fact what most educated persons to-day declare are stupid fables or guesses of ancient semi-savages. "God, what a tragedy it is!" that fond mothers should be induced to act as tools of the priests, should be deluded into poisoning their children's minds with the Church's "good, strong, thick, stupefying incense smoke."

England is the freest country in the world, freer than America, affirms Mrs. Pankhurst. Yes, it's not too bad, but it will be better yet when it repeals its Blasphemy Laws and Lord's Day Observance Acts.

Christians need never be ashamed of being hopeful, says a Nonconformist writer, discussing the prospects of capturing the new generation. Seemingly he has little hope of roping in the previous, or war, generation. For, many of these had become frankly sceptical or even cynical about the reality of God and the usefulness of religion, he declared. They had learned to take in sullen silence many things that they disliked, and they did not argue much against religion, but simply turned their heel upon it and walked away. They had been silenced and saddened by the long agony they had endured. That, we think, sums up the situation in regard to the war generation pretty clearly. Men and women of that generation have scrutinized the claims of Christianity in the light of a terrible experience, and are treating these pretensions with the contempt they are seen to deserve. The consolations of religion have been discovered to be about as satisfying as a couple of dry

buscuits to a famished beggar. Hence these men and women have turned for consolation to the secular things of life to ease an aching heart. They have turned to music and dancing, books and plays, to social service. And many are seeking distraction in furthering those causes that aim to eliminate the conditions of society which made wars inevitable.

This Nonconformist writer, however, believes that the new generation, having escaped the searing experiences of their seniors, are not very much affected by the irreligious views of the war generation. And hence a vast harvest is ripe for the churches to reap. For these new arrivals, he says, are anxious to know about Jesus, what religion is, what it is worth, how to get it, and how to put it into expression. We are afraid our pious friend is unduly optimistic. The new generation are very little concerned about all these lovely things. They are mostly indifferent. And many who are interested in religious matters are now sufficiently educated to realize that there are two sides to every story. They are therefore not content to accept the professional Christian's word for the worth of religion, but seeks also the other side's story. Therefore, all the churches are likely to capture are either the unthinking frightened by fear of hell, or else those who are misled into believing that their purely social feelings are religious longings. So the harvest the churches will reap will not exactly bulge the walls of the Christian barns. And it will be of pretty poor quality what they do garner.

We have been accustomed to the anonymous writer of texts in chalk on the pavement and walls. Spell binders are thrown at the helpless public by those who are out for Jerusalem, and they appear to work in the dark, not letting the right hand know what the left hand doeth. Another kind of anonymous author has now appeared, who has been busy chalking up "Is the Virgin Birth a Myth?" The Bishop of Birmingham has evidently an influence in propagating ideas that have almost died of senile decay. Yet we wish him luck in his efforts.

There has been some controversy in Northampton papers about the Bradlaugh statue, and a preacher at one of the local churches said he was sorry to see the statue there because it embodied a phase of thought that could not be commended. Incidentally, we may remark, there were many subscribers to the cost of the statue who contributed simply as a tribute to the intellectual honesty of the man, and we can quite believe that is something which would not commend itself to many a parson. Mr. A. J. Darnell, President of the Whitworth Road Club, told the members at their annual meeting how much he regretted that comment on Bradlaugh. He said he had been a bitter opponent of Bradlaugh, but had lived to recognize, with most Conservatives of Northampton, his great qualities. He added, "I differed with him in religion, I differed with him in politics, but I have not forgotten that he was a friend of mine in the later years of his life. I have not forgotten that he was a great man, and I do not like to see his memory slurred." Thus the layman and the parson! We would like some of the up-to-date parsons we have to seriously face the question of why it is that meanness, and slander, and general uncharitableness play so large a part where differences in religion are concerned. Where religion is concerned all that is little and mean in a man's nature appears to come readily to the top.

American Freethinkers appear to be very active in two directions just now. One is in agitating for the churches to pay their share of taxation. We are glad to see this, and have often stressed the injustice of it as it exists in this country. It is virtually a tax on the whole of the people for the upkeep of the churches and is radically unjust. Freethinkers here would be doing a public service if they kept this injustice well before the public. We wish our American friends every

success in their agitation and congratulate them on the amount of attention they are receiving from the general press.

Another matter to which a considerable space in the papers is devoted is that of the right of the public schools to set aside a portion of the school time for religious instruction. The agitation here is largely owing to the activity of Mr. Joseph Lewis, who is President of the Freethinkers' Association. Action is pending in the courts, and the ground of the action is that such setting on one side of the school time is contrary to the United States Constitution, which declares that the State shall not interfere in matters of religion. In one case a decision favourable to the contention of the Freethinkers has been obtained, and there is no reason why similar decisions should not be obtained elsewhere. Here again, we have to note the greater liberality of the American Press, which does not hesitate to devote space to reports of the meetings and conferences held on the subject.

On the other hand, in some States the agitation against the teaching of the doctrine of evolution appears to be gaining ground, and these seem to be determined to make the country appear as ridiculous as it did over the exclusion of Lady Cathcart. In one State the order has been given that the very name of evolution is to be expunged from all books used. We are rather pleased to see this, from one point of view. Consider the value to science if we could only resurrect a few of the cave-men so that we might talk with them and learn at first hand their thoughts and feelings. These American Christians act as very good substitutes for them, and if it were not that they are tampering with the mentality of the rising generation we would advise that it be made a penal offence to disturb them. A kind of new Yellowstone Park might be formed, in which they might be preserved as specimens of a bygone type. And the Bishop of London might well be appointed their permanent head.

The state of childhood is the only international State in the whole world, affirms the Premier's wife. Yes; the state of childhood in which priests delight to keep grown-ups is certainly international, but it is one hardly to be commended by lovers of progress.

An Eton master has offered to give ten per cent. of his salary towards a fund for improving the slums of Eton, on condition that others shall do the same. The *Schoolmaster* contributor comments:—

It is a deplorable fact that in Oxford, Cambridge, and Eton, three places wherein a seat of learning is a prominent local enterprise, there should be slum dwellings of the worst kind. Check by jowl with the magnificent buildings of Christ Church, Oxford, there were until quite recently some tenements which would have matched the worst places in any industrial town. For years the learned men of Christ Church and of Oxford generally have tacitly accepted the slums and slum-dwellers as part of the natural order. The remedy is not to be found in generous gifts of money, but in a resolute effort to build up a more active civic spirit. It is easy to alleviate symptoms by a poultice of Treasury Notes. What we need is a permanent cure for the disease. College Quadrangles and Cathedral Closets are too often the refuges of selfish complacency. Men will rest comfortably on a cushion of religious formalities or scholastic futilities and forget the plight of their neighbours. It is significant that in medieval Oxford the meat which was condemned in the market as unfit for the scholars was sent to the hospitals for the use of the poor.

