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PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

The Sorrows of God.—The Editor 305
The Napoleon of Freethought.—Mimmermus 307
The Herald of Modern Deism.—T. F. Palmer 308
British Liberalism at the Cross Roads.—A.C.W. 309
His Worship—Worship—Washout.—A.H. 311
Our Jubilee.—Chapman Cohen 313
The New Science and Religion.—W. Mann 315
Sunday and the Failure of Christianity.—E. Egerton Stafford 316
Bandman Fahy of Ours.—A.M. 317
Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.

Views and Opinions.

The Sorrows of God.

At first glance it does not seem a matter of great difficulty to find out what is God's will. Hundreds of people have always been ready to enlighten the world on that point; and regularly I meet an elderly man with a long beard and an amiable grin, bearing a large placard informing the people that unless they are very careful they will go straight to hell. Whether he is grinning at his own security or at the thought of what is waiting for others I do not know, but his statement is as authoritative as that of any Church in the world. There is nothing on which men have been more certain than on what is the will of God, and there is nothing about which they have quarrelled more heartily. God's will is a wonderful thing! It has enabled the fool to take rank as a philosopher, and the philosopher to stand on an equality with the fool. It has been disputed whether Johnson was right when he said that patriotism was the last refuge of a scoundrel. Had he said that "God's will" was the first refuge of a fool and the ever-profitable one of a knave, he would have laid down an indisputable truth.

Mr. Philip Snowden, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, is the last one to join the ranks of the authoritative exponents of "God's will." In introducing his Bill for the taxation of land values he based his proposals on the statement that "Land is different from all other commodities. It was given by the Creator, not for the use of Dukes, but for the equal use of his children." It is not for me to contradict the Chancellor when he expounds to the world the intentions of the Creator. The British secret service is a very elaborate one, it has command of great wealth, and in addition Mr. Snowden has a special chaplain for the House of Commons who acts as a link between him and the Lord, and who daily demonstrates the truth that prayers really are answered by asking that the Members of the House be endowed

with wisdom. Mr. Snowden has, therefore avenues of information that are closed to me. If he does not know direct from the Lord what were his intentions, he is able to get that information, so to speak, once removed. And, therefore, when he comes to the House of Commons with the information that God gave the land to the people, and it is his wish that the people, and not the Dukes, should have it, one can only listen and marvel at the amount of wisdom, and the degree of insight into things hidden from ordinary folk, that is required adequately to fill the post of a British Cabinet Minister.

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Dukes and Deities.

Mr. Snowden evidently disclosed the intentions of God Almighty in order to properly impress his hearers with the risks they were running if they did not act up to his suggestions, an attitude which would cause the man with the long beard and the big placard to welcome him as a brother beloved. For my own part I find my sympathies fairly equally divided between the people who have been deprived of the land given them by the Creator and the poor God whose benevolent intentions are so easily and so completely frustrated by mere Dukes. I hasten to add that when I venture to talk of mere Dukes to so independent a people as our own, I am comparing them with God only. No true Englishman would ever dream of referring to a duke in so light and so casual a manner. For if we no longer sing to God to save for us "our old nobility," we cease to do so because we know that the desire even to think disrespectfully concerning anything bearing a title is far removed from the mind of the patriotic Briton. But a Duke, after all, is only a Duke, and may owe his existence to the amours of a King; but God is God. He owes his existence to no one but himself. He created himself, before there was anyone to think about creating. God is by himself, and the loneliness of his situation was beyond human comprehension until he bethought of turning one third of himself into a son, and another third of himself into a ghost, and so creating at least the semblance of a comfortable family circle. But a Duke is, after all, only a Duke, a manufactured article, and although a king, who is king by the grace of God, when he makes a Duke may be said to pass a modicum of the divine influence on to the Duke, still it is not I hope disrespectful to say that a Duke is only a Duke, and is not really on a level with God, who has nothing to be on a level with but himself.

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Leaving God on One Side.

Dukes and deities have in these days fallen upon rather unfortunate times. There was a time when to speak disrespectfully of Dukes would have meant very severe punishment—either legally or personally inflicted. And to have stood in the way of realizing

God's intentions would, once upon a time have brought summary and spectacular punishment. Readers of the Bible will remember that many thousands of people were once killed because David took a census of the people, also that forty-two children were slaughtered because they had laughed at one of God's prophets, while thousands of people have been killed because they would not obey God's command to keep the Sabbath Day holy. But we live in different times, Gods are finding it more and more difficult to grapple with modern conditions. And Mr. Snowden's complaint that the Dukes have got in the way of God's purpose with regard to the land is only one instance of the way in which a quite well-meaning God finds himself ignored or defied.

For unfortunately the land question is not the only instance in which either Dukes or the Devil have got the better of what Martin Luther called "half-witted God." It is, for example, an old theological conceit that God made man that he might worship him. But year by year the number of God's worshippers grow steadily less. Large numbers ignore him altogether, others criticize his plans quite openly, and our Courts of law pronounce this to be quite legal. Others blasphemously suggest certain ways in which his method of managing things may be improved. It is true that these suggestions are often made under the guise of prayer, but God must indeed justify Luther's description of him if he fails to see that all the prayers for more rain, or less rain, for this, that or the other, are so many polite hints that he is not managing things as wisely or as well as they might be managed. Even the winding-up clause, "nevertheless, not my will but thy will be done," has all the flavour of a gentle sarcasm about it. For it might be translated into "We have told you what we require, and what we think we ought to do. But we suppose you will do what you like, and if you will continue to make a mess of things, we shall have to put up with it. We have relieved ourselves of all responsibility when we have pointed out what is needed." So while the Dukes, according to Mr. Snowden, flouts God's will in one direction, the Devil, according to theologians, flouts his will in another. Marie Corelli once wrote a book called the *Sorrows of Satan*. A very bulky volume might be written about the sorrows of God. Nothing that he does ever seems to turn out right. Anyone, from a Duke to a dustman appears to be able to get the better of him and to upset his plans.

* * *

A Chapter of Misfortunes.

Nothing the Lord is recorded to have done appears to have turned out well. His chief work, Man, has on all hands been described as an engineering monstrosity, a physiological mistake, a moral and intellectual blunder of such a kind that it takes all sorts of precautions to get it working smoothly, and even then, every now and again it breaks down completely. He intended men to love one another, and the very people on whom he spent most time in giving that lesson seem to have profited the least from his tuition. Nearly two thousand years ago he sacrificed the son he had created to mitigate his own infinite loneliness so that all men might believe in him and be saved; but to-day less than a third of the human race take the trouble to even profess belief in him. He created a heaven to bribe men to obey him, and a hell to frighten them if they were otherwise inclined, and the very best have laughed at being told they would be damned if they did not believe, and practically told him they would be damned if they did. He has made so many blunders, and managed things so badly that his defenders have even argued that unless he has

made a better world than this, then his work is very, very bad indeed.

But his greatest failure is as an author. Most Gods have had wisdom enough to steer clear of authorship. They have inspired men, but the inspiration could be disowned; they have appeared to men in visions, but the reading of the vision always allowed for different interpretations. But the Creator whose intentions Mr. Snowden authenticated to the House of Commons, became the author of a bulky volume. And that volume had all the faults that a well written book should not have. It was indefinite in the information given, it was demonstrably wrong when it gave verifiable details such as the way in which language began, or the way in which man was made, or the way in which the world began. For several thousand years his followers have been quarrelling as to what he meant by what he said, and others have been showing that he was quite wrong in such parts as admitted of quite clear meaning. Mr. Snowden's authority committed, in short, all the fundamental faults that an author should not commit. Where he was definite he was wrong, where he was not wrong, he was indefinite. He not only met with failure, he invited it. The itch for authorship has led many a man into serious trouble, but omniscience ought to have had enough common-sense to have steered clear of such traps for the unwary.

* * *

Leave God Alone.

With all humility I suggest to Mr. Snowden that it would be just as well to refrain from appealing to the intentions of the Creator as a basis for his land tax proposals. After all, the Bill, if it passes the Commons, must go before the House of Lords, and the peers have there a court of appeal greater—religiously—than anything the House of Commons has to show. They have a full bench of bishops—gentlemen who have been specially called by God to be what they are, and who may, therefore, be credited with knowing better than Mr. Snowden what it was their Creator intended when he made the land. And I am quite sure that they will not agree that the Lord meant to take the land away from Dukes, and princes, and private individuals and give it to ordinary people. They will agree that the Lord meant everyone to enjoy the fruits of the land, but the enjoyment was to filter down to them through the medium of the Dukes and others, including the Church. After all, the world is God's world. He made it, and ultimately the world must be as it was intended by him to be.

If we are going to take the world and reshape it "nearer to the heart's desire," it might be just as well to leave the "Creator" out of it altogether. When politicians have believed themselves to be mouthpieces of God they have generally been either hypocrites or a nuisance. It really does not matter what the Creator desired or desires. Judging by events he desired man to have any number of diseases but man has determined to get rid of as many of them as he can, and all of them if possible. Leave the Gods out of it altogether. If man cannot deal with his own troubles unassisted save by human wisdom and human industry, history proves that no other method is profitable. Politics and religion have always run badly together. Religion has never purified politics, and politicians have spent no small part of their energies in trying to civilize religion. It is far better to base proposals on their likelihood of increasing the happiness and the well-being of the people. Nothing else matters. Nothing else counts with those who have no desire to trade upon inherited superstition as an easy method of swaying minds too dull to appreciate the way in which they are being duped, drugged, and wronged. CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Napoleon of Freethought.

