

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN

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

Views and Opinions.

Ourselves and Others.

THE life of a Freethought propagandist ought never to be a dull one. That is if he is blessed with a sense of humour and a lively estimation of the power of human stupidity. The first enables him to laugh where otherwise he might be moved to tears or give up the game in despair, the latter teaches him not to expect too much in the course of a few years, and so to be satisfied with the impression that he does make. Some of my intimate friends know that I am rather partial to the cinema. They might not wonder at that, if the pictures I went to see and enjoyed were all good from either a dramatic or a spectacular point of view. But the truth is that I can enjoy very bad pictures quite as much as very good ones. I can get as much enjoyment out of a cowboy firing thirty or forty shots out of a six-chambered revolver, and never reloading, or joining in a bar-room tangle with six other men, then jumping through a window on to the back of a horse, thence into a river and being carried over a terrific fall, coming to the bank in time to have a fight with another bundle of desperados to rescue a girl, and *never losing his hat*, as I can from the finest performance in existence. For enjoyment at either end of the scale all I ask is that the thing shall be good of its kind. If it is bad, then I like it to be genuinely bad, not streaked with good. And if it is good then I want it to be good. I have no objection to a fool, although I do not like him to pose as a philosopher. And I like a philosopher, if *he* plays the fool, to play it with that intellectual distinction which an actor like Sir Henry Irving always gave to a part, no matter how badly he conceived the character or how completely he was unfitted to depict it.

The “Freethinker” and the Press.

I will return to the moral of this later; but it was brought to my mind by some comments which appeared in the *Church Times* for February 3, in the course of a review of a written discussion between

Mr. C. E. Joad and Mr. Arnold Lunn on “Is Christianity True?” It says that Mr. Lunn is as confused as his opponent and the debate supplies about 400 pages of redundancy and repetition. And in order to drive home their point about Mr. Joad *we* are brought in, thus:—

The *Freethinker*, a periodical of almost pathetic sincerity, which regularly quotes the *Church Times*, sometimes with apologetic commendation, recently complained that the *Church Times* never quotes it. That is because we never read it. The reason is that its contentions were proved ridiculous years ago to all but those queer persons who find pleasure and solace in the repetition of irrational negations. Why waste time in pulverizing the remains of a ruined jerry-built Victorian structure? And Mr. Joad is as *demodé* as the *Freethinker*. He yearns to fight over again battles that were fought a generation ago.

As I have not yet read the discussion I must leave Mr. Joad to look after himself. I am only concerned with the comments on the *Freethinker*, and I am as anxious to express my indebtedness to the *Church Times* for a few amused minutes as I am to the most absurd performance I have seen on the stage or on the films.

First a question of fact and explanation. I do not know I have ever complained that the *Church Times* does not quote us. I really do not care a brass button whether it does or not. I suspect that if it quoted us too frequently we should be growing either too respectable to be useful, or so silly as to be mistaken for an advocate of some form of religious belief. I have never *complained* of the treatment of the *Freethinker* by the press generally, I have only *explained* the press as an example of the intellectual cowardice of genuine Christianity where its real enemies are concerned. The general rule is that wherever possible the *Freethinker* must not be mentioned by name, for fear that Christians who do not know of its existence may be led to read it. If it *must* be referred to, then it must be by some circumlocutory way such as “an Atheistic journal” or a “Freethinking paper,” etc. On the other hand it is “borrowed,” from for material for paragraphs and articles without the least acknowledgment. And for the information of the *Church Times* I may whisper that some of the writers who do thus borrow from the *Freethinker* without acknowledgment are actually themselves occasional contributors to its columns. But their living depends upon their acting up to the rules laid down by their employers. I shall be somewhat surprised to learn that the *Church Times* does not know that this boycott exists, although as it imagines that its own thought is really “advanced,” it is quite possible that this is the case. Perhaps what I call boycott the *Church Times* would call a Christian precaution against poisoning the mind of the rising generation.

I cannot say I do not read the *Church Times*. I do, and also other religious papers, and hope that if

Roman Catholic theology is correct, when I die it will be remembered that I have had a dose of intellectual purgatory already. But I like to know just what my opponents believe and say, and as a deal of the *Freethinker* is naturally made up of paragraphs and articles dealing with current statements by representatives of the different religious sects, it would seem that we are really and inevitably more up to date than is the *Church Times* which knows that a paper is out of date without ever reading it. There was a time, of course, when Christians met the *Freethinker* with the cry that it was vulgar, ignorant, blasphemous, obscene, and ought to be suppressed. When these examples of Christian truthfulness began to lose strength it was discovered that what it attacked was not Christianity as now understood. It was Victorian theology, and Christians have now outgrown it. May I suggest to the *Church Times* that if it publishes in its columns the kind of thing that was once taught as Christianity, and which some Christians are still backward enough to believe, they should not fail to subscribe to the *Freethinker*. They, and we, would then be working for the destruction of error. The *Church Times* does not wish people to believe in this Victorian theology; neither do we. Why not let us become fellow workers in the cause of truth? We promise, in order to still further promote the cause of true Christianity, to send the paper for one year at half rates to all new subscribers who write in the name of the *Church Times*. I expect this offer will be accepted by the *Church Times*, for one cannot conceive a genuinely Christian paper saying something it does not mean.

* * *

What we have Done.

But I really do want to help the *Church Times*. I wish to educate it, and I desire its aid in rooting out those survivals of Victorian Christianity that are still with us. The *Freethinker* is now about fifty-two years old. When it started, it set out to destroy:—

- (1) The belief in the inspiration of the Bible.
- (2) The belief in miracles.
- (3) The belief in God and a soul.
- (4) The belief in the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And to secure:—

- (5) The complete secularization of the State, and the absolute equality of all opinions before the law.

There are quite a number of other things for which the *Freethinker* has always stood and for which it has fought—such as the rational treatment of the criminal, the equality of the sexes, the substitution of arbitration for war, etc., etc. But I am now concerned only with the attack of the *Freethinker* on main religious and Christian beliefs.

Now it cannot be said that the work of the *Freethinker*, so far as the secularization of the State is concerned is either complete or old-fashioned. Religion is still established in this country, its representatives occupy privileged positions, the Churches and chapels get considerable financial support from the State, and Governments, particularly the present one, still cringe to the organized power of the Churches. These are obviously live issues. So we will turn to the other points.

I agree that so far as numbers go, thanks largely to the *Freethinker*, and its persistency, a number of "advanced" parsons do not believe in the inspiration of the Bible or in miracles. But there are vast

numbers of Christians—clergymen and laymen—who still do. If the *Church Times* does not believe this I would advise it to read the other religious papers. But perhaps it treats these as it does the *Freethinker* and knows them by inspiration only. Then there is the belief in God and in a soul. I do not think the *Church Times* really regards these as Victorian superstitions. Perhaps it may have been misled by reading the discussion by Messrs. Joad and Lunn, and in thinking that Mr. Joad represents the Freethought case. The *Freethinker* has done a deal to destroy the belief in God and a soul in the minds of many, and to weaken it in the minds of a larger number, but that question is hardly out of date—so far as Christians are concerned.

So we come to number 4, and in so advanced a paper as the *Church Times* it is surprising to find a little further on in the review with which I am dealing the following:—

Was our Lord God incarnate? Was he born of the Virgin Mary? Did he rise again from the Dead? These are the questions, and on the answers depend whether Christianity is regarded as true or false.

Now these are surely all pre-Victorian beliefs, and they really involve the others. The birth of a child without a father, and the resurrection of a crucified man from the dead are surely miracles. And if we believe them we can only believe because the Bible tells us they are true. And in that case, here we are, by implication, if not in so many set phrases, back with the most ignorant and the most crude form of Victorian and even pre-Victorian theology. I agree with the *Church Times* that these are the cardinal things in Christianity. If they are true then Christianity is true, if they are not true then nothing else matters. But please don't pretend that in these beliefs, however expressed, there do not lie the crudest, the most ignorant, and the most primitive forms of religious belief.

And now I must come to the moral that was foreshadowed in my opening paragraph. If the *Church Times* filled its columns with genuinely intellectual stuff, I could read it with great pleasure. If it were filled with unadulterated stupidity, something like the *War Cry* or the *Christian Herald*, I could read it with unalloyed pleasure. But when a paper such as the *Church Times* has all the stupid beliefs of the *Christian Herald* and the *War Cry*, all the savage superstitions of a Billy Sunday or a Welsh Calvinistic chapel, expressed as though it were proclaiming a genuinely scientific philosophy, then my enjoyment is spoiled. It is like serving up the sweet with the fish, and the soup with the dessert at one's dinner. The clown is all right in his place, but his place is not at a meeting of the British Association. The savage is interesting in his proper environment; but parading in the columns of a modern paper, and attempting to disguise his uncivilized beliefs in the language of civilization he arouses resentment.

So I feel sure that the work of the *Freethinker* remains to be completed. I cannot unreservedly accept the compliment of the *Church Times* that the work of the *Freethinker* has been so successful as to have completed its self-appointed task. But I am not disheartened that we have not done more. It is here that a perception of the power of stupidity comes in. It keeps us from expecting too much, and to have hope for the future. After all, even the *Church Times* is not so primitive in its thought as it used to be.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A bore is the hardest of all people to convert, because he is, as a rule, conscious of virtue.—A. C. Benson.

The Fruits of Freethought.

