

# A CENTURY OF FREETHOUGHT.

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## Views and Opinions.

### A Century of Free Thought.

MR. JOHN M. ROBERTSON'S *History of Freethought in the 19th Century*,\* has now reached the eighth part, so that about half the work has been placed before the public. We expressed our opinion on the value of the work on the appearance of the first two parts, and that opinion has been justified. The work covers an immense field, a very large part of it hitherto untilled in any scholarly work, and for that reason the amount of research has been enormous. Whatever may be the criticisms passed on the work, Mr. Robertson has placed all Freethinkers under an obligation to him, and no one who wishes to know what has been the progress of Freethought during the past century can afford to be without his book. *A History of Freethought in the 19th Century* should find a place on the shelves of every Freethinker.

For our own part we should have liked to have seen a more detailed account of the popular propaganda in connexion with the Freethought Movement as a whole, but the reply of the writer to this would probably be that the popular propaganda has to be taken in connexion with the more "learned" and more pretentious movements, and the historian cannot neglect the more academic phases. To that reply I have no criticism to offer, and frankly confess that my wish is motivated by the fact that popular Freethought propaganda has been so generally ignored or decried by writers, that one would like to have seen brought out now and again, how much such men as Kingsley and Maurice on the Christian side, and Huxley and others on the non-Christian side, owed to the conductors of popular propaganda from Paine to G. W. Foote.

### The Secular Society Limited.

Part 7 of the History has a chapter on Freethought organization, and there is a survey of the work of Hoiyoake and Bradlaugh, with just a parting reference

to G. W. Foote. Presumably Foote's work in connexion with Freethought will be dealt with more fully in a later section, for one could hardly pass over his life and influence in a few casual lines. No man ever brought a more devoted mind to the work of Freethought, few were more effective on the platform in its advocacy, and none ever wielded a more brilliant pen in its defence. Freethought was the love of his life, and he served it faithfully to the end.

The reference to G. W. Foote is in connexion with his establishment of the Secular Society Limited, and that calls for a word of correction and comment. Mr. Robertson says:—

One of Mr. Foote's services to his cause was the discovery (1898) that by formal establishment as a company, the society could legally receive bequests, a right denied it as a propagandist body. Bequests so made had always been disallowed in the law courts. The genius of English law, which sees in a clerical incumbency a form of property, now bestowed in terms of "business" and finance, the protection it had refused an organization aiming simply at the diffusion of truth.

This is not a very satisfactory description of the formation of the Secular Society, Limited, and it hardly does justice to Mr. Foote's acumen in the matter. Mr. Robertson does not mention the Secular Society, Limited by name, which is rather a serious omission in a history of Freethought, and shows a want of recognition of the historical significance of that body, while his language implies that it was the National Secular Society that was formally established as a company. That, of course, is not the case. The National Secular Society is now what it always was, and there has never been any attempt to alter its status.

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### A New Chapter.

The Secular Society, Limited was really based on the summing up of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge in Foote's own trial for blasphemy in 1883. That trial was certainly one of the most significant blasphemy trials of the century; first, on account of Foote's own speech, in my judgment one of the best defences ever set up in an English Court, and second, on account of Lord Coleridge's careful declaration of the state of the Common Law of Blasphemy, which at once took its place as the standard for all future trials. It was not exactly new, but it had never been so authoritatively laid down. It declared that under the Common Law it was permissible to attack the most fundamental doctrines of religion, provided the language used observed the decencies of controversy. It was upon that decision that the Secular Society, Limited was formed. Hitherto the law had declined to enforce legacies that had been left to the National Secular Society. A very large sum of money had been lost in this way, although it need never have been lost had the bequests been claimed in the right

\* Issued in fortnightly parts, Watts & Co., 1s. 6d. each.

manner. Bradlaugh did not make many mistakes in law, I think, but this was certainly one of them. Had the bequests been claimed on the grounds, first, that a bequest to an unincorporated body is a bequest to the individuals comprising that body, and, second, that no bequest can be set on one side because the individual or the individuals receiving it may spend it in an unlawful manner, the cases might have had a very different ending. Even Foote himself followed the Bradlaugh lead in this respect, and I had many a wordy battle with him on this head, until (in 1908, I think) a case brought by the Franciscan Order before Mr. Justice Joyce settled the matter. But for all that, the formation of the Secular Society, Limited marked an epoch in the history of Freethought in this country, and from the point of view of organization was the best thing ever done in its behalf, of greater significance than anything accomplished by either Holyoake or Bradlaugh. For that reason one regrets that the subject was not more carefully dealt with by Mr. Robertson.

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#### Freethought and the Law.

Mr. Robertson's statement that the law gave to "business" what it would not give to propaganda, is inaccurate. The Secular Society, Limited is not a commercial company, it has never made any legal pretence to be such. In the case of Bowman versus the Secular Society, Limited, which was fought right up to the House of Lords, which ended in a complete victory for the Society, and which the counsel said at the time was really Mr. Foote's victory, for he had decided the procedure from the outset, in none of the trials was the element of business introduced. The Society was avowedly a propagandist body, and the sole question debated before the House of Lords was whether the propaganda was legal or not. There was no evasion of the law, there was no getting round the law. Everything was quite open. There was no need for any subterfuge, legal or otherwise. It was, perhaps, the first case of its kind in which there was no advantage taken of legal quibbles, or subterfuges, or flaws in some forgotten law or other. The Articles of Association of the Secular Society, Limited lays it down that no Director is to receive payment for his services, and no member may receive profit of any kind. His privilege is to pay his annual subscription.

The basis of the Secular Society, Limited is this: In English law there are two senses of the word "illegal." A thing may be illegal in the sense that the law will not permit it to be done. Or it may be illegal in the sense that the law will tolerate it, but it will not protect or enforce it. Betting is an instance. The law does not say a man shall not bet, but it says that if he does so the law will not collect the debt for the winner. So with bequests for Freethought. The law did not say that a bequest to a Freethought Society was illegal in the sense that it would not permit it, but it did say that it was illegal in the sense that if the next of kin protested it would not enforce the bequest. It was in this latter sense the courts had decided that they would not enforce a bequest to the National Secular Society, but if the next-of-kin raised no objection, it would not interfere with such a bequest being realized.

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#### Opening a New Chapter.

That was the state of the law up to Foote's trial in 1883, and it was thought to be so up to the formation of the Secular Society, Limited. But Foote saw that Lord Coleridge's judgment put the whole matter on a new footing, and it was grim irony that his blasphemy trial should have put an end to this robbery

of Freethinkers by Christians. For if it was no longer illegal, in any sense of the term, to attack Christianity so long as the "decencies of controversy" were observed, then a Society having for its purpose the elimination of the supernatural from secular affairs, even openly aiming at the destruction of Christianity, could no longer be said to be illegal. There was nothing to stop such a Society being registered under the Company Laws—registration is not a guarantee of legality, only a *prima facie* case for it. The basis of the Secular Society, Limited was, therefore, not an evasion of the law, but a putting into actual operation the law that an attack on the fundamentals of religious belief was no longer illegal at English law. It was this that gave the action of Foote in founding the Secular Society, Limited its great importance in the history of Freethought in this country. Without the struggles of earlier Freethinkers, with the resultant change in public opinion, this could not have been done; but without the building up of a language and other things Shakespeare could never have written King Lear. It is to the credit of G. W. Foote, that in addition to his labours for Freethought by tongue and pen, he gave Freethought in this country its financial charter. It destroyed for ever one of the weapons which bigotry had used against Freethought. We are witnessing one of the consequences of this in the altered conditions of Freethought propaganda to-day. It is for this reason I have called attention to the importance of G. W. Foote's work for Freethought. They are services that none should lightly value or permit themselves to forget.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Hard Knocks from Father Knox.

"Say, folks! You ain't heard nothing yet."

Al Jolson.

"Thus do I make my fool my purse."

Shakespeare, "Othello."

"Truth gains more by the errors of one who thinks for himself than by the opinions of those who do not suffer themselves to think."—Mill.

In the obituary notice of a recently deceased clergyman, it was stated that he had delivered no less than fifteen thousand sermons. Whether that exact number was correct or not, the total must have been large, because he started peaching at eighteen, and kept it up until he was over eighty years of age. Judging by the last published utterances, his mentality was the same at eighty as it had been at eighteen, when he came fresh to his profession from a training school. Under the circumstances it was fortunate that he filled a succession of pastorates, for most congregations would have had brain fever if he had persisted too long in one place.

Yet, it must be just as trying to sit under too many "pastors and masters," for, outside the patter of their profession, they are gay and irresponsible fellows, ready at all times "to damn the consequences." They are reckless, for they realize that the pulpit is a coward's castle, with no right of reply. One assures a frightened congregation that wicked Atheists eat their young. Another, apparently as earnest and as truthful, says there never was such a thing as an Atheist, and even the great Charles Bradlaugh was a Christian all the time without realizing it. An ordinary audience would have misgivings, but the soporific qualities of the average sermon lulls most congregations into an easy-going quiescence.

Father Ronald Knox, who is a fashionable preacher, goes so far, in a recent sermon, as to admit that Atheists are really alive. Perhaps he has

dined with some of them, and found their wine as admirable as their opinions were detestable. Anyhow, he says they are feeble-minded folks, and ought to be called "loose" thinkers rather than Freethinkers. Presumably, Atheists are not mad enough to be put in asylums, but are sufficiently childish to require the attention of a nurse, or, occasionally, a policeman.

