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

Views and Opinions.

Lord Dawson at Church.

I HAVE many times called attention to the way in which public men in this country behave where religion is concerned. I expect I shall have to do it on many more occasions. For where religion is in question, ordinary canons of right and wrong appear to lose their force. It would seem that when a man does not believe in religion, it is only common honesty for him to say so when the circumstances warrant it, and that this duty is the more imperative as the man is highly placed. For the more prominent the man the greater his influence. What he says may not merely mislead others as to what he believes; it may lead others who note his indefiniteness, and his method of "holding a candle to the devil," to imitate him. The second of these evils is the greater of the two, it leads to the direct cultivation of hypocrisy. It is of no avail for a man who has thus procrastinated to say in defence, "I did not say I believed in Christianity," or "My interpretation of Christianity is not that which is commonly held," the fact remains that the impression he has created is not the one which he asserts it was his intention to create. Those who are not able to see through clouds of guarding phrases are deceived; while those who are able to detect the humbug are too often encouraged to follow the same path. The result is wide-spread insincerity, with a consequent general distrust. More than half the social, ethical, political and religious shams that exists in this country do so, because many prominent persons set the example of insincerity of speech and ambiguity of action.

At the Heels of the Chariot.

I have received quite a shower of newspaper cuttings with reports of the proceedings connected with the installation of Lord Dawson of Penn, President of the Royal College of Physicians and of the British Medical Association, to the Fellowship of the Chapter of Liverpool Cathedral. Lord Dawson was

installed as representing medical science, but it would be idle to assume from this that the aim of the Cathedral authorities was the glorification of science, medical or otherwise. It is an advertisement of Christianity that is required, and the desire is to give the impression that science and religion are working together in close harmony, and that Lord Dawson is a good son of the Church. But it would be quite unwarranted to assume Lord Dawson to be a Christian, or even that he is religious, on the ground of his appearance in the Cathedral. I do not know that he is not, but it is generally believed that his religion is at best a very nebulous thing. I have no direct information either way; and so long as public men persist in keeping their real opinions on religion to themselves, or veiling their disbelief in shoals of evasive equivocal phrases, such uncertainty will always exist. Where the Chesterfieldian rule "I am of the religion of sensible men, and sensible men never tell" is in force one can never be quite certain whether a profession of religion expresses sincerity or masks hypocrisy. It is a situation in which the honest man is always open to a suspicion of dishonesty, and which does not altogether protect the hypocrite from the scorn of his fellows. Given a sufficient number of counterfeit treasury notes in circulation and that form of currency loses the confidence of the public. Tampering with the moral currency produces a precisely similar effect. Honest coin is apt to be treated as though it were counterfeit.

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Truth and the Church.

So I am quite unable to conclude from Lord Dawson's appearance in Liverpool Cathedral whether he is religious or not. He may believe that occasionally a child is born without a father, or that for special purposes a man who is physiologically dead may be raised from the grave, or that the prayer of faith will save the sick. I do not know, but because of what I have said about public men and religion I may not conclude that Lord Dawson's joining in a Christian service proves him to be a Christian. He may have his own peculiar notion of what real Christianity is. He may think he is doing a very valuable social service in taking part in a religious performance. After all, what is called Jesuitry is not confined to Jesuits. Jesuitry is in essence a natural outcome of Christian ethics, and it has affected every society where Christianity has power. But there are indications in Lord Dawson's address which go to show that his opinions on religion are certainly not very definite, and that his ideas about the Church are not very accurate. Take the opening of his speech:—

The order of Councillors in this Cathedral—men gathered from diverse walks of knowledge and activity—bears witness to the comprehensiveness of the English Church. You do not enquire whether those you receive into your brotherhood subscribe to

the Articles of your creed. Rather do you accept all disciples of truth as a way of fulfilling God's purpose.

This does hint that Lord Dawson's religion is not of a very positive quality. He appears to be saying, "I am with you, but I am not of you." And he is certainly at sea with regard to the belief that the English Church accepts all disciples of truth as instruments of God's purpose. The Bishop of Liverpool must have smiled inwardly at such a statement. It is certain that if Lord Dawson had been a militant Atheist of the type of Charles Bradlaugh he would never have been invited to join the brotherhood. There are all sorts of disciples of truth in this country, from the wildest of Communists to the woolliest of Conservatives, from the Materialist to the Idealist, from the crankiest of "healers" to the most orthodox of medical men, from the most credulous of Roman Catholics to the most aggressive of Atheists, and no one but a fool would deny that the quality of seriousness, of intense conviction of truth may and does accompany all of these beliefs. Would the Bishop of Liverpool welcome them all, and really give them an equal chance of expressing their "truth?" Of course Lord Dawson's statement is simply absurd, and we are not surprised that the *Church Times* promptly reminds him that you "cannot secure admission to the Church of England on those terms." But as we have said, the Church wants the advertisement of well-known names, and it is unfortunate that in so many cases the bearers of well-known names should permit themselves to be used, as are the testimonial writers for quack remedies, careless of the way in which they bring discredit on an honourable profession.

Liverpool Cathedral, and the creed for which the Cathedral stands, whatever else it may do, does not welcome all disciples of truth. It is not even engaged in discovering the truth. Its business is to preach "the truth," and that is a very different proposition. The Cathedral will only tolerate "disciples of truth" when they either accept a particular "truth," or when they can be trusted to say nothing against *Christian* truth, or when their intellectual or public eminence may be used to advertise the *untruth* that science is in complete accord with religion. It is true that the Church of England is not the least liberal of the Churches, but it is still a Christian Church, and those whom it honours must either accept its teachings or must be trusted not openly to attack them. I am certain that Lord Dawson would never have attained the eminence he has reached had he reasoned as badly in his medical researches as he does when dealing with religion and science. But perhaps Lord Dawson was framing his logic so as to be in accord with his environment.

* * *

Science and Service.

I will deal with Lord Dawson's treatment of religion and science next week. I am unable to do it justice in the space I now have. But there is one sentence in his address which might be Gibbonian in the way it saps a solemn creed with solemn sneer, or may only express confusion in the mind of the speaker. He says:—

. . . medicine touches religion not in its beliefs, but in its care for the individual soul and the way of living . . . Between these varieties there should be contact and tolerance but not compromise. The disciples of medicine are thus concerned with two different kinds of knowledge . . . To the profession of medicine belongs the narrow road of knowledge, wisdom and understanding. The magical and miraculous are the broad roads which lead to destruction.

One feels sorry it was not also emphasized that compromise may be effected either by way of asserted acquiescence in beliefs that one does not hold, or by the passive way of so acting and speaking as to mislead the hearer as to where one actually stands.

Why is social service outside the field of science? Above all why is medicine outside social service? Of course one cannot take so much good-will, and so much kindness and so much personal service, and mix them up in a bottle for the use of patients. But the medical practitioner who does not take into account the "individual soul" of his patient, and whose ministrations does not guide or constrain further than, "To be taken three times daily" is likely to have more tombstones than monuments erected to his memory. Undertakers may be very deserving fellows, but they are incidental to the profession of medicine rather than the chief of its avowed ends.

* * *

On Opinions.

Here is one other passage which indicates that Lord Dawson is not quite so sound as might be on the ethics of the intellect:—

I omit reference to those who accept belief from the authority of the Church, though their opinions call for respect and reverence.

That is very bad indeed, and would have been out of place anywhere but in a cathedral. What respect is actually due to a man who has taken his belief from the authority of the Church? One might as reasonably talk of the respect and reverence due to a gramophone. He has no personal belief at all, he is a mere sounding board, an echo. If respect and reverence is due here, it should be to the Church, not to the men who unthinkingly accept what they have been told.

But the whole thing is wrong, horribly wrong, and it is the cover for more mental cowardice and compromise than anything else. No opinion, as such, no belief, as such may demand respect or reverence. To say that we must respect an opinion is absurd. In practice we do not do it because we cannot do it. The Conservative does not respect the opinion of the Radical, the *Morning Post* does not reverence the opinions of the Russian Soviet, the B.B.C. does not respect any opinion that is directly hostile to Christianity. Opinions are only worthy of respect when we believe the opinions to be true ones, beliefs are only worthy of reverence when we believe them to be noble ones. But to talk of all beliefs as worthy of respect is downright stupidity. What is worthy of respect is the right of every man to express an opinion whatever it is. But in respecting a man's right to hold any opinion he thinks right, and to express it without hindrance, I do not and ought not to forgo my right to treat it with contempt. That is more than my right, it is my duty. If Lord Dawson had taken advantage of the occasion to point out that the refusal to recognize this right of expression on the one hand and the right of opposition on the other had been one of the cardinal sins of the Christian Church in all its branches, his address might have been more useful than it was. But had this been anticipated it is tolerably certain that Lord Dawson of Penn would not have been the welcome visitor he was.

I will deal with Lord Dawson's handling of the general question of religion and science next week.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Whatever gives freedom and variety to thought and earnestness to men's interest in the world, must contribute to a good end.—John (Lord) Morley.

The Mixture as Before.

"The worth of a State in the long run is the worth of the individuals composing it."—*Mill*.

"School-teachers who insist on religion must be either stupid or hypocritical."—*Bertrand Russell*.

The clergy know their own sorry business only too well. These "sons of God" seldom admit their fear of the Freethought Movement. In public they maintain a stout front, and never tire of the old refrain, "Who's afraid?" Behind the scenes, however, they whisper together, and arrange quietly the means of retreat. Fortunately for civilization and humanity retreat is the order of the day, and will continue to be so. Since Freethought has been organized the Army of the Lord has had no rest. The continuous frontal attacks of the Freethinkers are beginning to tell heavily, and the clergy are getting very nervous. Not long ago the House of Convocation of Canterbury actually decided to abandon unscemly portions of their own Scriptures, and to delete from the Book of Common Prayer some of the most glaring and objectionable features of the Old Testament. This astute clerical manœuvre was intended to deceive believers as to the real character of the Christian Bible. It may deceive some innocents for a time, but it will not save Christianity in the long run.