"And yet what days were those, Parmenides?
When we were young."—*Matthew Arnold.*

"The great Achilles whom we knew."—*Tennyson.*

"Rough work, iconoclasm, but the only way to get
at truth."—*O. W. Holmes.*

MANY men and women of talent, and some of real genius, have been associated with the Freethought Movement, but the most dynamic personality was that of Charles Bradlaugh. So dominant was he that he was dubbed the "Napoleon of Freethought," and the influence he wielded in public affairs was so great that he has written his name indelibly in his country's history. The memory of his personal career must live while anyone has an eye for the dramatic and romantic. The story of his meteoric rise from the rank of a common soldier to that of a proud position in the House of Commons is like a leaf torn from the pages of Plutarch; the story of his untimely death, worn out by fighting for years against overwhelming odds, is as moving and as poignant as a tragedy of Sophocles. He will live with Cromwell, Cobbett and Parnell as one whom a vivid and forceful personality must always make interesting.

The years since he died have quieted the shoutings and tumult of his strenuous time, but they have left the heroic figure of Charles Bradlaugh clear-cut for our regard. Not only was he a great man, he was a man of real distinction in aspect and carriage. The fight he made in Parliament and outside against an overwhelming majority of opponents was one of the bravest ever fought, and his triumph in the hour of death was as complete as that of Nelson on the deck of the shot-riven "Victory." Thanks to Bradlaugh and his devoted band of followers, heterodoxy is no longer a serious bar to the citizen, and ecclesiastical authority has been shorn of its worst dangers.

"Thorough" was his motto, and throughout life he acted up to it. In his weekly paper, *The National Reformer*, he proclaimed its policy in every issue to be Republican, Atheist, and Malthusian. His own Atheism was "four square to all the winds that blow," and he never camouflaged it by calling himself Agnostic or Rationalist. He was no dreamer, leaving others to translate his ideas into action. Like Napoleon, he was a man of action, first and last. In his earlier days the Freethinkers were feebly led and fitfully inspired. Charles Southwell went to New Zealand in search of health. George Jacob Holyoake, who succeeded him, had not one single qualification for leadership. Without Bradlaugh's lead the Freethinkers might have stayed in the wilderness for many years. It was Bradlaugh, most ably seconded by Annie Besant, George Foote, John M. Robertson, Charles Watts, and many others, who materially assisted to make the Freethought Party as we know it to-day.

It is passing strange that, forty years after Bradlaugh's death, people are only now beginning to see that his critical attitude towards religion was actually forced upon him. He had no burning desire to fight 50,000 fanatical priests and their more ignorant and fanatical supporters. He, being a very busy man, did not want to waste his time arraigning the barbarities of the Old Testament and the absurdities of the Gospels. The story of Jonah and the Whale was no more attractive to him than the fiction of Sinbad the Sailor. But he saw clearly that priestcraft and kingcraft were the obverse and the reverse of the same medal, and that the clergy were the bulwark of medievalism. Bishops sat in the House of Lords, and helped to destroy or mutilate all progressive legislation. A special service was then in-

corporated in the *Book of Common Prayer*, in memory of "King Charles the Martyr!" If Bradlaugh seemed to those outside his influence a mere iconoclast, he has in this only shared the fate of the world's greatest reformers. His life was shortened by the ill-treatment he received. Though dead, he remains a living force by the steadfastness of his courage, and the consistency of his example.

What a price he paid for his leadership! The last time I heard him lecture at the old Hall of Science, I realized that he was a broken man. His voice, once as resonant as a silver trumpet, was weak, and his mighty frame bowed. For thirty years he had led the forces of Freethought like a knight in shining armour, but the Philistines were too much for even his iron constitution. There have been brave men, but few have had to face the fearful odds that he did. Brave to the last, he kept a bold front to the enemy, but he was bleeding to death beneath his armour. Some of his cheering audience nearly broke down, thinking of the fierce old days of battle, when there was no thought of anything but the fight itself. Had his assailants known Bradlaugh as he really was, they could never have hated him as they did. Jealousies and unkindness and bitterness of spirit are in most human labours, but religion, with its insincerities and intellectual meannesses, seems to hold a poison of its own which narrows the vision and blunts the edge of principle.

At the time of the *Freethinker* prosecutions, it was only Bradlaugh's alertness and legal knowledge that prevented his being imprisoned for blasphemy with his comrades Foote, Ramsey and Kemp. The prosecution spent thousands of pounds in their endeavour to incriminate him, but he was too much for them all. As it was, he had to fight the bigots for thirteen years for his right, as an Atheist, to represent Northampton in Parliament. He won in the end, but the victory cost him his life. With a fine gesture, when he was on his death-bed, the House of Commons rescinded the motion of his previous expulsion.

Bradlaugh was one of the foremost orators of his generation, which included Leon Gambetta, Emilio Castelar, and Robert Ingersoll. These masters of speech were Bradlaugh's peers, rather than Bright or Gladstone, who were frigid in comparison. Bradlaugh and Foote, and Ingersoll after him, nearly always followed the Freethought tradition in speaking, which was based upon the fluid and graceful French methods, rather than the more judicial methods of the English politicians. Bradlaugh was a master in both methods; his address at the bar of the House of Commons, vindicating the right of an Atheist to sit in Parliament, being a gem of political oratory.

Again, like Foote and Ingersoll, Bradlaugh was at his very best in debate, opposition acting as a stimulus. His rejoinders were crushing, and his perorations were things to be remembered. In his purely political speeches, Bradlaugh sought to beat down opposition by sheer force of logic and law, and they read like judicial utterances. But in his Freethought addresses he relied far more upon rhetoric. Expressing the simple feelings of men and women, he made an universal appeal. "Give me liberty, or give me death!" That was the kind of thing, sonorous and impassioned phrase flung out to thrill the hearts and flush the cheeks of thousands. His perorations had this special quality. There was martial music in the grandiose periods, the trumpets sang to battle. He spoke to some purpose. He found the Freethinkers a disorganized crowd, and he left them a compact and well-organized army.

Charles Bradlaugh fought for liberty, and his life-struggle was as heroic as that of the Spartan heroes

who held the pass of Thermopylae against the Persian hosts. He stood like a stone wall against the hordes of Priestcraft. Bradlaugh grows larger to one's mental and moral vision the more distant he becomes. The best views of the Alps are to be gained from a distance, and we get the better view of Bradlaugh as we recede from him. A hero in action, he was chivalry incarnate. He was never the man to say to others, "Go on," but he always said, "Come on." Now he is no longer a presence, but a memory, we are free to look at him, free from controversy, and to estimate him at his true worth. He fell, prematurely, alas, worn out by hard work and harder usage in that great battlefield of humanity, whose soldiers fight not to shed blood, but to dry up tears; not to kill their fellow-men, but to raise them up. Labouring not for himself, but for coming generations, he made an imperishable name, and gave the world "assurance of a man." Let us salute the memory of one of the truest that ever drew breath.

MIMNERMUS.

The Herald of Modern Deism.

RELATED to the noble house of Pembroke, the parent of later Deism, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, was a contemporary of Bacon and Hobbes. He shared Bacon's scorn of mere tradition although, unlike the inductive philosopher, he exercised little direct influence on empirical speculation, but gleams as the morning-star of later rationalism in religion.

The elder brother of George Herbert, the gentle devotional poet, Edward Herbert was born in Shropshire in 1583. He was sent to Oxford at the early age of twelve, and espoused an heiress three years later, when only fifteen. From 1608 to 1618 he led the life of a military adventurer abroad, and became the intimate friend of the Prince of Orange. Afterwards ambassador in Paris for the English Government, he was elevated to the peerage in 1629 as Baron Herbert of Cherbury. In the opening stages of the struggle between Crown and Parliament he favoured Charles I., but subsequently compromised with the victors, saved his estate, and died in London in 1648.

Herbert's writings are rich in range, and comprise philosophy, history and letters. An accomplished courtier, his account of Buckingham's abortive expedition, and his highly favourable picture of Henry VIII., were very pleasing to the throne. Still, in his survey of the Reformation Herbert's dispassionate treatment suggests a mind detached from the sectarian disputes which then inflamed men's minds. His verses and his *Autobiography* possess more permanent value. The poems were not printed till 1655, whilst the brilliant *Autobiography* remained in manuscript until 1764, when Horace Walpole supervised its publication. His supreme work, however, was philosophical. *De Veritate*, Herbert's *magnum opus*, when submitted to the notice of the famous scholar Hugo Grotius, impressed him favourably, and he counselled publication. But the author remained undecided until he was convinced by a sign from heaven that the deity approved his handiwork. *De Veritate* was then printed in Paris in 1624. Later editions appeared in London with additional matter. In 1663 a pioneer treatise of Herbert's on comparative religion was published. A century later, a popular exposition of Herbert's religious opinions was issued from the press. This is probably a product of his pen, but the evidence is incomplete.

Lord Herbert attached supreme importance to sound method in philosophical research. He strove to discover the nature and criterion of truth.

This endeavour Descartes disdained, for referring to Herbert, he remarks that "he examines what truth is; for myself, I have never doubted about it, as it seems to me to be a notion so transcendently clear that it is impossible to ignore it."

Herbert serenely examined the problem of the relations of mind and body. Man to him was a compound of mental and physical characters. The body is largely, but not entirely passive. Mind, on the contrary, is ever active. We are told that mind operates, but is never operated upon. But, although mind is never acted upon by external influences these, nevertheless, are embraced within its sphere of activity. And, quaintly enough from the standpoint of logic and consistency, the action of the mind is said to be stimulated by the presence of objective things, and outside agencies activate mental faculty even in its most complex operations. A species of pre-established harmony is deemed to exist between the world of thoughts and the world of things. Man's bodily framework, fashioned from material furnished from the objective world is endowed with organs of sense which serve to convey impressions to the mind, and thus establish a state of harmonious co-operation. In this psychological scheme the mental faculty is assumed to provide a thought structure which corresponds with reality, as it exists in the external world. The phenomena of the objective universe are supposed to enter into the awareness of man in terms of harmonious union.