Truth to tell, Father Knox ought to be a good judge of "loose" thinking himself, for this is how he attempts to describe Freethought during the nineteenth century:—

In the last century, men wrote and talked as if Christianity had had its day and the old gods were returning. On the first point let my learned critics disagree with me if they will, but one thing is quite certain—and that is the older gods have never had a look in for all our modern religious disorganization.

This is worse than a cross-word puzzle. It is the merest balderdash, and would be silly if written by an inattentive and idle schoolboy. What does Father Knox mean by "old gods"? Is he referring to "Apollo," "Pan," "Odin," or "Thor"? Or does he mean the deities of the Hindoo, or some other Oriental religion? And what critic, learned, or otherwise, outside of a lunatic asylum, ever suggested the replacement of the three-headed god of the Christian Religion by other deities of other superstitions?

This inexact method of expression is a habit with Father Knox. Listen to his pretty prattling:—

You may find empty churches in our English countryside, but devil a hamadryad will you meet to compensate for them. Certainly there is a decline of religion; certainly there is a revolt, more organized and more deliberate than usual, among the young people against the traditional moralities.

"Hamadryad," forsooth! Such a thing would be as difficult to find as an honest priest. As for empty churches, these can be found in town and country alike. In the heart of the City of London a score of derelict churches were the subject of public discussion not so long ago. Freethinkers, too, will smile at the absurd suggestion that the young people of to-day are deliberately organized against Orthodoxy. The existing Freethought organizations are perfectly well known, and their membership is by no means confined to young persons in their "teens." It is the priests who seek to capture the rising generation while still "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms," and actually take money for performing rites. But exactitude is not a weakness possessed by Father Knox, or by many of his profession.

Edward Gibbon is admitted to be our greatest historian, and even Newman conceded that Gibbon was an authority on many points of Christian origins. Father Knox has nothing but contempt for the mind that penned the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Thus Papa Knox:—

If you do not accept the notion of her divine origin you may well find yourself put to all the shifts of a Gibbon to account for it. And the more you try to undermine the historic authenticity of the Christian religion the more difficulty you will have in explaining its success."

By the expression, "her divine origin," Father Knox means the "original" Christian Church. But which is the original Church? Is it the Greek Church which countenances the annual fraud of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem; or is it the Roman Catholic Church which favours the annual swindle of the liquefaction of the blood of Saint Januarius at Naples? As Father Knox gets his daily bread (and butter) from the Roman firm, there is little doubt as to the choice he would make. In any event it must be a choice of evils.

It is not only what Father Knox says, but some-

times what he leaves out, that makes his sermons so interesting. Here is a charming specimen:—

And the Church did not kill paganism by cold rationalism, by mere insistence on its own inherent inconsistencies, absurdities—the philosophers had been doing that for centuries past, without ever disabusing the popular mind of the old mumpsimus. The Church conquered superstition by preaching that One had risen from the dead: she opposed faith, not scepticism, to the old credulities, and substituted for the old light-heartedness, a hope, not a despair.

I thought at first glance the reverend gent. had written "rope" instead of "hope" in the last sentence. It would have been nearer the truth than what he had actually written. When Christians gained power they conquered opposition by brute force, and even Father Knox should know the difference between the persuasive powers of preaching, and the persuasive powers of the thumb-screw, the rack, the stake, and the gibbet.

Even in England it is not many generations since the fires of Smithfield proclaimed the sincerity of Christian love. It is but a few years since the last Freethinker languished in a prison-cell for the "crime" of laughing at a decadent superstition. There is no impudence equal to that of the priest:—

"I had rather be a dog and bay the moon  
Than such a Roman."

Clerical culture is largely a sham and a make-believe. It is far too often taken for granted, whereas the truth is that the people in the pews are often better informed than the men in the pulpits. *Punch*, some years ago, hit this off in an excellent picture, which depicted a parson on his knees before a sceptic, saying: "Pray, don't mention the name of another foreign author, or I shall have to resign my living."

The surest guide to clerical ignorance is a perusal of the sermons these men address to their long-suffering congregations. They amply prove the association of the Christian Religion with gross ignorance, and reaction of the worst kind. Their congregations are better dressed and better schooled than those who listen spellbound to the trombones and tambourines of the Salvation Army, yet they listen devoutly to the most rank and fulsome nonsense. We raise our hats to the clergy as acute men-of-business; but our admiration is diluted by the thought that they live by "tickling the ears of the groundlings," and are obtaining their money by exceedingly false pretences. They are no more honest than racing tipsters who gull their public with information "straight from the horse's mouth."

MIMNERMUS.

## The Dean of St. Paul's.

(Concluded from page 236.)

EVEN Epicurus, the Greek philosopher who lived 300 B.C., and whose philosophy has been a target for Christian attacks ever since, finds a defender in Dean Inge, who observes:—

All respecting philosophers heave bricks at Epicurus, who taught that pleasure is their supreme good. His followers are now called Hedonists; and moralists direct all their heavy artillery upon them, arguing not only that they are bad citizens for not realizing that "life is real, life is earnest," but that they are stupid people who miss the things that they aim at and hit nothing else. . . . if it is true that to aim directly at pleasure is not the way to hit it, our Epicurean usually has sense enough to know this; he aims not directly at pleasure, but at things which he knows will bring pleasure.

I am not thinking of the sensualists; the Epicureans were not sensualists. They lived very simply; the pleasure which they ranked highest was

comradeship or friendliness. They bade dull care begone, and summed up their practical philosophy in the following quartrain, which in Greek is only eight words: "Nothing to fear in God. Nothing to feel in death. Good—easily won. Evil easily borne."—(Dean Inge: *Assessments and Anticipations*. p. 270.)

Speaking from personal experience, the Dean bears witness: "I have known some genuine Epicureans, and they are such pleasant friends that I cannot grudge them their unheroic satisfactions." And declares: "He is a much more agreeable fellow than the Stoic, who assists you in your troubles with an entirely unfeeling benevolence; . . . or than the Catholic, who regards you as an object on which to practise some meritorious and distasteful Christian virtue."

One perfect specimen of an Epicurean was one of his colleagues when he was a college don. A man of great abilities, says the Dean, "we were all uncommonly sorry when he left us, and I sincerely hope he was much happier than he deserved to be, for he added to the happiness of us all." The Dean finishes with a half apology for this testimonial to a great heathen, by observing: "Of course, I have been speaking as the devil's advocate. It is better to be a Stoic than an Epicurean, and better to be a Christian than a Stoic." That, of course, is the correct attitude for a Christian Dean, but it would be extremely difficult to convince an unbiassed mind of the truth of his statement.

In another connexion, he remarks that the test of happiness is clearly no criterion: "since those who have it seldom become great, and those who become great have either put happiness aside, or are too busy to think whether they are happy or not."

Dean Inge is also thoroughly alive to the problems of race breeding and cultivation; unlike the vast majority of the clergy, who either ignore the subject as indecent, or denounce birth control as a crime against God, in spite of our over-population, as illustrated by our million unemployed. He warns us: "When the laws which regulate racial progress and degeneration are known, woe to the nation that refuses to recognize them. 'I am not in the habit of talking,' Plotinus makes Nature say. No; with her it is a word and a blow, and the blow first." (p. 216.)

Of the famous epigram of Hobbes, that the Roman Church is the ghost of the dead Empire, sitting crowned and sceptered among the ruins of it, he remarks:—

It is not merely a clever saying. It is the most appropriate way of describing the nature of this Church. The Popes rule like Augustus, and still more like Diocletian; Peter and Paul have stepped into the shoes of Romulus and Remus; the bishops and archbishops, as Harnack says, are the proconsuls; the troops of priests and monks correspond to the legions; the Jesuits to the imperial bodyguard. The Pope, who calls himself Pontifex Maximus, is the successor of Cæsar. (p. 154.)

Of the claims of Roman Catholicism itself, Dean Inge observes: "The priests say virtually, 'If you admire the character of the Catholic saint; if you would like to be that kind of person; if you would wish to be free from all uncomfortable doubts, and to be personally conducted through life, put yourselves under our training, and we will promise to deliver the goods.' Catholicism, in other words, is a very successful system of mind-cure. Even if the treatment is by quackery, the average patient would rather be cured by a quack than treated unsuccessfully by orthodox science." (p. 159.) This last remark seems somewhat cryptic, for science does not undertake to make Saints, or personally conduct people through life. But still, if some people prefer quackery to science, who shall say them nay? But

let them beware of these quack soothing syrups, and remember the saying: "Religion is the opium of life."

The Dean agrees with Santayana that the Northern nations have not yet found themselves in religion. They discovered four hundred years ago that the Mediterranean religion did not suit them. But we are, as Santayana, who is a Spaniard, tells us, still inexperienced barbarians, compared with the older and more sophisticated nations of the South. The uneducated Southerner, if he is religious, is a pagan pure and simple; the Northerner indulges in ridiculous fads, such as Anglo-Israelitism or Christian Science; he maintains that when St. Paul recommends Timothy to "take a little wine for his stomach's sake," the medicine was for external application only and that the text: "Worship the Lord with clean lips," condemns the use of tobacco. These are the absurdities of honest barbarians; the Latin races do not make fools of themselves in that particular way. (pp. 166-7.)

The Dean also refers to "the irritating person who goes about saying, 'I am always an optimist'—as if a barometer firmly stuck at 'set fair' could be of the slightest use to anybody. This is the Gospel according to Uncle Sam. The Americans make so much money by bluffing each other that they think they can bluff Nature and the Author of Nature. Christian Science, which has nothing to do with either Science or Christianity, is the religion based on belief in the sovereign efficacy of make believe." (p. 98.)