Adult worshippers are not the sole concern of the clergy. Their hope is in the rising generation, and their power lies in the encouragement of religious teaching throughout the educational system of this country. Hence, the Bishop of Ripon called a conference recently to consider the place of religion in education, and, cleverly, roped in representatives of the Free Churches. After all, Nonconformist ministers are as much priests as the State Church variety, for, as Milton puts it, "presbyter is but priest writ large."

The star-turn at this precious conference was no less a person than Lord Irwin, President of the Board of Education, and his speech is a standing reminder that, under present-day conditions, a man may occupy a big position and yet have but slender claims for such honour. Lord Irwin protested that religion is vital to the welfare and prosperity of any State or Society, and that religious teaching should be as thorough and as efficient as existing statutory provisions permitted.

It is perfectly amazing that a man with any reputation to lose should talk like this. Lord Irwin, who has travelled in the East, should know what horrors are enacted in the name of religion. Yet he pretends that religion—any religion, mark you—is vital to the welfare of any country. His lordship really ought to undertake a little missionary work among the Cannibals of the South Sea Islands. Or, if he prefers nearer home; he might do worse than attend the annual fake of the Holy Fire at Jerusalem, or the liquefaction of St. Januarius' blood at Naples.

Almost as amusing is Sir Herbert Samuel's assertion that Englishmen are devout because he heard a cup-tie crowd singing "Abide with Me." If that crowd had been singing, "Beer, glorious beer," would Sir Herbert have branded us all as drunkards?

The Bishop of Ripon said that present-day religious views would shock our grandmothers. Just so! He might have added that if somebody, centuries ago, had not shocked dear grandmamma, we might have been now offering human sacrifice in Trafalgar Square, and had Druid priests officiating on the site of St. Paul's Cathedral. The bishop added that years ago "it was naughty to ask questions when one was

young, and dangerous to ask questions about religion when one was grown up." He did not say how dangerous it was. He never whispered a word concerning men and women being burnt alive in the name of religion. "Mum's" the word on such aspects of religion, and religious people on these matters are as close as oysters.

Mr. J. T. Lancaster, headmaster of Ashville College, put up an unexpected plea for schoolboys. When he was young, he said, he had crammed into his mind the idea of an Almighty Policeman who made notes of his movements.

If, however, this headmaster is so concerned with the welfare of these fine, clean-minded boys, why does he teach the Oriental Bible and the Christian religion? He must know that this sacred volume is full of barbarism and ancient ignorance from cover to cover, from the first error in "Genesis" to the final absurdity in the Book of Revelation. Much of the writing is repellent to modern readers, let alone children. In far too many pages of the Old Testament there are recorded the scuffles of savages, whose arrows are "drunk with blood," to adapt its own charming phraseology. There are also far too many chapters quite unsuitable to be read by juveniles. As for the New Testament, the moral perception of today is shocked beyond expression at the awful doctrine that countless millions of mankind will suffer eternal punishment. Believed by children, such horrible ideas "make a goblin of the sun." The clergy, above all others, should know these things, and in forcing this book upon the children of this country they may safeguard their own position in the nation, but they will forfeit the respect of all high-minded people.

The plain, blunt, unpalatable truth is that in this country education has been hampered by the desire of the clergy to teach "religion" as part of the ordinary school curriculum. This desire has been further complicated by the dissensions among themselves. The teachings of the State Church are considered by the Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful, whilst the instruction given by Dissenters is pronounced to be heretical and dangerous. Roman Catholics, in their turn, consider that Anglicans and Free Churchmen are alike so monstrous that they provide their own schools, or withdraw their children from Christian religious instruction. Realizing, however, that they must hang together, or hang separately, many of the clergy of all denominations agree that the Christian Bible be read in the schools, but that no theological doctrines be taught. That is what is called "Simple Bible teaching," and, although it satisfies most of the clergy, who use it as the thin edge of the wedge, it still impedes education and fetters progress. The clergy are wise in their generation. They realize that so long as their fetish-book is forced upon millions of children, and the little ones are taught to respect them as sacred persons, their own position will be quite safe. Democrats, however, cannot be expected to regard this delightful arrangement with enthusiasm. For men may be ordained to the Christian ministry, even attain high rank in that profession, and yet have never been converted to civilization. There is high need for definite action. When the Domesday Survey was made in the reign of William the Conqueror, near a thousand years ago, there were three mills in Taunton paying tribute to the then Bishop of Winchester. To-day, the owner of the town-mill has to pay his annual tribute to that bishopric. How much longer, O Democracy, are these clerical parasites to levy tithes, collect ground-rents and mining royalties, in order to cramp the minds of the rising generation?

Bradlaugh and Debate.

THERE was until recently a tendency to decry something called "Victorian," though I must frankly confess I have never yet been able to find out what exactly Victorianism meant. Of course, people were born, grew up, got married, died and were buried under Queen Victoria. They also wrote books, painted pictures, built towns and bridges, discovered new countries and new things in science, and they all seem to me to be suspiciously like ourselves. Naturally they hadn't the talkies or the wireless, but they seemed well able to amuse themselves—or to suffer when things were hard. In so far as many great and important discoveries have been made since the old Queen died, Victorianism may be called something which did without them or, perhaps, it was something which could have happened only under Victoria and nobody else, though I feel that Dickens or Darwin, for example, would have flourished just the same even if Victoria had not come to the throne.

I have seen the stuffed armchairs, the glass cases with stuffed birds in them, the tapestried beds and the very unpleasant sanitation of last century described as Victorianism, as well as Tennyson, Watts (the painter), Gladstone, Mrs. Ormiston Chant, General Booth, Jack the Ripper and many other world-famed people and things that happened when Queen Victoria was becoming like a legend that seemed never to die. But really, I have an idea that our great grand-children may look just as pityingly on "Georgeianism" next century and, retailing our marvellous collection of celebrities and events, wonder how *we* ever survived them more than a year or two. The truth seems to be that every century, since the Renaissance at least, marks some progress, greater each succeeding century because of the tremendous discoveries of science, the inherent love of freedom in the human race, and the impulse given to this by the work of Freethinkers and reformers.

I do not deny, however, that there were some aspects of human activity last century which compare favourably with those of to-day. Victorians had courage, for example, and I could, if it were my subject, easily demonstrate that to the full.

I shall take courage only in so far as it relates to controversy, and one has only to glance through a record of our social history to see how anxious the Victorians were to prove they were right, how desperately hard they strove to give their reasons and how many forlorn hopes they led with inspiring audacity.

Born four years before Victoria came to the throne, Charles Bradlaugh lived and died within her reign, and I must confess I have never seen him cited as a typical Victorian any more than that other shocking Freethinker, Richard Burton. Both threw their complacent age out of gear so to speak. Both galvanized mediocrity into shrill disclaimer, and both have left names to be reckoned with.

Bradlaugh was a born leader and fighter. His joining the army was not altogether for economic reasons. The cry of battle was in his blood, and as his whole soul abhorred bloodshed, it was sublimated later (in psycho-analytic phraseology) to intellectual controversy.

He was only twelve years old when he started to earn his living, and this dependence on himself so early in his career influenced his whole life and thought. The Chartists had begun to assert themselves, and the open spaces in the City Road were often crowded with speakers and disputants. Young Bradlaugh, brought up in the Church of England, and one of the most promising pupils of his Sunday school, was a zealous defender of the old faith,

in spite of the fact that his questionings on difficult points so angered his teacher, the Rev. Mr. Packer, that with Christ-like forbearance the rev. gentleman actually wrote to the boy's parents, denouncing him as atheistical!

It was not long before Bradlaugh arranged a debate (with a Mr. J. Savage) on "The Inspiration of the Bible." It was his first public discussion, and it resulted in a thorough defeat for orthodoxy. Thenceforth, he became a Freethinker, and when he asked Mr. Packer a few pertinent questions on Robert Taylor's *Diegesis*, the result can easily be guessed. Mr. Packer carried an ultimatum to the elder Bradlaugh, and his son was given three days either to change his opinions or get the sack. The threat, it is true, may never have been carried out, but for Charles Bradlaugh only one course was open. Young as he was he took it and left his home to fight "the battle of life unaided but independently," as one biographer puts it, before he was seventeen years of age.

This is not the place or time to relate his struggles for a living. The '50's of last century was an era of unmitigated bigotry. It was the golden age of the Bible. Every word in God's own Book was inspired. It was God's gift to erring mankind; it contained everything man could know or ought to know, and apart from implicit belief in everything it contained, no salvation was possible. Hell was a veritable place of fire, heaven gave eternal bliss, angels dressed in female clothes, with holes in the back to let the wings through, were actual living beings, and the blood of the Saviour was on almost everybody's lips. To be an infidel was to be some monstrous horror, and nothing too bad could be devised against a blaspheming Atheist. The greater number of the people of England subscribed to some form of Christianity, each quite sure it was the genuine one. The Oxford movement had had immense influence and the secession of many English Churchmen to Rome really strengthened Christianity. Newman was intellectually a power of strength, and with Wiseman and Manning, helped to give the Roman Catholic Church tremendous and world-wide publicity. The Protestant divines also were defending their faith and the Bible with great dialectical skill, and were always ready to meet the unbeliever in debate. This may not be true perhaps of those at the top, but all over the country could be found men eager and ready to defend Christianity or Theism, and Southwell, Robert Cooper, Charles Watts, George Jacob Holyoake and a number of other "infidels" never had any difficulty in finding opponents.