"Seize the quick present
Prize the one sure boon.—*Jas. Thomson.*

"More life and fuller that we want."—*Tennyson.*

"Cephalisation is not civilisation."—*J. K. Sykes.*

PRESENT-DAY soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation can have little conception of the intense hatred and antagonism which the Old Guard of Freethought roused in the Christian Camp. To-day, if there be not a greater tolerance, there is at least less bitterness, due as much to increasing religious indifference as to the growth of more civilized manners. Christian apologists, who never tire of boasting of the tolerance of their intolerant creed, need to be reminded of these things. In the battle for Liberty, for instance, Richard Carlile and his associates endured fifty years imprisonment. Daniel Eaton was prosecuted seven times, and had £2,500 worth of Freethought literature destroyed by order of the Law Courts. The poet Shelley was ordered to be deprived of the custody of his children, and a similar dishonour was inflicted on Annie Besant many years later. Charles Bradlaugh had to wait five years before he could take his seat in the House of Commons as Member for Northampton, and only the courage and loyalty of George Foote prevented Bradlaugh's actual imprisonment for blasphemy. Foote's own share of Christian charity was a year in prison. A former Marquis of Queensbury was denied a seat in the House of Lords on account of his scepticism. Last, but not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought purposes were diverted to other purposes. It was not the Christian sense of justice that stopped the daylight robbery, but the strong arm of Foote and his colleagues.

Charles Southwell, the first Freethought editor, was imprisoned, and prematurely aged by his fight for freedom. Edward Truelove was sent to durance vile when over seventy years of age. Francisco Ferrer, fronting the rifles of his enemies, earned the crown of martyrdom. Had Robert Ingersoll not attacked Orthodoxy, he might have been President of the United States of America. Thomas Paine only escaped penal servitude by escaping abroad.

Men speak of the drawbacks of a political career, and of calumnies to which statesmen are exposed. Opponents distort every word uttered, and every act is misinterpreted. There is much truth on this sad avowal, but if there is sacrifice in the case of prominent politicians, what is to be said in the case of leaders of a really unpopular movement, to whom sacrifice is a science and denial an art? Freethought is a far nobler and wider evangel than a purely political one. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human development. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, it is to-day changing the character and direction of the civilized world.

The Freethought leaders are the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles and missionaries of Liberty, but magnificent as is their life-work, the men themselves are greater. Hissed at and boycotted by superior people, stoned and cursed by the ignorant, they find compensation in the strength of their own characters, and in the righteousness of the cause they champion. They are unaffected by the temptations of palace or gain or title that bribe to subservience men of weaker fibre.

Bradlaugh, for example, found his strength in himself, and in the surety of his principles. Partial defeat he expected and experienced, but ultimate

triumph would, he was convinced, ensue. An indication of this was seen when the House of Commons expunged, or as an act of expiation, the record of the expulsion of the man it had fought and abused, but whose greatness it was at last forced to recognize.

Yet, in their hours of apparent failure, these pioneers had really triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm, but not the pains of martyrdom; heroes without the laurels, conquerors without the jubilations of victory. Labouring not for themselves, but for new generations, for them was influence as far reaching as the utmost stretch of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

Liberty has never failed of her votaries. From the dim twilight of history when the poet, Lucretius, rolled his richest thunders against the infamies and iniquities of religion in his day, until twenty centuries later Meredith and Swinburne rallied the soldiers of Freethought with the golden trumpets of their genius, there was a succession of witnesses for Freedom. The bare records of the doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by their very simplicity. The feats of Freethinkers need no embellishment. From Hypatia, murdered by a Christian rabble, to Ferrer, "butchered to make a Spanish holiday," they strike our imaginations and hold our wonder in thrall. They are potent because of their very sincerity. Who could fail to recognize the splendid courage which held so steadfastly to the very last moment, or fail to appreciate the iron nerve which bent only before the impossible? The bead-roll of Freethought reaches from the greatest names in history to hundreds of men and women whose achievements were less important, but, who, because they dedicated their lives to the service of intellectual liberty, laid deep and sure the foundations of the future greatness of the human race:—

"New occasions teach new duties,
Time makes ancient good uncouth.
We must upward still and onward
Who would keep abreast of Truth."

MIMNERMUS.

Christian Soldiers.

1914.

ONWARD, Christian soldier,
Onward to the war,
See the cross of Jesus
Marches on before.
Christ, your royal master
Will destroy your foe,
Therefore, though you face your death,
Onward, Christians go.

1918.

Slower, Christian soldier,
War is on the wane,
Not so common now is
Our antique refrain.
Now the great Jehovah
Falters in his stride,
And it seems that man, not Christ,
War has crucified.

1933.

No more Christian soldier,
Pacifism's come,
Sound no more your trumpet,
Beat no more your drum . . .
Till again your masters
Think they profits see,
And once more in battle
Christ's good friends must be.

HERBERT SHIELLEY.

The Case Against Einstein.*

IN *The Case Against Einstein*, Dr. Arthur Lynch gives to English readers the only sustained criticism of the doctrine of Relativity as understood by mathematicians. With the general doctrine of the relativity of all knowledge as enunciated by Herbert Spencer, Dr. Lynch would in all probability agree: it is against the theory of Relativity (with a capital R) as understood and interpreted by Einstein and his disciples that Dr. Lynch takes out his critical weapons. And we may say at once that the book makes excellent reading so far as its argumentation is concerned: and its pages are enlivened by irony which does not hesitate to use Keats and *Alice in Wonderland* to point its barb.

Dr. Lynch, so far as I can follow his mathematical analysis, is not only clear but illuminating, as is shown by his commentary (p. 26) on the summation of the geometric series $1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{8} + \dots$ etc., showing how, no matter how long the series is continued, it can never equal 2: because if we stop at any point, say where $\frac{1}{4}$ is added, the total is short of 2 by $\frac{1}{4}$: then when $\frac{1}{8}$ is added the total is short of 2 by $\frac{1}{8}$; and Dr. Lynch might have emphasized the point by saying that the very law (mathematical law) which causes the sum-total to approach 2, is also the cause of its never reaching 2. And it may be pointed out here that not only one infinite series can be kept less than a finite total: but that an *infinite number* of such infinite series may be added together and yet the whole be less than any assignable finite quantity.

In a similar way Dr. Lynch takes us to the beginnings of the calculus, and by a concrete example robs this mystic part of mathematics of its difficulties and terrors. It is this concrete treatment of algebra that gives one confidence in Dr. Lynch's further mathematical developments which soon outrun the equipment of all but students of the higher mathematics.

But while the author takes some dozen pages to reach a certain mathematical conclusion, he excuses his non-mathematical reader the effort and tells him where to resume the argument: and he excuses himself for the length of the exposition by pointing out that after the posing of the problem by Archimedes some 2,000 years elapsed before the great mathematicians Fermat, Pascal, Newton and Leibnitz saw the way through to the solution. All this is on the road to the mathematical attack on what Dr. Lynch calls Einsteinism: and as an example of the way in which the author scatters his words of warning and wisdom, I cite this comforting dictum. "If any process of mathematics seems mysterious it does not mean that a great genius is at work: it means that there has been a failure to understand intelligible operations." (p. 34.) "Certainly imagination, a fertility of resource and invention, are excellent in a mathematician: but these and their products should be controlled, and subjected to the most vigorous examination, and the concentrated light of the intellect should be specially directed to the narrow places where one step is linked to another. The mathematician should be as sure of what he is doing as the carpenter or machine-maker." (p. 34.) It is the insistence on checking mathematical conclusions by referring them to reality that makes Dr. Lynch's book so valuable, and he pursues the mathematical structure of Relativity through all its phases, pointing out where and how fallacies have crept in.

It is lack of this checking or verification of mathematical conclusions (by referring them to reality) that

gives rise to all kinds of absurd theories. For a mathematical law may be true only under given conditions, even in *mathematics*. For example, the binomial theorem is always true for the expansion of $(a+x)^n$ while, a , x and n are positive integers. When however $a=1$, and x is negative and $n=-1$, that is $(1-x)^{-1}$, the theorem is only true on condition that x is less than 1. And since the original form of the binomial theorem had reference to reality it was necessary to check its extension by the same reality. Dr. Lynch traces the development of the wonderful instrument of the calculus and its application to the solution of problems in mechanics, astronomy and most sciences susceptible of measurement: and how owing to the work of Gauss, Bolyai and Lobatchewski, there grew out of their researches into parallelism, the non-Euclidean geometry; and out of this with Riemann's and Von Staudt's researches, there arose the conception of a *curved space*.

Here Dr. Lynch warns his readers that when once the conception of infinity is dealt with, unless it is clearly defined and the definition kept in mind, a whole crop of mysterious absurdities may spring up. So he shows just how the *fallacy* of parallel lines *meeting at infinity* arises; and hence the conception of a curved space: a sort of enormous hollow sphere, where the matter of the universe is "as five flies in Europe." And as a sphere (in itself) has no defined boundaries our space is limited but unbounded: or preferably bounded (by the curve) and limitless.

Dr. Lynch must be quoted on this. "Here indeed is a wonderful discovery and all due to abstract science!

My own explanation is, compared with this refinement, of a merely vulgar nature. The result is not due to curvature of space, but to curvature of mind, a sort of intellectual scoliosis in the intellects of the mathematicians which has made them give crooked reasons." "It certainly adds to the neatness of mathematical expression when we use such conventions—and there are many equally untrue in mathematics—that two straight lines in a plane must intersect (at infinity). But nature has a little kink in this direction, she does not bow to our etiquette, and when two straight lines are parallel she affirms tacitly that they neither intersect nor meet at all. I take my stand with Nature and against the Einsteinists." (p. 38.) This notion of parallel lines meeting at infinity long precedes Einstein's appearance. One heard of it before Einstein was born.