Of the Ideal Utopias invented by would-be Reformers, he truly remarks: "The societies which they depict are rather like a farmyard of tame animals; they would be very dull to live in."

The standard of preaching in the Church of England, he admits, "is certainly low," it is "unworkmanlike and even slovenly." Some preachers hardly trouble to prepare their sermons, trusting perhaps to the Apostle's promise that "it shall be given you in that hour what ye shall speak." But, he dryly remarks: "This kind of inspiration, however, does not seem to follow necessarily from the possession of the Apostolic Succession." The falling off in the quality of the preaching is also "connected with the inferior intellectual quality, and the absence of proper training among the younger clergy. It requires no brains to be a purveyor of sacerdotal magic, and this conception of the ministerial office is unfortunately growing. These young men adopt a very dictatorial tone in the pulpit, which repels their hearers, many of whom are far better educated than themselves." (p. 69.)

Then there is the difficulty of the different intellectual levels of his hearers, so that

It is almost impossible to interest highly educated men and women without becoming unintelligible to many persons in the Church. And the problem becomes acute when we are asked to assist the young and thoughtful men and women in the congregation in their intellectual difficulties about the Christian faith. We cannot even come to grips with these difficulties without shocking and offending those of our hearers who are neither young nor thoughtful. There is no solution of this problem; when the laity complain of the disingenuousness of the clergy in shirking the questions which are exercising the minds of the younger generation, they seldom realize the shackles in which they are held, not by the bishops, but by another type of laymen. The golden age of the pulpit is over. (p. 71.)

The fact is that men of ability are no longer attracted to the Church; science has undermined its authority, and, like a fallen humpty-dumpty, nothing can set it up again. That is why the Church to-day only gets the intellectual leavings, the unemployables of the other professions.

W. MANN.

## Conscience.

A CORRESPONDENT sent me, a few days ago, an epitome of a lecture he had just listened to on the above subject, and, judging from the summary given, a very well thought out lecture it was. But the debate that followed was, in his opinion, "below par"; and he invited me to express my views on the questions raised. As I had often thought of taking "conscience" as a subject of an article, I decided to submit a brief outline of what I consider to be the "psychology" of the so-called faculty.

To me there is not a shadow of a mystery in the nature of the awareness called conscience. It is the inevitable outcome of becoming self-conscious. Due to this racial awakening, man, in the process of time, became aware of the effects of his actions and behaviour upon other sentient creatures, particularly other human beings. It is this awareness of the effects of actions upon sentient beings that gives acts or conduct their moral quality of right or wrong; of good or bad. This fact is well borne out by the etymology of the word which means "co-knowledge" or "knowing-along-with." (Con and scire, to know.) The term was then, as was the vogue in semi-civilized times, personified, and placed on a high stool, after the manner of an umpire, in a tennis court, to watch the game!

As he became more and more self-conscious, which increased *pari passu* his power of introspection, this awareness became amplified and progressively included the extent he satisfied his own wants and desires at the expense of the well-being of other sentient creatures. By becoming self-conscious he could not avoid acquiring a moral sense; it was absolutely inevitable. Endow a horse, a dog, an elephant, or an ape with self-consciousness and it becomes *ipso facto* a moral creature.

This obvious fact is too commonplace a truism for the metaphysician and the sophist—the Siamese twins of high philosophy. They must needs have something occult—something that must be expressed in non-significant language, *i.e.*, in terms and phrases from which all real meaning has been pressed out. That is why no reference is ever made in the textbooks to man as a self-conscious animal, notwithstanding the fact that it is the key that accounts for everything that is characteristically human.

This clairvoyant awareness awoke a new spring of action which is usually denoted by the terms pity or sympathy—an emotion that tends to curb a person from doing things which are obviously calculated to cause pain or distress to others. If sympathy was a strong impulse to action, all would be well. But unfortunately it is a very feeble incentive; and the cause of its impotence is fairly obvious. The sensation of pain cannot be revived in memory at will, as is the case with sense-impressions. You can easily revive in the mind the scene of your home and its surroundings though you may not have seen it for fifty years; but you cannot revive a toothache when it has ceased, though it made you writhe with pain an hour ago. The flogger knows the agony produced by the lash he wields, but he does not *feel* the pain, otherwise it would stay his hand. That is why the most horrible tortures ever inflicted upon sentient beings have been not only watched with apathy and callous indifference, but have furnished a source of rare enjoyment! To see a man hanged used to be an occasion for a public holiday; and to see a witch or a heretic burnt alive drew thousands to watch the grim spectacle! Could the spectators have received the agony of a burn, they would have hurried away *en masse*, to seek the inquisitor and his minions to lynch them.

Thus conscience as an emotion (moral sense) tending to inhibit actions of cruelty is a very feeble motive.

But apart from its intrinsic feebleness as an incentive, it is, in self-conscious man, often opposed by hostile emotions of great strength, such as anger, hatred, or jealousy, in which case the infliction of pain is often a keen satisfaction to the perpetrator. In such circumstances "pity" is as impotent as a straw before the whirlwind.

When, however, conscience is not a mere emotion, but a mental state into which the intellect enters and is known as a "sense of duty," it is a uniform and a powerful incentive to action. So much so that every nation, tribe, or clan is bridled by a set of habits, customs and vogues which control the whole of its behaviour from the cradle to the grave.

Within the clan or tribe those bridles of habit are supposed to be in alliance with sympathy, and to oppose or inhibit all actions calculated to inflict pain on others, but those restrictions were not meant to cross frontiers. Even within the clan, tribe or family however, self-interest ever tends to thwart the impulses of altruistic sympathy. Every act or type of behaviour is in truth a battle royal between the force of self-interest and the sense of duty, *i.e.*, the desire not to infringe upon the well-being of others.

As these restraining habitudes unmistakably bear, without exception, the hall-mark of the community wherein they exist, it is obvious that they are its product—all stamped upon the mind by the communal voice of authority during childhood. To refer them to any supernatural agency is an absurdity, both palpable and grotesque.

When the term conscience is referred to as a moral "faculty," it usually denotes nothing more precise than this set of moral habitudes acquired during youth by every member of society. They do certainly tend to the well-being of the community, but they are far from being unfailing or certain in action.

In the case of religion, conscience, as a sense of duty, is manifested as the product of the environment, pure and simple, with no complications from sentiency. Religious duty is not a duty to sentient beings, but to the gods in whom sentiency does not count or exist; yet there is no duty so potent or uniform in its action. In the most absolute sense it is the offspring of an authoritative priesthood; the plastic mind of childhood is the matrix wherein it is conceived.

Seldom or never does it fail to effect uniform compliance however arduous the task imposed by ritual or severe the sacrifices demanded by martyrdom. The vast army of martyrs betokens its irresistible potency. And the diversity of the gods to whom the duty is supposed to be due, and in whose honour it is all performed, betrays the pathetic fatuity of the hollow behests of non-existent beings. In one place, conscience bids its owner to lay down its life for Allah, the Moslem god; in another for Jahweh, the Christian deity; in another, for the god of Hinduism, of Brahminism, or of any of the vast multitude of gods which at one time or another have flourished on this Earth. And that is not all. Every sect within these creeds has a conscience of its own. The Protestant conscience bids a Christian to behave in a certain way; while the Catholic conscience orders its owner to act in a manner diametrically opposite; and so of every sect throughout the world.

The voice of the religious conscience is thus obviously nothing but the reverberating echo of credal sounds reflected by the mental cavities hollowed out by priesthoods, the world over, in the plastic minds of youth.

KERIDON.

## Are We Out of Date?

THERE is a gibe which opponents, clerical and other, are rather fond of levelling against Secularists. It is that we are "out of date." They seem to think that this indicates their ultra-modernity, whereas it merely expresses their backwardness.

An illustration was afforded the other Sunday when I heard a debate between one who claims to be some sort of a Theist, and an advocate of Atheism. It was not possible to determine what kind of a god the Theist believed in. From his remarks, I should imagine that he would be unable to define it since it was more nebulous even than Haeckel's gaseous vertebrate.

Members of the N.S.S. were assured, however, that they have not advanced in their ideas during the last half-century or so, that modern science has gone beyond materialism, and that it has established the existence of something other than the material in the phenomenal universe. What precisely the discoveries of science in this direction may be, and what it is that has been thus shown to exist, we were left guessing. The Theist did not tell us, and I suggest that he does not know himself.

It was obvious, however, that he would go all the way with the Secularist in repudiating the dogmas of the Churches as regards the inspiration of the Bible, its miracles and alleged prophecies, the supernatural character of Jesus Christ, and the claims of the clergy to speak with authority on these matters. Even the dubious orthodoxy of the most advanced Christian modernist would find few points of contact with the views of this particular Theist.

Nevertheless, we are out of date. Why? Because we persist in exposing as falsehoods the very dogmas which he himself would agree in rejecting. He would assure us that "modern thought" has advanced beyond them. Has it? They are being taught every day, and particularly every Sunday, not only by the reactionary Roman Church and Salvation Army, whose thought is several centuries behind the times, but from every pulpit occupied by "modernist" divines like Bishop Barnes or Dean Inge, down to the Rev. Athanasius Verisopht of St. Stupidity's high Anglican church and the Rev. Boanerges Leatherlungs of Little Tophet chapel.