The work of "Tom" Paine was well known as was the *Diegesis* of Robert Taylor. Moreover, the orthodox clergymen were not afraid to study the German semi-Rationalists, whose criticisms were more or less epitomized in the books of R. W. Mackay. No matter how much Strauss and Feuerbach were hated, their criticisms had to be met, and much as we may dissent from the orthodox champions, we must not forget to give them credit for their courage in defending what seems to us to be hopeless positions, and which their successors have had to give up one by one.

The unknown English clergyman who, from some small parish, could write a book worth reading to-day, annihilating Popish claims (compare, for example Blakeney's *Manual of Popery*) or, who was not afraid of meeting in a public discussion one of the foremost debaters and orators of his day, as Bradlaugh became, may have made a mess of his case, but he at least did have courage. How many Christian clergymen to-day do, in this respect, equal the despised Victorian?

Many of them too, tried hard to be tolerant, but that was almost impossible. Christianity in its very essence is rigorously intolerant. As Paul (is said to have) put it: "If any man preach any other gospel to you than that you have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 9.) And to us it is most amusing to read how literally that was taught last century by the various sects of Christianity to each other.

Bradlaugh had to face the most bitter antagonism all his life from Christians, and it is not too much to say that his forty years of advocacy of Freethought shortened his life. His death at fifty-seven was a calamity.

Those early times when, during the day, he was struggling for bread, and during his leisure was struggling in debate helped to make him the great fighter he eventually became. He was a born orator, and crowds gathered to hear the boy as he still was. And this early success brought him in contact with Austin Holyoake, that fine Freethinker—too long overshadowed by his better known and more facile brother, George Jacob—who managed to get Bradlaugh's first pamphlet printed, much to the young man's delight. His lectures were also violently denounced by an egregious editor, Dr. Campbell, of the *British Banner*. Unfortunately none of these things brought him any financial help, and he decided to enlist, as he thought, in the service of the East India Company, but he found he was through a trick in the Fiftieth Foot instead.

Bradlaugh's experiences in the Army were particularly interesting, but it was no place for a student bent on learning Greek and Hebrew and French, and he was lucky to be able to leave it. He got a job as an "errand boy" to a solicitor, but soon proved his capabilities to his employer in other ways. Hence that knowledge of law which distinguished and influenced his career and made him such a terrible opponent in the Courts. Hence also his power of twisting a less able opponent into a knot. So that his business and his Freethought propaganda should not clash, Bradlaugh took the pseudonym of "Iconoclast" and made it one of the best known and most feared of infidel names.

As there was hardly any real Freethought organization, Bradlaugh devoted himself to the movement, and with his lectures and debates soon proved himself not merely one of the keenest and most fearless propagandists of his time, but showed qualities in leadership almost unknown in our ranks till his day.

There was one clergyman, or rather Dissenting minister, the Rev. Brewin Grant, who on the strength of his two debates with G. J. Holyoake, considered himself the greatest debater of his day. Now it cannot be denied that Grant could debate. He knew all the tricks of the platform, and he knew also how to play on the feelings of an audience by reviling dead Freethinkers—he never scrupled to lie like a real Christian when it suited his purpose—and he indulged in foul personalities when he found his arguments were getting the worse of the encounter. Bradlaugh held the first of his discussions with this charming person in 1860. The extracts of this debate that I have read make most unpleasant reading, as Bradlaugh protested again and again he was arguing principles and not personalities. But it is a pity he took Grant seriously. Perhaps we who live in a more tolerant age cannot visualise the exact conditions, and think our way would have silenced this particular clown. He was not liked, anyhow, by his colleagues, and eventually he left the "Dissenting World," as he called it, and joined the Church of England. I may have to say something more of him later when I deal more in detail with some of the

wordy encounters which Bradlaugh had during those forty years of his when he almost alone stood for Atheism—an Atheism backed up by his keen, logical and analytical mind. This is his Centenary Year. I want some of my younger colleagues never to forget, as I myself have never forgotten, the tremendous debt we owe to Charles Bradlaugh.

H. CUTNER.

Max Planck on Determinism.

"It is evident that the interaction of myriads of atoms, each with their electrons and waves accompanying electrons, in each of the fourteen thousand million neurons computed to be in the great brain suffice for the functions of mind and consciousness. There is no justification for calling into play "a spirit from the vasty deep, totemism, magic, witchcraft, polytheism, vitalism, free-will, human immortality and divine retribution, heaven and hell and the devil, a crowd of spectres with which man's wayward and fearful imagination has for ages oppressed him, cumbering his progress in true knowledge and in command over the forces of nature." (Sir Leonard Hill: *Philosophy of a Biologist*. p. 73.)

THE scientific discoveries of Max Planck, although not so well known to the public as those of Einstein, are regarded by his fellow scientists as of equal importance with those of Einstein himself. His theory of the Quantum has solved and made clear many puzzling scientific problems, and has given a great impetus to scientific research, but, like Einstein's theory of Relativity, it can only be appreciated fully by the mathematicians.

In his new book *Where is Science Going* (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.), the dust cover tells us: "He (Max Planck) shows that the Quantum theory has not upset the determinism of the older school, and that there are no logical grounds for attributing something like free-will to nature." There is a preface to the work by Einstein, and at the end "A Socratic Dialogue between Einstein—Planck—and Murphy who is the translator of the book, and who also contributes an introduction.

Max Planck begins by tracing the progress of science during the last fifty years. Then he deals with the present scientific views, followed by two chapters on "Causation and Free Will." It is with this part of the book that we propose to deal.

In his book *The Mysterious Universe*, Sir James Jeans observes that Max Planck's Quantum theory "appeared to dethrone the law of causation from the position it had heretofore held as guiding the course of the natural world." (p. 20.) One of the main objects of Planck's new book is to show that there is no exception to the law of causation, either in the inorganic or the organic world. The law of causation, used throughout the work by the translator, is termed by us Determinism, and must be so understood in our quotations, as opposed to the doctrine of free will. Far from holding that his Quantum theory will overthrow Materialism, Max Planck holds that it will strengthen it. He says: "I firmly believe, in company with most physicists, that the quantum hypothesis will eventually find its exact expression in certain equations which will be a more exact formulation of the law of causality." (p. 143.) And further "physical science, together with astronomy and chemistry and mineralogy, are all based on the strict and universal validity of the principle of causality. In a word, this is the answer which physical science has to give to the question asked at the beginning of the present chapter." (p. 147.) The question is "Does science in its everyday investigations accept the principle of causation as an indispensable postulate?"

The problems concerned with the science of biology, which deals with living things, are much more intricate, and present serious difficulties to investigation, yet Determinism still governs. Max Planck continues:—

Of course I cannot speak with special authority in this branch of science. Yet I have no hesitation in saying that even in the most obscure problems, such as the problem of heredity, biology, is approaching more and more to the explicit assumption of the universal validity of causal relations. Just as no physicist will in the last resort acknowledge the play of chance in inanimate nature, so no physiologist will admit the play of chance in the absolute sense, although of course the microscopic method of research is very much more difficult to carry out in physiology than in physics. (p. 147.)

To clinch the matter: "Science can only accept the universal validity of the law of causation, which enables us definitely to predict effects following a given cause, and in case the predicted effect should not follow then we know that some other facts have come into play which were left out of consideration in our reckoning." (p. 148.) Which fulfils the claim made by Professor Tyndall, in his famous *Belfast Address*, nearly sixty years ago, and which aroused such a storm of theological anger and abuse, and runs as follows: "The impregnable position of science may be described in a few words. We claim, and we shall wrest from theology, the entire domain of cosmological theory. All schemes and systems which thus infringe upon the domain of science must, *in so far as they do this*, submit to its control, and relinquish all thought of controlling it."

But, resumes Max Planck, in spite of the remarkable progress of science "the tendency to believe in the power of mysterious agencies is an outstanding characteristic of our own day," as shown by the popularity of occultism and spiritualism. And he asks, "how is this peculiar fact to be explained?" "Is there a point at which the causal line of thought ceases and beyond which science cannot go?"

For our part, we should answer, not at all. The mass of the people are quite ignorant of science, and while religion, in this country, is patronized by the State, and taught in all the State schools, nothing else can be expected. If you teach children that there are supernatural powers over and above the natural laws, and capable of suspending them, you open the door to all manner of superstitions. But this is not the answer given by Max Planck. Up to this point he has pursued the path of inexorable fact and logic, and warned the supernatural off from every field of science. Now, suddenly, at the critical point, he collapses and on the flimsiest pretext, namely, the popularity and prevalence of superstition, gives away his case, as follows:—

The fact is that there is a point, one single point in the immeasurable world of mind and matter, where science and therefore every causal method of research is inapplicable, not only on practical grounds but also on logical grounds, and will always remain inapplicable. This point is the individual ego. It is a small point in the universal realm of being . . . Over this realm no outer power of fate can ever have sway, and we lay aside our own control and responsibility over ourselves only with the laying aside of life itself. (p. 161.)

Yet, only a few pages previously we had been told that "if we could study the acts of the human being at very close and intimate quarters, we should find they can be accounted for through causes which lie in the character or in the momentary emotional tension or in the specific external environment." This does not give much scope for the free will of the human being! And further "conduct entirely with-

out motive is scientifically just as incompatible with the principles on which mental science is carried on as the assumption of absolute chance in inorganic nature is incompatible with the working principle of physical science." (p. 154.) Very well then, if conduct is governed by motives, the motives must have a cause, like everything else, and therefore come under the rule of Determinism, and in fact Max Planck admits that Psychology—the science of the mind—is founded upon Determinism. He says:—

The deeper scientific research goes into the peculiarities that have characterized even the great spiritual movements of world history, more and more the causal relation emerges into the open. The dependence of each event upon preceding fact and preparatory factors gradually begins to appear under the strong light of scientific investigation, so much so as to warrant the statement that present-day scientific procedure in psychology is founded practically exclusively on the principle of causal interrelations and the assumption of an active law of causality which permits no exceptions. This means that the postulate of complete determinism is accepted as a necessary condition for the progress of psychological research.