Herbert contends that the test of truth is not Spencer's inconceivability of an opposing proposition, but stands clearly revealed, when facts completely harmonise with one another. "Truth," declares Herbert of Cherbury, "is a certain harmony between objects and their analogous faculties." Ironical conclusions are drawn when the relationship between the things thought about and the thinking organ itself is imperfect. "The root of all error is in confusion—in the inappropriate connexion between faculty and object—and it is for the intellect to expose the inappropriate connexion and so to dissolve the error." (Prof. Sorley, *History of English Philosophy*, p. 38.)

Our native instincts invariably provide the most certain test of truth. Reason is something to which we return when all other faculties fail. But, being less reliable in its results, reason seldom reaches the certainties which our instinctive faculties furnish. Herbert throughout pictures states of consciousness as more or less in complete correspondence with the realities of the surrounding world. These realities initiate the sensations which constitute all mental phenomena. The mind is composed of multitudinous faculties which separately respond to environmental impacts. Herbert conceives each faculty as an internal force or energy which responds in terms of apprehension in diverse ways to different modes of material existence residing in the outside world.

Distinct images or impressions may be conducted by the same organ of sense, and still be cognized by separate faculties. We may see a figure at rest or in motion, yet both the stationary and the moving object become part of our awareness through our sense of sight. Mental faculties are so constituted as to provide us with a practically—useful, working—knowledge of the world around us.

Although Herbert's language is occasionally obscure, the doctrine is contained in *De Veritate*, that every psychological operation is more or less conditioned by the innate powers of the intellect. Moreover, the human understanding itself is a manifestation of an omnipresent spiritual being. Man's mind is a minor image of the majestic truthfulness and benevolence of God. The corporeal structure of the human creature is shapened in the semblance of the great Creator.

British Liberalism at the Cross Roads.*

FELLOW Liberals: A Radical clergyman, the late Rev. R. C. Pillingham, when he was suspended from the exercise of his office as Vicar of Hexton, preached on the Sunday before that sentence took effect from the text: "Loose him, and let him go." He began his sermon with the words: "Brethren, I stand before you, unmuzzled." I feel in a somewhat similar position here, for, for the first time for more than twenty years, I address you, not as an official of the Party, or some organization allied to it, but as a Liberal of the rank and file. You will, I believe, pardon me if I take advantage of this circumstance, and, if I may borrow a phrase beloved of ex-ministers, speak with more freedom and less responsibility than heretofore. He was an unusually wise curate who was reported to have said: "We are all of us human, some of us *very*."

First, I am a Liberal. It is, in my opinion, the only philosophy to live by, to fight for, and—I speak having not long since been very near my last end—to die with. But when I speak of Liberalism I speak, not of the British variety, but of Liberalism in its largest, its loftiest, its international, its European, sense. In that sense it has not been, and I am sorry to say is not now, by any means synonymous with the liberalism of these islands, and, in particular, with that of its official organs and oracles.

One of the first acts of the new Government in Spain was to proclaim full religious liberty. I hope no delegate here cheered it merely as giving liberty to Protestants in that country, for you have only to recall recent history in this country to know that established Protestantism—and it is still, despite Liberal Governments, established—persecuted so long as it dared. The British Liberal Party has constantly claimed the credit for having been the pioneer of civil and religious liberty, and of the emancipation of Catholics, Jews, Nonconformists, and Freethinkers. Some credit is doubtless due to it; but with the anomalous and class-prejudiced Blasphemy Law still on the statute book; with a Church which, according to its own published statistics, represents a decreasing minority of the people, established and endowed by law; with national education held up under a Socialist Government, as it was held up under a Liberal Government with a much greater majority behind it, by the clamour and racket of the Catholic, Anglican and Dissenting religionists; with a Minister of Education having to resign because his fellow members of a Labour Cabinet would not stand up to the sectarians; while you have a Home Secretary proposing legislation about Sunday observance which is a cowardly abandonment of the duty of the Government to give effect to the obvious and admitted will of the majority of the population; while you have the Liberal Party constantly dragged at the heels of such a combination of puritan repression and semitic legalism as the precious Lord's Day Observance Society—while these conditions continue it is true to say that the full implications of Liberalism are being flouted by the very Party in this country which is supposed to be their exponent and custodian.

The new Government of Spain, by proclaiming religious liberty at the outset of its regime, was true to that conception of Liberalism which, in its implications with regard to religion, is common to the liberals of every country but this, and, alas, the

* An address prepared for, but not delivered at, the forty-eighth Annual Meeting of the National Liberal Federation at Buxton, May 11-15, 1931, by Albert C. White, late Editor of the *Lloyd George Liberal Magazine*, and formerly Deputy Director of Publicity Headquarters.

Then appears this striking passage: "But, as in the propagation of light there is a growing loss of distinctness as it gets farther from its source, so that divine image, which shines clearly in our living and free unity, first communicates itself to natural instinct or the common reason of its providence, then extends to the numberless internal and external faculties (analogous to particular objects), closes into shade and body, and sometimes seems as it were to retreat into matter itself." (*De Veritate*, p. 70.)

Common experience, Herbert urges, develops universal assent which constitutes "the highest rule of natural instinct," and "the highest criterion of truth." What we now regard as self-evident propositions which appear inborn in rational beings, and which represent the ancestral experiences of the human race, evidently impressed Herbert's mind. But he did not stress the point, and as Sorley states: "Herbert made little, if any, use of the tests by which he might have shown that certain common notions are presupposed in the constitution of experience, and thus failed to carry out the theory of knowledge of which at times he had a clear view.

In 1633 Herbert's *De Veritate* received the official imprimatur of the chaplain to the Bishop of London. Yet, the teachings contained in his work soon exposed its author to the then serious accusation of Atheism and infidelity. For in reality, Herbert traces both science and morals to the influences of common or general ideas. But to ethics and natural science he devotes little attention. To religion, however, he devoted much time and thought, and thereby became the founder of the important Deistic School. There are five postulates in Herbert's theological scheme. He affirms the existence of a supreme Power or God. This divinity should be worshipped. Piety and virtue comprise the chief part of that worship. Sins should suffer repentance. And there is a future state of punishment and reward. These five articles form the complete doctrine of the true universal religion which is the natural theology of reason. This refined faith Herbert supposes to have been the early and uncorrupted faith of mankind. But unfortunately the credulous multitude "gave ear to the covetous and crafty sacerdotal order," and the pure and primitive cult has been degraded to the level of superstition. All that runs counter to the five articles of natural religion is opposed to reason and truth. More religious light may come through natural channels. But men must distinguish between a record of an alleged revelation, and a revelation itself. Mere tradition rests on the trustworthiness of the narrator and must ever lack certitude. Dwelling in a pre-evolutionary age, Herbert was destitute of a vast sum of knowledge since accumulated. Still, he must ever be revered as a splendid pioneer in a sterling humanistic philosophy.

T. F. PALMER.

He that would pass the latter part of his life with honour and decency, must, when he is young, consider that he one day shall be old, and remember when he is old, that he has once been young.—*Johnson*.

Civilization has accomplished improvements in every direction except that of politics, which continues to be a field for the display of deceit, intrigue and contempt for right and liberty.—*L. Proal*.

Everyone must seek his own happiness in the way that seems good to himself, provided he infringe not the freedom of others.—*Kant*.

It requires no small degree of ability to know when to conceal one's ability.—*Rochejoucauld*.

United States of America. It is no mere anti-clericalism, although all liberalism must be anti-clerical in the political sense; it is an attitude of mind of which I do not know a better definition than one which comes from a quarter which cannot be questioned by any delegate here, namely, from the pen of the late Lord Oxford. Here is his definition of Liberalism:—

To be open-minded; to struggle against preconceptions and hold them in due subjection; to keep the avenues of the intelligence free and unblocked; to take pains that the scales of judgment shall always be even and fair; to welcome new truths when they have proved their title despite the havoc they make of old and cherished beliefs.

I will add one further quotation from the same source. Speaking immediately after the Great War Lord Oxford said:—

The new problems which confront us, and they are many and grave, are not outside the ambit of the old faith.

I would like to add to this another definition from one who, if more liberal in theology than in politics, will at least be not less respected by most of you, I mean the late F. W. Robertson, generally described, I think unnecessarily, as of Brighton. He said:—

Enlarge your tastes, that you may enlarge your hearts as well as your pleasure: feel all that is beautiful, love all that is good. Sever yourself from all sectarianism; pledge yourself to no school; cut your life adrift from all party; be a slave to no maxims; stand forth, unfettered and free, servant only to the truth.

Bearing these words in mind, I will add one or two things to the rough summary I have already rehearsed of the actual matters in which, as it seems to me, liberalism in this country lags behind. Remember that, according to every sociological and statistical inquiry that is relevant, religious belief, so far as it can be reckoned by church membership, communicants, candidates for confirmation and ordination, and attendances at public worship and Sunday schools, is on the decline. All the aids of modern publicity do not suffice to stop the exodus of religious belief. Whether it be for good or evil, and I think it is all to the good, it is a fact.

Why then, for example, should it have been left to the Labour Party (I admit in the days when it was in no peril of holding Office) to champion the liberal and logical cause of secular education? The Labour Party of this country is no more like the Socialist Parties of the continent than the Liberal Party is like the Liberal Parties there. The difference is of the same order. Labour, at all events in office, crawls to the established "ism," and a resolution which was an annual event in its councils when it was a propagandist party, is now never mentioned by its time-serving apologists. It has even made a Peer of the only one who was loyal and constant to the cause of secular education, and, of course, still is.