Our Theist seems not to realize that the literal interpretation of the fall of man, Noah's zoological procession, the linguistic mix-up at Babel, and all the rest of the fabulous nonsense, down to Jesus Christ's super-balloon performance, are taught, not only in the Sunday schools, but in many elementary and secondary schools in England. Thousands of children are being taught these things as positive facts, not to be disputed, very often by schoolmasters who know better, and do not believe them, but are compelled to teach them by the stranglehold which the clergy maintain upon our educational system. Our Theist would agree that this is the teaching of lies, but he would deprecate the condemnation of it as "out of date." A very curious attitude, is it not?

I do not know upon what lofty pinnacle of intellectual superiority our Theist habitually resides, nor what rarified metaphysical atmosphere he there breathes; but, if he is unaware of the situation down here on earth, and of the necessity that still exists for altering it by public propaganda, then he is out of touch with the times. He does not know, apparently, that there are millions of men and women whose minds are still befogged by medieval superstitions which he himself would reject with amused contempt. But we are aware of them, of the need for opening the eyes of these people to the truth, and of setting forth the true facts of life and of the world, so that they may be able to think sanely to their own ultimate benefit.

It may, perhaps, be all to the good that such doctrines are taught to the children. When they are a little older, and find them to be falsehoods, they may possibly be inspired with a greater contempt for the clergy and the churches. But, in the meantime, they are being "doped," and we know how pernicious this "dope" is. A celebrated Romish prelate once said, in effect, that if he could have the training of the children up to the age of

twelve years, he did not care what subsequent influences might be brought to bear, the Church would still hold them. He may have been over-sanguine, but the fact remains that getting rid of false teaching, once implanted, is much more difficult than acquiring the true in later years.

The statement that Secularists are out of date is grotesquely false. The Secularist, as a rule, is one who keeps himself abreast of modern thought, and he is well aware that those who make this assertion are either out of date themselves, or they are dishonestly endeavouring to create a misleading impression on the minds of others who are unable to check their misstatements.

The facts are that no scientific research, ancient or modern, has shaken the Atheist position in the slightest degree. There is not a single scientific discovery that points to the existence of "spirit" (or "mind," as our Theist expressed it) apart from the physical, phenomenal universe.

The latest scientific research leads to the following conclusions:—

That evolution can be traced backwards until the organic passes into the inorganic.

That there is no breach of continuity between the inorganic and the organic.

That we cannot conceive of life, or mind, apart from matter.

That all the phenomena, including mental activity, exhibited by a living thing are finally resolvable into physical and chemical processes.

That all life phenomena, including mind, are determined by chemical processes.

That modern physiology proves all organic processes to be physical or chemical.

That living organisms contain no special, vital elements differing from those of non-living matter.

That life is not a thing-in-itself, but is a property of organization.

That life may be said to be a form of electrical energy.

That, apart from life, no mental phenomena can occur.

The electrical constitution of matter forms one of the greatest of modern, scientific discoveries, and thus the doctrine of a special, vital force has received its death-blow. The notion of dualism, namely, that mind ("spirit") and matter are two separate and distinct things, capable of existing apart, is completely exploded, and the conclusions of monistic materialism are fully vindicated.

Claims to the contrary merely serve to indicate the ignorance and the incompetence of those who put them forward. It is they, not we, who are out of date.

E. J. LAMEL.

## "Is There a Purpose in Evolution?"

IN spite of the inclement weather a large audience met at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, to hear Mr. C. E. M. Joad and Mr. Chapin Cohen debate the above subject. Mr. J. P. Gilmour, the R.P.A. Chairman, was in the chair, and it was interesting to learn from him how he officiated in the same capacity fifty years ago, when the debaters indulged in a free fight. Nothing of the kind happened on this occasion, of course, the audience listening most attentively to the two disputants, and it was also evident the arguments on both sides made a deep impression.

Speaking for myself, the impressions conveyed by Mr. Joad, in his previous debate, were confirmed in this. He will not avow himself a Theist, but those of us who know Theism (and Atheism) recognized in his new "vitalism," the good old Deity of the Theist backed up by almost the same arguments.

Mr. Cohen had no difficulty in ramming this home, very much to Mr. Joad's annoyance. These Theistic beliefs were, Mr. Cohen insisted, a heritage from primitive savages, and Mr. Joad eventually had to defend them, as he declared they fitted the "facts."

better than any other theory. Again, Mr. Joad was forced to accept the Theosophic position, when he claimed that "life" made Evolution take "jumps" for the "betterment" of humanity through the appearance of geniuses. These "geniuses" are the well known Theosophic "masters," and after Mr. Joad gave us the classic instance of Socrates taking the hemlock, I half expected he was going to point out the wonderful story of Jesus dying on the Cross, entirely and absolutely to save mankind. He did not, but it is quite conceivable he will reach that position one day.

Mr. Joad did not like the way Mr. Cohen argued. He did not like the way in which his opponent turned his snarling "arguments" against Materialism (Mr. Joad's idea of Materialism, that is) into a joke, though Mr. Cohen insisted that he was never so serious as when he was funny, while Mr. Joad was never so funny as when he was trying to be serious. The universe, Mr. Joad declared, as if he was a-telling us, was a far more mysterious place than Mr. Cohen could imagine in his wildest dreams, in fact, it had completely changed in the last twenty years. Science, the science Mr. Joad knew all about, had done this, while Mr. Cohen was still flopping about with the old "materialistic" view of the universe held twenty years or more ago, which no "authority" believed in whatever. Now, curious to relate, twenty-five years ago, my Theistic opponents all talked like that to me, and a large number of other Freethinkers. Then, we were told, that the old blatant Materialism (it was always "blatant," while Atheism was almost invariably "crass") of forty years ago was the laughing stock of "modern" scientists, and books were published by Theists to show that hundreds of the greatest scientists the world had ever known were all firm believers in Theism, and in almost everything that all sorts and conditions of Theists ever believed in. If Mr. Joad had known a little more about Freethought, he would have perhaps noticed the inward chuckles that Mr. Cohen must have indulged in as all the familiar arguments were trotted out—including the one that Mr. Cohen was "out of date." It is because Mr. Cohen is so right bang up to date that makes him one of the most dangerous enemies "Vitalism" has ever had to encounter. To reduce the long speeches of the debate into a few paragraphs seems a hopeless task. But it was evident from his first speech, Mr. Joad hadn't the slightest idea of what "purpose" in evolution connoted. "Purpose" must spring from "determination," and determination from "will," and if "will" can be connoted with something other than flesh and blood and a living brain, then I'm entirely ignorant of the meaning of the words used. Mr. Joad, of course, referred constantly to a "stimulus," either a "push from behind," or a "pull from the front," but his arguments must have left some of us rather bewildered, and his insistence that "life" is mysterious, and that we don't know how it happened, is merely a repetition of platitudes. Mr. Joad believes in the transmission of acquired qualities, and even went so far as to state that we could eventually rear a race of born cyclists.

Mr. Cohen's reply was, as usual, witty and penetrating. He insisted on the right use of words which, as far as his opponent was concerned, were used in such a way that could leave nothing to discuss. If "life" did this, and "life" did that "impelled" by a "purpose," the debate was really over. He pointed out that if the "purpose" of Evolution was to "improve" us or make us "better," and eventually the Earth on which we lived would become lifeless, as Science believed and taught, of what use was the "purpose"? Mr. Joad, without knowing it,

was still thinking in the way his primitive savage ancestors thought, was still groping about with the God idea or the ghost of God.

Mr. Joad's reply to this was that he wished God had been kept out of the debate, that Mr. Cohen was obsessed with the idea of God. The question was not what primitive savages believed, but were his (Mr. Joad's) arguments true? Nothing else mattered. Mr. Joad seemed to talk all through as if "life" was a distinct entity. "You find life," he cried, "deliberately sends into the world a kind of genius, who is created by life for a conscious purpose." And all Mr. Joad's arguments were dominated by this kind of thing.

Again, Mr. Cohen pointed out that an argument was not changed because you dressed it up in other terms. Mr. Joad's "Vitalism," his "purpose," was really the old savage idea of "God" dressed up in pseudo-philosophical terms. And if Mr. Joad was right, then millions of human beings had lived and suffered and died for *our* betterment—not for *theirs*. We die—and then what?

Mr. Joad's last ten minutes were spend in what appeared to most of us a personal attack. He said listening to Mr. Cohen was like listening to an old Nonconformist who could not grasp a new idea. Mr. Cohen was out of date. Most of the members of the audience were out of date—but twenty-five years hence we would all (or nearly all) be on his side. Finally, Mr. Joad passionately objected to Mr. Cohen's method of conducting the debate, and concluded by pointing out again how very very mysterious the universe was.

Mr. Cohen wound up an interesting evening in a way his long experience proved very effective. He was witty and serious—a rare combination which it was no wonder Mr. Joad did not like, and there was very little left of "purpose" and the new "Vitalism" at the end of the debate.

The speakers then proposed and seconded a vote of thanks to Mr. Gilmour, whose work, he said, before closing the meeting, had been reduced to nothing by the perfect attention of the audience. The audience then dispersed.

H. CUTNER.

## Acid Drops.

We see from the *Cape Times* that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has made another "bloomer." In one of his lectures, Sir Arthur screened a picture of a ghost given him by a Nottingham man. The ghost was quite authentic, because when it was exhibited, a well known Nairobi dentist immediately recognized the ghost. In fact, he explained that he was the ghost. This made it the most authentic ghost on record. The "ghost" explained that he and his brother manufactured the ghost for the sake of a joke. The picture was about twenty years old. That is, of course, quite a young ghost, and many of those Sir Arthur has are very much older—and just as authentic. Sir Arthur has promised not to exhibit this particular ghost any more. It strikes us as a pity not to exhibit the one ghost who can be so positively identified was as this one.