Dr. Lynch goes very fully into the Michelson-Morley experiment which it was hoped would demonstrate the existence of the ether: and he gives a schematic plan of the apparatus used. (It is a pity that the illustration is so small, for it makes difficult the work of the reader who desires to follow the experiment). The experiments were carried on for some years, so as to vary the conditions—such as being taken at opposite points of the earth's orbit—and the result was that no "ether wind" was discovered above 5 kilometres per second: and as the earth is (estimated to be) rushing through space at 30 kilometres per second, the experiment was accounted "null." During 1904-5 Morley and Dayton Miller carried out fresh experiments with even greater care, and could find no "ether-wind" of 3.5 kilometres per second, existing.

In 1921, Miller again returned to the experiments on top of Mount Wilson, near Los Angeles, where at the height of 6,000 feet, and after many "observations giving rather widely divergent indications, he concluded that an ether wind of 10 kilometres was ascertained." (p. 44.) Many thousands of experiments were undertaken between 1921 and 1925, and "at Cleveland only about one-tenth of the supposed

* *The Case Against Einstein*, Dr. Arthur Lynch. London: Philip Allan. 10s. 6d. net.

ether-wind was discernible." (p. 45.) Dayton Miller writing in 1930, is quoted by Dr. Lynch with respect to the reputed "null effect" of the experiments on which the Relativists built their assumption that there was *no* ether. "The truth of the matter is the experiment never gave a null effect. My present determinations are exactly in agreement with the 1887 results of Michelson and Morley. This fact has been widely announced, especially in England, but the theory of relativity seems to be so acceptable to many persons that they overlook the apparent discrepancy." (p. 45.)

And Dr. Lynch's comment on this situation is "though I do not force the argument, it is remarkable that those who carried out these famous experiments on which the Relativist doctrine is based, have not accepted that theory."

EUCLIDEAN.

(To be continued.)

What is YOUR Mission?

THE busybodies, nosey parkers, and Grundys who are engaged in the job of boosting Christianity could never be happy unless they were each assured that they had a "mission," *i.e.*, that they had a call from God to direct their fellow beings and interfere with their concerns. This observation applies not only to the less literate evangelical propagandists who are assigned the task of dealing with their intellectual equals; but also to people of professional rank who have had a higher school and University education, many of whom in their heart of hearts sneer at and hold in contempt the street-corner crudities of their tub-thumping collaborators! But it has come to this: that to refill the pews Christians are content to homologate *any* kind of advocacy however blatant or lying that may succeed in bringing "erring sheep" back to the fold.

The writer was once told an amusing story by a medical man, who while a student, was a guest one day at tea at the house of one of his Professors. The Professor's wife, like her husband, was a most ardent evangelical Christian, and seated by her side was her favourite son, a theological student. The medical student happened to be placed at her other side, and in the course of the tea she addressed him with the question, "What Mr. — is your great object in life?" My friend was rather taken aback, but replied, "Well, I hope to qualify in reasonable time and in reasonable time also to be able to acquire a share in a practice where I can do useful work." "Is that *all*?" asked the lady. "Well," said the medical student, "I shall hope to marry a companionable wife and take some share in improving social conditions with her help." "Is that *all*?" again came the query from the Christian lady. "Well," said the young man, "I think if I do that, acquire a reasonable competence, do my duty sincerely and give my children (if I have any) a fairly good training and education, I shall probably have achieved what I set out to do." "And is *that* all?" anew came the booming question from the importunate dame. "I think so Ma'am," said my friend. "Ah, that is all! Ah-h-h, have you no higher vocation, no nobler mission in life no call from above?" Then quickly turning to her favourite son sitting by her, she triumphantly exclaimed, "And what is your supreme aim in life Robert?" To which Robert curtly replied, "To save souls Ma. Pass the marmalade."

You can never disconcert or put to the blush the

Christian guardians of their fellows' morals who are convinced that they have a duty to direct the lives and habits of other people. Take for example Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby in *Bleak House*. The former is the typical home missionary and the latter the typical foreign missionary—both of whom we have with us (be it said) even unto this day. Oh no, you can never put either of them out of countenance. They brush aside all protests with the confidence of assured ambassadors of Almighty power. Their hides are pachydermatous—their smile serene. Any objection to their presence—any request to fade away—is treated with persistent indifference and unconcern. They must be about the business of their Master; and work while it is still day—that is they claim the right to invade all human sanctities and privacies if the Lord tells them to do so. Did it matter that the children of Mrs. Pardiggle and Mrs. Jellyby were wretched and neglected? Here is Mrs. Pardiggle's description of herself: "I am a school lady, I am a visiting lady, I am a reading lady, I am a distributing lady; I am on the local Linen Box Committee and many general Committees; and my canvassing alone is very extensive—perhaps no one's more so." Mrs. Jellyby's family may break their necks by falling into areas. That is a trifle compared to the salvation of the natives of Africa. Does it matter that her poor daughter Caddy is sacrificed to a mother of ink and circulars? Mrs. Jellyby is above all such local, immediate and petty considerations. The Pardiggles and Jellybys—male and female—have grown in number; and many of them are now invested with national or civic authority. Truer to-day than ever is the statement of Grummer in *Pickwick*, that it is gammon to talk of an Englishman's home being his castle. Christianity more and more restricts and contracts the freedom of human beings who refuse to subscribe to the dogma of the faith.

The mission of Freethinkers is not derived from any supernatural authority. It is dictated by a passionate consciousness of the fetters which the Christian superstition has put upon the minds of men and women. The task of Freethinkers perhaps consists more in repeal than reform. Greed, meanness, cowardice and mendacity are the characteristics of the modern methods of priestcraft. Is any voice heard in high quarters in Britain denouncing State Churches? Does any one possess the courage to demand the ejection of the Bishops from Parliament? Nay, verily, if the priests and parsons cannot get their pews filled they will at least permeate with their poison the "temporal" powers that be, and use them to maintain the Established Churches with their great endowments. No reasonable mind can hold that there is any element of justice in a system which permits Episcopal ecclesiastics to legislate for a nation like Scotland, where Episcopalians are Nonconformists in a small minority. When will England wake up to the insolent greed of these fat men of God in the House of Lords with their stipends ranging from £15,000 to £4,000 a year, with palaces provided by the State in addition for their personal accommodation? It has repeatedly been proved that the ancient endowments of the State Church are national property, which may be destined, applied and used as the people as a whole may direct.

IGNOTUS.

So the priests hated him, and he
Repaid their hate with cheerful glee.—*Shelley*.

Religion hides many mischiefs from suspicion.
Marlowe (The Jew of Malta)

"Let's Talk of . . . Epitaphs."

THERE is a noble ring in Robert Emmet's famous words in his speech from the dock, "Let no man write my epitaph." The words are more remembered than the man, or the cause for which he died. Only a microscopic minority of men have even that "poor traditionary fame" which has been said to fall to actors. Epitaphs are remembered for their wit, or some other quality, by thousands who know nothing about the subjects of them. Shakespeare thought that "After your death you were better have a bad epitaph than ill-report while you live." Byron wrote of "a woman or an epitaph or any other thing that's false," as more trustworthy than critics. Epitaphs, albeit less crude and frank than of yore, have not yet ceased to be written and engraved, at least on tombs and tablets, if seldom in human minds and hearts. Mr. Ernest Suffling, in his *Epitaphia* has collected 1,300 British epitaphs and at least one of them must have been written by one who had no doubt of their futility. It reads:—

"My name, my country, what are they to thee?
What, whether high or low my pedigree?
Perhaps I far surpassed all other men;
Perhaps I fell below them all—what then?
Suffice it, stranger, thou that seest a tomb;
Thou knowst its use: it hides—no matter whom."

The man who wrote these lines little thought they would meet the eyes of readers a century after they were written, and be found in most of the reference libraries of the English-speaking world. Religious epitaphs, and they are in the majority in this British collection, perhaps because, as Mr. Suffling points out, "the ban both of Bishop and law" has put an end to the "quaint" and "curious" and "profane" in "tombstone literature." Still it is satisfactory to notice that provided they are pious they need not be dull. Righteous glee finds expression in these lines from Ulverston (Lancs.) Churchyard, written by an obviously Christian man upon the tombstone of his wife:—

"Here lies my wife,
Here lies she;
Hallilujah,
Hallilujee!"

Piety of more than one variety, and its essential ingredient of intolerance, may be found in the epitaph on Sir Horatio Palavicini (Brabraham, Cambridge). This gentleman collected taxes for the Pope in England under Queen Mary: misappropriated the proceeds; turned Protestant, and, under Elizabeth, became Ambassador to Germany, and commanded a ship against the Spanish Armada:—

"Here lyes Horatio Palavicini
Who robb'd the Pope to lend the Queene.
He was a thief—thief! thou lyeest
For what? He robb'd but Anti-Christ.
Him death wyth besome swept from Bab'ram,
Into the bosom of ould Abraham,
But then came Hercules with his club,
And struck him down to Beelzebub."

"Profanity" may be erased, but there is no objection to personal abuse of deceased human beings. So, at Reading, one Gordon is thus commemorated:—

"Here lies the body of William Gordon,
He'd a mouth almighty and teeth accordin';
Stranger, tread lightly on this sod,
For if he gapes you're gone by G—."

Somewhat similar, but of the other sex at Witney, we have:—

"Here lies, thank God, a woman who
Quarrelled and stormed her whole life through
Tread gently o'er her mouldering form
Or else you'll rouse another storm."

Holy Scripture is sometimes quoted with unfortunate results, as in the epitaph in a missionary in India. "Here lies Rev. A— B—. For many years missionary in B— district. He was accidentally shot by his native servant. 'Well done thou good and faithful servant.'"

