

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN

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

## Views and Opinions.

### A Group of Criminals.

I HAVE been spending some time in the company of a number of distinguished criminals. These include Mrs. Eddy, William James, Professors Whitehead, Eddington, Julian Huxley, J. S. Haldane, Malinowski and Alexander, Sir Arthur Thomson, Bishop Barnes and Father Knox, besides many others. There they stand accused of the serious misdemeanour of uttering false coin, working the confidence trick, miseducation and misdirection of those whom they had in their charge, and of divers other serious offences against the well-being of this realm. I do not think I can add, as they do in blasphemy indictments "to the dishonour of Almighty God and the high displeasure of His Majesty the King," because I am not sure that either the heavenly or the secular authority would regard these criminals as worthy of punishment. They are far more likely to become objects of public honour just so far as they are successful in their villainies.

The Public Prosecutor in this instance is Mrs. Janet Chance, who a little time back wrote an excellent work on *The Cost of English Morals*, in which she indicted the law and a number of publicists for their handling of Motherhood, Birth Control and cognate subjects. She has now followed this up with an equally striking, if not a more fundamental work, *Intellectual Crime*,\* in which a number of writers are charged with having tampered with the intellectual life of the nation. Mrs. Chance writes with a charming directness; her language, bearing in mind the nature of the offence, is never strained or extravagant, and she brings her charge home in every instance. Whether the criminals will receive the punishment they deserve is another question. The chief difficulty here is that so few of those who are called upon to judge are capable of delivering a considered verdict. The "criminals" have done their work too well for

that. They are almost as well guarded against punishment as a gang of American Racketeers.

\* \* \*

### Debasing the Currency.

Mrs Chance rightly says:—

The idea that there are criminals and cowards, slackers and forgers in the realm of thought, and that they are every bit as harmful to the community as the thief and murderer, will, it is to be hoped, gradually be understood; will be discussed and explained and tested by increasing numbers of people; and will . . . carry into every town and village in the land the conviction that the thought of the world is a sacred thing, and that sins against property and person are as nothing compared with sins against the mind of man.

As one who has probably written more columns against the crime of intellectual crookedness than any other writer in the country I am entitled to say "Amen" to that. We waste much indignation upon the thief, the burglar, the bully, even the murderer. But the evil of these men is comparatively negligible. They are not held up to public admiration, statues are not erected to their memory, the young are not exhorted to admire them, the evil consequences of their lives are, so to speak, localized. But the evils of miseducation, of suppressing the truth, of teaching falsity, of discouraging enquiry or of encouraging a slavish acceptance of accepted opinions, are incalculable in their extent and ramifications. It is the men who in the name of order, of religion or of morality do these things who are the really dangerous criminals. They are canonized in religion, honoured in politics and praised in the world of letters. I should like to see in every educational institution in the country some of the epigrams printed by Mrs. Chance at the beginning of her book:—

The way you think is more important than the way you dress. It is better to let a child be dirty than to let it be deceived.

It is a crime to say a thing is true when you have no ground for saying so.

The truth is always and everywhere an extremely valuable thing; you have therefore no right to believe what you like and you are an intellectual outlaw if you allow beliefs or fancies, dogmas or ideals, to falsify truth.

I was almost saying that these should be hung in the Houses of Parliament and in all the Churches, but they would be considered revolutionary in the first and blasphemous in the second. The Attorney-General would certainly declare that the greatness of England has not been built up on those lines.

\* \* \*

### The Religious Criminal.

Newspapers, scientists, that farrago of fraud and folly, Christian Science, politicians and the B.B.C. are all brought within the four corners of the indictment, and their right to be so included is proven by

\**Intellectual Crime*, by Janet Chance, 5s.

the evidence brought forward. There is a very trenchant chapter entitled "Religious Belief: an Intellectual Crime." The crime is clear enough and it is worth while citing the introduction to the indictment:—

The examples of intellectual crime already discussed are serious enough. The polite liar, the superstition-monger, the quack devotee and the rest are all in their way pernicious. So are the intellectually criminal amongst politicians, journalists and philosophers. But the worst by far of all such offenders are the Churches, the religious writers and preachers—the believers. They are our intellectual criminals whose offences against the sanctity of human thought and the store of human knowledge are too many to be counted. . . . If sincerity of thought is a valuable thing, if vigour and independence of thought are vital things for the life of the race, then the Churches and with them all who in the interests of a faith make dogmatic and unproven statements about God, the future life and an unseen world of spirits, are guilty of a crime which strikes not at the transitory values of the person or the purse, but at that supreme possession of humanity, the achievements of the mind. . . . From another point of view the intellectual crimes of the religious far surpass those of other types. Their crimes in the sphere of the mind are not accidents, not incidental mistakes to be corrected when understood; they are the foundations on which the whole structure of religion, as represented by the Churches, is based. Religious creeds do not merely contain, here and there, some intellectual error. No. Religious creeds are intellectual crimes. It is time the Churches faced not their failure to live up to their creeds but the intellectual evil of having a creed at all, the intellectual degradation implicit in the religious phrase, "I believe."

That is well put and every word of the indictment is solidly true. The real indictment of the Christian is not that he fails to live up to his creed, but that he too often does live up to it. Freethinkers themselves are so often hypnotized by the repetition around them of Christian phrases that they talk of people "acting like Christians," as though it involved perfect conduct. The truth is, the better Christian the man, the worse man the Christian.

\* \* \*

#### The Prosecutor in the Dock.

Were it not for two things in Mrs. Chance's book I should be able to paraphrase Pilate and say, "I find no fault in this Woman." But the two things are there, and there is a certain malicious pleasure in bringing Mrs. Chance within her own indictment as one who muddies the clear stream of thought. Mrs. Chance appears to have a weakness for two words. One is "Agnosticism" when indicating the rejection of the belief in God the other is—but to a lesser degree—"religion." She cites approvingly Huxley's definition of Agnosticism without realizing that on Huxley's own showing it has no reference to the particular thing to express which Huxley says he coined the word—that is, a state of disbelief in God. The rule as laid down by Huxley as descriptive of Agnosticism has no more to do with a belief in God than it has to do with the statement that a train leaves Euston for Edinburgh at a particular hour. Indeed, as I have so often had to point out, Agnosticism has no relevance whatever to the religious issue. It has a relevance to certain philosophical questions, but none whatever to the belief in God. The word was coined, in relation to "God" for the sole purpose of escaping the imputation of Atheism. So far as Agnosticism goes Mrs. Chance might have included Huxley among her intellectual criminals, in spite of his many services to the cause of scientific thinking.

"Then with regard to the word "religion." On this she says:—

It is claimed that the great and desirable gifts which the religious spirit brings are essential to the welfare of humanity. If this book is not in that sense religious, however imperfectly, it is worthless.

And again:—

The religion of the supernaturalist may, and of course does, fall to the ground. . . . But not religion itself. Not the religion of the humanist, not the religion that puts value into this world. Religion in the sense of an emotional attitude to life which fits us to live well and fully in harmony with our world, etc.