The Rev. Desmond Morse Boycott says, "I always did hate that expression 'A lover of souls.' I have not yet found anyone who loves souls. You may love a *person*, but that is another matter." Now that is very queer. For it is the soul that theologians believe will survive, and we shall all love one another in the next world. And Mr. Morse Boycott says it is impossible to love a soul. Well, we have said the same for years and years. It is very difficult even for a parson to avoid occasionally saying something sensible.

Mr. Morse-Boycott also says that he regards parsons as lighthouses. Why, so do we. Really, we appear to agree in a surprising manner. I believe parsons are like lighthouses. They warn people to keep clear of them. And the decrease in the number of churchgoers seems to prove that this is the function of the clergy that touches them most. It is wasn't for having one of these lighthouses attached to every church and chapel, some people might be misled to go inside, instead of taking another course.

Mr. Crook Palmer, we learn, has been working for fifteen years in Hyde Park, witnessing for Christ. A pious reporter says: "Anybody who knows anything about the Park will realize what a tremendous task that has been. The forces of evil are rampant there, and those who testify to the redeeming grace of Jesus are assailed from every imaginable point." Freethinkers who enjoy questioning Mr. Palmer will no doubt be glad to know that they are classified as rampant forces of evil. Seemingly, Mr. Palmer's eloquence has made little impression on evil ones, although Christian tracts do claim many Atheistic conversions.

Lord Astor has the makings of a good Christian. An association of "Young Electors" organized by the Churches, recently addressed to the three political party chiefs some inquiries relating to what the Churches regard as "social reform," which consists chiefly of prohibitions regarding alcoholic drinks. The youthful electors have received very satisfactory replies. Lord Astor, at a meeting to discuss the replies, consoled the young electors in this wise, according to a report:—

Men and women in the House of Commons who are keen on the Temperance question are those who can be relied upon to take the right attitude on all moral questions, and those who support the drink interest can generally be relied upon to oppose anything that makes for a higher morality.

This is a quite Christian line of argument, fully guaranteed to breed self-righteousness and intolerance. If a man does not see eye to eye with you in certain matters, you are justified in suspecting his morals and principles, and that he is very much your inferior ethically.

We commend to Lord Astor's notice an article by F. L. Kimming's in this week's *Methodist Times*. Discussing the theme "On Judging Others," the writer says: "How often we condemn other people because by the process we seem to exalt ourselves!

In regard to opening theatres on Sundays, the Society of West End Theatre Managers and the Entertainments Protection Association have made the following statement:—

There is an overwhelming public demand for Sunday entertainment. It is essential that the Sunday Observance Act of 1781, so obviously inconsistent with public opinion at the present time, should be amended or repealed. With regard to the question of employment on Sundays, this is a matter which should be left entirely to the trade unions and other bodies who represent actors and all other employees.

These be sound sentiments, but have the Theatre Managers and the Entertainment Association the courage of their convictions? Are they willing to co-operate with any Society, whose avowed purpose is to get the Lord's Day Observance Act repealed? To this question, an official answer forwarded to the National Secular Society would be duly appreciated. Persons anxious to secure a rational Sunday for the people of this country should bear in mind that only organized and collective effort is likely to achieve the desired result.

Mrs. Robert Beare, writing in the *Daily Sketch*, complains of being "sickened" by the B.B.C.'s Sunday programme. An indignant reader, who appreciates the religious service, replies that Mr. Beare's remedy against being sickened is to switch over to a Continental station. The retort is typically Christian. And Mr. Beare and others of like mind are no doubt wondering why, after paying for Sunday entertainments, they should be forced to forgo it, and be expected to get their amusement elsewhere. Probably, they are also wondering whether it

would be quite in order to request the B.B.C. to issue a cheaper licence to listeners compelled, by the nature of the English programme, to seek abroad on Sundays what is denied them here.

The *Daily Mirror* says there is a commendable simplicity in the Election message "to all Christian citizens," issued by the Anglican bishops and leaders of other denominations. The aims set forth relate to international peace, slum clearance, unemployment, and the mining industry. As the *Mirror* points out, all men and women of good will are substantially agreed that war, armaments prompting war, slums, and unemployment are things to be got rid of. These good ends are not disputed; but the means for achieving them are. Quite so; and the pious manifesto authors have little to suggest in the shape of constructive ideas for the best means. The electors are urged to "insist on the return to Parliament" of persons who will fulfil those aims. Apparently, the Bishops & Co., imagine that the presence in Parliament of a sufficient number of persons with an amiable desire to achieve certain aims will ensure the speedy disappearance of various intricate social problems. It is a schoolboy sort of notion, and it reveals what a small amount of intellectual aid the nation must expect from men of God in solving its problems. Even with the help of God these men can only make much ado about the obvious. Suggesting workable means to achieve the end is beyond them. Yet to men with the Almighty to prompt them it should be as easy as falling off a ladder.

Replying to one who defends Governmental restrictions and prohibitions, a reader of a daily paper says that "the most restrictive laws are made through the agitation of minorities to appease their selfish egotism. But it is noticeable that these rules all affect other people, never themselves." Bigots and intolerant busybodies always do work things that way. They seem terribly anxious to force people into a mould of their own unlovely image. The desire is presumably prompted by self-administration, a defect usually irridicable when nurtured by religion. The Perfect Man appears to have had a goodly share of the defect. His fervid protestations of humility were probably sub-conscious attempts to disguise it.

As an "argument" against Sunday theatres and the repealing of the Lord's Day Act, the Lord's Day Observance Society declares that the Act is not unpopular. The evidence given to support this statement is that the Act has been upheld by the licensing authorities of sixty-nine towns during the past year. Is this the best the Society can manage? A more accurate inference from the fact cited is that magistrates and councillors have merely administered the law as it stands, because they are too timid to reduce an absurdity, an anachronism, a piece of antique stupidity, to a dead letter. In some instances, of course, not timidity but sheer Sabbatarian fanaticism upheld the Act. Really, the Lord's Dayers grow sillier—if that is possible—every time they rush into print.

The present Sunday wireless entertainment is obviously unsatisfactory to a very large number of listeners, despite official attempts to suppress or belittle the fact of dissatisfaction. As a straw showing which way the wind blows, a remedy is suggested by a woman reader of the *Daily Sketch*. She proposes two simple measures: (1) An alternative programme; or (2) A "fifty-fifty" programme, giving half the total broadcasting time to religious people, or the other half to ordinary mortals with average intelligence and tastes. There can be little doubt that the alternative programme would be the better solution. Neither, however, would remedy another course of dissatisfaction, namely, the large number of hours when, by order of the Churches, there is no broadcast entertainment. An alternative Sunday programme transmitted during the same times as on week-days would improve matters. But probably the only hope of getting it would come from an organized petition to arouse the B.B.C.'s moribund sense of fair-play.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

THOSE SUBSCRIBERS WHO RECEIVE THEIR COPY OF THE "FREETHINKER" IN A GREEN WRAPPER WILL PLEASE TAKE IT THAT A 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.

W. G. BLAKE.—We are not surprised at what you say concerning the tactics of the clergy with regard to slums. It is quite simple and easy to ask for the abolition. That has been asked for several generations. Perhaps the best test of the interest of the clergy would be to note the pressure the clergy bring on their followers to do away with slums, when compared with that of getting in more funds for the Church.

C.F.B.—Glad to have your high opinion of recent issues of the *Freethinker*. Many thanks for cuttings.

C. W. BRUNDAGE.—If you will write such letters to the press, you must expect the good and pious to go for you. Still, the good done cannot be undone by any critics of the kind you are pestered with.

F. PAUL.—We have no objection to the insertion of a letter on the lines you suggest, provided it is not too lengthy, but brevity is indispensable.

S. THORNLEY.—We imagine that any genuinely intelligent man, however religious he may be, must have moments in which he doubts the truth of a future life. Probably the parson in question was no exception to the rule. We cannot conceive anyone but a born bigot or an incurable fool, who does not sometimes doubt.

J. STEPHENS.—Many thanks for selections. Will prove useful.

W.L.E.—It is decidedly strange that anyone can write on the life of Mrs. Besant without mentioning Charles Bradlaugh. This is a strange world. Thanks for reference. We had not borne it in mind.

R. DODD.—There is no harm done, and we shall hope to hear from you frequently in the future.

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

The votes of the Branches have decided that the place of the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday is to be Manchester. That is a good choice from the point of view of geography, and we hope to see there a good muster of delegates and ordinary members. Every Branch should be represented, and visitors who wish to have accommodation reserved for them should write as early as possible to the General Secretary, stating exactly what accommodation they require and for how long. Resolutions for the Agenda should be sent in at once.

The West Ham Branch has arranged for another visit to the South Kensington Natural History Museum on Saturday, April 27, for members and friends. Mr. L. Venton will act as guide, counsellor and friend to the party, and those wishing to join must meet just inside the main hall at 3.30. A visit to the museum is always interesting and instructive, particularly with a good guide. Those who wish to communicate with Mr. Venton should write to 34 Warwick Road, Forest Gate, E.

We are glad to learn that Mr. Mann had a successful day on Sunday last, at Newcastle-on-Tyne. We have had several independent reports of the lectures, of which the highest appreciation is expressed. Mr. Mann should have a bright future in the Freethought Movement.

Mr. Mann also paid a visit to the Emerson Club, on Thursday, April 11, for the purpose of opening a discussion on "Freethought." The discussion, says a correspondent, helped to reveal the half-baked mental condition of many who consider themselves "advanced" thinkers, where Freethought is concerned, at least, and wherever the fetish of Jesus is attacked. We are pleased to learn that Mr. Mann handled the discussion with tact, good-humour and judgment.