Under these circumstances it is obvious that we cannot erect a definite boundary and say: Thus far but no farther. The principle of causality must be held to extend even to the highest achievements of the human soul. (p. 155.)

Yet, only four pages further on, he gives the case away.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

Mr. J. A. R. Cairns, the well-known London magistrate, has honoured the *Daily Express* with an article, "How I think a man should live." Its excellence is unchallenged, and a proof that we live in an age of miracles; or shall we say a world of accidents? for the article is full of common sense. There is not one single sop thrown to the peculiar kind of Christianity which makes the *Daily Express* lyrical, and the writer states "that this age is freed from the mental fears and tortures of the Victorian era." Fear is one of the particular copyrights of Christianity which enables all its official representatives to gain power, and it is encouraging to know that there are knobkerries at work in the world to reduce this peculiar form of lunacy to what is decent and human.

In the numerous notices on the passing of George Moore the nearest approach to an admission that this genius was a Freethinker is the statement that "he did not lack a spice of malice and was irreverent of much that his fellows held sacred." This delightful skating on the thin ice of orthodoxy in another twenty years may be translated to read that George Moore was an excellent Christian, although all that he wrote was saturated with the Greek healthy attitude towards life. This, of course, is Chinese to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the lesser lights of Christianity who claim no-saying to life as a virtue.

Canon Searle of the English Church Union (as reported in the *Church Times*) recently made an eloquent appeal reaffirming "the doctrine of the Church concerning the Blessed sacrament of the Altar," and concluded with "If the doctrine of the Real Presence is magical," as is openly asserted in newspapers and pulpits "then magic is the official doctrine of the Church of England, and one would imagine that really honest men would not care to remain official teachers in such a Church. If it is not magic, then the sooner we receive a public apology for

this offensive expression the better." If this means us, we humbly offer no apology whatever, but if it means Dr. Barnes, what about it, Bishop?

In case it is not generally known what the Christian Sacrifice of the Mass really is, we quote Dr. Charles Harris: "We believe that the Eucharist is a Sacrifice, and that the essential element in that Sacrifice is twofold: (1) Christ being truly present therein by virtue of the Eucharistic consecration both as Priest and as Victim; and (2) the priest and the worshippers, united to Christ by Communion and being living members of His Body, offer themselves with Christ to the Father as a living sacrifice. There is nothing whatever that is superstitious or magical about sacrifice so conceived." If there is "nothing whatever," of magic or superstition in this meaningless conglomeration of words—there is nothing in it at all.

We remarked last week that a Freethought propagandist with a sense of humour should never find things dull—so long as there are Christians about. Here is an example from the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, which has a writer who styles himself "Adrian," solemnly announcing that he does not accept evolution because "it leaves me cold." We do not know what his temperature has to do with it, but no one can retort that the man who rejects Christianity will be left cold. But the poor man appears to labour under the delusion that scientific men reject Natural Selection, whereas some only question its adequacy to account for evolution. The operation of a form of selection that is not conscious is about as plain as anything can be. And evolution is to-day questioned by no one whose opinion is worth bothering about. "Adrian" is also unconvinced by evolutionary teaching because it is "materialistic and unscientific." So good-bye evolution—in the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*.

The gem of the article is in the tail. "Organized matter is synonymous with purpose, which finds its expression in the human brain." That is quite interesting, but it hardly demonstrates the existence of cosmic intelligence. Consider the millions of years that organic evolution has been proceeding, and also that if organized matter spells purpose all that has happened was intended. And look at the result? Of course there was Darwin, but there was also Billy Sunday, there was Bradlaugh, but there is the Bishop of London. There was the genius, but the idiot is just as surely the end of a term. And there is "Adrian." Was it all worth while? You see, it is all purposive. "Adrian's" God intended it all! If there is a God, we should imagine that "Adrian" is in for a hot time when he comes up for judgment and God points out to him all what his published statement in the *Weekly Chronicle* implies. Unless God is as dull as "Adrian's" admirers, in which case he may not see the point. We should say that "Adrian" is a very young, or a very old, parson.

More than thirty years ago, in 1896, the late Wilson Barrett produced "The Sign of the Cross" as a play. Ten years ago it was made into a silent film. On January 30 last it was shown at the Carlton Theatre as a "Talkie." Described in the exaggerated jargon of the trade as "the most colossal spectacle of the ages," the present film is little like the play. One of the most responsible film critics, indeed, says (in the *Manchester Guardian*) that it is only at the close that "a cross appears on the screen to remind us that the film that has ended is the one we came to see." The play was, in the admission of Wilson Barrett in his correspondence with Mr. Foote on its production, Christian propaganda. The film is sheer "spectacle" and an attempt to exploit Christian sentiment about its martyrs in the interests of the box-office. The Prime Minister, in aristocratic company, has seen the new film, so we may be sure there is nothing in it that will shock the snuggest film-goer. Wilson Barrett explained that it was his object to "make

vice hideous," and this at least may be the result of the present production, for parts of it are hideous enough, albeit their historical veracity, like that of the original play, may be questioned.

G. W. Foote was at his best in dealing with Wilson Barrett and his proselytising intentions. "It is very good of Mr. Barrett," he wrote, "to be so solicitous about the appearance of vice, but his anxiety is unnecessary. Was it not Pope who said that vice to be hated needs but to be seen? Mr. Barrett tickets her carefully, and paints her like a scarecrow; in doing which he over-reaches himself, for it is not brazen, riotous vice that is dangerously seductive. Temptation comes to average human nature in a more plausible fashion. It may be good preaching to 'make vice hideous,' but it is bad drama. The business of the playwright, as the great Master said, is to 'hold up the mirror to nature.' Do that, if you can; give us a faithful picture of good and evil; and you need not fear as to which will be loved or hated. But if you cannot do this, it is idle to plead your excellent intentions."

We are tempted, and will yield to the temptation, to quote a few more lines of this masterly criticism of Foote's. "There are profound lessons in Shakespeare's tragedies, but they do not lie upon the surface, and are not picked up and flung at you. Preachers may be as direct as they please; that is their method, and we know its actual effects, after all these ages, upon the morals of mankind. But the poet's method is indirect. He excites our sympathy, which is the vital essence of all morality, and our imagination, which gives it intensity and comprehensiveness. He produces a definite effect on those who are fit to understand him, but were he to declare that he intended to produce that effect, and expected to witness its immediate results, he would ensure his own failure. In a certain sense Shakespeare has a purpose, but it is secondary and subordinate; the poetic impulse is primary and supreme." If the "talkie" trade would grasp this truth we might have less "colossal spectacle" and more true and moving drama.

All the way from Saskatchewan comes a message that what is needed in these (irreligious) times is another Wesley with exactly the same message, but with about twenty times the power, command and leadership. Well, now, things to-day are bad enough, and only a real hater of mankind would wish for something to make them worse. It is only during the last few years that the people of this country have been able to shake off the ill-effects of the blight which Wesley and his religious revival spread over the land. Wesley led the people to God—and to puritan gloom, to puritan hatred of the theatre, of card-playing, of theatre-going and of dancing, to puritan hatred of a wholesome Sunday, to puritan prejudice, narrow-mindedness, and intolerance. Things to-day are bad enough, and they don't need making twenty times worse through the agency of a new Wesley and an evangelical revival.

The *Daily News* devotes a "leader" to "A Plea for Wise Spending." It might well have mentioned that an instance of *unwise* spending is that of putting money in the parson's pocket, with the idea of purchasing a seat in Heaven, and escaping a singeing in the warmer department of the nether regions.

Army "crime" in the Salisbury Plain camps has disappeared completely, says General Sir Archibald Montgomery-Massingherd, who in support of the statement quoted a Wiltshire Chief Constable. The improvement is attributed—not to an increased staff of army chaplains—but to the introduction of organized games and the provision of playing grounds. Sports and games generally have, says the General, "been responsible to a very great extent for the present high state of discip-

line and good conduct." Fancy that, now! We always understood that such desirable results can only be achieved through acquiring a "sense of sin," and falling in love with Jesus.

The Bishop of Winchester is terribly anxious that the parson shall not be overlooked. He doesn't say so in plain English. Instead, he voices his anxiety in a gentle warning thus, "Man may almost atrophy his higher faculties by devoting too much time in the search for pleasure." One is supposed to assume from this that the Bishop's patent spiritual tonic is particularly effective for keeping the "higher faculties" in active condition. After having scrutinized the mentality of Christian adherents one may be pardoned for being rather sceptical about that. The primary or fundamental motive which inclines the Christian to accept the essential ideas of the Christian religion is fear. And fear is not an instinct which nourishes man's higher faculties. It is the lower faculties which a Christian exercises when he prays and howls to his God and cringes before him in a so-called sacred building. However, assuming that the Christian does these things to please himself and God—that is, "in search of pleasure"—there may be some sort of truth in the Bishop's warning after all!

Bishops occasionally have a sensible moment. An accident of this kind occurred recently to the Bishop of Plymouth who volunteered the opinion that "It is more important to know about the nineteenth-century war against disease and ignorance than about the Crimean War." He need not have stopped at that. He might have added that he regretted to say that the Church and the Christian religion had nothing to do with the starting of the war on disease and ignorance. On the other hand, the Church and religion were largely the cause of that war not being started centuries before. How could a start be made while the Church was teaching that disease was "sent" as divine punishment for sin, and that prayer would prevent or cure disease?