Another clergyman, the Rev. John Tyrwitt (Malta) had an even less appropriate end:—

"Here lies John Tyrwitt,
A learned divine:
He died in a fit
Through drinking port wine.
April 3, 1828. Age 59.

At Pewsey (Wilts) a certain Lady O'Looney is buried, and thus described for posterity: "Great niece of Burke, commonly called the Sublime, she was bland, passionate and deeply religious; also painted in water-colours and sent several pictures to the Exhibition. She was first cousin to Lady Jones, and of such is the Kingdom of heaven." A large number of epitaphs relate to the trade or profession of deceased, and one of the most remarkable of these is the following from Lydford (Devon):

Here lies in a horizontal position the outside case of George Longleigh watchmaker, whose abilities in that line were an honour to his profession: Integrity was the mainspring and Prudence the Regulator for all the actions of his life: Humane generous liberal; His hand never stopped till he had relieved distress: So nicely were all his actions regulated that he never went wrong except when set a-going by People who did not know his key: Even then he was easily set right again. He had the art of disposing his time so even that his hours glided away in one continual round of pleasure and delight, till an unlucky minute put a period to his existence, he departed this life November 14, 1802, Aged 57: Wound up in hopes of being taken in hand by his Maker and of being thoroughly cleaned and repaired and set-a-going in the world to come."

Notwithstanding the interest and amusement afforded by epitaphs, the healthy mind can find little to enjoy in the melancholy country churchyard which perhaps owes some of its vogue, as a resort, to Gray's famous "Elegy." It seems that the amenities of that much visited churchyard are now in danger, and as these lines are written (near by) an appeal is made for funds for their preservation. The "midnight owl" has new disturbers of "his ancient solitary reign." A modern poet was nearer the truth when he wrote:—

"The Earth is full of hoary tombs,
All green and lichen grown:
The vagrant flower around them blooms,
The winds still make their moan;
But they who stood beside the grave,
In stress of anguish sore,
Now for the dead small pity have,
Remembering them no more.

The wild winds still about them moan,
The skies above them weep;
The graves with autumn leaves are strewn
The stars long vigils keep;
But we go on our happier way,
The wound is healed at last,
Nor comes to mar the arduous day,
A memory of the past."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

LIFE'S JOURNEY.

There is only one journey, as it seems to me, in this increasing of parables and facts, in which we obtain our ideal of going away and going home at the same time. Death, normally encountered, has all the attractions of suicide with none of its horrors. We shall all bid our first real adieu to those brother-gaolers of our time and space: and though the handkerchief flutter, no lack of courage will have power to cheat or defeat us. "However amusing the comedy may have been," wrote Pascal, "there is always blood in the fifth act. They scatter a little dust on your face: and then all is over for ever." The wisdom of humility bids us pray that in that fifth act we may have good lines and a timely exit. . . . Since life has been a constant slipping from one good-bye to another, why should we fear that sole good-bye which promises to cancel all its forerunners.

The late Thomas Kettle.

Acid Drops.

The King is not to return to London while the epidemic of influenza is about. We do not blame him. There is no reason why anyone who can avoid it should run the risk of infection. But the King's action indicates very little faith in the army of parsons—including his own particular chaplain—who offer up prayers for his health. The Church of England has a set and official prayer for the preservation of his health, and at thousands of stately ceremonies, film performances and knock-about music-hall shows the Lord is asked every day to look after his health. And yet when he is really ill the parsons have to give place to the doctors, and when an epidemic is about he is compelled to resort to the same policy as that of other people. When nothing of importance is about we can leave it to God. When the situation is serious, his followers leave God out of the situation.

Bernard Shaw's book *The Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God* has fallen under the displeasure of Cambridge. It has been banned by the public library. It is announced that the heated discussion in the library committee showed that "religious feeling in Cambridge is a more tender plant than in many towns in the country." God bless their impudence! All the same it is characteristically Christian. Because a book does not please Christians—or certain groups of Christians, others are forbidden to read it. Of course, it may be said that those who wish to read it may purchase it. But those who will not allow it in the library, would not have it in the town, if it could be prevented. They would not permit it to be published if it could be prevented. The impudence of it all would be astounding, if it were not so common. It all helps to remind us of what Christianity was and what Christianity still is, when it can show itself in its pure form.

And here is Christianity in another form, but the same in spirit. Five years ago a man and a woman in Toronto placed an infant, aged five months in an infant's home. The child was taken out of the home, by a Protestant couple and brought up as their own. They loved the child and the child loved them—the only parents it had ever known. But the parents were Roman Catholics, and inspired by the priests the parents now demanded it back, and the priests boasted they would have it back for they "never lost one of their lambs." To save its being brought up away from the Catholic Church these priests were willing to assail the only home and the only parents the child had ever known. Fortunately the Judge was humane enough to declare that he would not separate the child from its adopted parents, and this time the priests will not get back their lamb. The child's happiness counted for nothing with them when it was a question of getting a convert. Decency and religion are not usually good companions when the interests of religion are in question.

The Rev. Canon Bourstead in a sermon reported in the *Hants and Berks Gazette*, makes an attack on Charles Bradlaugh which is full of venom and lying. He alleges that Bradlaugh's Atheism was not the reason for his exclusion from Parliament, but that it was because he was a teacher of "child murder." Birth control may be, as this preacher contended, contrary to Christian teaching; but if it is, the Ministry of Health, and an increasing number of Local Authorities, are engaged in a very belated effort to mitigate the suffering and evil which have followed and still follow from Christian teaching. The Canon would, no doubt, denounce them as he denounced Bradlaugh. In that case he would, at least be attacking the living, and not slandering the dead. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is a maxim which mostly falls on deaf ears so far as the Clergy are concerned. This parson's outrageous vilification of Bradlaugh at the beginning of this, the centenary year of his birth, shows that no wiping from the records of Parliament of the expulsion of Bradlaugh; no general, if slow, recognition of his

great services to his country and to mankind can avail. No matter how often or with what thoroughness they are refuted—nothing will prevent clergymen of the type of this one from retailing stale and nauseous slanders of their noble enemies, living or dead.

The Tokyo Correspondent of the *Times* makes a suggestive observation at the end of a message about Police activity against Communists in Japan. (Nearly 7,000 persons have been arrested in the last twelve months and 2,000 are still detained). The Correspondent says: "Much which the special section of police stigmatises as Communist activity would be ignored in Great Britain. The zeal of the police, whose suspicions and questionings keep every university and higher school in a ferment, seems to advertise Communism rather than suppress it; but the Japanese authorities, who should understand their own people, contend that *dangerous thoughts can only be countered by rigorous suppression*." We do not have to go to Japan to find people who agree with this contention. That thought cannot be suppressed, by rigour or otherwise, may be the case; but to be even suspected of thinking "dangerous" thoughts can be and is held to justify the repression, or suppression, not of the thoughts, but of the thinker. And this is the twentieth century!

It is said that "the good die young," but not always, for the Bishop of London has just celebrated his seventy-fifth birthday. He was interviewed by a woman journalist who, unfortunately for him, made a careful note of the interview. It ends as follows: "Are you a good woman?" he asked. "I try to be"—"Do you earn enough in your profession to keep you?"—"Yes"—"Then be grateful—and be good." We will not comment on this, except to say that we most heartily appreciate the grace and wit of the lady interviewer who thus describes the man who asked her these questions. "He is a school-boy," and "he is a very wise man of the world!"

A whole column of solemn counsel by one Mathetes in the *Church of England Newspaper* is addressed to a person who complains of a religious illness called "spiritual desolation." According to this writer, "All the most trusted guides to holiness" have had this malady. It is a kind of pious measles; or so we thought until we came to a diagnosis of it from "a good evangelical, long dead." This deceased worthy says—what does not surprise us—that "as one becomes naturalized to communion with God," dryness and depression follow. "In withdrawing His felt presence from us" God makes us "know that without Him we can do nothing." God, it seems, acts on the principle that "absence makes the heart grow fonder." The pious, and "desolated" must endure this "without impatience or bitterness"; but if they do not manage to endure it they may manage to forget the Author of their distress, familiarity with whom should, in sound minds, breed contempt. What humane person would deliberately play hide and seek with a man in trouble?

An advertiser of lessons in public speaking (in the *Times*) claims that he can make his pupils "self-confident, fluent and *convincing*." The latter achievement should bring him many replies from the clergy. Self-confident and fluent they may be, and often are, but conviction, either in themselves or of their congregations is what they most lack. Even in days when most people will believe anything they read in a newspaper, they get harder and harder to convince that "God's in his heaven" and "all's right with the world."

The clerical mind can never let good alone. A parson has made a proposal—to the York Convocation—to add a service to the Prayer Book for "thanksgiving," and a "renewal of their vows" for married couples who have survived twenty, fifty or sixty years of married life. Such persons, at least outside pious circles, are more numerous than the publicity given to matrimonial

troubles would suggest. If there is a need in the case of religious couples to "renew" their vows we can only suppose that they are, in the opinion of this parson, liable to have been broken, or to be in a very precarious condition. Even if that is not the case why should they thank God? So far as we know, He had never shown any disposition to interfere with nagging tongues or bibulous habits or to assist his faithful people to keep their heads and their tempers. But, just as Confirmation is a rite in which the young are supposed to take over for themselves what their god-fathers and god-mothers in their baptism "did" for them—and so forge a new link in the chain by which the Church holds them—this proposed new service is doubtless intended to get people back to church in gratitude for their own good luck or good judgment. The parsons, who take fees for marrying and burying them, christening the children and "churching" the wives, no doubt see a chance of adding another to their fee-making opportunities.