Mr. W. Ferrer writes expressing his appreciation of Mr. Cutner's recent articles on "Supernatural Religion," and hopes Mr. Cutner will be willing to supply some biographical details concerning the author of the work. We pass on the request, which Mr. Cutner may be able to gratify.

## To a Spring Poet.

I KNOW not who the singer is so tunes the gentle lyre,  
But well, methinks, I know the mood the soothing  
strains inspire.  
I know a landscape of my dreams, as sweet and calm  
and fair,  
I know my poet friend, unknown, would be as happy  
there;  
As sad, perchance, as satisfied, as idle in repose,  
Where corrugated Care dissolves and into music flows.  
Freethinker he, as free to rove, and loved and cradled  
here?  
Or Churchman? still, 'tis Nature he doth ultimate  
revere:  
Those waving sprays, those op'ning leaves, those aisles  
so sweet and dim,  
With age grow dearer still to me, as so they must to  
him—  
Those dappled shingles 'neath the wood, those boulders  
old and grey,  
The gentle stream, old memory's dream, enchantment of  
to-day.  
And there the Corner of the Wood beside the shining  
pool—  
A shade to hide the heart beset, a fount the brow to cool—  
Oh Sylvan Sanctuary! whence all vulgar fear is fled,  
Where I would love and live again, and lie when I am  
dead.

I seem to hear the requiem wind sigh lonely o'er my  
rest,  
Or fall of leaf like footstep dear of friend I loved the  
best:  
"Thy best of rest is sleep," said one, long lapped in his  
repose—  
From life and love, to death and peace, what further  
need disclose?

ANDREW MILLAR.

## A "Solosmic" Fantasy.

(Concluded from page 237.)

A SILENCE followed. Kosmikos addressed his attendants—"This, then, is due to my negligence?" As if defying affirmation or negation. None dared answer.

"How am I to answer these wordings?" he continued. "What satisfaction can I give to this 'ill-used race of men,' whose existence is due to an oversight, and on whom no guidance or Principle of Life has been conferred? What *are* their views about Life?"

"Varied, Sire," responded the Representative, "Some believe that Life originated on their Planet, and definitely ends with the grave—this is generally interpreted as being an unemotional and unpicturesque belief, and is regarded with opprobrium. Others affirm that it is an intermediate state or, perhaps, a purgatorial one; some even think that there is an eternal heaven and an eternal hell. Those calling themselves 'Materialists,' consider Life to be merely sensitized Matter, but this does not help them much, because they don't know (any more than their opponents do) what Matter stands for ultimately. This view is opposed by the 'Immaterialist' who contends that Matter is a delusion, and that Life is something vital and distinctive from Matter. I say 'something,' because the Immaterialist is in the same boat as the Materialist—he can get no further than a 'Vital something'—a phrase that is no more enlightening than the word 'Matter.' 'Matter is a delusion, Mind is a delusion'—so they argue one against the other! Many modifications of each and every view, with variations, exist, including some which I have not troubled to mention—and are frequently being amplified, or curtailed, according to prevailing currents of thought. In short, their attempts to elucidate this Mystery of Life has brought them to hopeless confusion.

"Apart from all this, a very definite consensus of opinion exists in support of the claim that Life has a Purpose, and that this Purpose will be achieved by the Perfection of their earthly . . ."

"Purpose? Perfection?"—angrily exclaimed Kosmikos—"are such ideas a form of planetary madness? What can they know about Life, when they know so little about living? Does a human baby criticize the household moving about him before he has learned to feed? How can you expect to evaluate the purpose of any process before you apprehend the ultimate objective of that process? Life is a process, and a process implies Change. Change is inherent to Life, and therefore, Life involves Change. Life and Change are synonymous terms. They are interchangeable.

"And Perfection?—What perfection is possible or even imaginable in a process that is not only eternal, but eternally changing? Purpose and Perfection infer ultimateness and ultimateness means—nothing. The only finality is Change. Change alone is reality and Change is—er—is . . ."

The Earthian representative, now thoroughly bewildered, seized this opportunity to emphasize this hesitation on the part of his Cosmic Master, and hurriedly asked, "Well, what is Change, Lord of the Cosmos?"

Kosmikos glared at his trembling querist. "Change? You fool! I myself am at the mercy of Change; and am I not, likewise eternal? And is not Change a process that cannot be stopped? Its

cessation would be a contradiction in terms. Its integrity is only preserved by its inability to remain immutable. Eternity without Change is a *reductio ad absurdum* as in the course of that Eternity any event would be an impossibility—it must of necessity involve Change. You can see, therefore, O! Earthly Representative, that 'Purpose' and 'Perfection' are reduced to mere human subjections—mental figments that are only catchwords to cheat Reality of its meaning. The only possible conceptions of 'Purpose' and 'Perfection' are as symbols of Change, and that which is constantly changing is a process or development that knows no ending or finality.

"There is at least one significant resemblance between Change and Life on your Planet. Change and Life are both self-contained and self-expressive, and no deductions as to their meaning or validity are possible, because no similar phenomenon exists with which to compare them. You cannot compare an effect with itself. Comparisons must be relative." The unhappy look which by this time has descended like a cloud upon the Earthian Representative, checked Kosmikos' eloquence. His tone became almost paternal.

"Take heart, my Representative! Perhaps it would be as well not to inspire your planetary dwellers with, or encourage them to, a recognition of the Truths which I have expounded to you. Although their credulity is apparently almost boundless, I gather that a perception or acknowledgement of *certain* truths, even though they stare them in the face, is an act that entails a loss of popularity." The Representative from Earth acquiesced.

Kosmikos continued: "However, they are evidently in a parlous state—although perhaps there are signs that indicate progress?"

"A notable achievement, Sire," replied Earth's Representative, "is a determined effort to abolish homicide."

"Good, good," responded Kosmikos. "Their troubles arise from the fact that they are, as yet, indifferently adjusted to their environment. They can never make real progress until they understand and appreciate their own origin—both terrestrial and human—and realize that their Destiny is in their own hands.

"They must also understand those secrets, by the application of which they can adapt their bodies and minds to their environment; and in order to do this, they must learn to control those external forces which threaten them on every hand. If their weather, for instance, is arbitrary and not conducive to general health and happiness, then efforts must be made to comprehend its vagaries and causes. By so doing, they will be able to control it. Systematized and applied knowledge is their only hope. Tell them to keep alive the Spirit of Knowledge. That way Salvation lies."

An afterthought occurred to Kosmikos. "I could, of course, annihilate the whole system, if I chose—but I have more important matters to attend to. I may come again in about another 2,000 million years to ascertain the extent of progression—or retrogression achieved. Au revoir!"

Kosmikos and his followers had disappeared. His Earthian Representative was alone. He returned sorrowfully—to Earth.

MONTAGU COLVIN.

There is universal agreement that one can come to no conclusion about the other side of the moon in the absence of knowledge. But it is quite a different proposition when one is dealing with the other side of the grave.

## The Roman Catholic Doctrine of Obedience.

LONG before the dogma of Papal Infallibility was pronounced, the subject had been discussed. The Council that decided on it was ostensibly called together for it. When the pronouncement was made, talk and argument were nearly all about it. We fancy there was deliberate design in this; or at any rate, that the Jesuits engineered it thus, as much as possible. For the decree contained something far more serious than the Infallibility business, and for which the Infallibility was, to a large extent, camouflage. This was the Doctrine of Obedience, which definitely made all Roman Catholics chattels of the Pope. Here it is:—

All, both pastor and faithful, of whatsoever rite and dignity, both individually and collectively, are bound to submit, by the duty of hierarchical subordination and true obedience, not only in matters pertaining to faith and morals, but also in those that appertain to the discipline and government of the Church throughout the world . . . This is the teaching of the Catholic faith; . . . We further teach and declare that he (the Pope) is the supreme judge of the faithful and that in all causes recourse may be had to his judgment; and that none may re-open the judgment of the Apostolic See, than whose there is no greater authority; and that it is not lawful for any one to sit in judgment on its judgment.

The Infallibility was and is but a means to an end. It is this Doctrine of Obedience that the Jesuits were after. The ordinary Catholic must obey the priest *without question*, the priest the Bishop, the Bishop the Pope. (This is the meaning of hierarchical subordination.) The last stage (in the Jesuit idea) was not mentioned—that the Pope be a puppet at the end of a string in the hands of the Jesuits.

If this doctrine had been announced by itself it would probably have made even the Catholic dupes kick. But it was not only camouflaged but made tolerable to dupes mentally enfeebled by the superstition of Infallibility. It is well known how religious people glory (after a fashion) in such a slave sentiment as "Not my will, but Thine." The person referred to is, of course, supposed to be a perfectly good God, and there would seem to be no danger in a submission of will to Him (though there is great danger of enfeeblement of will and character). Well, if it is the voice of God speaking through an infallible Pope, then submission to the Pope is submission to God.

The catch about *ex-Cathedra* enabled Infallibility to be achieved without too much bother. With the defence of the doctrine at their rear, the priests let the idea and the kudos of Infallibility spread over all their organization, and on the strength of it foisted the doctrine and dogma of obedience on their dupes—and made them, theoretically, as well as in fact, mere chattels. No wonder they need not *work* the Infallibility much. It is there like the carrot in front of the donkey's nose—to take the donkey's attention from the whip. It is an excellent illustration of priestcraft. Kings, presidents, dukes, M.P.'s, councillors, headmasters—no matter what a man is, if he is a Roman Catholic, the Roman Catholic doctrine is that he is a chattel, to obey the priests without question.