Now it is one of the counts against the men and women Mrs. Chance has pilloried that they use in one sense words which people understand in another. They use to this extent a false coinage, and it therefore behoves all who value accuracy of thought to see that their language does not mislead either themselves or others. And the plain truth here is that religion never has meant just humanism, and it has never meant an emotional attitude to the world. Humanism in some form or other is very ancient, and an emotional attitude to the world may exist as easily with Atheism as with Roman Catholicism. A religion must, if it is to be really a religion—that is, if it is to mean what history has always meant by the word, and to mean what one's readers will understand by the term, must involve a belief in some form of supernaturalism. I need not dwell upon the evil of using a word in one sense which one's readers understand in another. Mrs. Chance has given many excellent examples in her book. And after all, it is the use of misleading, elusive, and deceptive words that Mrs. Chance so rightly pillories in her *Intellectual Crime*. She has written a good book—too good I fear for it to receive the notice it deserves from the general press.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

### The Clergy and the Artists.

"Look on this picture."—*Shakespeare*.

"To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge."—*Disraeli*.

"The best of prophets of the future is the past."  
Byron.

The clergy are a caste apart. They appear to live in a strange and fantastic universe of their own. In the midst of a world upheaval, some of these reverend gentlemen are mightily interested in the quaint idea of re-introducing a discarded service commemorating King Charles the Martyr into the Prayer Book. Other parsons, obsessed with still more antiquarian ideas, have been discussing the burning question of the traditional portrait of the alleged founder of their religion.

The Dean of Canterbury, (Dr. Hewlett Johnson) has started a movement for picturing Jesus Christ as a different type from the familiar figure depicted by artists. He points out that generations of artists have portrayed the Christ as weak and effeminate, and that it would be preferable in the present day to present a portrait that should be stronger, better-looking, and more muscular. People, he added, were irreverent concerning beards, and children particularly so. Dr. Scott Lidgett, the Methodist President, agreed with the Dean of Canterbury that these traditional portraits were sentimental, but he wished to keep the beard. Other clergymen expressed various opinions, but the net result to date seems that nearly all of the clergy are dis-

satisfied with the existing portraits, and desire alterations and repairs, especially to the face-fungus.

The subject is a thorny one, but, as it has been started by the clergy themselves, and even been used as the subject matter for sermons, there is no harm in commenting upon it. All the clergymen are agreed on one point, and that is that the popular portrait of Christ is a purely imaginary one. Many of them are forced to admit that the customary figures, especially those favoured by Roman Catholics, are distasteful, and apt to jar on the finer feelings. Nothing more incongruous meets the eyes of British visitors to the Continent than the gaunt, unlovely figure on the roadside Calvarys set amid the brilliant sunshine and the beauties of Nature. To a non-Christian the thing seems a sorry jest, like a death's head at a feast.

Yet this figure, in its way, is really typical of the unlovely Christian creed, just as the seated figure of Gotama Buddha is representative of Buddhism. If an Indian wished to make the portrait of Buddha more up to date, what could he do? The thing would be absolutely unrecognisable. Christians have got to put up with their sacred symbol. They cannot get artists to portray a figure like that of Sir John Falstaff, and expect believers to accept it as a studio portrait of the man of sorrows. No human being could be expected to smile and look very pleasant whilst the victim of a most terrible form of execution.

Christians simply wallow in sentimentalism. The traditional portrait of Christ is neither Oriental nor Occidental, but a purely fanciful picture. It is too ladylike to represent a Syrian peasant. The same criticism applies to all pictures of the alleged sacred family. Portraits of the Virgin are of all the nationalities of Europe. French artists painted Gallic women; Germans limned Teutonic beauties; Spaniards the ladies of their own country, and so on. A glance at the numerous religious paintings in our own National Gallery proves this beyond all cavil and dispute. A few years back there was a sensation at one of the Royal Academy Art Exhibitions because a young artist depicted Christ as being other than a white man. It was too much like Ariel turned Caliban.

It is easy for the clergy to plead for more virile portraits as symbols of their religion, but the unpalatable truth remains that any new portraiture must remain as fanciful as those already in use. In the Ages of Faith artists had no compunctions. They limned the First Person of the Christian Trinity as somewhat resembling Sir Oliver Lodge, and drew the "Twelve Disciples" rather like a male chorus in an opera. Those days are gone for ever, and even schoolchildren now ask questions which their forefathers were burnt alive for asking. It seems almost as if this generation has lost its simplicity of faith, in spite of desperate efforts to keep it faithful.

The Christian Superstition has all along been deeply indebted to artists. In the old Saxon manuscripts the dear angels are dressed in shirt and undershirt in the fashion of the period. With Perugini, Luini, and Raffaele died the old, simple, and ascetic angelhood. The more modern varieties are as elegant as mannequins, and the latest resemble nothing so much as the charming ladies of the Ziegfeld Follies. The point of juncture of the wings with the body of an angel has always caused artists fever of the brow, as well it might. But it is well to desist. Such discussion tends to become too light-hearted for so solemn a subject, more or less resembling Charles Lamb's jocular question to the oracular Coleridge as to how many angels could dance on the point of a needle.

The anxiety of the priests is quite understandable. They wish to bring their sorry superstition more into harmony with modern ideas. Already they are

camouflaging the real nature of the Christian Bible by reading bowdlerized passages to their congregations, and by systematically suppressing all allusion to its coarser features. Now, they seek to popularize a more attractive portrait of the Christ figure. Even should they impose the Apollo Belvedere upon unsuspecting worshippers they cannot save the Christian Superstition from the fate of all religions.

There is no room to-day for the dead hand of superstition on the steering wheel of education, and modern society must be rescued at whatever cost from the antediluvian ancients who seek to perpetuate the ignorance and inhumanities of less civilized and less humane days. By all the signs there is now a tendency to break away from sacerdotalism masquerading as wisdom. Tearing pages from their sacred book, and substituting one fanciful portrait for another may deceive some innocents, but it is no more satisfactory than the cheap device of a travelling waxworks to dress an old figure in different clothes, add a caterpillar moustache, and pass it off as the latest notoriety who figured in last night's newspaper. Whether the Christian symbol is transformed by a Captain Kettle beard, or Dundreary whiskers, is a matter of little moment. The figure will still remain an imaginative picture of an original who had a real existence. But, so long as there are heavily endowed churches, there will be found numbers of men who will pretend, for financial consideration, that these Christian and Hebrew legends are nothing but the truth, and that the flights of artistic fancy are actual portraits.

MIMNERMUS.

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#### WATCH AND PREY.

*(After a well known hymn).*

Parsons seek not yet repose,  
Hear thy anxious Bishops say,  
We are in the midst of foes,  
Watch and prey.

Principalities and powers,  
Lean on an unseen array,  
With its eyes on what is ours,  
Watch and prey.

Urge thy congregations on,  
Keep them at it night and day,  
There are many on the run,  
Watch and prey.

There is danger to our pay,  
They may take the tithe away,  
Rate-collectors look our way,  
Watch and prey.

Portugal and France and Spain,  
England yet may go their way,  
From the Church its riches drain;  
Watch and prey.

Hear above all, hear this word,  
This the issue for to-day;  
Let it everywhere be heard,  
Watch and prey.

Watch, as if on that alone  
Hung the State's part of our pay,  
Prey, lest we all be let down,  
Watch and prey.

A.H.