Lord Irwin, the Minister of Education, speaking at a Conference called by the Bishop of Ripon to consider "The Place of Religion in Education," fairly let the cat out of the bag as to what may be expected from the present Government in this matter. "Public opinion," he asserted, "has moved and is moving steadily away from the secular solution." And the evidence for this? That "the columns of the daily press" show that "in all walks of life people are searching and are athirst for something which institutional religion does not give them." The "search" is a manufactured stunt, put over by the Churches, by the B.B.C., by any and every medium that will lend itself to the purpose, to stop the steady movement of public opinion in favour of the secular solution. Going from bad to worse, Lord Irwin next declared that this manufactured "desire of the public" makes it "the function of the State to make provision within its own sphere for the desires of the majority of its own citizens." Headmasters who spoke at the Conference administered a cold douche to this fervour for the faith. "We cannot cram British boys with religion. They won't have it." This speaker added: "I think if the family Bible is still in the home it is probably supporting a flower-pot in the homes from which our boys come to-day." Another Headmaster said his boys "had no cant." They "are clean, healthy animals, and understand the laws of cricket in the moral sense as well as upon the playing fields." Lord Irwin must have been shocked!

The *Universe*, the other day, reprinted some extracts from an article in the *Hibbert Journal*, by Dr. Edwyn Bevan. The reason for this—as Dr. Bevan is not a Catholic—was because, says the *Universe*, "Dr. Bevan has, in language of the utmost courtesy and even deference, quite completely and comprehensively wiped the floor with Dr. Barnes." This must make the umpire's time Dr. Barnes has been completely beaten and all because he does not believe that some Latin words muttered over a wafer changes it into the living Jesus Christ. We must add, however, that if the extracts given do really wipe the floor with Dr. Barnes we are prepared to eat our hat; and we notice that nowhere does Dr. Bevan say he believes the incantation does really cause the transformation. If a plethora of words or an inky splash can be considered an argument in favour of the change from a wafer to Jesus, then Dr. Bevan has more than accomplished his task.

One of Dr. Bevan's smashing arguments is this: "The question whether there is a spiritual power which occasionally produces exceptional effects in the material world is not a question on which reason, properly understood, can give any judgment: it is a matter simply of the valuation of actual experience and human testimony. If a belief in such exceptional operation of a spiritual power—whether through holy oil or the bones of a saint or prayer—conflicts as the Bishop supposes with natural science, it must conflict with some particular natural science. With which science does the Bishop think that it conflicts? With chemistry or hydrostatics

or physics or biology or which?" We should like to say it conflicts with whoopee, but we feel it useless to argue with anybody who talks about "a spiritual power" or "holy oil" or "the bones of a saint" in the same breath as science. There are limits even in disputation.

We have sometimes felt that that delightful liqueur known as "Benedictine," was too good to be true, and certainly much too good to come exclusively from a monastery of Benedictines. We are happy to say that we were right—in the latter at least. For it is also manufactured by a layman—M. Iagrange, who never was a Benedictine—at Fécamp. So smash goes another good old legend.

Communism and Birth Control are really frightening Catholics out of their wits. Teaching poor people prudence in the matter of the children they bring into the world is, according to a Catholic writer, Mr. W. Cuthman, "an attack on the poor!" One would dearly like to know how many children Mr. and Mrs. Cuthman have or intend to have, and whether they would continue having them if Mr. Cuthman was out of work and the family living in one room in a slum, subsisting on "relief" or the "dole?" The proper and sane attitude is for people to have only those children they can afford to bring up themselves and provide for decently, and to teach the "poor" to be provident in this way surely is fine teaching.

Mr. Cuthman has one passage in his article in the *Universe* which is quite amusing and worth preserving: "The Church, which freed mankind from the same sort of pagan and material servitude 1900 years ago, once more stands between him and his enslavement to a pagan Materialism. The Church is fighting not only a moral battle but for the liberty of the world." This is the same Church which has for its history more blood, war, massacre, torture, imprisonment, intolerance, and savage persecution than any other that has ever existed, and it is fighting for "the liberty of the world!"

Fifty Years Ago.

THE achievements of our forerunners in the battle for free discussion form part of the great history of modern progress. But it is not simply to recount their glorious deeds that I have thus hastily sketched the fight of forty years ago. That battle has a lesson for us to-day. It proved, if Freethinkers need any proof, that persecution must be met with determination. Adherence to principle is the one path of victory. Resistance means success, resignation would be lying down to be trampled upon. The more we bend, the greater burden would be laid upon our backs. The prosecution of the *Freethinker* may be but an initial step. It at least proves the days of persecution are not over. It was not until Christianity was strong that it met its severest persecution under Domitian. It was not until Protestantism was strong that the fires were lighted at Smithfield, and the bells tolled on St. Bartholomew's Eve. The severest persecution may always be expected just when it is too late. And it is too late to crush Freethought now. Christian persecution did not suppress the *Age of Reason*, did not suppress the *Oracle of Reason*, and will not suppress the *Freethinker*, if the Freethought party are worthy of the traditions of their past. We stand in the vanguard of heresy fronting the fire of the enemy and sheltering behind our backs the feebler fry. A century ago to be a Unitarian was to be in worse odium than an Agnostic to-day. That this advance has been made has been owing to the boldness, and the sufferings of those who stood in the breach and faced the persecuting foe in the past. They laboured for us, and we enter into their labours; happy if by our stripes yet others may be healed.

The "Freethinker," February 11, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

FIRST LIST OF DONATIONS.

DAUGHTER, Son-in-Law, Grandson, Grand-daughter-in-Law, two Great Grandsons, of Charles Bradlaugh, £50; W. B. Columbine, £25; J. Swaagman Darwen, £20; E. Tuck, £12; H. Ormerod, £10; J. P. Gilmour, £5 5s.; A. C. Y. Bell, £5; W. Jenkins, £5; Sydney A. Gimson, £5; C. W. Newton, £5; Mildred Mary Hadden, £5; Thos. N. Robertson, £10; National Sunday League, £5; Rt. Hon. Lord Riddell, £5; J. F. Rayner, £5 5s.; Chapman Cohen, £5; Harold J. Laski, £3 3s.; Sir P. C. Mitchell, £2 2s.; F. S. Hare, £2 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Watts, £2 2s.; T. Bayard Simmons, £2 2s.; W. J. W. Easterbrook, £2 2s.; His Honour Sir Edward A. Parry, £2 2s.; Judge A. R. Cluer, £2 2s.; A. Ernest Withy, £2; E. C. Saphin, £1 1s.; W. Whooper, £1 1s.; G. T. Pilcher, £1 1s.; Ernest Thurtle, £1 1s.; Charles M. Beadnell, £1 1s.; F. C. C. Watts, £1 1s.; Julian Roney, £1 1s.; A. H. Devereux, £1 1s.; Ernest H. Griffin, £1 1s.; Dr. Alfred Cox, £1 1s.; Dr. Arthur Hawkyard, £1 1s.; F. W. Partridge, £1 1s.; Col. J. C. Wedgwood, £1 1s.; A. D. Howell Smith, £1; Lt.-Col. G. E. B. Oldfield, £1; E. Pariente, £1; S. G. Green, £1; J. Lane, £1; J. Brown, £1; E. F. Errington, £1; Dr. W. M. Hewetson, £1; Dr. Bernard Hollander, £1; David Clarke, £1; Ernest Newman, £1; Nelson Branch N.S.S., £1; Dr. Griffith Evans, £1; Joseph Close, 10s. 6d., Chas. M. Hollingham, 10s. 6d.; R. H. Rosetti, 10s. 6d.; Ben Turner, 10s. 6d.; Prynns Hopkins, 10s.; Edgar Syers, 10s.; W. Kent, 10s.; W. G. Furmston, 10s.; L. Lloyd John, 10s.; Frank Moore, 10s.; Frank MacLachlan, 10s.; D. C. Drummond, 10s.; Wallis Mansford, 5s.; G. Burgess, 5s.; W. James, 5s.; E. Anderson, 1s.; MacArdell, 1s.

Total ... £230 19 0.

All subscriptions to be addressed to the Hon. Treasurer, Bradlaugh Centenary Fund, Mr. F. C. C. Watts, 38 Cursitor Street, London, E.C.4.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—H. Jessop, 20s.
W. J. MEALOR.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad to have the good opinion of yourself and your wife. Hope the Gramophone Record will do the good you anticipate. The demand for it has exceeded our expectations.
J. DOSSETT.—Your notices arrived too late for insertion.
G. BURGESS.—Will be dealt with next week.
R. G. ASHLEY.—Always pleased to receive suggestions, particularly from new subscribers.
L. BIAGIONI.—We hope the record will prove as effective as you desire. But one must not expect too much.
R. J. SCHMERE AND OTHERS.—Mr. Cohen was suffering from a severe cold, not influenza. He is now better, and thanks all who have made enquiries about his health.
A. ALEXANDER.—Very pleased to hear from you. You bring back recollections of one whose friendship we valued. Gratiated to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. Freethinkers ought to make "Bradlaugh Year" a memorable one in our annals.

CINE CERE.—We have noted promise. Thanks. We hope to see many local attempts to celebrate the Bradlaugh Centenary.

FRED SUMMERS.—Many thanks for addresses, paper being sent for six weeks.

T. BARKER.—We think you handled the case very well. Glad you found *The Other Side of Death* so helpful.

J. SWIFT.—Glad to hear from you again. Many thanks for addresses, paper being sent.

W. J. GOUCH.—Many thanks for your letter, the price of *An Outline for Boys and Girls* is 8s. 6d., postage 9d. extra.

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.