I ventured to criticize Mr. McCabe's presentation of the doctrine of Infallibility, chiefly because he made no allowance for this doctrine of Obedience. The Jesuits probably saw that by leaving the term "*ex-Cathedra*" not properly defined, people would tangle themselves up arguing about it. Whilst arguing on this unimportant detail they would be kept

from the dangerous occupation of giving attention to the paragraph in the decree about obedience. Mr. McCabe seems also to have fallen into the trap. What theologians think is, or was, or should be, the correct "*ex-Cathedra*" procedure, is now of no account to the wire pullers. At any time the Pope can simply give his own definition, and the duty of the dupes is to acquiesce and obey. In theory, the Pope (with the Jesuits behind him) have now gone, or got (choose your own word) the whole hog of absolutism. The cunning of the entire business is remarkable.

Notice, in the wording of the dogma of Obedience that word "*Collectively*." You may slip over it, in the first reading, without noticing its extreme significance. Mr. Gladstone pointed out that Protestantism was the revolt of the individual against the tyranny of the priesthood. Of this kind of Protestantism there was relatively very little during the Middle Ages—its sporadic appearance was quenched in blood. The mass of the population was too ignorant to argue (intellectually) with the priests. But, without the name, there was a very vigorous protestantism of another kind—that of Governments. The priestly class did its worst at interfering in secular affairs, *i.e.*, with kings and political governors (military leaders, city governors, judges, etc.) But the ruling classes fiercely resented this. The Church might have its sphere, but undoubtedly so had the State also. Kings (like Edward the First of England) and their nobles considered that the State was the superior, and the Church was at most a department of the State, inferior and subject to it. They could be sincere Catholics at the same time, for there was then no dogma conflicting with their views. Under strong rulers the priests had to submit, for they had not the moral support of doctrine on their side. There were only two situations when they could get such a doctrine established. One when they were overwhelmingly stronger than the military caste all over Christendom. Perhaps this situation never arose—though they got near it in Becket's time. But if the situation was there, the need for the dogma was not obvious. If they had the power in actual fact, what need to define it? The opportunity, if it ever was there, passed, and a period of balance set in, when the priestly and military castes had neither a decisive advantage. If the priests had attempted to define the dogma under such circumstances, they would probably have driven the military to a unanimous and cohesive hostility—and precipitated a contest *à outrance*, in which the priests would have been stamped into the mud. What did happen, of course, was the Reformation and a gradual dwindling of the Romish Church to the position of a mere sect, and then the other situation came about, namely when the Church was so insignificant that it could make its dogma and doctrine what it liked—and people would notice it only with amused contempt.

The opportunity provided by the fall in its fortunes was taken. The doctrine of obedience was made for men individually and *collectively*, *i.e.*, for men and States (governments).

The priests do not in actual practice, stress the doctrine much *yet*. The time is not ripe. But they bide their time. And if by their enclave system they get the masses into their fold—if and when they can again stand up to the State on more or less equal terms, then they will have behind them the moral support of a doctrine and dogma that can be interpreted to the height of their ambition. When they get a majority in a state, the doctrine will be paraded and stressed in its full stringency.

C. R. BOYD FREEMAN.

(To be continued.)

## The Dismal Science.

AN anecdote is told of an old lady whose nieces had accused her of being illogical. For some time she could not be brought to understand what logic was, and when she grasped its true nature, she was not so much angry as contemptuous. "Logic! Good Gracious! What Rubbish!" she exclaimed. "How can I tell what I think till I see what I say." But perhaps the old lady was wiser than she knew. She had realized, in the first place, that logic had to do with thought; and in the second, with speech, or the expression of thought in language. She also recognized that there must be essential agreement between the thought and its expression, otherwise, when she saw what she said, she would not have been able to recognize the object of her thought. And just as logic requires that there shall be a strict correspondence between the thought and its statement, so also it demands that the statement itself shall agree with the facts, or subject-matter of its assertion. And when a person understands the necessity of these requirements, he may be said to have grasped the true nature of logical thought. Unfortunately, these truths are more honoured in the breach than in the observance.

In an article, recently, in a periodical of some literary pretensions, on "What Scotsmen Read," Sir Harry Lauder gives the palm to the Bible and Burns—or should it be Burns and the Bible—as being their chief literary mental food. Burns needed no puff, but Sir Harry evidently thought that the Bible stood in need of some. His favourite portion of the Holy Book is the thirty-fifth chapter of Isaiah, which he says has "thrilled the soul of mankind for countless generations."

I am reminded of the story of the little boy who assured his mother in the morning that there had been a million cats in the backyard overnight. When the impossibility of such a number was pointed out to him, he still maintained that there must have been a thousand. When he was told that there wasn't a thousand in the whole of the neighbourhood, he still held out for a hundred. And, after further questioning, he was brought to admit that there might only have been "our tom-cat and another one." And so it is with Sir Harry Lauder's statement. Mankind is a universal term signifying *all* mankind. But, seeing that in the Chinese Empire alone, it is estimated that there are some three hundred millions of people who have never yet heard of Isaiah, or his thirty-fifth chapter, it is apparent that Sir Harry has been reckoning up the wrong column. The facts compel us to reduce his millions of mankind to the few people who have read this chapter of the prophet; and these are a very small number compared to the total of the human race. And of these few, with the possible exception of an erratic Scotsman or two, I never heard of any of them being "thrilled" by its perusal. Even his "countless" generations since Isaiah's day could be stated in definite numbers by any intelligent school-boy in less than five minutes. Probably, by the time we get this extraordinary statement reduced to correspond with the facts, there would only be left of his millions of mankind, "one loquacious Scotsman and another one." Sir Harry may be a good comedian, but it is evident that his logical education has been left in such a parlous condition, that he doesn't know the difference between "all" and "some."

It is a constant cause of complaint, not only among the teaching profession, but also the general public, who have to pay the piper, that we get but a poor return for all the huge sums of money spent upon

education in this country. And yet, I imagine, the matter could be remedied, and that speedily, if the authorities would get it out of their heads that education consists in merely stuffing a child's head with facts and knowledge, that often prove of doubtful value. About the last thing the authorities would try to do is to teach a child to think, to use its reasoning powers on the mental material supplied to it. A child does not need any tuition to build "pot-pies" on the sands at the sea-shore; but it would be folly to give it a lot of timber and bricks and mortar, and expect it to erect a house that would resist the wind and weather. It would have to be taught a lot of technicalities before it became an efficient builder. And so it is with the serious business of life, and the problems that confront youth at every step. The pot-pies of their childhood are ruthlessly destroyed by the first incoming wave, and, later, when they come into contact with new ideas and systems in the social and moral world, these victims of a farcical education have no mental equipment by which they can determine whether these ideas can be utilized in the development of life and thought. Their critical and constructive faculties being undeveloped, they are left to the mercy of every sophist and illogical reasoner who mounts a rostrum or ascends a pulpit.

I have often wondered whether it would not be possible to simplify the science of logic in such a way that it might be of service to school-children. This idea was once suggested to John Stewart Mill, but—Mill had the Professors of Learning to consider. And this is perhaps the root of the trouble in the educational problem. The old objection to the education of the artisan's child is not dead, but it is camouflaged by giving them the semblance of an education that leaves them as logically helpless as before. It should not be, one would think, a very difficult matter to teach children, say, the three fundamental laws of thought. (1) The Law of Identity; which simply means that every object must have certain qualities by which we can distinguish it from other objects. From this law originates the necessity of defining our terms. (2) The Law of Excluded Middle; meaning that a thing must either exist or not exist. (3) The Law of Contradiction. Nothing can both be and not be. This means that an object cannot have contradictory qualities.

I remember a speaker at a public meeting, who assured his audience that he was a firm believer in human progress; nevertheless, he added, I am firmly convinced that the bulk of mankind will always remain hewers of wood and drawers of water. Now, if this speaker had had any logical knowledge, he would have known that one statement flatly contradicted the other; as it is not possible to believe that the human race will progress, and not progress, at the same time. Or, if his audience had ever been taught to refer such statements to the necessary laws of thought, they would have known that the man was talking nonsense.

Take again, the Laws of deductive reasoning: (1) that all terms which are either indefinite or ambiguous must be defined; and (2) that all propositions that are not self-evident must be proved. If a child were taught that a large number of words in current use were only counterfeit, until some definite meaning was attached to them, what endless mental confusion it would be saved in after life in trying to extract wisdom out of barren thought. Or, if it were taught to be on its guard against accepting the truth of any proposition unsupported by sufficient evidence, this would do more towards its real education than all the cramming of which the juvenile mind is capable.

While logic has to do with terms and propositions, its chief function is concerned with the process of

reasoning—those operations of the mind that are employed in drawing conclusions from facts, or from other propositions. It has been called the Science of Inference, and this best describes its real nature. Holyoake entitled his book on reasoning, *A Logic of Facts*; and of course, facts are the logicians' working material. But the chief value of Darwin's contribution to progressive thought lay, not so much in the vast accumulation of the facts that he so laboriously amassed, as in the conclusion, or inference, that he drew from them. Most of these facts were known to other naturalists before Darwin's day; but it was the universal generalization, which has come to be known as Evolution, and which he suggested as the explanation of them, that was the crowning glory of Darwin's life's work. So far as the facts themselves were concerned, the religious world might have slept peacefully in its bed. It was only when they realized the significance of Darwin's inference that pandemonium reigned among the theologians. This difference between a fact and an inference is one of the interesting studies in the subject of logic. The rumpus made by "our tom-cat and another one," in the backyard, was the fact; the million cats was the boy's inference.