Says Dr. J. A. Hadfield: "My father spent fifty years in the South Sea Islands and never heard any quarrelling among native children." Evidently the little islanders hadn't been Christianised, and had never known the blessing of sectarian hatred engendered by the Gospel of Love.

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.

"FREETHINKER" Endowment Trust.—A. Button, 5s.; A. C. Boers (S.A.), 5s.; C. B. Little, £1 5s.

H. AMEY.—Yours is one of very many requests for the publication in permanent form of Mr. Cohen's recent articles on Materialism. He will certainly reprint them as soon as he has time. But there is more to be said, and constant lecturing, the weekly dose of writing, and a deal of work in connection with the movement, which does not show itself publicly, leaves but little time for extra work. And there are only twenty-four hours to the day.

R. BROWN.—You do good in registering with the B.B.C. your protest against its religious propaganda. Even though it has no immediate effect it is well to remind these people that others beside Christians exist.

T. MOSLEY.—See reply to H. Amey. There is nothing very difficult about most philosophical questions. What is always required is the courage to look at the question for oneself, and not through the spectacles of other people. And it has always been the policy of the *Freethinker* never to mistake obscurity for profundity. Generally the really profound is quite simple, and those who see an issue ought to be able to express it simply.

A. M.—We have no particulars with regard to a debate which Charles Bradlaugh is said to have had with Mr. Gillespie. But the story that Bradlaugh walked off the platform because he was unable to meet the arguments advanced is a statement which we may say is false on the face of it. Probably Bradlaugh's daughter, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, may be able to give you particulars.

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 (March 7) Mr. Cohen will lecture, afternoon and evening, in the Co-operative Hall, Portland Street, Ashton-under-Lyne. His subject at 3 will be, "The Way to Study Religion," and in the evening, at 7.30, "Things Christians Ought to Know." There will probably be many friends from a distance, and Manchester friends will please note that cars 26 and 28 stop at the hall, which is situated directly behind the public baths.

There was a capital audience at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday last, every seat being occupied. Mr. Cohen's address was listened to with great attention, and there

appeared to be many new faces present, probably as a consequence of the recent debate. Mr. High occupied the chair, and made a very earnest appeal for support for the local Branch. There also appeared to be good business being done at the bookstall.

The West Ham Branch is very active, and very enthusiastic in its work, and it has taken Bromley Public Hall for a series of three lectures, commencing on March 14. Mr. Rosetti will deliver the opening lecture, and will be followed by Mr. Saphin. Mr. Cohen will deliver the last lecture on March 28. Bromley Public Hall is in Bow Road, and can be easily reached by 'bus or tram from all parts of London. We hope the East London Freethinkers will do their best to make the meetings a thorough success.

The Secretary of the Manchester Branch has received a reply from the Dean of Manchester in response to an invitation to publicly discuss one, or more, of the questions at issue between Christians and Freethinkers. The Dean replies, "I am of opinion that no useful purpose will be served by the course you suggest." As the Dean's purpose is to get people to believe in Christianity we quite agree with the wording of his reply. So far as Christianity is concerned no useful purpose will be served by allowing people to hear what can be said against it. The only hope here is to keep them in ignorance. And as a Christian preacher, the Dean naturally prefers controversy in which the other side is muzzled. The Dean has the reputation of being a very intelligent man. Certainly intelligence, and caution, is shown by his not risking Christianity in a public discussion. Jesus disputed with his opponents in the temple, but as they believed in much the same thing as himself, it was quite a family affair. Discussing with an outsider is quite another matter. There is no wisdom in exhibiting the poverty of the family wardrobe.

We are asked to announce that a rainproof coat was left in the Engineers' Hall after Mr. Cohen's lecture on February 21. If the owner will apply to the caretaker of the hall it will be returned to him.

We were glad to see in the *Birmingham Town Crier* a very good notice of Mr. Clifford Williams' recent lecture before the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. on "The Churches and the Workers."

One of our readers wrote to the B.B.C., pointing out that as all classes of people paid the licensing fee, no selection of particular opinions should be made, but that so long as lectures on religion were given, lectures on the other side ought also to be permitted. The reply given was peculiarly evasive and silly. This was that in the case of a newspaper people might read what they wished to read and leave unread other matters. But with the wireless, "which comes into the homes of all and sundry, it is obvious that certain natural restrictions must be exercised." That, we repeat, is evasive and silly. Newspapers also go into the homes of all and sundry, and by a parity of reasoning papers also are justified in excluding news from its columns. And it is precisely because the wireless goes into all sorts of homes, and is paid for by all sorts of people, that either all sorts of controversial opinions should be excluded or all sorts should be permitted. The religious potentates of the B.B.C. show the lack of common sense and justice that is so very common with religious people.

The *Liverpool Echo* contains a generally appreciative notice of "Tom Paine," in a report of a meeting of the Society of Lovers of Old Liverpool. The Lovers were discussing the whereabouts of part of Paine's tombstone which Cobbett brought from America, and used to stand in the garden of Edward Rushton, of Liverpool. If the stone can be found it is intended to present it to the

Paine Museum in the United States. The curious thing about it is that Paine is described as an "unattached" Christian, which is about the most curious description of him that we have come across. Paine, of course, was not an Atheist, but to call an unattached Christian one who repudiated all Christian doctrines is distinctly curious. By the same reasoning the term might be applied to Bradlaugh or Foote. Anyway, it is good to see some interest being taken in one of the greatest reformers England has produced.

The Bill for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, introduced by Mr. George Lansbury, is now before the House of Commons. What its fate this session will be remains to be seen, but its introduction will serve at least the purpose of keeping the matter before the House and the Country, and one of these days the sense of justice may be sufficiently strong to wipe away these survivals from a dark past. In connection with the Bill the Society for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws is arranging a demonstration for April 23, to be held in the Essex Hall. Canon Donaldson has promised to take the chair, and the list of speakers will be announced as early as possible.

Interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Express*, Mr. Lansbury said:—

I want to equalize the law in regard to blasphemy. I want freedom of speech to be equalized, and I want any challenge of religious doctrine to be immune from prosecution, even if it be stupid and vulgar, in the same way as it is now excused if it be cultured and intellectual. Prosecution for "opinion" has never succeeded in putting "opinion" down, and I hold strongly the New Testament judgment, "If it is of God, it will live; if it is of the devil, it will die."

We congratulate Mr. Lansbury on the attitude he takes up. If stupidity were a generally indictable offence, there would be only a small minority of the clergy out of prison, to say nothing about the rest of the population. And the talk of vulgarity is only the cover taken by a bigotry that lacks the moral courage to express itself openly. We have no hesitation in saying that for sheer vulgarity there is more of it in the pulpit than anywhere else. It is quite a mistake to assume that vulgarity consists in expressing one's opinions in ungrammatical language. There may easily be greater vulgarity behind an Oxford accent than there is with the vilest of cockney expressions. But we should like to see a little more anxiety among the Labour Party for real freedom of expression than there is. In this respect Mr. Lansbury is setting his colleagues a good example.

Is Mind a By-Product?

MR. J. B. S. HALDANE, in his noted article in the *Weekly Dispatch* for January 3, delivers himself of some very bewildering opinions or puzzles rather. In point of vagueness they can hardly be excelled.

The first and cardinal pronouncement is "It seems to me immensely unlikely that mind is a by-product of matter." This is then followed by another, if anything, still more baffling, to wit, "I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms!" And the two are together capped by an enigma that defies not only a solution, but a knowledge of what it means—viz., "That it's (the mind's) limitations are largely at least due to my body." He then winds up with the speculation that "He has reason to suspect that behind nature there exists a mind or something analogous to mind."

Let us take these deliverances in their reverse order. As he gives us no hint what the term "mind" connotes in his speculation, it is to me a mere *word*—nothing but a sound or a symbol without any significant meaning whatsoever. I can therefore offer no criticism upon the assumption save that the guess,

whatever it be, is in the absence of any presumptive evidence for its existence, a wholly gratuitous conjecture. Possibly it is, on his part, only a confession that he has failed to interpret the facts of experience on the principle of strict Materialism, and that he has been obliged to resort or revert to the "dualism" of our forefathers. But he has overlooked the fact that they were much better entrenched behind the term "spirit" than he is behind that of "mind." You can fill the former with *negations* as a meaning such as "immaterial," but "mind" must have *positive* contents, and that possibly accounts for its vagueness. Why did he not try materialistic monism as an alternative guess?

The third puzzle seems to imply that the animal mind, in the manifestation of its normal activities, is in no way dependent upon, or helpfully affected by, the bodily processes of eating, drinking, breathing, and sleeping; that is to say, that the mind's capacities and potencies are wholly *independent* of physical energy! Possibly Mr. Haldane does his mental work without food and rest, and that but for the cruel limitations of his body which circumscribe his being like a wire fence, and reduce a capacity which would otherwise be infinite, to one of finite dimensions! As I am no hand at puzzles, I give it up at once, in the hope that one day Mr. Haldane will vouchsafe us a solution of the riddle.

The preceding enigma states that he has no reason for supposing that his brain is composed of atoms! The famous riddle of the Sphinx is no puzzle by the side of his masterpiece. Does he suggest that his brain is *immaterial*, and thus differs from that of other people? If so, the contention cannot unfortunately be checked until he is dead! Or, is it his conviction that the atoms in the brain plasma are disintegrated into electrons and protons? Should this be his meaning, I have a deal of sympathy with it, as I am, myself, strongly inclined to that view. But if that be his meaning, why state it so vaguely; why wrap it in a shroud more impenetrable to vision than a London fog?

And again, in respect to the first puzzle, I am no better off; I am just like Noah's dove which could find not a single dry spot to rest its foot on—vagueness, like a watery waste, still covers all there is of solid land.

He says, mind is not a "by-product." Which "mind" does he mean? Is it the individual mind—that fleeting phenomenon—of which he speaks at first; or the permanent entity which exists behind Nature? Which is it? The latter can neither be a product *nor* a by-product, but a perennial existence. And the former, the animal mind, on his dualistic hypothesis, *must be a by-product*; that is, *indirectly* awakened by the physical impulses reaching the brain from the various sense-organs. Only on the materially monistic hypothesis is it possible for the individual mind to be a *direct* product. Thus the more we analyse his dicta the more hopelessly confused and incongruent they become.

During that brilliant period of intellectual inflorescence in Greece man became so self-conscious as to be impressed by the fact that he was aware of two very dissimilar worlds—an inner and outer—one immediately presented in consciousness and the other either intuited or inferred by reason. And soon he was seized by that cancerous mental disease called philosophy—that never satisfied craving to know, to understand, and to unify all phenomena under one principle. This conflicting dual disparity between the two orders of the "known" acted as a provocative challenge stimulating his "disease" into activity and growth, with the result that soon a number of volunteers were in the field making strenuous efforts

to solve the riddle and banish the mystery. It was attacked from both sides: by the mystics from the inner and by the materialists from the outer. The history of the effort of each camp divides itself into two dispensations—the new and the old, or the scientific and pre-scientific.

For long ages the exploits and manoeuvres of the mystics, led by Plato, resembled the erratic movements of a will-o'-the-wisp until the Berkeleyites and the Bradleyites gave it some direction and aim, as subsequently revealed in the monistic idealism of Hegel or of Schopenhauer, in which the former tried to reduce both worlds to "thought"; and the latter to "will." The achievement very much resembled a Maskelyne performance in which sham furniture and fictitious contrivances are represented by hollow words and learned high-sounding phrases, with a view to reducing the physical universe to an infinite palace of illusions.