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

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.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

On Friday, February 17, Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Beechcroft Hall, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead, at 8.0, on "Looking for God." On Sunday, February 19 he will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, at 7.0, on "The Menace of Mass Opinion."

The Liverpool Branch is also arranging a dinner to take place at the St. George's Restaurant, Redcross Street (off South Castle Street), on Saturday, February 18, at 7.0 There will be speeches and a concert. Mr. Cohen has promised to attend. The price of the tickets is 5s. 6d. each, and application should be made by February 13 to Mr. S. A. R. Ready, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Liverpool.

Edmonton and Acton have now by big majorities voted in favour of Sunday cinemas. These victories do not mean that cinemas will be able to open at once. The consent of both Houses of Parliament has yet to be gained, which will take about two months at least. But hitherto the contests have shown up in striking colours the humbug and cowardice of the Government in passing the Sunday Entertainment Bill. The humbug consisted in one Minister after another saying there was no demand for them, and the cowardice in their not having the courage to sweep away restrictions on all Sunday entertainments, leaving them to the same regulations that obtain on other days of the week, with the single addition of making seven days labour illegal. But politicians are too much in fear of the parsonry to act with this sense of elementary justice where religious interests are concerned.

London Freethinkers are asked to reserve Saturday evening, April 1, for a social at the Caxton Hall, Westminster. The Executive of the N.S.S. have the arrangements in hand, and can promise all who attend a thoroughly enjoyable evening. There will be dancing, musical items, and no doubt, a few words from the

President. Tickets 2s. 6d., including light refreshments, can already be obtained from the offices of the N.S.S. 62 Farringdon Street, London, E. C. 4, or from the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street.

The attention of South London Freethinkers is directed to the regular Sunday evening lectures held by the South London Branch N.S.S. in the New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, at 7.30 p.m. To-day (Sunday) Mr. F. Victor Fisher will speak on "The Inner Meaning of Christianity." On Sunday evening, March 5, the Branch will hold its Annual General Meeting in the same hall. Members only will be admitted to that meeting, and all members of the Branch are asked not only to note the date but also to attend.

The Birmingham Branch N.S.S. will hold a Whist Drive in the Shakespeare Rooms, The Dickens Room, 174 Edmund Street, near Livery Street, Birmingham, on Saturday evening, February 11, at 7 o'clock prompt. Admission 1s. There will be a number of prizes, and refreshments can be had at low charges. Such functions are very useful in the social side of our movement, also for the introduction of orthodox friends.

At the Stockport Labour Fellowship, Central Hall, Millgate, Stockport, Mr. George Whitehead will lecture to-day (Sunday) at 6.45 p.m. on "How Man Made God." Admission is free and questions and discussion are invited. Mr. Whitehead has many friends in the area and his lecture should provide a pleasant and instructive evening in Stockport.

East London Freethinkers will be pleased to note that Mr. F. P. Corrigan will deliver the second lecture of the course of three arranged by the Bethnal Green Branch N.S.S., at the Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road, London, E.2, on Tuesday evening, February 14, at 8.0 p.m. The subject "Roman Catholicism in the Melting Pot," is attractive and topical and should certainly be well supported. Mr. E. C. Saphin will bring the course to a close on the following Tuesday.

It is the busy season in the offices of the National Secular Society, but not too busy to note that a number of Annual Subscriptions have not yet arrived. The despatch of the Annual Subscription is looked upon as a pleasant duty by our members, and those concerned will thank us for this friendly reminder.

Very shortly the Secular Society, Limited will issue a work by Mr. W. A. Campbell on *The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ*. The work will have an introduction by the late J. M. Robertson. This introduction, written just before his death, is perhaps the last piece of writing Mr. Robertson did for publication.

A TRIBUTE TO BYRON.

Fated in other ways not to be the happy but the unhappy warrior, he had an imperishable quality of rallying and sallying Courage. He was a path-breaker for greater movements than he knew. Amidst the Europe created at Versailles we have no power of protest and awakening like his, and we are the poorer for it . . . It was given him to die lowly, like some notable good man, in a wretched room, beaten by the rain, in an hour of darkness for the cause he served, amidst faction and failure with no ray of promise to be seen. A century afterwards finds all the rest disputed, but his iridescent genius confessed and his personality ineffaceable. It is the irony and magnificence of fame—in whose temples, like the temples of delight, veiled melancholy has her sovran shrine.—*J. L. Garvin* (in "The Hundred Best English Essays.")

Open-Mindedness.

Being a letter to a member of the younger generation.

MY DEAR C—,—I am enclosing for your perusal a letter which I wrote to your grandfather a few days ago (see "Die-Hardism" in the *Freethinker* for February 5), because I think its contents may interest you and because, frankly, I find it a much more difficult task to write you a coherent epistle explaining my views in regard to the problems that are likely to confront you. My difficulty is occasioned by two facts. The first is that I know so much less about what occupies your thoughts than about what occupied, and still occupies, the thoughts of your grandfather. The second is that many of the problems which still affect his and my generation may cease to affect your generation in a few years time.

Nevertheless I believe that many of the issues which I have had to deal with will still exist, though perhaps in slightly different form, before you are many years older. And when you come to tackle them in earnest—as you will certainly have to do if you live to a normal age—my views on these subjects may perhaps give you a new outlook on them, and may also help you to arrive at a more correct valuation for yourself. My own experience has been that ignorance is the chief cause of suffering in life, and that my own ignorance on vital matters was largely due to certain "die-hard" ideas which are entertained by my elders. Had it not been for these fixed ideas, they would have been more ready to tell me facts which I had later to find out for myself. And I, for my part, would have been more open-minded and more inclined to study questions from other points of view.

These "die-hard" ideas were almost entirely the result of religious beliefs. For example, I knew nothing about the facts of sex, except what I discovered by secret means—and that was mostly wrong or one-sided. It is the Christian religion, as you will learn for yourself, which is mainly responsible for that "hush-hush" attitude towards this subject. Yet before a young man or woman decides to get married, it is mere stupidity to keep them in ignorance of the real physiological facts involved. The young man should not only learn about himself, but about women as well—and *vice versa*. And information of this sort cannot be learnt by "experience," in the usual sense of the word, without serious and dangerous risks.

If your parents are religiously inclined, the odds are that they will either be afraid or ashamed to tell you real facts, or else they will give you a one-sided view. They will not tell you about birth-control. They will have strong and narrow-minded views about marriage and divorce. And you may be sure that even if they have no "skeletons" in their own "cupboards," they will be extremely dogmatic about questions of morality and immorality. All these attitudes are not obviously religious, but they are all highly coloured by the paint-brush of Christian teaching, and you will, therefore, not be given a chance to hear what there is to be said for the non-Christian side of these questions. And, believe me, it is the non-Christian side which is the more humane and kindly and which is, happily for future generations, becoming more acceptable to society as a whole.

My own views about contraception, for instance, are that it should be as much a matter for public knowledge as the true facts about sex. As for the marriage and divorce laws, I regard them as harsh and out of date. It would take me too long to enumerate all the reforms which I would advocate. But I will mention at least two, and they are—I would make divorce by consent legal, and I would abolish

all distinctions between what are now called "legitimate" and "illegitimate" children. Broadly speaking, I maintain that if boys and girls are taught, before they reach puberty, the important facts about their bodies, about sexual relationships and their possible consequences, about contraception and its limits, etc., as part of an ordinary general training in physiology, they are much less likely to gather information concerning these things (as they invariably do sooner or later) in a manner that will lead to unhappiness in after life. There will also not be that difficulty, which still persists, in discussing these matters in a wholesome and rational manner whenever the need should arise. You cannot expect to be happily married if you are unable to talk things over openly with the one you choose as your future partner.

I do not think that religion worries you as much as it worried me when I was your age. Even twenty-five years of Freethought and Rationalist influence have had their effect in humanizing the outlook of society and in curbing the bigoted and narrow-minded activities of the various religious sects. But although I imagine you are inclined to regard religion as a necessary item in life, you have never had it forced upon you to any great extent. You probably are under the impression that without some sort of religion it is impossible to be moral. This is one of the falsehoods which are carefully fostered by priests and parsons to keep people under their influence. Religious morality, as you will discover later, is not the only, nor by any means the best, kind of morality. You also probably regard religion as a purely private matter which is no one's concern but your own. I am afraid that the older you grow, the more you will be disillusioned on this score. Religious persons never have and never will treat their beliefs as private matters; while the clergy of every denomination make it their business to intrude their beliefs into every imaginable sphere of life—usually with disastrous consequences, not to themselves, but to the unfortunate and credulous folk who listen to them. You will not be asked as often as I was whether you are "saved," or whether you have "found Jesus," but you will find religious bias cropping up in a host of unexpected places.

To mention a few examples within recent times, I would remind you of the last Education Bill. Your own education was, fortunately for you, continued to the age of nineteen. The vast majority of children have to leave school and go out to earn their own livings at the age of fourteen. Yet when a Bill was introduced into Parliament to raise the age limit to sixteen years, it was wrecked by the demands of religious interests. So most children still suffer a five years disadvantage as compared with yourself. Then, again, there is the scandalous Sunday Cinemas Bill. In spite of the fact that most people would prefer to go to the Cinema than to Church on Sundays, the Government, at the bidding of its religious members, passed a Bill which made it as difficult as possible for Cinemas to open on that day. Furthermore it insisted that a large proportion of Sunday Cinema profits should go to charity. The profits of Zoos, concerts, restaurants, public-houses, and all other businesses which makes profits on Sundays, were left untouched. The fact, of course, was that the Churches could not object to the Cinemas on principle, so they opposed it merely because it is a serious rival to their own "entertainment." It is their own collection-plates that they are so concerned with—not the morality of the public, as they pretend.