Mr. Lloyd George has just sent a message to the teaching profession through *The Teacher's World*, in which he says that "the true end of education is not to teach people what to think, but how to think." Lloyd George may have many faults, but I am pleased to be in agreement with him in his view of education. And if the Liberal Party is returned to power at the forthcoming election, one may hope to see a Professor of Logic installed in every school.

After all, the battle of Freethought is a logical battle. There are no errors of fact; only errors of thought. And Freethought pleads not only for freedom of thought, the right to express honest conviction without let or hindrance; but the necessity of right thought, the agreement of all our ideas with the reality of things. And in proportion as logical knowledge is spread will the task be made easier.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

### The Trail of the Occult.

In a recent issue of the *Freethinker* the Editor salutarily deprecated a "sop to Cerberus"—a passage in a recent publication which, though written by a thorough-going evolutionist, is calculated to suggest that the Law of Evolution is not fully proved, and to give some encouragement to Fundamentalists or others who still believe that man was supernaturally created.

Such "sops" are met with not infrequently. And with them we may associate the suggestion of Dr. Jeans, in his paper on *The New Cosmogony*, that man is a "habe," and may be dreaming, and also the remark of Professor Eddington, at a recent meeting of the Royal Society, that the universe, after all, may not be rational.

With all respect to these great scientists, it may be suggested that such pronouncements are little, if anything more than echoes or relics of the unreal, nebulous thought in which mankind were so long immersed. To suppose that, after building up the great masses of verified and organized natural knowledge that we now possess—physics, with astronomy, chemistry, biology—we are not on firm ground cannot be regarded as a reasonable conclusion; and to doubt that the universe is rational, in the sense that it is composed of things, with their relations, which can be apprehended, causally and otherwise connected, and the results systematized into bodies of truth, will probably be similarly dismissed by most scientists, as well as by rationalists.

Though science is still in a rather youthful stage (owing largely to the great break of the Dark and Middle Ages and the continued opposition of the Church in earlier modern times to rational investigation, discussion

and publication), man has, in the course of a few centuries, not only built up immense bodies of knowledge, but has also established laws and principles from which definite prediction of the unknown can to some extent be made. The case of the discovery of Neptune through the calculations of the Frenchman Leverrier (made simultaneously in this country by Adams, but neglected by one or more of our astronomers until it was too late to make the first observation of the planet) is well known to those who read astronomy. The prediction of unknown elements, which have since been found, from the Periodic Law of Mendeléef, is equally well known to chemists. And in biology we have the remarkable case of the prediction of Hofmeister, from the Law of Evolution, that self-motile male elements, such as are found in mosses, ferns and their allies, would be found to exist in the higher land plants. These have been found in Cycads and *Gingko*; and plain relics of them are found in the cork-screw like, but no longer motile, male elements of the higher flowering plants.

Such prediction convinces us that science is securely based on the relative reality and permanence, and on a certain causality, continuity and order among the phenomena of the universe. Without these attributes it is improbable that the universe, and more particularly the human part of it, could exist. But, of course, this view does not connote belief in design and personal government, or in the "moral order" and perfection of the world, beliefs that are rendered impossible by the plain imperfection of our own bodies, as well as by natural cataclysms, parasites and many other things that have caused, and still cause, an immense volume of human suffering and premature death.

In his recent book, *The Nature of the Physical World*, a main thesis of Professor Eddington is that science must be limited to that which can be mathematically treated and described. At present, however, we may hold grave doubts as to whether the countless known facts of geology and biology—to say nothing of psychology, archaeology, anthropology and sociology—will ever be so treated. But, in any case, such treatment belongs to a more or less final stage of the unification of knowledge. And if it should prove to be possible to so treat, say, the countless facts (some known, probably more, as yet, unknown) of fertilization and embryology, variation and heredity, and the nature and evolution of life and mind, the discovery of many more of the facts must presumably precede final unification.

Professor Eddington says, as has often been said before, that the nature of the external world is inscrutable. Here we have the old idea of the "absolute." On the contrary, it is clear that the nature of the external world, in the relative sense, is being constantly and progressively disclosed by scientific, historical and other investigation; and many of us will rest content with the conviction that the absolute (whether it has real existence or not) is unknowable.

Unfortunately, we have still with us some philosophers of the older type, as well as a host of other tradition-bound speakers and writers, who do much to perpetuate the earlier and more nebulous kind of thought; and they have been widely successful in establishing, in this country, a low estimate of the two most outstanding, scientific and "positive," and therefore more rationalistic, philosophers, Comte and Spencer. One of the conspicuous results of this is that there is no apparent progress in philosophy. There is, for example, no general agreement as to what constitutes truth. If, writes one, we say that truth is the correct relation between thought and its object, the answer is that we do not know what thought is, nor what the object of thought is, nor the nature of the relation between them. All this rationalist thinkers will sweep away, and will no doubt continue to be satisfied with Spencer's definition, viz., that, taking the relative reality of both thought and external world for granted, truth is the correspondence between them, a correspondence which becomes fixed and permanent when the phenomenon has been fully investigated and is fully known. The advance of knowledge, therefore, consists in storing in the mind (or recording in books and elsewhere) all that is discovered about the external world. To this, of course, we add all that can be discovered about the mind, or thought, itself, including

ethical and social thought, whether by means of introspection (which seems to have proved, in the main, a broken reed), or by the more fruitful evolutionary, behaviouristic and historical lines of inquiry.

It is encouraging, however, to note, here and there, some approach to Spencer's position. In the article "Epistemology," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, the writer quotes, apparently with appreciation, the following from I. add's *Knowledge, Life and Reality*: "The knower feels sure of the existence of himself and of his object, the thing known, he is certain . . . of those feelings which we call sensations, which are in himself, but which he nevertheless attributes to the object as their external cause . . . he knows his object, as he acts upon it, moulds it, makes or destroys or modifies it; and is himself moulded, modified or otherwise affected by it."

In view of all this we may reject the "babe" and irrational universe theories. And as regards the inadequacy or incongruity of some physical concepts—as, for example, the present impossibility of deciding between the two rival theories of the mode of propagation of light and other radiation—the undulatory and the corpuscular theories—which can hardly be authoritatively judged except by an accomplished physicist, who is also something of a philosopher, we may reasonably wait on further investigation and discussion before we adopt the suggestion, rather hurriedly made, that we must relinquish our belief in strict causation among natural phenomena, and with it deterministic and materialistic views. There are still many things to discover and elucidate even in physics, as, for example, the cosmic radiation, which has of late formed the subject of investigation and discussion, especially in the United States and Germany. Professor Millikan is at present inclined to think that the rays are emitted in the process of the up-building of matter into more complex molecules in interstellar space. But it is evident that much further research will be needed to solve the problem. In the realm of biology, though much is known, it is probable that much more than is known remains to be discovered. But it appears at present that the element of causality is all-pervading, and is, indeed, a necessity of biological thought; and the advance of discovery is constantly bringing more and more of the phenomena of life into the materialistic domain.

J. REEVES.

## Correspondence.

SIR,—With reference to the fifth paragraph of Mr. W. Mann's article on "The Dean of St. Paul's," will you kindly tell me in which of Ruskin's books I can find evidence that he had become a total unbeliever. In the library to which I belong there is a complete edition of his works, published after his death.

In the same library there is the *Jewish Encyclopedia*. I read with great interest the sections dealing with Christianity. I think a brief summary of the reasons why members of the Jewish faith cannot accept the Christian faith would make a very interesting article in your paper. Your able contributors, Mr. Cutner or Mr. Mann would make a good thing of it.

J. STEPHENS.

## Society News.

### NORTH LONDON BRANCH.

MR. E. C. SAPHIN concluded, last Sunday, his three lantern-slide illustrated lectures with "Christian Art and Ritual." Those who had the pleasure of listening to his intensely interesting exposition of the symbolism underlying Christianity will realize more clearly than ever how religions grow. Mr. Saphin knows his subject thoroughly, and should be welcomed next winter all over the country by other Branches.

To-night (April 21) Dr. Binnie Dunlop will lecture on "The Illegal Operation."

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, by the FIRST POST ON TUESDAY, or they will not be inserted.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

HAMPSTEAD ETHICAL INSTITUTE (The Studio Theatre, 59 Finchley Road, N.W.8): 11.15, Mr. Rennie Smith, M.P.—"America and Ourselves."

THE NON-POLITICAL METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (The Orange Tree Hotel, Euston Road, N.W.1): 7.30, Mr. F. C. Botting—"Is Spiritualism Sound?" Social and Dance at 101 Tottenham Court Road on 25th inst., at 7.30. Admission 1s.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W.): 7.30, Dr. B. Dunlop—"The Illegal Operation."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (The London Institution Theatre, South Place, Moorgate, E.C.2): 11.0, Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton—"A Socialist Moral Code."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road, S.E.): 7.0, Walter Hogg, B.A.—"The Psychology of Conversion."

#### OUTDOOR.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorridge Road, North End Road, Walham Green): Every Saturday at 8 p.m. Speakers—Messrs. Campbell-Everden, Bryant, Mathie and others.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Clapham Common): 11.30, Mr. S. Hanson—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12 noon, Mr. James Hart, 3.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 7.0, Messrs. Hart and Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Mr. James Hart. Every Friday at 7.30, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. The *Freethinker* is on sale outside the Park at all our meetings.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Ravenscourt Park, Hammersmith): 3.0, Mr. J. Hart.

### COUNTRY.

#### OUTDOOR.

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