Materialism, on the other hand, has, from the first, moved along one and the same line of progressive development. Under the old dispensation it was very crude; matter was almost stark-naked. The only attributes it had to cover itself with when Gnostics and New Testament writers heaped their anathemas upon its head and made it responsible for all the evils and woes endured in this vale of tears, were wholly of the mechanical order. And the "matter" of Epicurus, Empedocles, Democritus, and Lucretius was no better equipped. But under the new dispensation this thinly clad beggar is so richly endowed with "properties" as to be wealthy enough to be dubbed a millionaire! Nevertheless, I must in honesty confess that, despite all its wealth of attributes, it is yet incapable of explaining the emergence of the mental world out of the material; for slurring facts, or shaking up the dice-box is of no use. It has to account not only for the emotions of joy and of beauty on beholding a sunset, but for the awakening of very perception itself; that is, for the capacity of translating solar energy when absorbed by eye, transmitted by nerve, and again appropriated by brain plasm, into vision; that is the rub; and it is at the very threshold of mind where it stares at one as a blank wall. And unless the substance of the cerebral plasm is in essence psychic as well as physical, I can see no alternative to reverting to the dualism of our forefathers. But I fail to see how an absolutely gratuitous speculation is preferable to one which has a considerable amount of presumptive evidence in its support, apart from the insuperable difficulty—indeed, an impassable chasm—of finding the "cog-wheel" that gears the physical with the psychic.

Moreover, I submit it, as a philosophic axiom, that a monism can never be established except by annihilating its opposite: the Idealist must bid the physical universe vanish in the truly Fichtean fashion, *i.e.* cease to be an independent existence. And the materialist, before he can establish his monism, must likewise be able to show that mind, as we know it, is not an entity—an easy task, I presume.

I fully intended incorporating in this article the facts that serve as presumptive evidence in support of the speculation that in the plasm of the brain the mental is awakened *directly* by physical stimuli—that the animal mind is a *product* and not a by-product, but that must, with the Editor's permission, be left for another contribution.

KERIDON.

If we believed in a creative demon, we should be justified in pointing to his work and exclaiming, "How could you dare to break the holy peace of eternal night to bring forth such a mass of tribulation and misery?"—Schopenhauer.

Charles Bradlaugh and Birth Control.

It is an extraordinary thing that the mere mention of Charles Bradlaugh to some people is like a red rag to a bull. One would think that the violent prejudice his opinions aroused during his lifetime would have died down and that his life work could now be seen in its proper perspective. To the early and mid-Victorian there must have been nothing more hateful than an Atheist and Malthusian. Birth control through the use of contraceptives was the last word in immorality, and to be profoundly immoral was, of course, the hall-mark of Atheism. Thus from the moment "Iconoclast" (as Bradlaugh called himself in his early days) identified himself with the law of population as put forward by Malthus, his viler Christian opponents fixed their teeth into him and practically worried him to his grave. He has himself said:—

Unfortunately our voucher of the Malthusian principle makes us the target for every kind of calumny. Those who hesitate to discuss the soundness of the views of the great political economist, feel no reluctance in assailing us with violent inuendoes or in resorting to the most extraordinary measures to do us an injury amongst our friends. We honestly affirm that we have had opposition more severe and unkind offered to our approval of the opinions of Malthus than to our most extreme heterodoxy in theology.

This was said in the *National Reformer* for August 16, 1862, when Bradlaugh was but twenty-nine years of age; that is, sixty-four years ago, he was complaining of the foul attacks of his opponents, not because he was an Atheist, but because he believed, with Malthus, that there was a tendency for population to increase faster than the means of subsistence and because he advocated birth control, as we now call it.

Well, here we are in 1926 and the attacks on Bradlaugh have not ceased. Indeed, with some people, they are more bitter and furious than ever. Only this time it is not his birth control that is attacked; it is not even his Atheism, *by itself*. It is the combination of the two that upsets those people who have never forgiven him for his steadfast and resolute stand for the things he believed to be true.

This paper is particularly addressed to Dr. Marie Stopes. I dealt some years ago with an article of hers which appeared in the *Cambridge Magazine*. It was specially written, she told us, to remove some "historical prejudices." In other words, it purported to deal with the history of the Birth Control movement, and yet she omitted all mention of Francis Place, Richard Carlile, Robert Dale Owen, and George Drysdale! Now whenever I have heard Dr. Stopes speak (not many times, to be sure), she has always insisted on her rigid scientific training; she has pointed out she is a Doctor of Science, and therefore she could rightly claim a great superiority over her opponents. How can anyone discuss Malthusianism, for example, unless they have had her training, particularly in palæontology? Indeed, how could anyone discuss Malthusianism at all when once she—a Doctor of Science—has said it was hopelessly unscientific, antiquated, and exploded?

The curious thing is that so far as I have read her writings, I have not come across a single proof of her own that Malthus was wrong. If she has given such proof, I wish someone would point out where. What she does, as a rule, is to name someone else as her authority for the statement. For example, in her latest work on *Contraception*, she says Professor Carr Saunders "shows convincingly that the theory

of Malthus has long been disproved." Well, the Professor has now turned "right about." In the latest edition of his *Population* he shows quite convincingly that Malthus was right and he actually gives a portrait of that great economist as a frontispiece. He looks like coming in for a very rough time when Dr. Stopes points out that in doing so he will have to deal with her statement that Malthusianism is so very, very hopelessly unscientific.

For a lady with her scientific attainments, it has always been a puzzle to me how she managed to miss out Francis Place and the other eminent Free-thinkers from even a short survey of the Birth Control movement. Surely they loomed large enough, not merely in the public eye, but as specialists in their own particular line! How came it that she did not even drop a hint of the existence of the *Elements of Social Science*? The "beggarly" *Elements*, as Christians always politely called it, was a veritable blessing for the God-fearing and righteous opponents of "blatant" Atheism. No better book to prove how thoroughly low and degrading was Atheism from the sex standpoint could have been written, and, as I pointed out in my previous articles, Bradlaugh bore the brunt of the foulest attacks that Christian ingenuity could devise for over thirty years because of this one book, and Dr. Stopes is quite oblivious of its very existence.

But if she ignores Dr. George Drysdale's epoch-making work (for the *Elements* anticipated many sex reforms powerfully advocated to-day), she has not forgotten Charles Bradlaugh. One has but to mention at any meeting where she is present and can speak, the year 1877 and the famous Bradlaugh-Besant trial and she immediately wants to put everybody right on a matter of history. "Bradlaugh," she will declare quite sweetly, "dragged birth control into the gutter." And she will give her reasons. It seems that there was quite a movement in favour of birth control before 1877. There was a correspondence in the *Daily Telegraph*, there were several letters she has which she has not so far published, there were many dear old ladies becoming quite interested, to say nothing of a number of clergymen. But as soon as it was seen that a "rabid" and "notorious" Atheist like Bradlaugh was also a birth controller, well—there you are. The publication of such a work as *The Fruits of Philosophy* (it was quite decent before Atheism touched it) in 1877, simply dragged the whole movement into the gutter. And it never regained its proper status till 1918, when *Married Love* was published, and decent people saw how beautifully moral and God-like birth control really was. I am sure the above represents Dr. Stopes' reasons why Bradlaugh "dragged" the movement into the gutter, but if she has any additional reasons, I do wish we could have them.