## Hints on Preparing a Speech.

### I.

WITHIN the past four months I have received at least a dozen letters from readers of the *Freethinker* asking me to send them some notes on this subject. As I cannot write to them all personally, they must accept these articles as my reply.

The writers on public speaking to-day can surely claim that their "name is legion." Nearly all of those to whom I have referred start out with the advice, "first have something to say"—no doubt a useful qualification for anyone who ventures upon the public platform; but it probably seems like platitude to the young inquirer who is sufficiently interested in a subject to desire to speak upon it. How and where is he to seek for information? Many older Freethinkers trying to answer this question for him would doubtless find their chief embarrassment in making a choice from the mass of literature which scientific and historical criticism has brought to bear on religion. The youth of to-day, it has been frequently said of late, are becoming a disturbing factor in social life. If this is true—and I hope it is—we may attribute the fact mainly to their sceptical attitude to what was once taught and accepted as "divine truth." But the rejection of the traditional formulas and dogmas of religion should be only the initial stage in active work for Freethought. From my own experience I know that many young men and women to-day are reaching out for a wider interest in life, and the Freethought movement has much to offer them. Those who would help in our propagandist work need some help in selecting their books and a few hints on taking notes from them.

I have no intention here to compile a bibliography, but merely wish to suggest a few lines along which a beginner may collect his material and gradually advance to those branches of research to which he feels most attracted. In the early part of the year I asked each member of our Study Circle to think out carefully the six books, not more, which he would recommend to a young inquirer of average education as the most likely to convey a general idea of some of the important aspects of Freethought. In quoting authorities it is advisable to refer to the great text-books; but for our purpose voluminous works like Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, or Frazer's *Golden Bough*, were expressly excluded. Eight lists were sent in, and though they varied considerably, the titles of two books appeared in nearly all of them—Draper's *Conflict* and Winwood Reade's *Martyrdom of Man*. Other writings recommended in two or more lists were: Paine, *Age of Reason*; Tylor, *Primitive Culture*; Chapman Cohen, *Theism or Atheism*; Grant Allen, *Evolution of the Idea of God*; and J. M. Robertson, *Short History of Freethought*. The compilers wished to include one book on evolution; but there was no agreement as to the best to recommend to a beginner. Personally, I know of none better for this purpose than J. W. Judd's *Coming of Evolution*, or Dennis Hird's *Easy Outline of Evolution*.

Having acquired a fairly good all-round knowledge of our position, aspirants would do well to concentrate on the line of studies in which they feel specially interested. This will aid them in choosing a subject, and it also safeguards them against the superficiality which results from attempting to master everything under the sun. According to a recent statement by a writer on the Oxford Group Movement, the question at issue between Christians and the rest of the community is whether a man is for God or against him. This seems simple enough, but our indictment includes many counts and we are not all equally interested in each individual item.

Even after the young advocate has decided for himself in which particular part of the wide arena of controversy he will spend his energies, he should realize from the first that he cannot deal with any question so as to impress honest inquirers unless he knows the other side. A good knowledge of comparative religion is almost indispensable, and a study of the history of Christianity will repay the time spent on it. The history of Christian apologetic from the earliest times down to the *Bridgewater Treatises*, the Genesis-and-geology period, the panic created by Darwin and evolution, and the historical criticism of the New Testament in our own day, afford an insight into the influence of orthodoxy on the promotion of intellectual dishonesty. It also throws light on the meaning and value of authority in religion. For the history of Christianity as an ecclesiastical institution the student will, of course, turn first to Gibbon. A. D. White's *History of the Warfare of Science with Theology* is also well worth a careful reading. Lecky's *European Morals* and *History of Rationalism* are still serviceable for the facts, though some of his comments, intended to soften the repulsive character of the facts, lay him open to criticism.

The study of such books as Sedgwick and Tyler's *Short History of Science*, and the writings of Charles Singer on this subject, is interesting in itself and useful for propagandist purposes. It directs attention to the important truth that Freethought has a much longer history than Christianity. To-day from Roman Catholics and Protestants alike we hear a good deal about modern thought; but it is not so "modern" as some Christians imagine. Only now it is much more difficult to suppress. To that section of Young England which is seriously interested in our work I would say, "Try to form a consistent picture of the periods in which religious beliefs spring up, and examine them in the light of their intellectual environment." A grasp of the significance of this way of viewing religion aids the Freethinker materially in showing what Christianity has been throughout its history and what it is to-day.

The literature which treats of the Christ-myth has now reached such dimensions that only a few can hope to master more than a selection from it. I would advise the student interested in this question to begin with Strauss—everything he has written is worth reading—and then to make a careful study of the late J. M. Robertson's writings on it, all of them if possible, but certainly *The Jesus Problem*.

Sociology, psychology, and ethics, regarded from a scientific point of view, and the problems of which they treat—especially determinism, responsibility, "occult" phenomena—are subjects of the highest importance to Freethinkers to-day. But this is too wide a field for me to touch even the outskirts of it. Here as in his studies generally, the young reader is urged to confer, personally or by correspondence, with others well informed on the subject.

The champion of the faith in the domain of popular apologetics deserves a word all to himself. In the parks I have found that a favourable impression is created by anticipating his stock phrases and showing the sophisms which they often wrap up. "Christianity has as much right as science to be up to date." "Atheism explains nothing." "Religion is no more to be condemned for its lowly origin than man is." "The fact that religion persists proves that it has survival value." I cannot go through the whole list. The Freethinker's general reading in natural science, comparative religion, and history will equip him with facts bearing on such questions; but he must apply his logic to the devices of the expounders of Christian evidences whether in Hyde Park or in the universities. That is why I recommend our speakers to have some

knowledge of formal logic. It is of practical importance to know the exact meaning attached to such terms as "hypothesis," "explanation," "probability," "evidence," and the words and phrases which enter so largely into the "arguments" of some of our opponents, and also to be able to detect fallacies. The logical study of the lecturer's subject has a much wider application; it helps him to arrange the successive propositions of his speech so as to produce a cumulative effect. Almost any local library contains books on the subject. Keeling's *Logic and Reasoning* in Benn's Sixpenny Library is easy reading. I have found all Alfred Sidgwick's writings helpful, and especially recommend his *Elementary Logic*. Welton's *Manual of Logic* (Vol. II., Book VII.) deals very fully with fallacies.

All this reading, of course, in itself makes exacting claims on the student. Little or nothing is gained by skimming over, without concentration, page after page of printed matter. How is the reader to get out of his books the best value for propagandist purposes? There are various methods recommended for note-taking. Many speakers now make their notes on cards, with suitable headings, and add to them from time to time. I have long been in the habit of using the fly-leaves at the beginning and end of my own books for noting important relevant facts and ideas, and if necessary bind in additional leaves. Short notes in the margin of the text may be helpful, but only the essential passages should be marked. If the work consulted is not my own, I use a medium-sized note-book and write down the substance of what I want, with a reference to the original source. Long quotations swell one's notes beyond control, and in any case should not be used in an ordinary speech. When the student is looking for some particular point in a book of reference, he should read that point when he finds it, not the whole work. Inexperienced speakers are prone to collect masses of information which they can never use, and this is a serious waste of their time.