That it is no duty of the State to impose religious tests on anybody, whether in schools or training colleges or elsewhere; that it is no part of the function of the State to pay for or subsidize opinions which, however influentially held, are only opinions, and questioned and questionable wherever men are cultured and free, this is plain Liberalism. Why is the Liberal Party as silent about Disestablishment and Disendowment as the Labour Party is about Secular Education? Because they will not face all the implications of the principles to which they are explicitly committed, in both cases. "It will be the Throne next," say some of the god-fearing men who fear not God, but their fellows. But the throne in this country rests upon a Parliamentary sanction. What Parliament gave Parliament can take away. If that is not Liberal doctrine Liberal doctrine does not exist. Monarchy, as it has been practised in this country since the reign of that overrated bigot Queen

Victoria, has been proved to be not inconsistent with as great a rate of progress as the country was and is prepared for. When the Throne stands in the way, instead of being the channels of constructive change, it ceases to be worth five minutes purchase in any modern community.

Listen now to these words of an authoritative exponent as to part of the resulting policy from these liberal principles:—

Establishment has persecuted and plundered our nation time out of mind. It has endeavoured to thwart every national movement. It is still doing so; and I refuse on my part to be a party to any compact to provide padding for gloves with which to spar at the oppressor or to furnish cushions to ease its fall.

These are the words of Mr. Lloyd George, spoken of Wales, but true and truer of England, as you will know if you have ever read Morrison Davidson's *Great Lying Church*.

I ask, why is the Liberal Party the champion of the illogical killjoys of Nonconformity who have all the vices of their much vaunted puritan ancestors and very little of their courage. I have had twenty years of Liberal campaigning, and I tell you that, even on the lowest ground of expediency, the anti-pleasure, anti-freedom, anti-rational drinking antics of the so-called free churches stink in the nostrils of the man in the street. The Nonconformist vote, like the so-called temperance vote, is not worth three ha'porth of cold gin for electioneering purposes to any party in this country in any given constituency. The pledges given to these cranks prejudice the candidates who give them, and their questionnaires show that what they are after is not the growth of liberty, which in this country, has been accompanied by the growth of sobriety, but its curtailment to the narrow dimensions of their creed. It is a creed, whether preached by bishops or baptists, that is not believed by any proportion worth reckoning on of the present-day electorate. And, what is much more to the purpose, it is a creed at fundamental variance with liberal principles.

Not that it is only the Nonconformists who come in this category. There is no worse member of this crowd than the most illiterate Bishop who ever held the see of London, Dr. Winnington Ingram. What is he? A man who is a rich bachelor with two palaces always preaching to the poor to be fruitful and multiply. Throughout his episcopate he has revolted against the apostolic injunction that "a bishop should be blameless the husband of one wife," but he has taken care by every trick of the most expert self-advertisers, to observe the apostolic injunction immediately following the one just quoted, namely to "have a good report of them which are without." Even the *News-Chronicle*, which cannot be accused of being irreligious, recently called him to order for impugning the morals of the working girls of London.

It is not for me, who has participated in them and suffered from them, to say anything about Liberal divisions. But, if you want to recruit the Liberal Party from the vast multitude of the unattached electorate that is fed-up with the platitudes of politicians, and interested in the problems of making this, the only world we know, more just and more tolerable for all the children of men, you will stretch out a hand of friendship to the pioneers of Liberalism in thought and action. In not distant, but recent times, they have stood up to gael and contumely in the cause which is the life blood of the only Liberalism that will survive in the future. You must not rest until the last penal enactment against opinion, and the last religious oath or test has been abolished, and the state is left free from the crippling and corrupting maul of the vested interests of clericalism, Protestant and Catholic, which by the logical tendency of its creed according to its most

efficient modern exponents must be intolerant in self-defence. The late Professor Denney, no medieval monk, but a distinguished professor of Divinity in Scotland, who died a few years ago said in his *Death of Christ*, "intolerance is an essential part of true religion. It has the instinct of self-preservation in it. If we believe that the Christian revelation is something upon which the salvation of the world depends, we must be intolerant of anything which belittles it, injures it, or seeks to explain it away."

That may be, and I think is, a fair definition of Christianity, Protestant and Catholic. The Council of Trent itself says no more. Well, it is the antithesis of Liberalism.

A.C.W.

His Worship—Worship—Washout.

AN ILFORD TRAGEDY.

THE *Ilford Recorder* of April 24 is something of a journalistic curiosity. It contains fourteen photographs of parsons of every variety (except Roman Catholics) and certain laymen connected with a big "Come to Church" push. There are reports covering nearly sixteen columns (two pages) of sermons, some long, some short, some which is always as much as the congregation will stand. The Mayor of Ilford (Alderman H. G. Odell) seems to have taken a leading part, and, apparently in his official capacity, signed an invitation to everybody in Ilford to go to church or chapel on Sunday, April 26, which was delivered, if we are to believe the organizers, at every house in the Borough.

Arrangements had been made for the Salvation Army band, and an amalgamation of surpliced choirs, to beat up those who had not been impressed by the circulars. The Lord, whose rain, as is well known, descends on the just and the unjust, thought fit to send a perfect deluge over the country during this particular week-end, perhaps poor little Ilford's efforts had escaped notice in the celestial weather department. However that may be, we have it on the authority of the *Recorder* in its own summary prefatory to the reports aforesaid, that "drenching rain, which continued without cessation throughout the day, and the lost hour due to the advent of 'Summer Time' conspired adversely to effect the church attendances on Sunday when crowded congregations were anticipated in connexion with the 'Come to Church' campaign."

It is true that our contemporary adds "nevertheless from all quarters have come reports that point to the complete success of the movement." Comment would be superfluous; but this statement is not even in accordance with the reports in the *Recorder*. There are (we have counted them), thirty-four separate reports of sermons and addresses at about that number of places of worship in and about Ilford. Here are some of the actual reports: "Well-attended," "church almost full," "few unoccupied seats," "not too well attended," "more strangers than usual," and so on. All the clatter of the letter boxes and knockers and bells, of the delivery of the Mayor's letter did not have much effect, and, of course, the weather was to blame.

We will add that at one of the Ilford churches (Gants-till Wesleyan), a minister named Leslie Newton, "who in his message combined the modern outlook and the eternal truths"—so the *Recorder's* reporter says—made some startling assertions. He said, "Christianity can and will produce the super-man." But it will take a long time, for this gentleman himself is still in the neighbourhood of "a grain of mustard seed." He also gave some "much needed guidance" on Sunday observance. Sunday, he said, is pagan. The Sabbath is Jewish. The Lord's Day is Christian. But when he goes on to say that "the breaking of the Sabbath" (which is, according to him, an exclusively Jewish affair) "is but the abuse of an economic right," we began to suspect that we have at last hit upon that oddity—a Christian Socialist. Well, he will have to make up his mind to be one or the other.

A.H.

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Express* is publishing a series of articles, written by well known people on the burning question of "The Worst Thing I Ever Did." Mr. Gilbert Frankau leads off with the confession that the worst thing he ever did was to forget to kiss his mother on one occasion when leaving home. Gipsy Smith says his greatest offence is that he has sometimes put himself before God. Lady Oxford and Asquith, thinks her greatest crime was when she told a lie about a horse. Mr. James Douglas considers the worst thing he ever did was not to tell a lie about his age when the war broke out, and so be admitted into the army. (He was then forty-seven.) But his pure soul could not tell a lie even then. Mr. Geoffrey Gilbey relates that twenty-six years ago a friend asked him to put some money on a horse. Mr. Gilbey failed to do so, and when the horse won, pretended that the bookmaker had backed the wrong horse.

For a long time we have read nothing more touching than this series of articles. We are staggered with the purity of mind of so many public men and women whose lives have been so blameless that they can recall nothing worse than the "sins" named. Admiration for their purity of character struggles hard with admiration for their absolute truthfulness. Pure and spotless as our own life and the lives of all our contributors have been, we are afraid they would compare but ill with such noble specimens of humanity. Such men and women deserve the critical and intelligent public with which the *Daily Express* furnishes them. The same public are rewarded by having so admirable a set of writers. Like calls to like, deep responds to deep. These writers have written the first chapters of a new Saints Calendar, and when our children's children wish to form some adequate conception of English character at the beginning of the twentieth century they will have it in these articles.

This is a Christian country with a Christian Royal family, and many people believe that religion and the royal family are inextricably intermixed. The Freethinker, therefore, will have smiled at reading of the Prince of Wales's activities on Sunday, May 10. There is no mention in the newspaper that the Prince went to church, but in the afternoon he played golf and inspected race horses, and at night he went to an ex-Service man's club. In London stage hands worked all through Saturday night and Sunday morning preparing a stage for a show on Monday afternoon, and on Sunday afternoon a special rehearsal was held. The show was the Royal Command performance at which the King and Queen were expected to be present. What do Christians think about it all? Will they petition Parliament to reprimand the royal family for breaking the Sabbath or causing it to be broken?

Monasticism did not begin and has not ended in Rome. There were older and are newer varieties in the old world and the new. In our youth we heard a good deal about Father Ignatius of Llanthony, and since then we have heard, and still hear now and then, when one of them passes from the new firm to the old, of the Mirfield Monks. Ignatius never got beyond being a "deacon" in the establishment, we don't know and don't care where he got his "priest's" orders from, but we do know that he was made a bishop by some wandering Eastern prelate on the high seas. These remarks and reminiscences are roused up by reading that a new, and apparently what is intended to be a popular history of *The Great Religious Orders* has just been written by one, Piers Compton. As it only deals with the Roman Catholic monks, and has some pretty drawings by a lady of the habits (clothing, not personal), of each of them, we suppose this is another bit of Roman Catholic propaganda in the literary field. We need hardly add that

although it begins with the Dominicans, whose London quarters are at Haverstock Hill, and ends with the Passionists, whose ditto are on Highgate Hill (commonly known as Holy Joe's), its description of the Jesuits, whether in Mount Street, Mayfair, or elsewhere, suggests that the author has exercised what Newman called "reserve in communicating religious knowledge" in his more secular attentions to these clerics.