What are the facts? There can be no doubt that ever since the boy, Charles Bradlaugh, lived with Mrs. Carlile, Richard Carlile's widow, he must have been a Malthusian—or we can say, if you like, Neo-Malthusian. In 1861 he published his *Jesus, Shelley, and Malthus*, and from that day never ceased to advocate the law of population. How, then, could he have dragged birth control into the gutter in 1877? The quotation I give above is sufficient to show how violently he was attacked as far back as 1862, yet the Bradlaugh-Besant trial is actually put forward by Dr. Stopes as the occasion of the "gutter" episode. Bradlaugh took his stand then, as he always did, on the great principle of freedom of thought and speech. He claimed then, and time has, in the opinion of everybody but Dr. Stopes, vindicated him, that the poor have the right equally with the rich to complete contraceptive information. And his chal-

lenge to the authorities is one of the finest and most courageous acts of his great career. He risked imprisonment so as to be able to give for sixpence information which any wealthy person could get by paying more for it. And the whole Birth Control movement has never, since his triumph, looked back. The people who write books on birth control and kindred subjects have to thank the great Atheist leader for their freedom from interference by the authorities, and no one, I venture to say, knows this better than Dr. Stopes.

The "gutter" business is part of the heritage of Christian upbringing. It is the last word that could ever be used against Charles Bradlaugh. Never in any speech or debate did he use a coarse or gross epithet. And just as the great figure of Thomas Paine is emerging into the light of history away from the foul slanders of insolent and ignorant Christians, so we are beginning to see more and more what this present generation owes to the heroic battle with superstition and intolerance constantly waged by Charles Bradlaugh. Dr. Marie Stopes simply dishonours herself by throwing mud at the great Humanist.

And for this reason, I shall examine in my next article, one or two statements in her latest book on the history of contraception.

H. CUTNER.

Correspondence.

MATERIALISM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In discussing the question of Materialism and natural phenomena, we have ultimately to draw a halt. We have only five senses and anything beyond their scope is out of our reach. That there is a whole world of subtle and fine forces that is unexplored, I thoroughly believe. Nevertheless, I am hopeful enough to think that such problems as life, mind, and consciousness will one day be solved. Nature is very wonderful, and it is up against science to discover her secrets, and give them to the world. We know a little, and with patience and patience we shall know a good deal more. The telescope and microscope reveal things unknown to us without their aid. Possibly instruments may be made that will reach these fine forces.

ANDREW CLARKE.

SIR,—At the invitation of "Medicus" allow me to state some of the difficulties I have of accepting some of the theories put forward in the polemic regarding Materialism. "Medicus" says we get our conceptions of "energy," "matter," "force," and "ether" out of experience. That means we get our concepts of the abstractions mentioned by means of sense perceptions, or, if you will, by the inductive method. Einstein says, "There is no way of detecting the ether's existence." Professor J. A. Thomson, in the *Outline of Science*, says that very delicate experiments have been tried for the purpose of detecting the ether with negative results. So it is up to "Medicus" to explain to us how he experienced it, or take it out of his category of experienced abstractions. If we get the others through experience, then our conceptions are connoted to sense perceptions. But "Medicus" says they do not stand for external reality, and do not even connote precepts; so he has closed the door on experience and contradicted himself.

Mr. Cohen tells us that of matter and mind in themselves we know nothing. That "the one is no more than a name given to an existence, the other is a general term covering a succession of mental states. Both are abstractions. They are no more than names." The last sentence wants explaining. Surely if we know nothing of mind in itself, then it is no use studying the name, but the mental states in order to understand what the name stands for.

Mr. Cohen admits that matter and mind are abstractions. In the following week's *Freethinker*, A. Russell is told, "You give the name "matter" to an abstrac-

tion; we do not. That is the main difference between us." Will Mr. Cohen say if matter is only an abstraction some of the time, and not all the time, and, if so, what causes it to fluctuate?

Mr. Cohen says, on December 6, 1925, that matter is an abstraction, and exists. Now listen to him in the *Freethinker* dated September 23, 1917: "Abstractions are abstractions; they are not existences." No one can misunderstand that clear statement, so it is Mr. Cohen's duty as teacher, to say that he has contradicted himself, and which thesis is the correct one, in order that his faithful followers will not perpetuate error.

WM. WALKER.

[If Mr. Walker will bear in mind that a writer is sometimes dealing with a subject from the point of view of others, and sometimes from his own point of view, the alleged contradictions and our correspondent's difficulty will disappear.—Ed.]

THE "FREETHINKING CHRISTIANS."

SIR,—I think the following will interest most readers of the *Freethinker*. It is from *The Lawrences of Cornwall*, page 7. Lady Durning Lawrence published the book in 1915, chiefly as a memorial of her husband, Sir Edwin Durning Lawrence, author of *Bacon is Shakespeare*: "William Lawrence was attracted to the religious fellowship organized by Samuel Thompson in 1798 under the name of the Church of God, a body better known by its popular designation, from 1804, as Free-thinking Christians, and not finally extinct till 1851."

Samuel Thompson seceded from the Universalists. He rejected the Trinity baptism, the eucharist, public singing and prayer, and the payment of preachers. They met for scripture reading and study. Against Deism they maintained the authority of the scriptures, and their public antagonism to Paine's *Age of Reason* gained them the name which they did not repudiate, of Free-thinking Christians. The parent body had branches in Battle, Cranbrook, Dewsbury, Loughborough, Wimeswold, and other places. The poet, Sydney Thompson Dobell, born at Cranbrook, was Thompson's grandson.