The next question is, when the would-be speaker has his material ready to hand, how is he to present it to the audience? The answer to this requires a separate article.

A. D. McLAREN.

(To be concluded.)

### Soft Soap from the "Catholic Encyclopædia."

THE *Catholic Encyclopædia*, a portentous work in sixteen massive volumes, is a masterpiece of secular learning and clerical craft. If we turn to "Atheism," we read that "since its first coming into use the term Atheism has been very vaguely employed, generally as an epithet of accusation against any system that called into question the popular gods of the day." In this sense, we are informed, Socrates, Diagoras, Democritus and Epicurus were styled "Atheists." Moreover, "even the early Christians were known to the pagans as Atheists." Just a little too clever this admission since it implies that the early Christians brought in a new god—which is true enough but hardly what the writer of this article meant. There never have been many Atheists. "Huxley, Darwin and Spencer" were "quite erroneously" so described. "Materialism is the one dogmatic explanation of the universe which could in any sense justify an Atheistic position, but even so it can really only form a theoretical basis for negative Atheism." There is, it is to be observed, a nice distinction between positive and negative Atheism. Positive Atheism can only include "the teaching of those schools, whether cosmological or moral, which do not include God either as a principle, or as a conclusion of their reasoning." An Agnostic "may be

a theist"; and the "Materialist belongs to this type so long as he merely neglects and does not exclude from his system the existence of God." It is admitted that "those who advocate Atheism introduce (in place of God) new sanctions for moral action, ideas of duty; the social instinct, or humanity." The worst sort of Atheism is "moral Atheism," or positive or practical Atheism. This "is not a kind of thought or opinion, but a mode of life." It is "godlessness in conduct, quite irrespective of any theory of philosophy, morals or religion." In Germany, says the writer, Karl Vogt, Jacob Moleschott, Ludwig Buchner and Ernst Haeckel "go far to forming an Atheistic system of philosophy" but—and there is nearly always a "but" as the reader will have noticed—"even the last named (*i.e.*, Haeckel) admitted that there may be a God, though so limited and so foreign to the deity of the Theists that the admission can hardly remove the system from the first (positive) category of Atheism." Mentioning Ingersoll, as one of the few Atheists it can think of, the *Encyclopædia* says "speakers and writers of this type may create a certain amount of unlearned disturbance, they are not treated seriously by thinking men, and it is extremely doubtful whether they deserve a place in any historical or philosophical exposition of Atheism." Hoity toity!

We will now see what the *Catholic Encyclopædia* has to say about "Infidel." Rest easy, reader, for the chances are you do not come into this category. For what is an "infidel" as officially here defined? Infidel is "the name given to those who have not been baptized." It applies, not only to those "who are ignorant of the true God, like pagans, but also to those who adore him, but do not recognize Jesus Christ, *i.e.*, Jews, Mohammedans. (The Anglican Prayer Book is thus tautological in praying for "Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics.") Heretics and Schismatics (if baptized) are not called infidels, but non-Catholics. Infidels are "presumed ignorant, not rebellious." St. Thomas Aquinas is quoted as giving a testimonial to infidels as follows: "Their condition is not morally bad, and does not partake of the nature of sin, but rather of punishment, in that ignorance of the Faith is a consequence of original sin." The writer goes further and says, "daily experience moreover proves incontestably that there are infidels who are really religious, charitable, just, true to their word, upright in their business, and faithful to their family duties. One can say of them, as the Scripture says of Cornelius the centurion, that their prayers and their alms are acceptable to God." Infidels are not heretics, for "no act of an infidel can have any value from the point of view of a spiritual society to which he does not belong." He may even contract a valid marriage under natural law, "but not as a sacrament." The Church however is not so liberal in practice as this might suggest, because "ecclesiastical law forbids marriage to an infidel as a diriment impediment in rendering the marriage null and void unless a dispensation has been obtained," and, we may add, been paid for.

Notwithstanding all this circumlocutory discrimination in the articles on Atheism and Infidelity the reader can take it from us that there is abundant evidence elsewhere in these volumes that friendly readers of this journal, not to mention such scoundrels as the present writer, are booked for a hot place.

The wire-drawn distinctions of speculative theology may suggest that the fate of unbelievers is problematical. Pious Catholics, however, have no doubts. They hope, if they do not believe, *de fide*, that all infidels will share the lot assumed to have been that of a famous statesman by one of his pious enemies, who opined that:—

"The Grand Old Man has gone below,  
Gone down in a fiery chariot,  
To sit in state,  
On a red hot plate,  
Between Satan and Judas Iscariot."

ALAN HANDSACRE.

It is always wisest to assume that nobody has read a thing—especially if it is one's own writing.

Professor E. A. Freeman.

## The Credibility of Coincidence.

DR. HENRY MAUDSLEY, the distinguished alienist, dealt in his *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* with the vagaries of credulity. The relevant passages, slightly abridged, follow. Many popular superstitions have their origin in the same irrational practice as provides most of the examples of so-called answers to prayer. That there are many more things in heaven and earth than philosophy can spell out, or even dream of, may be readily admitted. But it is a long way beyond the evidence of observation and reason to accept off-hand the stories of spiritual apparitions and mysterious sympathies which have had and still have a strong hold on popular credence—stories whose hot attestation blazons the need for their confirmation. For example: the apparition of a person at the moment of his death, in form and habit as he lived, to a friend a thousand miles away; the dream of some one's place and time and mode of death—in the exact way it took place; the communication of a thought or feeling between two persons who are in different rooms of the same house or in different houses, miles apart; and why not add the more vulgar instance (which rests after all on a wider basis of experience) of the tingling of a person's ear when somebody is talking about him. Although these and like stories are vouched for by zealous observers, whose credulity lacks nothing except that it suffers from the entire lack in them of a capacity to observe. They are believed, rather because they are wished than because they are proved to be true: they ought to be expected therefore to hold their ground stoutly in faith were they disproved by the positive evidence of facts.

When the neurotic persons, eager to make discoveries in psychical research, go to work to list diligently by experiment whether the one, when he mounts to the attic, can respond instantly by telepathic sympathy to the thought which the other conceives in the kitchen, having carefully pre-arranged the conditions of the experiment so as to avoid any collusion except the unconscious subtle collusion of two like-structured minds, it would be strange indeed if the two did not sometimes coincide not echo. One knows not indeed which to admire most—the simple zeal for the truth, or the zealous simplicity with which the connecting natures go about conscientiously to prevent collusion. The experiment, so conducted, is pathetically absurd. For it is not they who ought to conduct it—it is they who require to be controlled as factors in the conducted experiment; and that should be done by a cool and competent outside observer, unbiased and critical, who regulates strictly all the proper conditions and tests. The pity of it notably is that the presence of a sceptical mind is hostile to the conduction of the telepathic sympathy, or to the spiritual manifestations which so resents the irreverent tests that the expected event does not come off: like the miracle, it requires the ambient medium of believing minds. It fails to show itself in the unfit medium of unbelievers because of their unbelief. Now an event that cannot tolerate the searching conditions alone sufficient to test it scientifically, but claims a privilege of sanctuary from the criticism of reason, belongs logically to the domain of faith proud to exalt over reason.