My last example is the wrecking of the Bill to abolish that vindictive and antiquated relic of religious bigotry—the Blasphemy Law. This Law, which is hundreds of years old, could put me in prison

for many of the articles I have had published, if it were possible to find a judge and jury who were sufficiently religious to apply the law as it was originally intended to be applied. But to you, probably, such Bills as these are lumped together as dull "politics" which bore you stiff. You are too busy earning your own livelihood and enjoying life as best you may, to give a passing thought to political matters. Yet I assure you that political matters have quite a surprising way of butting into one's private life and of refusing to be ignored. You will soon have a vote (if you haven't one already) and you will then have either to make use of it or else to let governmental procedure rip along without it. In the latter case, if you find yourself in difficulties owing to this or that unpleasant law, you will be partly to blame for the trouble you are in. As things are at present, bad laws, such as the Marriage and Divorce laws, the Education laws, the Blasphemy law and of others cannot be altered for the better unless you vote for their amendment. And unless you vote intelligently—which does not mean voting according to the views of your favourite newspaper—you will continue to suffer under their injustices. And not only you, but your children as well, if you have any.

If you say that you will study these questions when they begin to affect you, my reply is that it will then be too late. You may be able to help future generations, but only after having suffered yourself. If you ask how you can study them now, my reply is—make it a rule to read at least as many books of fact as you read of fiction. It does not much matter what books of fact you read, but do not confine yourself to those which deal with the past. Study present-day conditions, modern science, and up-to-date history and biography. And if you find yourself interested in any particular subject, make a point of reading all sides of it, no matter how much you may be prejudiced in favour of one or against another side.

Religious people and parsons will advise you never to read any book or paper written by an Agnostic, a Rationalist, a Freethinker or an Atheist. They will also, as a rule, cast doubts upon every statement made by such persons, without suggesting that you should try to verify them for yourself. The same attitude is often manifested by persons who have strong political or social views. Yet you will find, as I did at a late age, that the truth about the facts of life are not the monopoly of any one religious, political or social sect. You will also find that it is a favourite dodge of biassed and bigoted persons to run down those who hold opposite views. I remember, for instance, a lady who tried to influence me against reading the books of Julian Huxley, by saying in an off-hand manner: "Oh, I know all about *that* young man. Unfortunately he suffers from swelled head." Unfortunately for the lady herself, however, the more anyone tried to put me off reading a book, the more determined I became to read it. So don't be influenced in your opinions by narrow-minded persons who wish you only to know about things from their own particular point of view. Be open-minded.

There is one tip I would like to give you in conclusion. Up to the age of about thirty-five you are likely to hold much more decided views about most subjects that you will have after that age. Don't forget that these decided views are seldom the outcome of your personal experiences and thinking. They are "convictions" which have resulted from what has been implanted in your mind from your earliest years. The worst of them is that they are apt to create a prejudice in your own mind which will prevent you, often quite unconsciously, from trying to understand any other point of view. Some people regard an attitude of this sort as being evidence of a

strong will. It isn't. It is merely a sign of pig-headedness and is usually the companion of ignorance. So when anyone puts before you any point of view to which you have no reasonable answer, don't shrug your shoulders with impatience or in contempt. Admit honestly that it is a "new one on you," and ask for time to consider it more fully. There is no shame in being ignorant. The shame is in refusing to admit ignorance. And if you ever feel yourself getting annoyed or angry because your opinions are being upset, you can be pretty sure that those opinions are not well-founded. So don't stick to them in spite of everything. Give them a good overhaul in the light of the new knowledge you have been presented with. Open-mindedness only makes for flabbiness and indecision when one takes no trouble to ascertain the truth from every possible source. But an open-mindedness which is accompanied by a real effort to get to the bottom of things will always add to your knowledge and will thus provide solid and valid grounds for your opinions and actions.

Yours, M.N.

Professor Levy and Modern Science.

FROM time to time I have indicated in the *Freethinker* how the general position adopted in *Materialism Re-Stated* has been taken by professional writers, who have added technical illustrations and personal colourings. I have now to add the name of Prof. H. Levy, of London University, who in his *Universe of Science*, proceeds on very much the same lines of reasoning as Mr. Cohen, especially when dealing with the question of Determinism, which forms the core of the book.

The special contribution of Professor Levy to scientific controversy lies in his exposition of the concept of ISOLATES, by the use of which he has produced evidence—one would think unanswerable—against the theory of Indeterminacy as held by Eddington or Jeans.

For linguistic convenience and scientific use we extract various features from the flow of events in the universe, and deal with them as detached from their environment (*e.g.*, table, atom, electron, solar system, John Smith, war, tree). We give names to these isolated groups of phenomena, and Levy's plea is for scientists to reconsider the nature of their "isolates."

Now let us apply determinism to our observation of the behaviour of a posited isolate, for no one has provided us with an efficient alternative method of inquiry. And let us suppose that Determinism definitely lets us down in our observations. What does this prove? To Eddington it suggests that "there is not a particle of evidence in favour of Determinism." (1930 Broadcast Address).

Prof. Levy, on the other hand, offers us the explanation that we are *dealing with a false isolate*. In other words, *we are ignoring too much of the environment*.

Let us, for illustration, isolate John Smith at about 3 o'clock on a Saturday afternoon. He is waving his arms in a frenzied fashion, and using the full strength of his lungs in exhortation and applause. If we confine ourselves in our data to the few cubic feet in his environment it is obvious that Determinism cannot give an adequate account of his behaviour. The deterministic method will not suffice until we have taken into account the football match which he is watching:—

"A tree is virtually an isolated system so long as we are concerned with the lesser systems¹ we can derive from it by further analysis—the bark, the shape and colour of the leaves, its fruit, girth, age, etc.," but "as soon as we are concerned with its growth process, however, we have to take into account its roots, and the atmosphere in which it grows. We have to widen the system so as to embrace more of that environment that previously was regarded as neutral to it."

Not all the atmosphere or all the soil in existence is required, and "the first function of experimental enquiry is, if possible, to find how little of an environment need be included to render a system neutral."

"That the simple concept of an atomic planetary system obeying laws . . . is not an adequate isolate is clear. The fuller reality we know is matter. These are all more sub-systems, attempted isolated systems at a level of space and time well below the range of visibility." "It would indeed be remarkable if the kind of isolated system suitable for widely separated bodies remained still adaptable for these limiting forms." "For although matter may be broken down into individual atoms with discrete unchanging properties when isolated, it does not follow that these are the properties they must exhibit when congregated together in each other's environment."²

The success of science is based on large-scale determinism. To judge from Eddington's scientific work "probably one of his greatest joys is to carry through a mathematical investigation that is finally verified as physically true . . . to determine in advance what nature will do, to use successfully the deterministic method, and to find it valid."

"Yet in the face of these obvious facts he asserts that there is not a particle of evidence in favour of Determinism." "It is a sweeping statement, which, taken at its face value, could mean nothing less than that the whole of scientific prediction in the past has been an illusion, and that the greater part of his life's work is groundless."

And Levy, a true philosopher, goes further. Not content with disproving his opponent's case, he goes on to explain how his opponent has slipped into error:—

"We have seen how the experimental scientist, restricting the field of his enquiry from the larger universe to smaller fragments of it, has passed from matter through the conceptions of particles and atoms to electrons. We have seen how, when this process is carried through, the possibility of forming isolated systems in neutral environments becomes, as we would expect, more and more difficult. For at each stage in the descent we have either to ignore part of the environment . . . or to fasten more inherent properties on to the smaller isolated systems. At these lower ranges the difficulties of finding the appropriate isolated systems increase in gathering intensity, for the difficulties of a sufficiently delicate experimental technique at the limits of visibility are colossal. Indeed, at a certain stage they become definitely insuperable. It is, therefore, not unnatural that the form of prediction capable of comparatively easy application to large-scale operation, where isolated systems are the subject of easy study, should break down at some stage. That is really all that Eddington can mean."

"Eddington therefore works upwards from the element to the larger aggregate, and in doing so bases his statement about the larger universe upon what can be deduced about a *fictional* world that would be a collection of these isolated electrons. It is a passage upwards from the unknown, and therefore it is to be expected that the imaginary universe so constructed will inherit on a colossal scale all the

¹ Every isolate is a unique combination of its sub-isolate.

² Cf. *Materialism Re-Stated*, Chap. vii.

vicious features of its infinitesimal parent. The breakdown on the smallest scale . . . which to the experimenter is evidence that he has reached the limits of his possible technique is to Eddington the starting point from which he will now proceed to evolve a larger-scale universe, his own final stage with all the attributes of indeterminism he has inserted in it."

It is an attempt to force a false isolate.

Levy concludes that Determinism is a well-established scientific procedure, and that "whatever else scientific men may say to the contrary concerning what they believe in their private capacities; as scientists they give the lie to it" by proceeding on the Deterministic assumption. The most rabid anti-Determinists, from the Chancellor of the Exchequer downwards, would lose their temper if their predictions were systematically upset by caprice.

I reserve for another time Levy's application of Determinism to personality.

G. H. TAYLOR.

The Book Shop.