Thompson's main service to religious freedom was on the marriage question. [At that time the only legally-binding marriage ceremony was the Anglican one.] Thompson started the policy of delivering a protest to the officiating clergyman against the "idolatrous" ceremony, and advertising it in the newspapers. He began this at the wedding of his own eldest daughter, June 10, 1814, and went on till the Marriage Act of 1836 removed the grievance. William Lawrence, in his public protest at his own marriage at St. Mildred's Church, Bread Street, September 21, 1817, calls himself a "Free-thinking Christian." He afterwards became a Unitarian. His youngest son, the author of *Bacon is Shakespeare*, was born in 1837.

C. HARPUR.

THE DEVIL AND THE DELUGE.

SIR,—I find that Dr. Lee put forward, in 1910, a theory that the moon was captured by the earth. This statement was at the tail end of an article on "Tides," by Sir G. H. Darwin. I consulted Dr. Lee's book at the British Museum Library, though Darwin does not consider that his views are proved.¹ Personally I think, from a cursory reading, Dr. Lee attempts to prove too much. Of course, he makes out a good case for assuming that the moon was not thrown off from the earth, and specifically calls attention to the two planets of Mars—Phobos and Deimos—as examples.

He does not appear, however, to have considered the part as to the distance the moon must have dragged the earth from the sun. I have written to him and said my own calculations are about one and a-half million miles, but one of the myths requires a much greater distance.

¹ Darwin puts forward his new theory, which appears to me self-destructive. I find *Whitaker's Almanac* has mangled my theory of earthquakes. I wrote some years ago that the earthquake in Japan was due to the uplift of land near the Cape of Good Hope, and this year's edition says it is due to the uplift in the Bay of Biscay, which is absurd, because this would give a turning movement to the crust and change the latitudes of places..

I have gone over my calculations on the rainfall, and make with a body one mile in diameter, velocity thirty miles per second, and density 4.0 (water=unity), a rainfall over the whole earth of 0.3103 inches; that is, nearly one-third of an inch as stated.

WILLIAM CLARK.

"FREETHOUGHT CHARIVARIA."

SIR,—Knowing that you are willing to give the opinion of all classes of thinkers, I should be glad if you will permit me to put my views before your readers. You state, under the title, "Freethought Charivaria," for January 10, the following: "The influence of Christ is centred in His personality," says the Rev. Harold Trask. "It was the power of men's love for Him that transformed them; they became what they loved." Then you add, "As Christ had the mind of an uneducated, superstitious peasant, we presume it is love of him that is responsible for his followers exhibiting a similar type of mind."

Now, sir, I greatly object to your criticism. It is not only offensive to a large number of thinking and highly educated men and women, but it is entirely gratuitous and incorrect. To speak of Christ as an uneducated, superstitious peasant is contrary to all we know about him. He was by no means uneducated. There is good evidence that he studied the "Law and the Prophets" with great care, probably under Gamaliel and Hillel, and there can be no doubt that he was familiar with the philosophy of Buddha and the Alexandrian school of thought. You might just as well say that Mohammed was an ignorant, superstitious Bedouin Arab. Yet his religion is followed by a tenth of the human race at the present day. What the Rev. Harold Trask says is perfectly true. It certainly was the exquisite simplicity and reasonableness of his doctrines, combined with his eminently lovable nature, that transformed his disciples, and had the Christian Church kept strictly to his doctrine, the world would have become infinitely better and happier. It is the so-called Christians who preached and practised a perverted and almost opposite doctrine, in which greed, selfishness, superstition, and all manner of absurdities played the leading part, that has caused Christianity to become a mockery and a by-word among many thinking men to-day. I feel very hurt and annoyed at your correspondent making such accusations which, to say the least, are quite unnecessary, and only do harm to your cause. Criticism and doubt are among the greatest assets we have for getting at the truth, and nobody appreciates them more than I do, but I feel sure you will agree with me when I say that a purely one-sided criticism only defeats itself, and one should always avoid becoming a special pleader, and be careful to look at both sides of the shield. However much one may disagree with the clergy, one cannot make wholesale statements, and accuse them all of being insincere. There are always two sides to every question. No set of people, no matter what they may believe, can always be wrong, and by taking an extreme view of anything one will always do harm to one's cause. I beg to enclose my card.

East London, Cape Province.

A READER.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 25.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present, Messrs. Clifton, Neate, Quinton, Rosetti, Samuels, and Wood, Mrs. Quinton, Miss Kough and the Secretary.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted, and the pass-book produced.

New members were received for Birmingham, Newcastle, and West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society.

Various matters arising from the minutes having been dealt with, a letter was read from a firm of solicitors, informing the Executive that a friend of the Society, recently deceased, had left the residue of his estate at the death of his widow, to be equally divided between

the Trustees of St. Bartholomew's Hospital and the Trustees of the National Secular Society. Mr. Cohen estimated that the residue would be in the region of £15,000, to be equally divided.

An application for financial assistance was received from the Manchester Branch. The success of Mr. Cohen's recent visit to Manchester and the enthusiasm aroused by his valuable contribution to the *Manchester Evening News* was discussed.

Resolved to make an immediate grant of £15 to the Manchester Branch.

The President reported the result of his interview with the members of the Finsbury Park Branch, whose propaganda work was at present somewhat handicapped, and the result of his visit to Bolton; also to Plymouth, where the audiences had increased.

The Secretary presented various reports, amongst them the engagement of the Century Theatre for March 21, for another lecture, and the arrangements, so far, for Mr. Whitehead's provincial tour, commencing in June.

E. M. VANCE,

General Secretary.

N.B.—Branches are requested to note that the circular letters dealing with invitations for the Conference and dates for Mr. Whitehead's tour, should receive immediate attention.

Society News.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S.

Mr. C. H. Smith lectured last Sunday on "Can Kent's Cavern, Torquay, agree with Monkeyville and Genesis?" It was a most interesting geological lecture, showing Kent's Cavern existed long before Noah's Ark. Mr. Smith brought a prehistoric hammer and chart of Cavern, and deep interest was taken in examining same when lecture was over. There was a good audience, who thoroughly enjoyed the discourse.—S. DOBSON.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.

Mr. George Bedborough's illuminating and informative lecture on "Prison Reform" evoked excellent discussion, to which Mr. George Ives, the well-known criminologist, who was present, contributed a most enlightening quota. To-day (March 7) Mr. Cutner, whose recent articles on the subject have been read by most of us with great interest, is taking for his title, "Back to Jesus." We hope for a good muster of North London Freethinkers.—K. B. K.

Obituary.