After all, the question of the supernatural in natural things is merely a subjective business—at bottom a question of the value of human thought and feeling: not of the nature of evidence itself, but of what men think about it: not of the thing-in-itself but of the *think*. And that is necessarily natural, being in the end always human thinking and feeling, however it has come about.

CANDIDATUS.

Rough work, iconoclasm; but the only way to get at Truth.—O. W. Holmes.

Drink: If it's an evil to a man, it's not necessary; an' if it's necessary it's not an evil.

(From "Dissertations and Observations,"  
by Mr. Dooley (E. P. Dunnc.))

## Acid Drops.

One of the Sunday papers solemnly pointed out a few days before the King and Queen saw the film "The Good Companions," that in one of the scenes there was used a word not common in polite society. Knowing the innocence of kings and queens—in this country—we were relieved to read on Wednesday that the King had been consulted as to whether he objected to hearing, in public the word "bloody," and he said he did not. But we should like to have heard what words the King actually did use, privately, when the enquiry was put to him. Still, we must congratulate our Sunday papers on their determination to see that the purity of the English Court is maintained. British morality is something that all the world knows stands quite by itself.

The stupidity of personifying a country in such phrases as "England thinks," or "France says," etc., is well shown by a sentence in the *Daily Express* in the column of reflections by an office boy which does duty for a leading article. Speaking of the developments in Germany the boy remarks:—

The fact remains that Germany in trouble turns to a master.

This is by way of explanation of the Hitler Movement. An armed minority, probably less than half the nation, imposes by brutality and terrorism its rule on the people and we are told that this is "Germany" turning to a master. Next we shall be told that China in trouble turns to Japan.

"I speak as a Christian," said the Japanese delegate to the League of Nations when manufacturing excuses why Japan should invade China. No one but a real Christian, or no one who had not studied Christian methods could have used that sentence. And that phrase might have been used by Sir John Reith when speaking at a meeting of the Thirty-Two Club on March 1. He said that:—

Every effort is made to obviate a charge of bias either in the political field or in any other field.

Sir John Reith and his fellow Christians are too ingenuous. The B.B.C. very plainly announces that it will never permit anything to be broadcast that is openly anti-Christian, and it will not permit the broadcasting of anything on Sunday while the religious services are proceeding, nor will it give a Week-day programme on Sunday. But it is not therefore to be accused of bias. Sir John is strictly impartial—speaking, that is, as a Christian.

There are, says an auctioneer, 200 mansions vacant in Somerset. Still, that is nothing to the number of mansions which must be vacant in Heaven, seeing the wicked and unbelieving state of the world during the past thirty years. But the other department—the warmer end of Heaven—must be frightfully overcrowded, unless the author of mankind, who must have known what men would do with "Free Will," has thoughtfully made the accomodation elastic.

In a sermon by the Rev. Lionel Fletcher, "an Empire evangelist," he says that:—

When I was a young man, I used to go home many a night, and kneel down by my bedside, and say, "O, God, convert me." Conversion never comes that way, because, you see, there is no handle outside for God to open. He has given you complete control of your life; the handle is on the inside of the door, and he comes and knocks from the outside . . . And he knocks and says, "May I come in?" But you have the bars up against the door, and they are on the inside. There is the bar of indifference, and the bar of wilful sin, and the bar of lack of faith, and there are a whole lot of other bars.

To the Christian who believes this sort of stuff, and in

this kind of God, it must be rather a problem to square this meek and humble and almost cringing God with the God who is responsible for tempests, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, vast floods, etc.—which violently destroy the lives of good and bad quite impartially and bring frightful suffering and misery to millions of persons in the course of one year. We are glad to say that the number of persons in this country, and the "Empire," with the kind of intelligence that would be affected by Mr. Fletcher's crude talk, is rapidly diminishing.

Apropos of a proposal to substitute "tip-up" seats for pews in a certain church, the Rev. Thomas Tiplady, of Lambeth, writes to a daily paper as follows:—

It is time we realized that "dim religious" light, draughts, bad ventilation, ugly walls, uncomfortable seats, and a freezing atmosphere that gives the congregation cold feet, hinder the work of the clergy and ministers.

So all these things are now regarded as bad for business—that is, the devil-dodging trade. It is curious to note that it is only in comparatively recent years that these familiar features of religious worship have become objectionable to church-goers. They were not noticed or were disregarded in the days when religion was fervently held. That they are to-day thought objectionable suggests that people regard religion differently now. They no longer believe in that hoary tradition of Christianity that earth is a vale of human suffering in which one earns everlasting bliss hereafter. They refuse to subscribe to the Christian notion that suffering and discomfort are aids to righteousness. Hence, they are desirous of being as physically comfortable as modern resources can make them while they are engaged in the pastime of assuring the Lord they are miserable sinners.

A reader of the *Daily Sketch* has undertaken to explain why so many people, educated and uneducated, are superstitious. He says:—

Superstitions are handed down to us in the same way as manners and customs; temperament, not education, is the deciding factor as to whether we shall be superstitious or not.

For our part, we should say that the superstitious temperament is largely a matter of lack of a rational education amongst all grades of people. For one thing, most persons are exposed, in youth, to contact with the Christian Bible, which engenders a belief in the supernatural and in signs and portents and wonders. For another thing, most of the popular newspapers and journals "hand on" superstitious beliefs, and keep alive belief in them. With these two types of "education" always in operation, the superstitious temperament cannot help but develop and be well nurtured.

The late Rev. Studdart-Kennedy is quoted (in the *Church of England Newspaper*) as saying, "There is too much prayer for comfort—the comfort of the cushion, not of the Cross." He denounces "the baser sense or soothing sorrow, dulling pain and drying tears." But the "baser" way of doing these things is by human aid and not by divine invocation. Religion "glories in the Cross." But humanism provides, not the cushion of prayer, but the inspiration of humane and practical aid. Christians may get a cowardly "comfort" from prayer: but nobody has ever got anything more substantial by its aid.

It is amusing to observe the tricks of episcopal gentry with regard to the forthcoming Oxford Movement Centenary. They cannot ignore a large proportion of the clergy and laity of the Establishment; but they cannot approve what is patently illegal and ostentiously Roman Catholic. So, in the Sheffield diocese for example, we read that the centenary will be observed "not in a partisan spirit." The Bishop says, "we cannot forget the stern saintliness of Keble, the devout learning of Pusey, and the Christian-Social teaching of Scott-Holland and

Gore." As if the Anglo-Catholics care tuppence for these men and things. We read in the *Church Times* the Anglo-Catholic cock in full crow over the greatest Party demonstration ever staged in the history of Anglicanism, and we realize that, according to its real promoters, the Oxford Centenary celebration is a party demonstration—or nothing. Some Evangelicals will not touch it with a barge-pole, and how so-called "liberal" churchmen can associate themselves with a big push for the crudest superstition is inexplicable except on grounds of fear or opportunism.

We are often puzzled by the candour of liberal-minded clergymen. Dean Inge's recent addresses to young people at Cambridge have now been published in a book entitled *Things New and Old*. At a time when in national and international affairs prove the urgent need for breaking down the barriers which creeds and conventions as well as Governments and tariffs have erected between men, here is the Dean of St. Paul's telling the youth of to-day that they "are called to serve in Christ's army against that other Society of co-operative guilt and limited liability called the world."