In a daily paper a reader asserts that few realize fully "the power and value of direct prayer" to God. Also that few know that "such prayers are invariably answered; provided, of course, that they are not for an object which will in any way cause hurt or injury to others." So prayers are "invariably" answered, are they? What about the millions of prayers that have been sent up, at various times, by or on behalf of persons suffering from incurable diseases? There have also been despatched a few million tons of petitions on behalf of the great multitude of unemployed in the world. A deaf Heaven vouchsafes no answer. Man will have to discover a cure for what are now styled incurable diseases by his own unaided efforts; the solution to economic or social maladies must be searched for and discovered by his own unaided brains. Reliance on supernatural aid has never secured for man the guidance and help he desired; it has but postponed his own discovery of causes, cures or preventatives, and solutions.

A Kentish vicar, the Rev. R. S. R. Sinclair, says in his parish magazine, with becoming modesty, that:—

Quite obviously it is futile for a parson like myself to go about pretending that I am free from failure, defeat, and sin. To do this is to be a Pharisee and a hypocrite. What men want me to tell them is my experience of and sympathy with their sin and my experience of Christ's power to deliver and give victory.

Still, if the vicar himself is not (as it appears) free from sin, etc., after utilizing "Christ's power" to deliver himself, how can he testify to the potency of this alleged power? We presume that he finds imagination a very useful ally, and human credulity a splendid absorbent of fairy tales.

A *Times* reader sends the following letter, which appears in a recent issue:—

Sir,—I have by me directions compiled circa 1840 for finding the path to female perfection. The first writer is perhaps a little bitter. "One of my predecessors," he says, "has mentioned the art which the ladies of his day used in the unfurling of their fans so as to display certain little Cupids and Venuses which lurked in their folds. Had he seen some of our ladies in the attitudes which modern spirit has taught them to assume—such unfurlings and unfoldings—his Venuses and Cupids were ice and snow to them." A less poetical admonition is, "Two ladies may take each an arm of one gentleman, but a lady should never take the arms of two gentlemen at the same time."

As to culture: "Practise the effeminate virtues and do not meddle with horses, dogs, Euclid, politics or the dead languages"; and "If a lady intrudes into the studies commonly appropriated to the other sex, it generally follows that either health is the sacrifice or duties and studies are neglected which are incumbent upon her own sex. At the same time I would not and do not countenance light and superficial acquirements; the female mind, as far as its capabilities go, should be exercised." The climax comes in "Believe me, that of all the monsters in creation a female demagogue is, next after a female infidel, the greatest outrage."

We wonder what would have been said by this 1840 gentleman had he seen the number of "female infidels" attending a meeting of the N.S.S.!

An interesting and not unamusing correspondence (in the *Times Literary Supplement*) is concerned with the origin and meaning of the expression "cock-sure." One correspondent points out that "rural metaphors have always been employed in serious connexions" and thus accounts for the original "dignity and solemnity" of this one. Whether the example he gives (from George Herbert's *Country Parson*) is solemn or satirical in its implications may be questioned. The passage reads:—

So that if a farmer should depend upon God all the year, and being ready to put hand to sickle shall then secure himself and think all cock-sure; then God sends such weather as lays the corn and destroys it; or if he depend on God, even till he imburn the corn, and think then all sure; God sends a fire and consumeth all that he hath.

In short, whatever you may be cock-sure of, you can never be cock-sure of God.

Fifty Years Ago.

THE Christian blasphemes when he affirms that God cursed his first children because of a venial trespass, and made all their posterity sharers in the malison; that he drowned all life in the world except the specimens in Noah's Ark, and turned the earth into a slaughter-house; that he burnt up whole cities with all their inhabitants; that he selected as his favourites a barbarous people with no science or art, and totally neglected the great civilizations of Assyria, India, Egypt, Greece and Rome; that he sent his chosen people, like a band of cut-throats, to kill innocent men, women and children, and ravish maidens amid the ruins of their homes; that he slew seventy thousand people because their king took a census, and another seventy thousand for looking into his travelling trunk; that he rotted thousands more to death for requesting a little change in his bill of fare; that he sent bears to eat up little urchins for poking fun at a bald prophet; and, lastly, that he keeps a hell, a dungeon of eternal torture, in which he will cast his own children for being what he made them. These things are horrible blasphemies, and the people who teach them deserve imprisonment more than we who revolt against them with all our heart and expose them with all the strength of our mind. Real blasphemy must not be sought in Secular halls or Freethought journals, but in churches and chapels, in religious newspapers, in Sunday-schools, in missionary meetings; wherever the monstrous Christian superstition raises its head in blasphemy against God and worse blasphemy against Man.

The "Freethinker," February 18, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—E. H. Hassell, 2s. 6d.
- J. E. MILLER (S. Rhodesia).—Mr. Cohen's Record can be recorded on any make of machine, pamphlets sent.
- MRS. B. HOUSTON.—Record sent carefully packed, enquire at your end re tariff on books and pamphlets, we do not know why the charges are made.
- J. A. REID.—Received letter safely. Note your intentions re Bradlaugh Fund. Thanks.
- H. DRAKE.—Thanks, but hardly up to standard.
- J. ROWLAND.—Received and shall appear.
- R. HENRY.—We are surprised to know that the *Life of Bradlaugh* has been taken off the South Shields public Library shelves. We should be glad to know whether another copy has been purchased, or if it has been officially removed. In view of the Centenary of Bradlaugh's birth it is likely to be a book that would be required by many readers.
- W. KEPR.—Personally we agree with your estimate of the *Black Girl*, and we think we said so in "Views and Opinions." So far as its heresy is concerned it is fifty years behind the *Freethinker*. But its importance lies in the fact that Christians who are still further behind look upon it as a daring work. And the reviewers have, as is usual with the glorified office boys who now review books, missed the really good points in the book.
- A. G. LYE.—We will see that the substance of your suggestion is carried out, but we must be careful of space.
- L. M. CLARK.—Amusing. Thanks.
- J. KENNELLY (Sydney).—Mr. Langley deserves the highest praise for the fight he is carrying on under very trying conditions. It is rather curious that there should be, on the whole rather less religious freedom in our colonies than there is at home.
- W.W.—See "Acid Drops."
- JACK BARTON.—Thanks for cutting. By the way, are you the same Jack Barton whom we knew many years ago?
- The "*Freethinker*" is supplied to the trade on sale or return. Any difficulty in securing copies should be at once reported to this office.
- The Secular Society, Limited Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
- The National Secular Society's Office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connexion with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, 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):—
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- Lecture notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (February 19) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Picton Hall, Liverpool, on "The Menace of Mass Opinion." The subject is one that should prove interesting. Admission will be free, but there will be reserved seats at 1s. Chair will be taken at 7.0 On Sunday next (February 26) he will visit Burnley and will lecture twice, in the afternoon and evening in the Phoenix Theatre.

The Stockport Branch of the N.S.S. sends us a letter suggesting that regular area meetings of Branches should be held to consider methods of propaganda, and also a resolution of the Branch in favour of the delivery of lectures to all outside bodies who would welcome N.S.S. speakers. The latter is quite a useful suggestion, and is already in operation in several districts, as well as at headquarters. With regard to the area meetings, that is already part of the duty of such branches, although it is not carried out as thoroughly as we would wish.

We hope to see very many lectures on Charles Bradlaugh between now and the Centenary date. For this reason we are pleased to learn that the address by Mr. H. Cutner on "Charles Bradlaugh," at the Metropolitan Secular Society last Sunday, proved an excellent attraction. Mr. Cutner dealt with the salient points in Bradlaugh's career, as an Atheist, Biblical critic, Malthusian and Social Reformer, and called attention to the militant work of the National Secular Society, which Bradlaugh founded, and of which he was the first President. In the discussion which followed, many tributes were paid to the enduring quality of Bradlaugh's work.

Many readers will be interested to learn that at the forthcoming exhibition of the London Portrait Society, which opens at the Burlington Galleries, Burlington Street, W., on February 28, there will be a portrait of Mr. Chapman Cohen. Mr. Cohen was asked by the artist, Mr. John H. Amszewitz, R.B.A., to sit, and he has certainly painted not only an excellent portrait, but has made it distinctly a work of art. Mr. Amszewitz has had a distinguished career, and his work can be found in many important galleries all over the world. The Royal Exchange commissioned him to paint one of its great historical panels, he has also decorated the Town Hall in Liverpool, and exhibited portraits and landscapes at the Royal Academy and other important Galleries. As the exhibition will be open for three weeks, it is hoped that those interested will pay it a visit.

A very good letter appeared from Mr. G. Burgess in a recent issue of the *Listener*, in which he says:—

As a Freethinker I am still waiting for a Freethought lecture from Broadcast House. Many Centenaries of well-known Britishers have been celebrated through the B.B.C. stations. We Freethinkers are wondering if that great apostle of freedom and democracy will have his life and work celebrated *via* the "mike."

An excellent suggestion. And if this advice is adopted, we hope that the desire of Mr. Burgess and thousands of others will not be circumvented by (1) the selection of some semi-religious individual to give the world a picture of Bradlaugh as "a respectable" Nonconformist, and (2) that the speaker in this case should consent to deliver a censored speech. It would be a supreme insult to deliver an address that has been carefully censored by the religious heads of the B.B.C., in commemoration of one who had fought so hard and protested so vehemently against a censorship of both press and platform. It would be a registration of Bradlaugh's failure, not an indication of his triumph.

But we understand that a rather keen fight is going on inside Broadcast House between those who wish to retain a strict censorship and those who wish for greater liberty of expression. So it will be a good thing for those who are on the side of the latter to keep up the protest against censorship. We are not likely to have made public the volume of protest. Neither are we likely to have repeated the famous lie of the Rev. Shepherd that only twenty letters had been received by the B.B.C. protesting against its policy with regard to religion.