If anyone is acquainted with anything that does more to demoralize a man's sense of right than a fervent belief in Christianity, we should be pleased to hear from him. We have often drawn attention to the ways in which this is done, and the latest instance to hand is connected with the agitation over the Sunday Observance Bill. It is well known that a systematic bombardment of members of Parliament by means of post cards was organized by the Churches. These cards came, ostensibly, from constituents and were signed with their names. A light is thrown on the matter by the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* for May 1. Mr. Wells, the member for the division, personally acknowledged the receipt of these cards, but was surprised when he received a large number of letters saying that the ones to whom he replied had never written at all. Their names had been forged by the Christian organizations responsible for the sending out of the cards. Forgery and also other forms of lying have always been favourite weapons with Christian advocates, and evidently time has not robbed their hands of cunning, or their minds of dishonesty. It is a contemptible creed, and develops contemptible results.

Another case of a Roman Catholic refusing to take the oath on a Protestant Testament. This time it was a Juryman, and the Coroner, in evident ignorance of what was his duty on such an occasion, said it was an insult to the Testament on which he and others had sworn. The Coroner matched the juryman in his superstition. The oath is wholly a question of superstition, and that being granted it is indispensable that the oath should be on the right kind of book, and the appeal made to the right kind of God. *Fec-fo-fi-fum* is a very powerful incantation. But *Fi-fum-fo-fee* no power whatever.

Mr. A. G. Gardner the journalist and author says:—

The ability to give reasons is quite a different thing from being reasonable. There is no place where you will find reasons more plentiful and reason less scarce than in a lunatic asylum.

That is not really correct. There is not less reasoning in an asylum than there is out of it. Lunatics reason quite strongly, and will offer as much reason for their actions as will sane people. The distinction between the lunatic and the sane person is a difference of logical reasoning. There can be no distinction between reasoning and reason, since the two things are identical, the only difference being that which exists between the general and the particular. That is why, as we have so often said, the quarrel between the Atheist and, say the Roman Catholic, is not that one believes in reason and the other does not, but that the Roman Catholic advances reasons for believing that which the Atheist declares to be completely illogical. That is an important distinction to be borne in mind, particularly when one is dealing with Roman Catholic opponents.

We see that the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa has now joined the Roman Catholic Church in its condemnation of Freemasonry, but for slightly different reasons. The great objection of the Roman Church is that Freemasonry comes between the priest and his dupes; the Dutch Reformed Church, from disagreement with its attitude on religion. The Synod, which recently met at Pretoria decided that:—

The God of the Freemasons is not the Father of Jesus

Christ; that Freemasonry proceeds from the recognition of the inherent nobility of human nature and of the inherent power of man to bring himself a stage nearer perfection, while the Holy Scripture teaches the sinfulness of human nature and of redemption only through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It also decided that "a spirit of materialism and Free-thinking characterizes Freemasonry," while in France it is "Atheistically inclined." The Synod also complains that Freemasonry gives no thought to missionary work among the heathen. So now no true member of the Dutch Reformed Church may become a Freemason. It is very sad!

The Synod also dealt with the recent heresy case of Professor Du Plessis, and reaffirmed its adherence "to the Bible as God's holy and infallible word." One of the speakers, according to the report of the *Rand Daily Mail* of April 14, wanted to know why it was that the intelligentsia quarrelled so much about the Word of God. He pointed out that "uneducated people were the greatest supporters of the Church." That is a phenomenon not peculiar to South Africa.

The following appears in the *Hull Daily Mail* of recent date:—

Sir,—Allow me to thank "John Humber" in Saturday's issue for his reference to "Bible Cake." It was of particular interest to Hull, as this cake was at one time popular. The Bible references were excellent and will cause many people to turn to that grand old book. However, one ingredient seems to have been forgotten, and it is possibly the most important. I refer, of course, to Ezekiel iv., verse 12, which gives advice on the baking of this Bible cake and mentions the most suitable spice to use.—BIBLE LOVER.

Ezekiel iv., v. 12 is, of course, a peculiarly filthy bit of Holy Writ, and we are quite sure that if the editor had checked the reference the letter would never have been inserted. Those who read the letter and turn up the Bible will now be able to see what a tremendous loss it would be if the Bible were kept out of the schools, and how much of the real greatness of England depends upon the Holy Bible.

Professional expositors of God's word are invariably as self-contradictory as that word itself. Thus at the annual assembly of the Baptist Union, the Rev. F. J. Walkey, as reported by the *Times*, having made the inaccurate statement that "the Sabbath, the value of religious teaching and the Christian atmosphere" remain in the country, as against the towns, "the best side of country life"; the rev. gentleman immediately went on to deplore "the decline in their Sunday schools" and the "country lanes" crowded with youth "careless of discipline and authority, and growing up indifferent to all the deep things of life."

There was another example of the same one-sided or to be more accurate, double-faced argument at the same meeting. The Rev. D. J. Hiley, "referring to the education question," said "Rome had become arrogant, and was not slow in making great demands and spending money on re-conditioning and building schools." There is no doubt that "Rome is arrogant"; but it is not the only religious authority that is, especially in respect of education. Mr. Hiley, and his Baptist brethren, together with the Roman and Anglican clerically controlled cohorts, have recently held up national education once again. That it is just as arrogant to ask the Free-thinker, or for the matter of that the ordinary citizen now-a-days—for he does not go to church or chapel—to pay for "simple Bible teaching" does not occur to the dissenting fraternity, and that the pressure exerted by them on politicians has exactly the same reactionary result as that of the Romanists, so far as educational progress is concerned, is left for the sceptical sections of the community to point out.

Our Jubilee.

FROM the point of view of the publisher the Jubilee issue of the *Freethinker* was a great success. We increased our printing order by about two-thirds, and then found that we had not enough. An S.O.S. to the wholesalers, who had largely increased their ordinary supply, brought back a certain number of copies, and with these we were able to fill all orders received. But we expect we shall have to reply "Out of Print" to orders that may yet come to hand.

From the editorial point of view the issue was no less successful. We simply have not the time to reply in any other way than this; but if we had wanted a demonstration of what we said last week, namely, that while readers might like other journals affection was the only term that adequately described the feeling existing between the *Freethinker* and its subscribers, the letters received would have been enough. We can only thank all for the very kindly words sent, and hope that we deserve a part of what has been said. Above all we hope that when "D.P.S." says of the Jubilee number that "One of its greatest, but not its most obvious features, is its inspirational value," he will be warranted by results. For unless the *Freethinker* does act as an inspirational force it will have failed in its main purpose. We have space for citations from only a few of the letters received. Mr. P. G. Peabody writes:—

Your article on first page of the *Freethinker* is unusually good, even for you. The Jubilee number is a monument to your ability and industry.

Mr. J. Sumner writes:—

Into my hands this morning comes the Jubilee number of the *Freethinker*. I have not found opportunity for its perusal, but have seen enough to bring back many memories of long ago, and to feel with you a glow of satisfaction at the continued vitality of the cause which you have for so long and under such trying conditions done so much to ensure. Let me add my heartiest congratulations . . . and my warmest thanks for all that you have done and are doing, together with my most sincere wishes for a long continuance of that wonderful strength and energy which has enabled you to compass it. Your tenure of life has been such that you ought to live to be ninety-two, and then have your lease renewed . . . To celebrate the occasion . . . please accept the enclosed cheque for £50.

[We are using this cheque for advertising and otherwise promoting the circulation of the paper.]

Mr. J. Driscoll writes:—

. . . The issue is a great achievement . . . About thirty years ago I was "converted" by Mr. Cohen, and have often wished I knew the older school of *Freethinkers* and the earlier copies of the paper. I am extremely glad to have this reproduction, which will be treasured among all my books.

From Dr. L. Streeter:—

Heartiest congratulations on reaching your Jubilee. I first made the acquaintance of the *Freethinker* while serving in France in '16. It indeed brought a breath of sanity to a world that was largely insane. I have never missed a number since, and my admiration for its courage and ability has grown with the years. You are doing a great work with conspicuous success.

Mr. R. W. Ridgway says:—

If I were a wealthy man it should be made possible for you to realize your ambition and to set about at once the production of a worthy history of the pioneers of militant *Freethought*. As I am not I shall always be ready to contribute to such a work whenever a start is made. Your fine tribute to their work reflects credit upon yourself. They would, if they could, feel as proud of your work as you are of theirs. I feel proud of you all.

Mr. W. J. W. Easterbrook sends:—

Heartly congratulations on the Jubilee number. Yours is a most striking review of the fifty years.

Mr. H. Jessop says:—

I just want to say you have excelled yourself in the Jubilee number. No one can ever forget it that reads your article in the Jubilee Supplement . . . I would not part with my Jubilee number for money. When do you intend making an appeal for the extra amount we require for the Endowment Trust? The sooner the better. Put me down for £150.

[All in good time, but the present does not appear to be a very bright moment for financial appeals.]

Mr. J. Close encloses £1 to circulate copies of Jubilee issue and says:—

I have lived over again a large slice of my life in connexion with *Freethought*, in reading the Jubilee issue. I was introduced to Mr. Foote at Sunderland just after he came out of gaol, and afterwards met him on many occasions. In writing the supplement you have done the *Freethought Party* a very great service . . . It is splendid.

These letters, with many others, are very pleasant reading, and fill one with encouragement for the future. But I want to make the most of the occasion by saying a word on another aspect of the situation.