Right against this idea of Christians as a non-worldly army the Dean advocates the transformation of the traditional machinery of Christendom in order to avoid its collapse. "Believe me," he says, "if Christianity is ever rejected as obsolete it must be because the conscience of humanity has advanced, while the teachers have refused to move an inch and prefer the traditions of the elders to the loving voice of the Holy Spirit of Truth."

What this seems to mean is that Christians are to separate themselves from "the world," to wage war against its Co-operative spirit; but, in order to do so the more effectively, they must abandon their out of date machinery and go in for the modern weapons of the enemy. The gloomy Dean is the best illustration of Mr. Facing-both Ways—that we have met since Bunyan's original actor in that part.

The following is from the *London Letter* writer of the *Yorkshire Post*:—

A Colonial Bishop of my acquaintance who has been abroad for some years is attending the Church Assembly for the first time since 1919. He has been surprised, even shocked—at the almost universal way in which the clergy light pipes and cigarettes—outside the Council Chamber, it is true, but actually within Church House. The landing by the room where serious discussions are taking place was littered with cigarette ends like the foyer of a picture palace, he declared, adding that he was horrified this morning to see a distinguished arch-deacon, after lighting his own cigarette before the door had closed behind him, lean forward and assist one of the many ladies who were present to light hers from the one he held between his lips.

Where were the Press photographers on this occasion?

A number of Catholics, male and female, have resigned their membership of the Hanwell Labour Party because it is in favour of Birth Control. "My religion, right or wrong," is their cry, and everything that the Party stands for can go to the wall rather than that the poor should be allowed to practise what everybody else who can afford to pay for the information does practise without fear or favour. What a noble example of toleration is given by the Roman Catholic Church!

The poor ye have always with you, but it is good to note how easily the money for building Churches is found. The new church of Our Lady and St. Teresa at Chingford has just paid off its debt of £6,500, and the Rector, Fr. Howell, is now going to build a new school for Roman Catholic children at a cost of £3,000. Not bad for religion in these glorious times.

It is interesting to note that a correspondent in a Catholic newspaper, writing about taking the oath, says "No thoughtful Catholic can regard the Authorized Version of the Bible with other than *religious aversion*." It shows how some people regard God's Holy Word in translation. Another correspondent thinks that if a Catholic Bible cannot be obtained for the oath, then the Catholic should insist on the right to *affirm* instead. Shades of Bradlaugh—the beautiful picture of a Catholic refusing to kiss the Authorized Version of the Bible and insisting on affirming might well make that doughty champion of freedom turn in his grave for joy. Why not abolish the Bible altogether?

The bachelor judge, Mr. Justice McCardie, is not exactly flying in the face of Providence, but his recent lecture to the Eugenics Society is a direct criticism of all that churches, big and little, have propounded for centuries. The lecturer actually has the audacity to suggest an improvement on the human race, but this, to those who can see farther than the end of their nose, is not blasphemy, but a direct hit at the forces that flourish on fecundity, poverty and ignorance.

The *Universe* is very angry that Mr. Justice McCardie should "preach in public" his views on divorce reform, on the sterilization of the unfit and birth-control, and considers it "a gross abuse and an unpardonable offence against an honourable tradition." But that is only because Roman Catholicism is against these things. Had the Judge pointed out that the Roman Church was divinely appointed, that divorce and birth-control were against God's decree, and that to kiss the Pope's toe was a very great honour, the *Universe* would have shouted "Hooray," and put him and his doings forthwith in its "Public Eye" column. As for us, we are glad that even a Judge, outside his judicial office, has the courage to attack things in our social life which he believes to be a blot on civilization.

A breath of sanity may be allowed to blow in the pages of the *Freethinker*, although it dates back to October 23, 1931. No doubt the petty outbursts of spleen by our imperialistic poet, Mr. Rudyard Kipling, will be tolerably overlooked on account of his age and his upbringing well within the sound of a drum. We quote the following from a newspaper, and repeat that the problem of people on this earth is not how to kill each other, but how to live with one another. Most book writers on the War have overlooked this very simple statement of fact, and we record the following as an acknowledgement that one individual at least has got the difficulty the right end up. "Speaking at the dedication of a new hospital, M. Herriott said, 'Among you sleep 75,000 German war dead, men who undoubtedly asked nothing but to live in tranquility. Let us pay to them such homage as we have addressed to our own war dead, for France has no hatred for her former enemy.'"

For those who are interested in matters other than cross-word puzzles or cricket scores, it will be amazing to find that the late George Moore and Signor Mussolini have something in common. It is the love of trees. Moore's last letter was a protest against the destruction of beauty, and in one of his latest interviews he vented his wrath on those who cut down trees. Mussolini has had planted in Italian forests more than 80,000,000 small plants. He says: "I love trees. Defend them. I will help you to defend them." Both of these figures, to their credit, are concerned for beauty on earth more than for a speculative bliss in the future.

The equivalent of £18,630,000 for War has been adopted in the Japanese budget for 1933. The suggestion for what it is worth is passed on from the *Freethinker* to the East—that Europe will sell her fruits of victory for half the price.

The Bishop of Carlisle in a sour grapes mood does not think highly of the Irish Hospitals Sweepstake, according to a newspaper report. It is curious and can only be explained by latent jealousy that those who specialize in a sheep and goat sweepstake should carp at one in which horses play a prominent part.

We are told in a newspaper that the Rev. Frank Clive Luget, Rector of Middleton, near Sudbury, Suffolk, has seen a shining vision of Our Lady. We do not doubt it for one moment, and would in the greatest friendliness extend to him a little kindly advice which may be read on hoardings, and that is, "Eat more fruit."

The Roman Catholic Archbishop Mostyn said at Cardiff, the other day, that "ever since Jesus Christ died upon the Cross at Calvary, in every age His Church has been attacked, and its members persecuted." This really means that when the ferocious and bloody Catholic Church was trying to stamp out liberty of thought by every foul means it knew, when it introduced the stake, the rack, the thumbscrew, the iron maiden, the dungeon and various other delightful accessories "to compel men to come in," and some men kicked and were powerful enough to resist, the Church was being persecuted! Perhaps the dear Archbishop will tell us when the Inquisition was abolished and why?

Another Roman Catholic, Bishop Lee, is very sad that "the old timid Atheism of the few of past ages has become the impudent profession of our time." Leaving aside the fact that we always understood from Christians there were no Atheists at any time, timid, or otherwise, we welcome his admission that there are some at least. In the days of the faggot and the red-hot pincers—was not the tongue of Vanini torn out by the Bishop's brothers-in-Christ before he was burnt alive?—it required some courage to avow oneself an Atheist. It was done, however, by many a brave pioneer and Bishop Lee, now that his Church can no longer burn and torture, will continue to see thousands more advocate "the impudent profession of our time."