Dr. Clyde E. Williams, in *Zion's Herald* (Boston) tells his pious readers that "in these days we are met with a rampant Atheism, intelligent and unafraid." What is to be done about it? Dr. Williams says "it is time for us to aid and abet rather than belabour those who use intelligence to answer intelligence." It is clear that the Christian objection to intelligence is as stubborn as ever.

A number of our readers have taken the suggestion we gave on the opening of the year, that a good way of helping the Cause would be by paying for three or six months a subscription for a likely subscriber. One who has read the paper for so long is not likely to drop it very easily. We take this opportunity of thanking those who have already sent, and bringing the proposal before the attention of others.

We wish to call the attention of our London readers to the Memorial Meeting in honour of the late John M. Robertson, which is to be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, on Thursday, February 23, at 8 o'clock. If men were valued by the quality of their work and their contribution to the better life of the world, no building smaller than the Albert Hall would be adequate for such a purpose. A list of the speakers will be found on the back page of this issue.

Here is an interesting comment on ourselves all the way from Hong-Kong. Mr. Arthur Hanson writes:—

The *Freethinker* is a damfine paper, despite all the stuff you don't put into it.

We suggest to Mr. Hanson that this would not be a "damfine" paper but for the stuff we keep out. The art of editing consists quite as much in what is left out as in what is put in. A paper should not be edited as a rice pudding is edited, nor should it emulate the editing of a rag-bag. The three first rules for an editor should be "Collect, Reject, Select." If he does this, and if he encourages his contributors not to care a damn whether they please readers or offend them, he should be able to produce a live paper, and one which will command the respect of anyone worth bothering about.

The "Rationalist Council" sends us copies of two Sunday tracts. One is by Mr. Ernest Thurtle on "The Case for Sunday Cinemas," the other a reprint of one by Lord Snell on "The Case for Sunday Games." Both are pleasantly written and should prove useful. The price is one penny each. Publishing office, 4 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.

Christian young people must have their fun. So, in *Pye*—the magazine of the Chelmsford Cathedral Young Peoples' League—they tell some stories of which the following is an example. "My friend," asked the missionary, "are you travelling the straight and narrow road?" In silence the man handed over his card, which read: "Signor Ballancio, Tightrope Walker." What the missionary said is, naturally, not recorded.

The Case Against Einstein.*

(Concluded from page 101.)

DR. LYNCH points out many factors which might lead to discrepancy between the ascertained rate of the ether wind and the theoretical rate of the ether wind which should exist; and he quotes an experiment by Fizeau with running water in a U shaped tube, afterwards confirmed by Michelson and Morley in 1889, proving the existence of an ether: and in support he tells a story of Fresnel, who gave a great impulse to the undulatory theory of light.

Poisson, who was a distinguished mathematician and physicist, said to Fresnel: "On the basis of your hypothesis I have found by calculation that at a place where two shadows meet, in a certain construction, we should get a spot of light!"

"Very well," replied Fresnel, "let us try whether it is so." The experiment was made, and the spot of light appeared." This phenomena of interference is immediately explained on the basis of the wave theory, and as Dr. Lynch emphasizes, "certainly on no other basis that has yet been imagined, still less demonstrated." (p. 50.) And we have only to imagine that the ether is viscous (as it must be to allow of wave propagation), to get rid of most of the discrepancy between the earth's rate through space and

the ascertained ether wind. For if we recognize that the ether in immediate contact with the earth is borne on, it will only be the residual drift of the ether that the Michelson Morley apparatus would register.

However, the Relativists, say that there is *no* ether wind, because there is no ether: and so they are driven to argue that the velocity of light is constant whether relatively to a body at rest, in regard to the source of light, or relatively to that body in motion towards the source of light. Here Dr. Lynch has a glorious time demolishing this thesis, and he goes on to point out how the Relativists accepted the "Fitzgerald Contraction" unwitting that it cut away the ground on which Relativity is built. Fitzgerald, in order to explain the "null effect" of the Michelson-Morley experiment, assumed that bodies moving through the ether were contracted in the sense of the direction of their movement; but this contraction could not be measured since the measuring-rod would proportionally be shortened. An analogous phenomenon is the loss of weight which a body suffers as it is carried up a mountain. If we had to depend on an ordinary swing balance, it is obvious we could never detect the loss; for the *weights* would also lose *their* weight. The loss could only be detected by means of a *spring* balance which would remain unaffected by the change in the force of gravity.

Sir Oliver Lodge saw at once that Fitzgerald's explanation was perfect, on which Dr. Lynch says, "The explanation had one merit: it explained everything: that is to say, if it were true. It had one demerit. There was no way of testing it." "Sir Arthur Eddington finds a conflict between his devotion (to Relativity) and his common sense: and he reconciles them thus. *The Fitzgerald contraction exists, but it is not real.*" Could cruelty of quotation go further. And having dealt such a knock-out blow to this Relativity monster, begotten by a Lorentz transformation or an etherless curved space, the doctor (to change the metaphor) begins to dissect the monster in order to prove its defective articulation. In other words, he examines the doctrine as expounded by Prof. Carmichael, one of Einstein's disciples, and he shows the false assumptions on which Relativity is based: and the contradictions existing between various assumptions.

But everlastingly Dr. Lynch tests the theory or its basic assumptions by reference to reality or as he terms it the Fundamental Processes of the Mind; and when a Relativist states that the velocity of light propagation does not depend on the velocity of the source, Dr. Lynch replies the truth of this affirmation must be tested by experiment: and if further it is stated that the relative velocity of light received at a system has no dependence on the velocity of that system (as it approaches or goes away from the source of light), "that, though a generation of Einsteins were to affirm it, is absurd." There are short but most interesting chapters on "the crux of simultaneity"; "the ether" and "mass and velocity," which do not require any special mathematical ability to follow, though the final paragraph on page 137 is not clear either from the physical or grammatical point of view.

The chapter on Riemann's Metric is the most illuminating that I have read on the subject; because there is a real attempt to show what Riemann was endeavouring to picture for our minds: and the author also shows how much nonsense is written about the fourth dimension.

Once again insistence is made on the need of examining our premises or the steps in our reasoning whenever our logical processes land us in an absurdity.

And if algebra can be applied to our conceptions of line (length or breadth or thickness), of area (surface) and of cubical content, by using respectively the first, second and third powers of x (i.e., x , x^2 , and x^3); it does not follow that we can have any conception of a space of four or more dimensions, even if we can write powers of x to the n^{th} dimension. That is, abstractly we may lay down certain conventions or laws of algebra and pursue them consistently and it may be that, so far as expressions of the first, second and third degree are concerned, they may be all interpretable in terms of our experience of space, i.e., in terms of our reality: but there may be no reality corresponding to algebraic expressions of higher powers than the third.

Mathematicians have, however, by giving new interpretations to x , x^2 , x^3 , x^4 , etc., been able to represent curves on a flat surface, and the number of bends in the curve is determined by the power; thus x (i.e., x^1) has no bends, and the curve becomes a straight line: x^2 has one bend, x^3 two bends, and so on: x^n having $(n-1)$ bends; but this has all been discovered by comparing theory with fact. To return to our author. "Riemann himself states the actual space we know requires no more than three dimensions." "What is the meaning of Riemann's series of dimensions? They have a meaning if regarded as algebraic terms; but if they be measures of space relations then they may be ultimately reduced to three—that is to say, they are not independent. If they are independent, as they are usually considered, then they cannot be defined in terms of space relations." (p. 155.) For this relief much thanks!

The Relativists seized on Riemann's Metric, and his curved space, and with Einstein as the arch-villain arrived at all those hopeless contradictions on which the French mathematicians, almost to a man, have seized; while many eminent English, American and German mathematicians have, with certain misgivings, accepted Relativity and the conclusions derived from it.

And now having shown that Einstein has borrowed Riemann's metric, he is convicted of combining with that conception another due to the Italian mathematicians Ricci and Levi-Civita, viz., the tensor calculus. "The tensor calculus, combined with the metric of Riemann, provides us with many of those complicated expressions which are the delight of mathematicians. Einstein chooses one of these expressions, and after various exercises of trimming down the generality of the expression to suit his needs, he 'fiddles'—I can find no better term—with the demonstration, till at last he produces what he calls the Relativist law of gravitation. During the whole discussion there is not the slightest reference to gravitation, to the manner of its operation, to anything of the external world at all. How then does he finally arrive at a result which he can plausibly put forward as a law of gravitation." "For one thing he knows the result at which he is aiming. That has been ascertained by Newton in the only space, according to Riemann, of which we can have cognizance. . . . What then has Einstein done new in this domain? Nothing in this domain, but something in an unknown, a transcendental domain. This is to say his law agrees with that of Newton in the universe as we can know it; but differs from Newton's at points inaccessible to our observations. He can always claim that no test will prove him wrong, for his domain is that which lies beyond the limits of testing." (p. 158.) So even among the mathematicians and astronomers Shakespeare's comment on humanity applies "What fools these mortals be."

According to Dr. Lynch the Relativists find an ex-

pression (algebraic) which applies to one branch of physics, say the wave-theory of light: and without ever enquiring into the other aspects of nature, apply the same expression to wireless-waves; or gravitation: and knowing beforehand from the classical or Newtonian physics where they must arrive, they juggle with their formulæ till they fit the new case. The gravamen of Dr. Lynch's charge is that Einstein is a borrower of other men's ideas or researches; that he fakes his results: and then constructs a theoretical space where he says these results are valid, and that they are beyond verification. That where the theory can be tested as in a total eclipse of the sun; or the irregularity of the perihelion of Mercury, he (Einstein) simply 'chooses' an expression of the metric of Riemann: modifies this expression by means of a series of processes that have no sanction either in the physical conditions appertaining to Mercury, or in the true meaning of mathematics: then he says: "There you are."