"THE MAGNET," the second volume of a trilogy by Maxim Gorki (Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 15s.) is a book packed with matter, but lacking the fire and vigour of many of the author's previous works. It contains excellent character sketches, studies in artistry, quite opposite to the rough hewn sculpture of Gorki's in the days when youth was on his side. It shows the plan of events previous to 1905 and up to that historical date. There are many signs in the work that it is an autobiography. Much hot air exudes from most of the characters, but there is the full flavour of reality in the pages of the *Magnet* that compels attention. The Father Gapon incident is dramatically presented as also an admirable description of that famous singer Feodor Chaliapin. The book is streaky, but wisdom lurks in every chapter, and Gorki has succeeded in making history interesting. There is little doubt that the *Magnet* will be a classic in Russian history; Gorki is no dilettante nor a student in the fatuous pretty-pretty style. He was a man before he was an author, and as a Russian salad at this banquet, hear one of his characters talking: "Mystery?" inquired Vlastov, taking Kumov's measure with a sarcastic glance. "Unknowable, you say? If I were inclined to tricks with words, I should have said that if it is unknowable, that means that science already knows it as such. But tricks are the occupation of idealists. Whereas science does not obey Du Bois-Reymond, it does not know the unknowable, but only the unknown. Knowledge of which you are talking is for me merely a fabrication of verbal banalities. Real values are created out of the material of scientific experience, and the products of the creation of the idealists are but counterfeit currency."

Mr. Cedric Hardwicke, who seems to have been born at a time to carry on the tradition of good acting has written a book entitled *Let's Pretend* (Grayson & Grayson, 15s. net.) It is an autobiography, and it is set down in an easy conversational style, full of interest, and a chronicle of the difficult old days of the stage coming eventually to the time when the films seriously challenge its supremacy. Mr. Hardwicke was born in Lye, Worcestershire, in 1893, and at the age of twelve months won the first prize of a guinea in a beauty competition; this was his first appearance in public. At the age of fourteen he played "Hamlet." Writing of old melodrama such as "East Lynne," "Maria Marten," "The Fatal Wedding," "Two Little Vagabonds," and "The Grip of Iron," he says, "Such as was the entertainment provided, it was wholesome. It may have been a weekly repetition of the clash of heavily underlined virtue with heavily underlined evil, but I venture to think its influence was better than that provided by the fare which Hollywood has since substituted." Cheers for the heroes, and hisses for the villain were recompense enough

for actors in the good old days when a delay in commencement was marked by the chanting of "Up with the linen and make a beginning," compressed, by the more direct members of the audience into "Up with the dishcloth." The book is a classic record of the profession which the author adorns, and it contains many excellent photographs. One which particularly attracts me is that of the author in the part of Cæsar in "Cæsar and Cleopatra," a play, in my opinion the best that Shaw has ever written. *Let's Pretend* is pleasurable and interesting reading; it will greatly appeal to those who remember some of the giants who have now joined the great majority. There are good stories in it, wit and humour, and many a good laugh is to be had out of it, and I conclude with one of Mr. Hardwicke's observations, "People still exist who believe what they see in black and white, whether it be printed or photographed." There are others equally as good, for it seems, that an artist working in the land of illusions should have none.

Appreciating the fact that it is a sign of weak mentality to be seen with a newspaper, I occasionally buy one to see the rascality and stupidity that is dished up to readers. By accident I read Mr. Robert Lynd's review of Shaw's work, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God*. The review INCITED me to buy the book and I obtained a first edition; I am told that the first edition of 20,000 was sold out in a few days. The later copy I bought to give away was a second edition, and there is now a fourth edition out. The book itself has obtained justice in the columns of the *Freethinker*, but I should like to make one extract from it; here it is. "In all these instances the Bible means the translation authorized by King James the First of the best examples in ancient Jewish literature of natural and political history, of poetry, morality, theology and rhapsody." I remember, when studying the Bible on these lines, a rather fulsome eulogy made at a lecture, by the late Mrs. Humphrey Ward; it was on the usual conventional lines. Her remarks in this direction were politely obliterated by the late Professor W. H. Hudson, who was at one time secretary to Spencer. He would take the Bible, he said, on the very same basis of study as that made by Shaw; he did it thoroughly, and, as a public man he made no attempt to regard it as literature with a "taboo." This is more years ago than I care to remember, but, Freethought a hundred years old has the flavour of originality to those who rub noses with the literary pundits of the *News-Chronicle*, *John O'London*, *Everyman* (in its moments of aberration) and the *Morning Post*.

In *Everyman*, C.B.P., from whom we expect better things, calls Mr. Bernard Shaw's Book "a mischievous fantasy." The writer must have turned up the wrong phrase in his index book whilst following his occupation. And if words are to be used as precisely as possible, it might be asked (but never answered) where is the book mischievous and at what point is it fantasy? Mr. Shaw is writing for grown-ups—not for the savage in our midst.

A note on Leon Chestov appeared a little while ago under this series. This Russian's philosophy is now reviewed in *The Adelpi*. Would anyone, at this stage in the world's history be prepared to say that the following extract is helpful, or in any way adds to reliable knowledge? "Chestov's work as a whole may be taken as a commentary on the words of God, when he warned Adam that knowledge was death. Inspiring his work, giving him courage to preserve along the seemingly blind alley where he gropes his way, is an ever lively memory of lost paradise, a nostalgia for the state of innocence and divine ignorance which mean power, liberty and joy."

This is a word-spinning, literary inebriety and demonstrates that the horse is not dead but requires, instead of flogging, that most powerful of all dynamites, common sense. At the close of 1932 it is agreed, the *Freethinker* has supplied and applied its quota.

C-DE-B.

Correspondence.

BITTER "SWEET."?

SIR,—May I put in a warning to your readers with respect to "Bitter Sweet," as eulogised by your contributor, C-de-B. Under the persuasion of two friends who had seen the play twice, and whose theatre tastes were not unlike my own, I saw the play: and I never saw any of the advanced ideas which C-de-B. found in it. The music bore distinct traces of Sullivan, but I doubt if in twenty or even ten years' time it will not be forgotten, like the music of forty years ago of *Olivette*, *Falka* and *Dorothy*.

With respect to the opening of the play—with the characters middle-aged: then the reversion to twenty years before, to explain the first scene: and the final return to the time of the first scene, C-de-B. seems to imagine the plan is new. Surely he has forgotten or never seen "Secrets," "Romance," "Many Waters" or "Murder on the Second Floor," to mention only recent shows. Shakespeare used the plan in part in his "Induction" and "The Taming of the Shrew": and he borrowed from an older play where the time of the opening scene is reverted to at the end; both plays being founded on an older story in Goulart's "Admirable and Memorable Histories." The notion is also to be found in the Arabian Nights story "The Sleeper Awakened." Indeed the "envelope" method, of a story within a story; play within a play has been exploited in many times and languages, and Noel Coward was only using a well-known literary and dramatic device in "Bitter Sweet" not originating something new.

I wonder if C-de-B. has seen Lord Dunsany's "If."

PLAYGOER.

A CURATE IN A CORNER.

A DIALOGUE.

(Parties: A Curate and a School Boy.)

Boy: How can there be three gods in one?
I'm jolly sure it can't be done.
That one and two are surely three
Is plain for any fool to see;
That two and one are three is plain
To everyone who has a brain.

Curate: That three in one and one in three
Make up the Holy Trinity
Is what the Church has always taught,
You must believe it and you ought.
If you do not take it from me
You'll perish everlastingly.

Boy: You say it is a mystery—
This three in one and one in three,
If it's incomprehensible
Is it not reprehensible
For you to be cock sure about
What no man ever can find out?

Curate: It is by faith and prayer that you
May come to see that this is true;
Give up your pride of intellect
Then you will pray with good effect,
And come to take all things as true
That Holy Church presents to you.

Boy: I tell you that will never be:
Our eyes were given us to see,
Our brains were given us to use,
And to stop thinking I refuse,
And while I think I can't agree
That three times one do not make three.
(Exit curate, a sadder, but not a wiser man.)

Cynicus.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road): 8.0, Tuesday, February 14, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Roman Catholicism in the Melting Pot."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. F. Victor Fisher—"The Inner Meaning of Christianity."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Miss Dugdale (of British Social Hygiene Council)—"The Gift of Life." Illustrated by non-inflammable Film.)

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, February 13, Discussion on the article—"Theism." In the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.0, Tuesday, February 14, Prof. Lancelot Hogben—"Darwinism and the Religion of Inequality."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road): 7.0, H. Cutner—"Charles Bradlaugh."

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH (Mitchell's Restaurant, High Road): 7.30, Mr. T. J. Sutherland—"Men After God's Own Heart."

OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, February 12, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

WOOLWICH (Lakedale Road): 8.0, Friday, February 17, Messrs. Dossett and Smith. Beresford Square: 8.0, Sunday, February 19, Messrs. Burke, Dossett and Smith.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ASHINGTON AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S., Wednesday, February 22, Mr. R. Sinclair, M.I.H.—"Introduction to Embryology."

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Hall, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 8.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President of the N.S.S., and Editor of the *Freethinker*), Friday, February 17—"Looking for God."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Mr. Jack Bailey—"Education and Progress."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. Jack Clayton—"Freethought and Poetry."

HANTS AND DORSET BRANCH N.S.S. (36 Victoria Park Road): 6.30, A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, R. Fyfe—"Progress of Secularism in U.S.S.R."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. B. Harry Hassell—"Behaviour."

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, S. Cohen (Manchester)—"Why the Belief in God is Demoralizing." Current *Freethinkers* and Mr. Cohen's Record on sale.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. G. F. H. McCluskey, A Lecture.

STOCKPORT LABOUR FELLOWSHIP (Central Hall, Millgate, Stockport): 6.45, Mr. George Whitehead (London)—"How Man Made God."

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.15, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Central Halls, 25, Bath Street.

Sunday, February 19, at 3.0 p.m.

Professor C. H. DESCH, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.I.C.,
F.I.Ph., F.R.S.

"The Social Function of Science."

Questions and Discussion

Silver Collection

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CHAIRMAN—CHAPMAN COHEN.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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