### Fifty Years Ago.

I TOLD you at the outset that you are the last Court of Appeal on all questions affecting the liberty of the press and the right of free speech and Freethought. When I say Freethought, I do not refer to specific doctrines that may pass under that name, but I refer to the great right of Freethought, that Freethought which is neither low as a cottage nor lofty as a pyramid, but is like the soaring azure vault of heaven, which over-arches both with equal ease. I ask you to affirm the liberty of the press, to show by your verdict that you are prepared to give to others the same freedom as you claim for yourselves. I ask you not to be misled by the statements that have been thrown out by the prosecution, not to be misled by the authority and influence of the mighty and rich Corporation which commenced the action, has found the money for it, and whose very solicitor was bound over to prosecute. I will ask you not to be influenced by these considerations, but rather to remember that this present attack is made upon us probably because we are connected with those who have been struck at again and again by some of the very persons who are engaged in the prosecution; to remember that England is growing day by day in its humanity and love of freedom; and that, as blasphemy has been an offence less and less proceeded against during the past century, so there will probably be fewer and fewer proceedings against it in the next. (G. W. Foote at his trial.)

The "Freethinker," March 11, 1883.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No. : CENTRAL 2412.

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FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—E. A. Macdonald, £3 3s.; B. Jenkins, £3 3s.; Miss V. Murray, £1.

MR. MAUD.—Many thanks for your kindness in sending us *Freethinker* volumes.

G. ENGER (Alexandria).—We can now supply you with a set of the *Freethinker* bound from 1926 to 1932.

H. FREEMAN.—The opinion of the late J. M. Robertson with regard to Atheism and Agnosticism was exactly that of Bradlaugh's and our own. He held that Agnostic was indefinite, and meaningless, save by its being opposed to a definite form of thought. He held that the clear thinker must always come back to Atheism, and that if people misunderstand it their misunderstanding is due to inability to understand the question at issue. He never, so far as we are aware, ever repudiated or qualified this position.

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

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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 (March 12) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The chair will be taken at 6.30. On Sunday next (March 19) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester. Times of meetings, 3 o'clock and 6.30.

The large Miners' Hall, Barnsley was about three parts filled on Sunday afternoon last, and better filled in the evening to listen to Mr. Cohen's lectures. It is many years since Mr. Cohen was in Barnsley, but there was no mistaking the interest of the audience in what was said. Mr. H. King took the chair on both occasions. There seems a chance of starting a Branch in Barnsley, and if it is started it should go ahead. There is some good material there.

There is a good report of Mr. Cohen's two lectures at Burnley, on February 26, in the *Burnley News*. But there is one curious mistake. Speaking of the censorship which the B.B.C. exerts over speakers, and arguing that no public or representative man or woman should submit, Mr. Cohen said that if as President of the Society founded by Charles Bradlaugh he was invited to deliver an address, he would decline to do so in such circumstances. Somehow this is transformed into

an invitation having been given by the B.B.C. to Mr. Cohen. Of course this invitation has never been issued and is not likely to be. The reporter appears to have dropped the word "If" at the opening of the sentence.

Our attention has been called to a slight error in the "Bradlaugh Centenary Notes" of February 19. The compiler was citing from Mr. Ramsay Macdonald's article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, and used the word "refusal" in connexion with proceedings in the Courts. It was his *evidence* that was refused on the grounds of his being an Atheist, and the conflict, as Mr. Macdonald says: "led to the passing of the Evidence Amendment Act (1869) which enabled the evidence of Freethinkers to be taken."

In the House of Commons struggle Bradlaugh, of course, never refused to take the oath. He had taken the highest legal advice and believed he had the right to affirm and asked to do so. This was refused, after a Committee had sat to consider the question. Bradlaugh then offered to take the oath, stating that he would regard it as binding in spirit, although the religious part of it meant nothing to him. The House of Commons refused this and so initiated the historic struggle over the right of representation. The Tories had not forgotten that Bradlaugh was not merely an Atheist, but that he had written that terrible *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*, detailing the imbecilities, and worse, of the reigning royal family and asking for the abolition of the monarchy on the decease of the then reigning monarch. And Bradlaugh's motto was "Thorough" in both speech and act. His enemies at least were not mistaken in the kind of man with whom they had to deal, and they indicated well enough the direction in which he figured as the most "dangerous" man of his generation.

There was a good attendance at Birmingham last Sunday, when Mr. Albert C. White lectured to the Branch on "Church Revenues and National Welfare." Mr. J. H. Millington was in the chair. A much appreciated point in the lecture was the suggestion that in this, the Centenary Year of Charles Bradlaugh, the great and growing, but timid and silent body of secular opinion, should be stimulated into affirmation and support. It would be an ironic and disgraceful event, said Mr. White, if some shameful compromise was rushed through Parliament by which the Church was freed from all the liabilities of State connexion and left in possession of all, or nearly all, its present privileges and exactions.

Mr. B. Jenkins (Johannesburg) in sending a contribution to the Freethinker Endowment Trust, writes:—

It is gratifying to a Freethinker to realize that the work initiated by Charles Bradlaugh and carried on by the late G. W. Foote and yourself is likely to be continued indefinitely. Certainly men's minds grow broader, but the evolutionary process is so slow that I feel there is just as much need for your work to-day as there was in the time of Bradlaugh. Men who are busy in commerce and industry are usually inhibited from doing much to give practical assistance to the cause, and the least that we can do is to support it financially to the extent that we are able. It is not without humiliation that I write thus, as I feel that I might have done more, and should have done more, to help the work along.

We appreciate Mr. Jenkins' estimate of the value of the work that is being done by the *Freethinker*. The Endowment Trust is one of the methods by which we aim at placing the *Freethinker* in a position stronger than any Freethought paper has ever been in British history. We feel sure that no Freethought journal has ever had a more devoted body of readers, and it will not be our fault if that feeling does not grow stronger, rather than weaker.

Mr. E. A. Macdonald, another South African reader, also sends a contribution to the Trust, with the following message:—

I hope that all those who can afford it will make this Bradlaugh Centenary year a special occasion for being generous to our paper. It is the kind of memorial Bradlaugh would have wished for most. The values cherished by the people are still mainly barbarous, and while this condition lasts there is heaps of work, for the *Freethinker* to do. Good luck to you.

We cordially agree that the best kind of memorial to Bradlaugh is an unceasing endeavour to promote those causes and principles for which Bradlaugh stood. In bringing more prominently before the public the work of the man who never played to the crowd, whether the "crowd" belonged to the upper or the lower classes, we hope to get the public more interested in the Free-thought Cause for the advancement of which worked during the whole of his life. Everything in his life was subsidiary to this, and everything he did was animated by the Free-thought ideal.

The large number of books published on Birth Control methods would make one think another was unnecessary. But Mr. George Ryley Scott's *Modern Birth Control Methods*, with a Foreword by Sir W. Arbuthnot Lane (John Bale, Sons & Danielson, 7s. 6d. net) is certainly a very clear exposition of practically all that is known on the subject. Those who are in need of this information will find Mr. Scott's work exceptionally helpful. The tables of the various methods with their advantages and disadvantages make the big question of choice for individual cases an easy one. We heartily recommend the book.