Why, the reader may ask, do all these clever scientists allow themselves to be led by the nose? Dr. Lynch replies "fashion." Einstein's clever presentation has "caught on," and the fashion may last a generation or two before it goes the road of other scientific "fads" like phlogiston, or the principle of least action. But Dr. Lynch is not content merely to trace the ancestry of Relativity to Riemann's metric and Lorentz's transformation via the mental alembic of Einstein, he also shows how both Einstein and Riemann derive their philosophy from Kant, and hence their theory of Space and Time is at fault.

Without discussing Dr. Lynch's criticism of Kant, one must admire the way in which he points out the difference between our feeling or awareness of space, and the measurement of space—of our sense of time-duration and the method of measuring the duration or the measurement itself. Reference is made more than once to the Fundamental Processes of the Mind as a means of checking or testing any theory of the Universe. These twelve processes are arrived at by analysis in Dr. Lynch's *Principles of Psychology*, and as that work is nearly as interesting as the book under review, the reader's study of it will be well repaid.

The Case Against Einstein needs and deserves an index, and it is to be hoped that this omission and some few clerical errors, will be rectified in a second edition.

We are not sure that Dr. Lynch's definition of a law of nature (p. 23) will stand analysis; nor do we think he is quite fair in his estimate of Einstein as a mathematician. The citation of so many French mathematicians in confutation of Relativity recalls the story of Einstein's welcome at Oxford. A lady at one function asked Einstein would his theory ever be proved or disproved. "Yes," he replied, "perhaps in the next hundred years. And if I am right, the French will say I was a Jew: but if I am wrong, they will say I was a German." For it is still difficult for the French to see any good coming out of Germany. Dr. Lynch speaks highly of Einstein's modesty under public plaudits, and he might have added a reference to his courage. For during the War Einstein had to leave Germany because of his pacifist views, and to teach at a Swiss University. He has again left Germany for Harvard, because of the hostility to Jews fomented by the Hitlerites. And there is also on record Einstein's refusal of 40,000 dollars for eight talks while he was at Pasadena. He said "he had not the time to spare" from his investigations. At the height of Einstein's popularity J. C. Squire took Pope's couplet on Newton and linked Einstein with

him in a manner which would probably win Dr. Lynch's approval.

"Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in Night.
God said: 'Let Newton be,' and there was light;
It could not last, the Devil crying, 'Ho!
Let Einstein be,' restored the *status quo*."

We have given this somewhat lengthy review of Dr. Lynch's scholarly attempt to point out the defects in the Theory of Mathematical Relativity since we understand that owing to his unorthodox study and preparation as a mathematician and physicist *he* is suffering from an academic and a press boycott of a pronounced character.

EUCLIDEAN.

Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

I.—RAMSAY MACDONALD ON CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

IN the *Dictionary of National Biography* (Supplement 1901, Vol. I., pp. 248-50.) is a biographical sketch of Bradlaugh by the Prime Minister. The following quotations, which omit biographical detail, and indicate the view and judgment of the writer on the character and public services of his subject, will be of interest in this year of the Bradlaugh Centenary Celebrations.

After detailing the Parliamentary struggle over the Oath, Mr. Macdonald concludes: "He had fought single-handed. Although he was a follower of the Liberal Government, it gave him very half-hearted support in his efforts to take his seat; its action was mainly confined to unsuccessful endeavours to alter the law so as to enable him to affirm."

Of Bradlaugh's fight for the freedom of the press the writer says: "Bradlaugh's efforts to maintain the freedom of the press in issuing criticisms on religious belief and on sociological questions involved him in several law suits which kept him constantly in debt." By his "outmanoeuvring" of the Government in the prosecution of the *National Reformer* (1868) "the restrictions on the popular press imposed by the security laws were withdrawn." His refusal to take the Oath in the prosecutions of 1867-69 "led to the passing of the Evidence Amendment Act (1869) which enabled the evidence of Freethinkers to be taken." The "Fruits of Philosophy" suits, which ended in favour of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant (1877-78) secured the removal "of the remaining restrictions on the liberty of the press."

Bradlaugh's Parliamentary activities are thus acknowledged: "As a sitting Member of Parliament from 1885-1891, he is chiefly remembered for the unusual number of measures the passage of which he secured; the chief of them was the Affirmation Bill legalizing the substitution of an affirmation for an oath both in the House of Commons and the Law Courts" (1888). In 1889 "he was nominated a member of the Royal Commission on Vaccination. He took a special interest in questions relating to India, and interested himself so deeply in the social and political condition of the natives that he was known as 'the Member for India.' In 1880 he attended the Indian National Congress at Bombay and was received with great honour."

Finally, Mr. Macdonald records the popularity of Bradlaugh in the House of Commons and its unanimous, if belated, decision to expunge from its journals its resolutions expelling him.

A.C.W.

Our Wonderful Press.

THIS year has already struck several blows at all lovers of fine writing, of great literature. J. M. Robertson, George Moore, Professor Saintsbury, John Galsworthy, have all joined the great majority, and the world of letters is very much poorer for their passing.

It is, however, not with the literary merits of these four great men that I am concerned with at the moment. It is of the attitude of the press towards them that I would write. How does Fleet Street deal with these matters? When a great man dies, does he receive the due meed of recognition in these journals which circulate in millions throughout these islands?

Of the death of J. M. Robertson much has already been written in these columns. It only remains for me to add that he did not receive more than a small fraction of the praise which he would have had had he been the defender of orthodoxy, rather than the defier of it. Can one doubt, for instance, that if it had been the death of Mr. G. K. Chesterton, of Mr. Hilaire Belloc, or of Father Ronald Knox which the press had been reporting, much more would have been said, adulatory notices of their life and work would have been written? But J. M. Robertson, with a brain as great as the three Catholic brains put together, received only the most grudging of comments.

And then as to the others. George Moore, we must admit, was generally recognized as a very great artist. All the press united in declaring that. But the press forbore to mention how George Moore was neglected and condemned during his lifetime, because of the supposedly "immoral" and "indecent" trend of his work. And the death of this fine writer received less notice than the latest details of the hunt for Furnace, a man suspected of commonplace crime, or of the foolish and futile squabble with the Australian Board of Cricket control. Such are relative values in Fleet Street.

And of the other two—the same thing can be said. Professor Saintsbury was a man of immense erudition and great literary ability. What did the obituary notices stress? Was it his fine histories of English and French literature? Was it his literary research? No. It was the fact that he was an authority on wine. Now, wine is an excellent thing in its place. But literature is a far finer thing.

And Mr. Galsworthy. One of the very grudging obituary notices I read stated that, although *The Forsyte Saga* is a very fine book, it is quite possible that it will take its place with the other much praised, but little read classics, such as the works of George Eliot. Now, how did the writer know that George Eliot was little read? One might ask that question for ever, and not get an answer. He didn't know, nor did he know, what I noticed the other day, that a girl sitting opposite me in a tramcar, was reading *The Mill on the Floss*. But that statement is good enough for Fleet Street and its provincial equivalents.

There certainly is something "rotten in the state" of the press in this country, one must admit, when an irresponsible journalist can deal with things of moment in this way. Of course, George Eliot, we must remember, was one of the great number of people who defied convention, who considered Thomson's *The City of Dreadful Night* the greatest poem of the nineteenth century, and it would never do to admit that a person of that type was still read by the respectable orthodox of to-day.

And so it goes on. The death of great men passes almost unnoticed, the crimes of little men receive the "honour" of headlines on the front page. The game of cricket (and I do not deny that it is a very fine game) receives more notoriety than the most important things of life. The Disarmament Conference gets less space than a suicide or a murder. When shall we achieve sanity in the press? Echo, I fear, will give its traditional answer.

JOHN ROWLAND.

The "Christian Inn" Myth.

CATHOLICISM and Puritanism have much in common. Many may doubt this statement, especially if they be readers of Messrs. Chesterton and Belloc, and, in particular, of the drinking songs of which they are the authors. There is that well known piece of Mr. Chesterton's which winds up in "Paradise by way of Kensal Green," although it begins with the "reeling English drunkard," and "the rolling English road." Mr. Belloc sings gravely of the Pelagian Heresy, but the song degenerates into a jingle on the merits of "barley brew." Both these poems are, in fact, what poems ought never to be, poems with a moral, the moral that hospitality and conviviality are Christian virtues. In more senses than one, according to this doctrine, the Inn comes next to the Church in point of godliness. Unfortunately for these amusing apologists there is no foundation for their beguiling, and, no doubt, pleasant belief that the boon of strong ale is among the benefactions which the Church has conferred upon mankind.

The Inn is an institution of civilization. Long before the Christian era it was flourishing. In Egypt, the Levant and in Greece and Rome, Inns and Taverns abounded. Their history shows the Inn as of human and social, and not of sacred or monastic, origin. Primitive man had not the needs which Inns supply. "Where traffic and commerce do not exist, where individuals do not travel, and the wild hordes wandering in search of spoil and pastures are the only wayfarers, Inns are unknown."

Even in the earlier heroic age individual travelling was uncommon. "Save in the instances of Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, and probably, Cnossos, commercial intercourse was of little importance, and was carried on mostly by water, and, at its best, was little removed from piracy." It is in the Egypt of Rameses III (circa. 1300 B.C.) that we get some of the first lucid and lively chronicles of Inns and their customers. Brugsch, in his *Histoire d'Egypte*, says: "No people could be gayer, more lively, or of more childish simplicity than those old Egyptians who loved life with all their hearts, and found their deepest joy in their very existence. Everybody was fond of enjoyment, sang, danced, drank, and made excursions into the country."¹

Beer, dear to the Christian heart of Mr. Chesterton, was the national beverage of the Egyptians. They were probably the first to grow barley for beer-making. When the population of Egypt was about 7,000,000 we learn (from the Harris Papyrus) that the temples alone were granted 256,460 jugs of wine, and 466,303 jugs of beer. The jugs are computed to have held at least a gallon; thus the annual contribution of wine and beer for sacrificial purposes was about 15,000 and 9,500 gallons respectively. Incidentally sacramental wine, like the Inn, is thus seen to be long anterior to its sacred use in the supposed institution of the Christian Sacrament of the Mass or Holy Communion.