A great number of people must have read the *Freethinker* for the first time last week. It is to be hoped that many of them will become regular readers as a consequence. If they are "looked after" by those who gave them the paper, there is a very strong probability that this will happen. In any case just round the corner there is always a likelihood of there being a new subscriber if we only make up our minds to look for him. I suggest that all those who are pleased with the present position of the paper, and all who value the work it has done and is doing should resolve to secure as many new subscribers as possible during the summer months.

We are doing all we can at this end, but what we do will be robbed of a deal of its effectiveness if we do not have the co-operation of readers at the other end. During the few days that have elapsed since the issue of the Jubilee number, the letters received praising what I have been able to do have been numerous and, I believe, sincere. Well, one of the ambitions I have set myself is to make the *Freethinker* self-supporting, so that when the time arrives that I must yield place to someone else, he—whoever he may be—will find himself editor of a paper firmly established financially, and with a circulation that is worthy of Europe's premier *Freethought* journal. I want all who can to lend a hand to realize that ambition. A stronger *Freethinker* means a stronger *Freethought Movement*. A *Freethinker* with the circulation it deserves and ought to have, means a greater instrument for inspiring the timid and encouraging the strong. I venture to claim that the *Freethinker* has never been lacking in its duty to the public it serves. I want the whole of that public to be equally alive to the duty it owes to its mouthpiece. If it is, if it not merely approves, but works, the past fifty years will serve as but a splendid prelude to a glorious future.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Modern electioneering is more than half of it demunciation. Let us condemn, let us obstruct, and deprive, but let us not do.—H. G. Wells.

The social instinct is a primary instinct in man.

Marcus Aurelius.

He that is pleased with himself, easily imagines he shall please others.—Johnson.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. WEARING.—We imagined that what we meant would be quite clear. We do not advocate the ignoring of all law, or of a law to which anyone may object. But over and over again laws become so outrageous that the only method of calling attention to them is to openly disobey. One must make up one's own mind when such an occasion arises.

R. JAMES.—We should like to make some of the improvements you suggest, and more. It is a question of finance. As the New Testament forgot to say, it is a case of "Seek ye new subscribers and all these things shall be gathered unto you."

R. SAMPSON.—You have been misinformed. George Jacob Holyoake was not tried for Atheism. Atheism is an unknown offence in English law. The error has probably arisen because Holyoake called his reprint of his trial *The Last Trial for Atheism in England*, a title which could only remain true until the next trial for blasphemy came along. But Holyoake, was charged, as were so many others, with "Blasphemy." The report of the trial issued by Patterson, while Holyoake was in prison, was more accurate. This was entitled *The Trial of George Jacob Holyoake on an Indictment for Blasphemy*.

DR. F. ARMSTRONG writes thanking us for our notes on Spain and ex-King Alfonso, particularly as "this sort of information is not furnished by the ordinary press of the country."

R. STEVENSON (Melbourne).—Joseph Barker was a Free-thought advocate in mid-nineteenth century. He was co-editor with Bradlaugh when the *National Reformer* was established, but the partnership did not endure for long. Barker afterwards professed conversion to Christianity. The story of Atheism being responsible for a "decline in his character" is just pulpit rubbish.

R. A. SPREED.—There is no reason whatever why you should have trouble in getting your *Freethinker* regularly. Your agent probably gets his supplies through some wholesaler, but if you will let us know the one with whom you deal we will make enquiries.

C. S. FRASER.—Thanks for congratulations, and for what you are doing to interest people in the paper.

S.M.—Mr. Cohen never saw or heard Bradlaugh, he never heard Holyoake but once, and never heard or saw Foote until some time after he had been lecturing on the Free-thought platform.

S. G. GREEN.—Many thanks for compliments and appreciation. Papers have been sent as requested.

S. R. READY.—As you will see our Jubilee issue has been conspicuously successful. We appreciate what you say.

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

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

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

When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and not to the Editor.

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.

On Sunday next the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. will be held in Liverpool. The Agenda, which should give rise to some useful discussion, was published in our last issue. The business meetings will be held at 10.30 and 2.30, in the Washington Hotel, Lime Street, and delegates and members are requested to be in their

places at the times named as the proceedings will start promptly. Any member who has paid this year's subscription, but has not received his card of membership should write the General Secretary at once. A reception of Delegates and Members will be held in the Washington Hotel, on Saturday evening at 7.0. We believe there is to be a little music and singing. There will also be a luncheon at the hotel on Sunday, price 3s. Tickets can be obtained in advance by writing to the General Secretary, or to Mr. S. R. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool. It looks as though there will be a very good muster of members.

In the evening there will be a public demonstration in the Picton Hall. The President will take the chair. This will commence at 7.0. Admission is free, but there will be a number of reserved seats at 1s. each. Local Freethinkers should try and bring one or two Christian friends with them.

On Monday there is to be an excursion to West Kirby, a very popular resort for Liverpool folk. The cost, which will include luncheon and tea will be 6s. 6d. Mr. Cohen will join the party, as will the other speakers. Again it is advisable that all who wish to take part should write Mr. Ready, so that he may make suitable arrangements. Friends from Chester may join the train at Hooton, and there are plenty of trains back to Liverpool, so that those who wish to leave early may do so.

The Perth Branch of the N.S.S. has been having a little trouble with the local authorities. Meetings are held on a space called the Inches, permission having to be obtained from the local Council. The Council gave permission to the Independent Labour Party, the Trades Council, and the Communist Party to hold meetings, but refused permission to the Perth Branch of the National Secular Society. Some very sensible, and very dignified letters of protest from the Secretary of the Branch have been sent to the Council, and also to the local press. The Secretary, Mr. J. A. Reid, wrote to headquarters on the matter, and we advised a course which would help to vindicate the rights of the Freethinkers in Perth. The Branch may rest assured on whatever help headquarters can give. A protest meeting was held on Sunday last, and we believe went off successfully and quietly. Preferential treatment by the Council in this matter is quite unjust, and we expect illegal also.

We were delighted to receive from one of our readers a handsomely bound copy of our *God and the Universe* as a small token in commemoration of this the Jubilee year of the *Freethinker*. The book is bound in full morocco and beautifully tooled in gold designs. It is a volume we shall treasure. We have only one fault to find, and that is the giver has failed to indicate in writing that the book is a gift. We will leave it at the office so that this omission may be corrected. It will greatly add to its value—to us.

By arrangement with the Executive of the N.S.S., Mr. G. Whitehead will begin his lecture tour of the provinces to-day (Sunday). He will lecture in Liverpool each evening this week up till and including Friday. Arrangements have also been made whereby Messrs. J. Clayton and J. T. Brighton will lecture around their respective districts when convenient. Details will be found in the Lecture Notices column.

We must again apologise for being unable to insert several items of news, with a couple of letters, owing to want of space.

The following letter has been sent by a delegate to the Co-operative Congress to Sir William Dudley:—

Re July Meeting C.W.S., April 18, 1930.

Dear Sir,—For the second time may I protest against the offence implied to my conscience by the farce of singing Grace before meat (paid for by Co-op. Members' money) at a purely business meeting, to which my Society (S.S.C.S.) sends me to look after their business interest. As an Atheist I feel it as a personal insult to my

opinions. I, and those who are of my opinions have as much right to be protected from insult as those who believe otherwise.

The Rochdale Pioneers in their wisdom laid it down in their fundamental rules as a guide and rule for all co-operative societies, that they should *not* meddle in religious differences or practices or permit any offence to any member's opinion in their councils or practices.

Rule First says "not to inquire into political or religious opinion of applicant for membership; Second—that the consideration of the various political and religious differences of the members who compose our Societies should prevent us from allowing into our councils or practices, anything which might be construed into an advantage to any single one of each sect or opinion.

I contend that such practice as the one complained of by me is against the letter and spirit of such fundamental rules and against the true spirit of co-operation animating co-operative membership of each for all and all for each, irrespective of opinions and religions.

Every member's opinion should be protected in every way from practices insulting to his or her belief.

A copy of this letter is being sent to Press.

A. F. POLTI.

The New Science and Religion.

We have had a great outburst of enthusiasm in the religious world over the publication of *The Mysterious Universe*, by Sir James Jeans. The press has also boomed the book, and it has achieved the status of a best-seller. It is claimed for it that it has again—for the millionth time—slain Materialism and vindicated religious belief.

The story is told of a priest, who, offering consolation to a dying man, thought to comfort him by saying that even our Lord had to die. "Yes," replied the dying man, "that's all very well, but he knew that he would rise again on the third day." In like manner we know that however often Materialism is slain there is always a resurrection awaiting it. Even Sir James himself leaves a hole in the tomb to admit of this; for he says: "Probably the majority of physicists expect that in some way the law of strict causation will in the end be restored to its old place in the natural world." (p. 29.) Now it is upon the alleged overthrow of the law of causation, or determinism, that Sir James mainly relies for his attempt to prop up a falling faith in the supernatural. It will be noted too, that Sir James admits that he does not carry "the majority of physicists" with him, so he can hardly claim to speak in the name of science; and for his religious, as apart from his scientific, interpretations, a very small minority at that.

Although *The Mysterious Universe* has been so trumpeted and had such an enormous sale, we have not observed any indication of a rush back to the Churches. Even the Bishop of London, who has announced so many revivals—notably the great religious revival in our armies in France, which an official religious investigation proved to be as mythical as the Mons Angels—has failed to announce any recent outburst of religious enthusiasm.

In our opinion this book is calculated to raise tenfold more doubts in the hearts of believers and half-believers than it dispels. Upon unbelievers it will only confirm them in their unbelief. The main argument that has been so much boomed in press and pulpit, is the argument for undeterminacy. That we cannot tell, or calculate, what an atom, at any given moment is going to do next, therefore Determinism is overthrown, and we have to come back to the old primitive idea of a God, who does everything, even to superintending the jumps in every atom, he must be very busy! And further, that matter has disappeared altogether: "the tendency of modern physics

is to resolve the whole material universe into waves, and nothing but waves." Thus matter slips through the fingers of the materialist in a series of mathematical propositions, leaving nothing behind except the great Mathematician, according to Sir James, who creates them. That is his business. And where are we to look for this great magician? "Modern scientific theory," says Sir James, "compels us to think of the creator as working outside time and space, which are part of his creation, just as the artist is outside his canvas." (p. 145.)