We record with great regret the death of a very old Nottingham Freethinker in the person of Mr. James Farmer. Mr. Farmer's devotion to the Freethought Cause was of long standing and continuous enthusiasm. He had a very intimate knowledge of the earlier years of the N.S.S. and had been acquainted with all its past leaders. He had a rather extensive acquaintance too with the literature of the movement, and was a voracious reader of all that bore upon it. For some years past he had given his services to the Cosmopolitan Debating Society, and never failed there to keep his Freethought well to the front. He played an active part in all the visits that Mr. Cohen paid to Nottingham. For some time he had been suffering from a peculiarly painful form of cancer, and must have suffered great pain. The last letter we had from him, only a few weeks before his death, was full of interest in the movement, and of the well-being of the *Freethinker*. Freethought had no more generous advocate, and his character was admired by all who knew him, whether they agreed with his opinions or not. To that widespread admiration and respect we desire to add our own tribute.—C. C.

"THE HYDE PARK FORUM."—A Satire on its Speakers and Frequenters. Should be read by all Freethinkers. Post free, 6d., direct from J. MARLOW, 145 Walworth Road, S.E.1.

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.

NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (101 Tottenham Court Road): 7.30, "An Evening with Mr. Hyatt."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Mr. H. Cutner, "Back to Jesus."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7, Mr. William Platt, "What I saw in North Africa."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit., "The Greek Drama."

COUNTRY.—INDOOR.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Portland Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "The Way to Study Religion"; 7.30, "Things Christians Ought to Know."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, 45th Anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall. Rt. Hon. John M. Robertson and Special Programme.

SALE AND EXCHANGE.

This column is limited to advertisements from private individuals only. Letters may, if it is so desired, be addressed to the Box Number, c/o "Freethinker" Office. Advertising rates 6d. for first line, every additional line 4d.

FOR SALE.

ONE H.P. HORIZONTAL PETROL ENGINE, complete; new; £17; £5 goes to Endowment Fund when sold.—HAMPSON, Garden House, Duxbury, Nr. Chorley.

ELEVEN years *Freethinker*, bound in cloth, 1912-22 inclusive, and 3 years, 23-25, unbound. What offers?—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

TWO "Durham Duplex" safety razors; new; 2s. 6d. each.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

BLACK marble calendar clock, by Baume and Mercier, Paris; perfect timekeeper; cheap at £15.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

BOG oak carved open bookcase; 3 tiers; £3 10s.—M., c/o *Freethinker* Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

PEN-PAINTED table centres, piano and sideboard covers, etc.; prices—very reasonable—on application; very suitable for presents.—MRS. AINSLEY, 37 Westgarth Terrace, Darlington.

ÆSOP'S Fables, with prints, 1722; *Other Men's Minds*, 7,000 choice extracts; Crabbe's Works, 1847, and others.—Box 65.

WANTED.

SHARP Wire-Haired Fox Terrier Dog, must be over distemper and absolutely house clean; this most essential; no fancy price; approval; 5s. to Fund if satisfied.—WOOD, Rozel House, Chard, Somerset.

Devil's Pulpit, vol. i.; Thomson, *Essays and Phantasies*; Sherwin, *Life of Palne*.—A G. BARKER, 29 Verulam Avenue, Walthamstow, E.17.

The Glory of the Pharaohs (Weigall).—Box 81.

G. W. FOOTER'S works.—List, condition, and prices to "B," c/o *Freethinker* office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4.

CHANCE MAKES our parents, but choice makes our tailors. And isn't Atheism a tailor's recommendation? The good sense that makes him a good Atheist will inevitably prevent his being a bad tailor. If you add to this the fact that he advertises here, 'twere were the height of folly to neglect writing for any of the following:—Gents' A to D Patterns, suits from 55s.; Gents' E Patterns, suits all at 67s. 6d.; Gents' F to I Patterns, suits from 75s.; Gents' J to N Patterns, suits from 104s. 6d.; or Ladies' Spring Fashion and Pattern Book, costumes from 60s., frocks from 52s. 6d.—MACCONNELL & MAHE, New Street, Bakewell, De. L. Shire

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For List of Birth-Control Requisites send 1½d. stamp to J. R. HOLMES, East Hauney, Wantage, Berkshire. (Established nearly Forty Years.)

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

President :

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Secretary :

MISS E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Principles and Objects.

Secularism teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name

Address

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19.....

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Pamphlets.

By G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. Price 2d., postage ½d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. Being the Sepher Toldoth Jeshu, or Book of the Generation of Jesus. With an Historical Preface and Voluminous Notes. By G. W. FOOTE and J. M. WHEELER. Price 6d., postage ½d.

VOLTAIRE'S PHILOSOPHICAL DICTIONARY. Vol. I., 128 pp., with Fine Cover Portrait, and Preface by CHAPMAN COHEN. Price 1s., postage 1d.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

DEITY AND DESIGN. Price 1d., postage ½d.

WAR AND CIVILIZATION. Price 1d., postage ½d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY: With a Chapter on Christianity and the Labour Movement. Price 1s., postage 1d.

GOD AND MAN: An Essay in Common Sense and Natural Morality. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY: The Subjection and Exploitation of a Sex. Price 1s., postage 1d.

SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES. Price 3d., postage ½d.

CREED AND CHARACTER. The influence of Religion on Racial Life. Price 6d., postage 1d.

THE PARSON AND THE ATHEIST. A Friendly Discussion on Religion and Life, between Rev. the Hon. Edward Lyttleton, D.D., and Chapman Cohen. Price 1s., postage 1½d.

BLASPHEMY: A Plea for Religious Equality. Price 3d., postage 1d.

DOES MAN SURVIVE DEATH? Is the Belief Reasonable? Verbatim Report of a Discussion between Horace Leaf and Chapman Cohen. Price 6d., postage ½d.

By J. T. LLOYD

GOD-EATING: A Study in Christianity and Cannibalism. Price 3d., postage ½d.

By A. D. McLAREN.

THE CHRISTIAN'S SUNDAY: Its History and its Fruits. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By MIMNERMUS.

FREETHOUGHT AND LITERATURE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By M. M. MANGASARIAN.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. Price 1d., postage ½d.

By A. MILLAR.

THE ROBES OF PAN. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By WALTER MANN.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. Price 2d., postage ½d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. With a Chapter on Infidel Death-Beds. Price 4d., postage 1d.

THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN. (Second Edition.) Price 1d., postage ½d.

By ARTHUR F. THORN.

THE LIFE-WORSHIP OF RICHARD JEFFERIES. With Fine Portrait of Jefferies. Price 6d., postage 1d.

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

JESUS CHRIST: Man, God, or Myth? With a Chapter on "Was Jesus a Socialist?" Cloth, 3s., postage 2½d.

THE CASE AGAINST THEISM. Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

THE SUPERMAN: Essays in Social Idealism. Price 2d., postage ½d.

MAN AND HIS GODS. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By ROBERT ARCH.

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. Price 4d., postage ½d.

By H. G. FARMER.

HERESY IN ART. The Religious Opinions of Famous Artists and Musicians. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By COLONEL INGERSOLL.

IS SUICIDE A SIN? AND LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE. Price 2d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? Price 1d., postage ½d.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. Price 1d., postage ½d.

WHAT IS IT WORTH? A Study of the Bible. Price 1d., postage ½d.

MISTAKES OF MOSES. Price 2d., postage ½d.

By D. HUME.

ESSAY ON SUICIDE. Price 1d., postage ½d.

PIONEER PRESS PUBLICATIONS

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Contents: Chapter I.—Outgrowing the Gods. Chapter II.—Life and Mind. Chapter III.—What is Freethought? Chapter IV.—Rebellion and Reform. Chapter V.—The Struggle for the Child. Chapter VI.—The Nature of Religion. Chapter VII.—The Utility of Religion. Chapter VIII.—Freethought and God. Chapter IX.—Freethought and Death. Chapter X.—This World and the Next. Chapter XI.—Evolution. Chapter XII.—Darwinism and Design. Chapter XIII.—Ancient and Modern. Chapter XIV.—Morality without God.—I. Chapter XV.—Morality without God.—II. Chapter XVI.—Christianity and Morality. Chapter XVII.—Religion and Persecution. Chapter XVIII.—What is to follow Religion?

Cloth Bound, with tasteful Cover Design. Price 5s., postage 3½d.

MODERN MATERIALISM.

A Candid Examination.

By WALTER MANN.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Contents: Chapter I.—Modern Materialism. Chapter II.—Darwinian Evolution. Chapter III.—Auguste Comte and Positivism. Chapter IV.—Herbert Spencer and the Synthetic Philosophy. Chapter V.—The Contribution of Kant. Chapter VI.—Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford open the Campaign. Chapter VII.—Buechner's "Force and Matter." Chapter VIII.—Atoms and the Ether. Chapter IX.—The Origin of Life. Chapter X.—Atheism and Agnosticism. Chapter XI.—The French Revolution and the Great War. Chapter XII.—The Advance of Materialism.

A careful and exhaustive examination of the meaning of Materialism and its present standing, together with its bearing on various aspects of life. A much-needed work.

176 pages. Price 1s. 6d., in neat Paper Cover, postage 2d.

A Book with a Bite.

BIBLE ROMANCES.

(FOURTH EDITION.)

By G. W. FOOTE.

A Drastic Criticism of the Old and New Testament Narratives, full of Wit, Wisdom, and Learning. Contains some of the best and wittiest of the work of G. W. Foote.

In Cloth, 224 pp. Price 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE.

By J. W. DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

(Author of "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," etc.)

Price 3s. 6d., postage 4½d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK.

For Freethinkers and Enquiring Christians.

By G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

NEW EDITION.

(Issued by the Secular Society, Limited.)

Contents: Part I.—Bible Contradictions. Part II.—Bible Absurdities. Part III.—Bible Atrocities. Part IV.—Bible Immoralities, Indecencies, Obscenities, Broken Promises, and Unfulfilled Prophecies.

Cloth Bound. Price 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.

One of the most useful books ever published. Invaluable to Freethinkers answering Christians.

WHAT IS MORALITY?

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

A Careful Examination of the Basis of Morals from the Standpoint of Evolution.

Price 4d., postage 1d.

THEISM OR ATHEISM?

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Contents: PART I.—AN EXAMINATION OF THEISM. Chapter I.—What is God? Chapter II.—The Origin of the Idea of God. Chapter III.—Have we a Religious Sense? Chapter IV.—The Argument from Existence. Chapter V.—The Argument from Causation. Chapter VI.—The Argument from Design. Chapter VII.—The Disharmonies of Nature. Chapter VIII.—God and Evolution. Chapter IX.—The Problem of Pain.

PART II.—SUBSTITUTES FOR ATHEISM. Chapter X.—A Question of Prejudice. Chapter XI.—What is Atheism? Chapter XII.—Spencer and the Unknowable. Chapter XIII.—Agnosticism. Chapter XIV.—Atheism and Morals. Chapter XV.—Atheism Inevitable.

Bound in full Cloth, Gilt Lettered. Price 5s., postage 2½d.

A Book for all.

SEXUAL HEALTH AND BIRTH CONTROL.

By ETTIE A. ROUT.

With Foreword by Sir Bryan Donkin, M.D.

Price 1s., postage 1d.

The Egyptian Origin of Christianity.

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST.

By GERALD MASSEY.

A Demonstration of the Egyptian Origin of the Christian Myth. Should be in the hands of every Freethinker. With Introduction by Chapman Cohen.

Price 6d., postage 1d.

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION.

A Chapter from

The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe

By JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER, M.D., LL.D.

Price 2d., postage ½d.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANISM.

By BISHOP W. MONTGOMERY BROWN, D.D.

A book that is quite outspoken in its attacks on Christianity and on fundamental religious ideas. It is an unsparing criticism of Christianity from the point of view of Darwinism and of Sociology from the point of view of Marxism. 204 pp

Price 1s., post free.

Special terms for quantities.

BIRTH CONTROL, AND RACE CULTURE.

THE SOCIAL ASPECTS OF SEX.

By GEORGE WHITEHEAD.

A Common Sense Discussion of Questions that affect all, and should be faced by all.

Price 1s., postage 1d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

THE "FREETHINKER."

THE *Freethinker* may be ordered from any newsagent in the United Kingdom, and is supplied by all the wholesale agents. It will be sent direct from the publishing office, post free, to any part of the world on the following terms:—

One Year, 15s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.;
Three Months, 3s. 9d.

Those who experience any difficulty in obtaining copies of the paper will confer a favour if they will write us, giving full particulars.