An Egyptian beerhouse is described by Maspero in his *Sketch from Life in an Ancient Egyptian City*. "The reception room has been freshly lime-washed. It is furnished with mats, stools and arm-chairs, upon which the habitual customers sit side by side, fraternally drinking beer, wine, palm brandy (shoden) and cooked and perfumed liquors. . . . The beer is made in a mash of barley steeped in water, and raised by fermented crumbs of bread. A slave or maidservant greets the visitor or customers upon his entry. "Drink unto rapture"—"Let it be a good day"—and such like greetings are exchanged.

Egyptian moralists, long before so-called "temperance" societies, reproved drunkenness and pointed out its sad results. The drunkard was warned that people who knew him will turn from him, and his companions would say "beware of him—he is a drunkard." Songs and ballads were sung in taverns, and something very like what is now called a student's "rag" seems to have been a not unknown diversion.

Hospitality was an innate characteristic of Celt, German, Goth and Hun, and many writers have observed that Christianity had little if anything to teach its converts on that score. Even the barbarians had an instinct for entertaining the wayfarer and ministering to his needs. In the almost complete extinction of culture during the Dark Ages there was little of the old jolly pagan hospitality, but it survived in the East, and, at the Renaissance, emerged even among the tavern-goers of monastic lore.

So far from the monasteries being on such terms with innkeepers as Mr. Chesterton would like to make them out to have been, there is abundant evidence, in songs and other writings that have survived, that the taverns in the Middle Ages were centres of merriment and sceptical jest. An old rhymer—not unfriendly to the monks—wrote:—

"Many there be in these sad times of ours
Who turn from faith and heaven and their powers;
They laugh to scorn the truths of priestly lore
And spend their time within the tavern door."

While it cannot be disputed that "teetotalism" is a modern and puritan invention (though Catholics say it is the Manichean heresy over again) and that the Catholic Church does in practice take certain natural tastes and appetites of men and women for granted, it must be admitted that Christianity, Protestant and Catholic, sets up a non-human standard of conduct, and that we do not owe to it in the past or in the present anything that has gone to make for pure joy of living either for the individual or for the mass of men.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

Richard Wagner—Freethinker.

. . . WAGNER'S work is fundamentally anti-Christian. This is true, in spite of the things which might seem to contradict it. There is *Tannhauser*, for example; a drama of victory over the flesh, of repentance, and of love that saves. It is, says Comte Guy de Pourtalès, a picture of Wagner himself, of the inner fight between his craving for pleasure and his horror of those indulgences that trail the winged spirit in the mire. But is it Christian?

There is *Parsifal*, also, his last work, his testament. The first idea and sketch of it came to him on a Good Friday, when he heard a voice saying, "Thou shalt bear no arms the day the Saviour died upon the Cross." The idea which was the seed of *Parsifal* was that he must convey to mankind one lesson, and tell them of the gracious miracle of Pity. It is Wagner's longing for the holy and the pure, an ideal of sanctity in the world but not withdrawn from it. But is it Christian?

What are the facts? Wagner's parents were Protestants, and he was baptized in the Church of St. Thomas, in Leipzig, Johann Sebastian Bach's church. But he had no regular schooling, and there is no word of any practice or teaching of religion in the home. It seems probable that he grew up with no knowledge of the Christian religion whatever. In due time he was prepared for his first Communion. But he took little notice of the Catechism, thinking himself too much of a man for such childish things. He was fourteen. Nevertheless, just as he was proceeding to Communion, just when the organ was playing, and the young communicants were making their way in procession towards the Holy Table, he was so overwhelmed with emotion, that he would never again consent to repeat the experience.

He was a Godless believer, for what he believed in was freedom. Freedom, for him, consisted in being true to oneself, and in absolute accord with one's own nature. In other words, Romanticism is the Liberal confidence in man, tinged with emotion. Jesus he takes as his symbol of humanity. He delivers men from sin by declaring to them the eternal law of the spirit, which is love. But little as he had the opportunity to learn of Christianity, he was sure he was not a Christian. The heritage of

¹ See *Inns of Ancient Greece and Rome* by W. C. Firebaugh.

Christianity, he said, was neurasthenia, so that hypocrisy has always been its salient characteristic. The Christian idea is morbid. It has engendered a weakening and cessation of human efforts, and offended against the real and healthy nature of man. The unforgivable sin which Christianity has committed, in other words, is that it declares that man is fallen and needs redemption.

On the very Good Friday on which the first idea of *Parsifal* came to him, he could not doubt that Heaven is empty. The story of the Saviour is a human legend—a legend, perhaps, full of Love and Truth—but not a revelation of God. He declared that *Parsifal* was a grave and authentic religious experience, but there is reason to believe that the pseudo-mystic emotions which he felt were rooted in the stimulus which Judith Gautier gave to his eroticism. He was an old man, and she was the eighth woman for whom he had felt a carnal passion. It was over *Parsifal* that Nietzsche broke finally with Wagner. "Nothing was so displeasing to Friedrich Nietzsche," says his biographer, Daniel Halevy, "as a return to Christianity; nothing seemed to him more weak or cowardly than such a capitulation to the problems of life." But *Parsifal* was an epic, out of a Divine Christ, but of the spirit of man. Wagner was an Atheist to the end.

From the "Church Times," February 10, 1933.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

ON "BITTER SWEET"—C-DE-B. REPLIES.

SIR,—After re-reading my notice of "Bitter Sweet," I am unable to modify any of the points which I endeavoured to make. The Freethought of the *Freethinker* has sadly misfired if it only enables a Freethinker to exercise his critical faculty on the one subject of religion. In "Bitter Sweet" there was a lightness and brightness and witty play with old-fashioned ideas which had been passed on as a doubtful legacy from the Victorian age. In attending theatres for my own pleasures and relaxation it is gratifying to find in some cases that the heaven of Freethought has been at work. I have seen numerous bad plays and no good purpose would be served by using up valuable space in the *Freethinker* to mention them. I confess to a love of praising. I confess also to a love of anything that is life-furthering, and for this and many other reasons, "Bitter Sweet" appealed to me as a very definite criticism of much public stupidity. Mr. Noel Coward has in his play freely criticized many of the old conventions that are inextricably associated with nearly all the values that pretend to pass muster.

I did not intend to convey the idea that the staging of the play was original or new as a reference to my notice will prove. There are many plays I have not seen, including Lord Dunsany's "If," but "Play-goer's" letter is appreciated if it has enabled me to establish my point, *i.e.*, the exercise of free thought, which, in short, is a criticism of life.

C-DE-B.

Obituary.

WILLIAM THOMAS ALLFREY.

ON Wednesday, February 8, the remains of William Thomas Allfrey were cremated at the West Norwood Crematorium, London. Although usually in good health he fell a victim to Influenza, which was followed by pneumonia, and death took place on February 2, at seventy-nine years of age. A member of the National Secular Society for many years, he was an active and enthusiastic worker until age began to remind him it was time to go slow. In accordance with his wish a Secular Service was conducted in the presence of relatives and friends by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Bethnal Green Public Library, Cambridge Road, E.2) : 8.0, Tuesday, February 21, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Who Invented God."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station) : 7.30, Mr. J. H. Van Biene—"Haeckel."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road) : 7.0, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"Bernard Shaw" and his "Black Girl."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4) : 8.0, Monday, February 20, Mr. P. Goldman will review Mr. Chapman Cohen's, "Sex and Religion."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 7.0, Tuesday, February 21, Captain P. P. Eckersley—"Broadcasting."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, N.) : 7.0, G. F. Powell—"Douglas' Dynamic Economics."

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 19, 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."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Bristol Street Schools) : 7.0, Mr. H. Lennard—"Humanism and the Two Wellers."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (36 Oswald Street) : 7.0, Mr. Jack Clayton—"The Claims of Historical Christianity."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street) : 7.30, Mrs. J. M. Shaw—"The Evolution of Man."

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

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street) : 6.30, Mr. C. Cochrane, M.A., B.Sc., "Metascience."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Prof. J. Lavrin (London University)—"Nietzsche and Christianity."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Pictou Hall, Liverpool) : 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen (President of the N.S.S. and Editor of the *Freethinker*), subject—"The Menace of Mass Opinion."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road) : 3.0, Mr. E. Egerton Stafford (Liverpool)—"Atheism and Sociology." 6.30, "Flashlights on the Bible."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus) : 7.0, Councillor J. Farrell—"Primitive Cultures and Customs and their Modern Counterparts."

RATIONALIST PRESS ASSOCIATION, GLASGOW DISTRICT (Grand Central Hall, 25 Bath Street) : 3.0, Professor C. H. Desch, D.Sc., Ph.D., F.I.C., F.I.Ph., F.R.S.—"The Social Function of Science."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Central Hall) : 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton, Lecture.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street) : A Lecture. The Branch Annual Meeting will be held in I.L.P. Rooms, Foyle Street, Sunderland, on Monday, February 20, at 7.30. Important Business—re-election of Committee.

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Thursday, February 23rd.

SPEAKERS.

Professor H. J. Laski, Dr Alfred Cox, J. A. Hobson, Miss N. Freeman, J. P. Gilmour, Chapman Cohen, and others.

Chair to be taken at 8 o'clock.

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