It is not our intention to criticize this view of the universe, that has been very ably and convincingly done by our editor, in his *God and the Universe*. Our purpose is to endeavour to realize what the effect of the book as a whole would have on the ordinary man, the man in the street, who has read the press notices and is attracted by the title *The Mysterious Universe*, which promises to be as exciting as an Edgar Wallace detective story.

In the first place he will not be much impressed by the argument for indeterminacy in the atom, for whatever may be the case in the atom, and as Sir James himself observes, on the last page of his book, "everything that has been said, and every conclusion that has been tentatively put forward, is quite frankly speculative and uncertain." Everywhere, outside the atom, determinism is the rule. If it were not so, the *Nautical Almanac* could not predict the positions of the sun, moon, planets and fixed stars, used in navigation, four years in advance; and it is absolutely reliable, or no navigator would trust to it. Anyway, the ordinary man is not interested in indeterminacy. Try it on your neighbour in a railway carriage and he will probably put you down as a crank, and certainly as a bore, and hasten to change carriages at the next station. If, further, you informed him that all we could see and feel was composed of waves of nothing, he would probably tell the guard to keep his eye on you.

No, these things will not impress him. The thing which will impress him, but which has not received so much attention from the press and pulpit, is the vastness of the universe and the insignificance of man and his dwelling place. In the very first paragraph in the book we are knocked over by the statement that "the total number of stars in the universe is probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the sea-shores of the world. Such is the littleness of our home in space when measured up against the total substance of the universe." (p. 1.) To realize the immensity of this figure we must bear in mind that the stars are really suns, shining by their own light, some of them immensely larger than our own sun, and Sir James tells us that: "no fewer than 1,300,000 earths could be packed in the sun."¹ And that the nearest star to us is "about 25,000,000, million miles away."² And this is about the average distance of the stars apart. Our sun is one of the stars forming the Galatic system, or Milky Way, which consists of "well over 300,000 million"³ stars. The Galatic system itself is only one star system of which two million others have been observed by the 100-inch telescope, and with the great 200-inch, now being designed in America "may perhaps be expected to show about eight times as many, or 16 million, nebulae."⁴

Light travels at the rate of 11 million miles in a minute, about 6 million million miles in a year, and the nearest star system, or nebula, to us is, says Sir James

¹ Sir James Jeans: *The Stars in their Courses*. p. 8.

² *Ibid*, p. 9.

³ Sir James Jeans: *The Universe Around Us*. p. 66.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 70.

850,000 light-years distant; and this is the average distance the nebulae are apart. This is our universe as modern science reveals it, and Einstein tells us that there may be other universes outside ours.

Equally great are the vistas of time revealed by science, most stars, says Sir James, "may look forward to lives of hundreds of millions of millions of years before darkness finally overtakes them." In face of these revelations, he adds: "our human lives fade into utter insignificance when measured against astronomical time. We have seen how the earth is only a speck in space; we now see that our lives, and indeed the whole of human history, are only a speck in time."⁵ With the corollary that:—

In estimating his position in the universe, man had up to now been guided mainly by his own desires, and his self-esteem; long fed on boundless hopes, he had spurned the simpler fare offered by patient scientific thought. Inexorable facts now dethroned him from his self-arrogated station at the centre of the universe; henceforth he must reconcile himself to the humble position of the inhabitant of a speck of dust, and adjust his views on the meaning of human life accordingly. (Sir J. Jeans: *The Universe Around Us*. p. 5.)

Moreover, Sir James points out that "life has inhabited the earth for only a fraction of its existence, and man for only a tiny fraction of this fraction . . . the generations of man, and even the whole of human existence, are only ticks of the astronomer's clock." (p. 12.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Sunday and the Failure of Christianity.

ONE of the outstanding facts in connexion with the question of Sunday Observance is the admission by Christians that their religion is a failure. This is proclaimed both by those who oppose and by those who desire Sunday Observance. Indeed it would appear that to emphasize the failure of Christianity has become a most important part of the work allotted to every Christian. The failure of his creed bids fair to become one of the doctrines of Christianity itself which the energetic Christian will soon be proclaiming from the house-tops, if the bishops and the power of God do not put an end to the dry-rot that has set in. This is a very important aspect of the Sunday question.

On the one hand the Christians who claim that Sunday should be freed from existing restrictions are admitting that their religion has inflicted injustice upon society in the past, while, on the other hand, those who wish to retain the quiet Sunday, and even make it more quiet, are living in fear and trembling, if they are telling the truth, of the moral havoc which is to befall their fellow Christians if a free Sunday becomes the order of the day. Thus do religionists bring their own religion into disrepute.

In a report of the second reading of that latest of Home Office nightmares—the Sunday Performances Regulation Bill, we are told, "it might be argued that they should take the short cut and repeal the Sunday Observance Act of 1780. The answer was that they did not want prize-fighting, boxing, gambling, horse-racing, dog-racing or football on Sundays."

Now, if this means anything, it means that thousands of real English Christians who at present go to church every Sunday, wet or fine, are just waiting for the opportunity to give up their habit of Church-going and worshipping God in order to adopt the

pleasure of attending race-meetings, gambling halls, dances, football matches, and possibly other places too bad to be mentioned. In fact they might even take a trip to the continent. In other words, they are just waiting for the word "go," and they will "go to the dogs" in more senses than one. Has any Freethinker ever proclaimed the failure of Christianity and Christians more loudly than this? Why should nearly all Christians become wicked immediately restraints are removed from them, if Christian teaching and training are of any value? If Sunday should be kept quiet; if there is any value in Christian teaching and training, there should not be any need of extra means of restraint. It should be the normal thing for every Christian to realize that Sunday is a day of devotion and one of quietness; and he should straightway be quiet, and devout.

This, to any thinking person, should be obvious; and the fact of so many Christians vilifying each others character over the question of Sunday Observance causes one to pause. If Christianity has had a definite teaching about Sunday Observance it has either failed to make that teaching understandable to all men, or failed to give men and women of the faith the power to observe the doctrine. Or shall we say failure has been on both heads? Hundreds of years of Christianity, and one set of Christians say that manhood can only be attained when every one is allowed to spend Sunday as he desires, while another set says all Christian manhood, and womanhood, will go to the devil unless Sunday is spent under certain special restraints. What a religion! and, what religionists! Nobody seems to ask whether there can possibly be any difference between Christianity on a Sunday and Christianity on a Wednesday. Imagine a Freethinker being asked how he changes himself on a Saturday evening in order to become a different being for Sunday.

Mr. Lansbury is reported to have asked, "What is the difference between going to see a picture on Sunday and going to look at a mummy?" No doubt it all depends upon whether the mummy is a dead one in an Egyptian Gallery or a living one in a pulpit.

The secret of the Sunday question lies in the fact that being wicked on a Sunday is not necessarily equivalent to doing wrong in a social sense. Sunday wickedness is a theological fiction like any other form of "sin," and it may or may not happen to coincide with social wrong-doing. An infringement of the sacredness of Sunday is not a wrong in the sense that it would be if it were a breach of social duty committed on Monday. It is a sin against religion; a violation of theological teaching, and this is proved by the fact that the sacredness of Sunday has always been adapted to suit the requirements of the religious people concerned—at any rate in Christian lands. When Christian industrialists found it to be necessary for men to work on Sunday, then such work ceased to be sinful; when Christian railway magnates found travel on a Sunday to be a likely proposition from the standpoint of profits, such travelling became right and proper in the eyes of the Lord, provided it were really necessary travel. When priest or parson found he could go to a distant church or chapel by taking train, tram, or bus on the Sunday, instead of walking a few miles on the Saturday in order to be at the place in good time, everything changed. The running of such vehicles became quite a sacred matter, especially if the engine-driver, the stoker, and the porter were badly paid.

How the engine-driving, the stoking, and the portering changed into being right on Sunday, after being conceived of as so dreadfully wicked has never been explained by Christians. It has only been glossed over in the interest of religion. The explana-

⁵ Sir J. Jeans: *The Stars in their Courses*. p. 99.

tion is that theological fiction has frequently to change its form and meaning in the face of what is socially necessary and right. Travelling on Sunday that was at one time forbidden as being wrong in the interest of religion, comes to be permitted as being right in the interest of religion, when complete resistance to social development is seen to be futile.

As such, travelling on Sunday never has been wrong. It was a sin, a wrong against religion, and if there is any truth in theological teaching, it is as much a sin now; but it can be committed with impunity, if you can convince the Lord of its sheer necessity. So, also, with all other forms of sin against the sacredness of Sunday. They are but theological fictions, and have nothing to do with right or wrong in any rational and sociological sense. Provided you have been to church in the morning, you can call at the Public House during the Sunday afternoon, and buy a glass of beer, and actually drink it. In which case you are both indulging in pleasure and trading on the Lord's Day, while the landlord is trading, working or making someone else work, and making a profit; and the evil does not end there. The brewer gets his share of the profit, the house or ground-landlord takes his share, and the Lord gets his share if the brewer sends a small cheque in aid of clergy fund. In fact it is only the Lord who does know where the evil of drinking a glass of beer on a Sunday afternoon really ends.

Much might be said in the same strain with regard to this and many other things now permitted to be done on a Sunday, provided you have been to church once at least, but which are really violations of the sacred day. Such acts are not social wrongs, they are simply sins, or theological wrongs; and consequently they cut across the evolution of morality which must needs go on with the development of society. Hence Christianity is doomed to failure. If it rejects itself and tries to enforce its doctrine, society remains itself and tries to enforce its doctrine, society rejects it sooner or later; if it adapts itself to changing conditions it sacrifices its face almost beyond recognition, and even if the main body of doctrine be kept in existence it is so by virtue of a frequent change in outward appearance, that amounts to failure in the struggle against social development.

The failure of Christianity along with its survival in numerous emaciated forms is well illustrated in the fight, over Sunday Observance, wherein Christians are wont to anathematize each other in the name of the Lord.

E. EGERTON STAFFORD.

Bandsman Fahy of Ours.

Yes, let him be immortal! In the ranks of death you will find him; yes, but let him live in our deathless army. A surviving comrade recalls him from the mist of years, from the First Irish Rifles encamped at Mullingar in the 1840's. He read, and passed round the *Freethinker*, and hated Church parade as the devil hates holy water. His protests, if not loud were deep and bitter. Where is now this humble pioneer, this "unknown soldier?" Sleeping perhaps in foreign soil—yet not foreign to him, this Irish, Catholic, Atheist—in this last most "Catholic," in the true sense—the world is my country! So from that now idyllic past, those Irish suns of long ago, those dress and church parades, arms and the man—one man of all the others stands again at the salute, behind him his true General, G. W. Foote, who would have been proud of him, private as he was, Bandsman Fahy!

One here recalls the story of another "Bandsman," resplendent in gold lace, walking with the living G.W.F. in the heart of London. "I fear," protested the musician, "I am attracting notice?" "Never mind that," said Foote, "come along with me," and they arrived at a meeting held to discuss Secular Education

After several rev., etc., notables had spoken—"I understand," said the chairman, "that Mr. G. W. Foote is present." Whereupon the alleged gentleman himself came forward from the back row and was received with vociferation. Then followed a scathing analysis of religion in the schools by one who was a master of the subject and of its expression . . . A scholar even in those days, this later "Bandsman" is now the learned Dr. Henry Farmer of Glasgow.

Rank and file of the army are still dear to the Doctor, and this little tale of Bandsman Fahy may touch him, with others, in a tender spot. A.M.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

BRAIN AND MIND.

SIR,—With regard to my articles on the relation of brain and mind, I have endeavoured to compress into a brief space a mass of reading, study, observation, and experiment; the mere records of which would extend to several volumes; and I find that while working under pressure I have allowed a few inaccuracies, even of expression, to creep in. The most serious of these is a slip due to hasty transcription of my own notes. In reference to Adridge Green's fine research work I should have said that the cones were the percipient organs, and that the rods supplied the visual purple. Will readers kindly make the necessary corrections in their copies?

I hope to publish the articles in the form of a booklet, and for this purpose I am now revising the text. But the main theme will, of course, remain unaffected. I have to thank Mr. Robert F. Turney and Admiral M. Beadnell for their interesting letters calling my attention to certain points which, though they are only incidental to the main argument, have importance of their own. Mr. Turney has convinced me that I have not been just to Büchner, though certainly that was not my intention, for I have great admiration, not only for Büchner's work, but for his character. It is a great number of years since I read Büchner's own book, and I may have been endued in error by his conventionally orthodox and academic critics; and since these people, who strain truth to fit into their own preconceived ideas, my own *bêtres noires*, have been capable of misleading me, I tremble to think of their evil influence on plastic minds who surrender themselves to their judgment.

At the same time I can plead in this instance that the issue is not so clean-cut as would appear in the quotation that Mr. Turney offers. Büchner's book ran through some twenty editions, and there were considerable changes from one edition to another. In that on which I relied, the latest German edition, carefully edited by disciples of Büchner and published in 1902, the passage quoted by Mr. Turney has been eliminated. It occurs in the English version, the first edition of which was published in 1864, and the second in 1870; I have not been able to get hold of the third. The English edition, however, omits passages which serve to define more closely the meaning of Büchner, for example, in his reference to Cabanis. A French version published in 1906, founded on the seventeenth edition, contains an expression absent from the English volume, which modifies the first quotation concerning Vogt. He says: "The comparison of Karl Vogt is therefore just *au fond*, but not happily expressed."

Büchner heads his chapters with quotations from authors of whom he appears to approve. These change from time to time, but he always adheres to a dictum of Moleschott: "Thought is a form of the movement of matter."

To sum up, I will correct my reference to Büchner, and I am glad that Mr. Turney has given me the opportunity to do so; but, finally though certain forms that Büchner has given to his conceptions are somewhat like my own, yet there are differences which are essential and important, and I do not accept all Büchner's physiology, nor agree with his interpretations. I submit that they should give way to my own.

Admiral Beadnell has given us the correct designation

of the family which I referred to somewhat loosely as the hatterias, reduced by a clerical error to hatteras. I made their acquaintance long ago, and gave them their full title in my *Psychology*; but here, as the whole subject was only incidental to my theme I mentioned them in too off-hand a manner, partly because if the question were discussed further it would be necessary to speak of a whole series of creatures, including lacertilia, and even ascidiae, in which zoologists have traced the rudimentary eye corresponding to the pineal body. Of all these creatures the hatteria are the most interesting, as they are still existent in New Zealand, where the Maoris have given them the name tuatara.

The actual constitution of the pineal body, though again the discussion does not affect my main argument, is of great interest. There is probably no part of the brain on which so much has been written, and so little determined. The French physiologists have been prominent in the research as to the real nature of this organ—de Varigny, 1886; Peytoureau, 1887; Granel, 1887; while other names include van Graaf, Rabl, van Beneden and Ashborn. Their conclusions are that the pineal body is the vestigial representative of a third eye. It has been found to contain rudiments of a pigmented retina and of a lens; and, according to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "is usually regarded as the remains of one of a pair of rudimentary eyes, though it has been suggested that it may be an organ for the production of temperature."

Galen was the first to describe it as a gland, and this description was accepted for a time by modern physiologists, until the researches in comparative anatomy which I have indicated. Rolleston and Jackson, in a work published in 1888, *Animal Life*, endorsed the theory of the third eye. The latest book which I can find on the brain: the *Brain, from Ape to Man*, in two volumes, by Frederick Tilney, Professor of Neurology at Columbia University, with a foreword by the well-known Henry Osborn, contains this reference: "The function attributed to the epiphysis in inhibiting growth, and retarding sexual development is significant in that it delays maturity in man to a much larger period than in other animals."

All this is very tentative; moreover, I am not convinced of the value of these two imposing tomes whenever the interpretations of physiological processes, as apart from anatomical structures, are concerned. I still remember how, many years ago, when following the famous Lancereau round the wards of the Hotel Dieu, I was greatly impressed by his declaration, and demonstration, that the spleen had a function, the reverse of that attributed here to the pineal body. Afterwards I became convinced, in spite of Lancereau's arguments, that this was mainly fudge, and since then I have been sceptical. I would have expected, on quite other grounds, that the organ would act as a gland, in secreting definite chemical substances which circulate in the blood and lymph fluids, and Admiral Beadnell tells us that recent research has proved so much; but I would, before accepting the rest of his statement, desire to know in what way it has been proved the the pineal body "exerts a powerful influence on the development and growth of the sexual organs and of other organs correlated with sexual maturity." Professor Tilney's book considers the influence to be the retardation of development, and this is only one of a dozen functions ascribed, from time to time to this organ.

The whole question is a side issue with me, but I feel indebted to the Admiral for his references, and I hope he can further help us to come to a judgment on the matter.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

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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.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. B. A. Le Maine—A Lecture.
FINSBURY PARK BRANCH N.S.S.—Mr. B. A. Le Maine will lecture at 11.15.

FULHAM AND CHELSEA BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Shorrola Road, North End Road): Wednesday, 7.30, Mr. F. Day, Mr. Haskett; Saturday, 7.30, Messrs. Mathie and Bryant.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Regent's Park, near the Fountain): 6.0, Mr. E. Saphin—A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—Every Tuesday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture outside Hampstead Heath Station, L.M.S., South End Road. Every Thursday evening at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury will lecture at Arlington Road.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Stonhouse Street, Clapham Road): 7.30, Mr. L. Ebury; Wednesday, May 20, at Rushcroft Road, Brixton, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury; Friday, May 22, at Liverpool Street, Camberwell Gate, at 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (outside Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren—A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Mr. B. A. Le Maine; 3.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. A. Le 6.30, Messrs. A. H. Hyatt, A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. C. E. Wood and C. A. Le Maine; every Thursday at 7.30, Messrs. E. C. Saphin and J. J. Darby; every Friday at 7.30, Messrs. A. D. McLaren and B. A. Le Maine. Current *Freethinkers* can be obtained opposite the Park Gates, on the corner of Edgware Road, during and after the meetings.

INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Lord Snell, C.B.E.—"Three Italian Statesmen—Machiavelli, Mazzini, Mussolini."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Education versus Social Caste."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S.—Ramble to Otley (Sunday) meet Forster Square, 2.15 p.m.

CRAWSHAWBOOTH.—Tuesday, May 19, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

DURHAM.—Tuesday, May 19, at 8.0, in the Market Place, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

ENFIELD (Barnes Square).—Friday, May 22, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

GREAT HARWOOD.—Monday, May 18, at 8.0, Mr. J. Clayton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Sunday, May 17, at 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.—Wednesday, May 20, at 8.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S.—Bigg Market, at 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND.—Sunday, May 17, at 10.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

WINGATE.—Saturday, May 16, at 7.15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): Sunday, May 17, Anniversary of our Annual Reunion and Dinner. In the afternoon, at 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton will speak on "And Man Made God in his own Image." At 5.30 Dinner will be served in the Empress Hotel, in the evening a Social will be held. Tickets 2s. 6d. per head inclusive. All welcome.

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