Mr. Scott has his own views also on what should be the reason for Birth Control. He claims "that Birth Control is a private matter for the individuals concerned, and that every married couple have the right to decide whether or not they shall practice birth control" for personal reasons alone. He refuses to justify it "from the standpoint of eugenics, or the need of alleviating unemployment, or any other of the varieties of chicanery that it is customary for exponents of contraception to parade," and he adds, "with exceptions which I could count on the digits of one hand, even the most enthusiastic advocates of birth control have attempted to white-wash their propaganda with some one or other social blessing which they claim birth control will confer upon mankind." Perhaps some of the "most enthusiastic advocates" will agree with Mr. Scott—or not.

## The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

### THIRD LIST OF DONATIONS.

AMOUNT previously acknowledged, £324 os. 6d.; F. G. Abbiss, £5; A. Cohen, £3; G. Wood, £2 2s.; N. Lidstone, £2 2s.; J. J. Dent, £2 2s.; A. B. Potter, £2 2s.; Mrs. Greevz-Fisher, £2 2s.; E. Snelling, £2; H. Boll, £2; Mrs. A. Robertson, £2; Roberts, £1 1s.; W. R. Barralet, £1 1s. The Daughter of his friend, Major Evans Bell, £1 1s.; Mr. & Mrs. O'Brien, £1 1s.; Mrs. Snelling, £1; Miss P. Snelling, £1; Mr. R. Snelling, £1; Dr. Ivor L. Tuckett, £1; Mrs. Annie Shiel, £1; Mrs. Alice Lee, £1; Executors of W. Griffiths per H. Black, £1; W. S. Collins, 17s. 6d.; J. Whittaker, 10s. 6d.; Lady Simon, 10s. 6d.; Miss M. L. Trevillion, 10s. 6d.; J. F. Hampson, 10s. 6d.; J. Mellor, 10s.; A. D. McLaren, 10s.; C. Bentley, 10s.; Miss Arnold, 10s.; Mr. & Mrs. W. King, 10s.; Henry S. Salt, 10s.; R. Daniell, 5s.; S. A. Ellingham, 5s.; W. A. Lloyd, 5s.; W. Watson, 2s. 6d.; W. W. Horley, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. S. Winkworth, 2s. 6d.; A. S. Lewis, 2s.; J. Robinson, 2s.; W. Deighton, 1s.

Total ... £367 1 6.

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

## Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes.

### IV.—BRADLAUGH AND THE POLITICIANS.

THE *Annual Register* gives us, for every year since 1758, an accurate and inclusive record and summary of public events at home and abroad. It has an Obituary section, and eminence of some sort is the condition of inclusion therein. Even so, many names have only the honour of mention, and most receive notice in a few carefully balanced lines. Each month's obituary opens with notices of the lives deemed to justify a longer and larger review than the rest. There are only four names in this section for January, 1891, and the obituary of Charles Bradlaugh (pp. 133-135) takes nearly two pages. Like all the others it is written with admirable judgment and restraint. Space here permits of the following quotations only.

After recording Bradlaugh's legal triumphs the *Annual Register* says: "His Parliamentary achievements, in a time unfavourable to the efforts of private members, were considerable, and they were due to the qualities wherein his strength lay—a dogged perseverance and an eminently practical bent of mind—together with the respect which he succeeded in extorting from all Parties in the House, and which grew rapidly in the last few years."

Referring to the prosecution of the *National Reformer*, the Obituary says: "In 1859 he [Bradlaugh] started his own paper . . . which attracted less attention from the public than from the Government authorities, who foolishly engaged in a struggle (1868-69) with the editor, attempting to revive for their purpose an obsolete Act calling upon every newspaper proprietor to give heavy securities against seditious writing. The Inland Revenue authorities were completely beaten, and withdrew at last from further conflict. In the same year he began his campaign for the purpose of the removal of the disabilities to which Freethinkers were subjected in Courts of Law, and the result was the passing of the Evidence Amendment Acts, 1869-70." On another case *Clarke v. Bradlaugh*, we read here that "the decision of the House of Lords was that the writs against him were so much waste paper. A scarcely less important victory was that which he achieved in the action which he brought with success against Mr. Newdigate for maintenance."

These important acknowledgements of Bradlaugh's character and power must be read in the light of his time, not ours. The hostile atmosphere of Bradlaugh's time may be gauged from the following passage from Herbert Paul's *History of Modern England*, Vol. IV. p. 149. "With the conspicuous exception of Mr. Parnell, almost every Irish member voted against the right of a constituency to choose its own member. By both sides of the House Mr. Bradlaugh was treated with unchristian discourtesy, and heard in dead silence when he spoke. In politics he was a Radical of the old school, and there were few stronger opponents of Socialism in England. But he had written an *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*, and for selling an American pamphlet on checks to over-population a Middlesex jury had found him guilty of what the law called obscene libel. He was therefore, on moral as well as religious grounds, obnoxious to men who knew nothing of him except his public career."

In his final volume (V. p. 215) Paul, recording Bradlaugh's death, observes "he had borne an active part in the business of the House, and won the respect of all parties by his genial, manly, independent character."

A.C.W.

## Christianity—Private and Public.

It is evident that but for the substantial following and support of well to do people the power of Christianity would soon be greatly reduced. Well to do people, whose intellects tell them that the Christian faith is so much fudge, nevertheless continue as members and adherents of the Churches. Some remain because of sentimental memories associated with the ideas they drank in with their mother's milk or imbibed at their mothers' knees. Others (much larger in number) have got it into their heads that, though the bases of religion are false, the Churches exist as a social buttress against dishonesty and immorality, and are therefore useful institutions. Many are chiefly influenced by the consideration that if they give up the Church, their business, material condition and social position would all be gravely imperilled. This last is what gives the Church Leaders confidence in a continued financial backing for religion.

One arm of superstition was greatly weakened when so many people ceased to be terrorised by Hell Fire. It is true that a number of ignorant and illiterate people are still the victims of the threatened wrath of God and a terrible retribution on the Great Day of Judgment. The average man, endowed with reasonable intelligence and common sense is not included amongst these. The other arm of superstition—the menace of material failure and privation in the present life still influences and intimidates multitudes. No one likes to be shunned, boycotted or ostracized; still less does any one contemplate without anxious apprehension, loss of trade or livelihood. This is the very weapon which Christianity employs to-day with more vindictiveness than ever to keep people within its pale. No matter that they are merely nominal Christians so long as they attend upon religious ordinances and continue to pay for them.

The blight of clericalism spreads to all national institutions. This is most clearly proved from a perusal of the popular press. The unreality and hypocrisy of the matters that are dished up to the public about religion are readily apparent. What many Christians say in the press, on the platform and in the Church porch differs fundamentally and essentially from what they say in the club smoking room, at the public house bar and on the sports ground. If we Freethinkers sometimes showed more courage, assurance and militancy we could do a great deal to convince these nominal Christians of the hideous and contemptible deceit of that kind of double life. Clericalism stands against fair dealing between man and man. It lies for the glory of God; and it prevents the exercise of common justice. The so-called ethics of Christianity are bewildering and self-contradictory.

Business men, themselves office-bearers in a Christian Church, have been heard to say in a private and "safe" company, that they had no religious belief, and did not care a damn for the Church except in so far as they could use it for profit. Clerics would not feel flattered if they heard the opinions of many of the laity about them. But most clerics have pachydermatous hides and don't lose any sleep about other people's opinions. Their job is their job; and so long as their stipends are regularly forthcoming, why should they bother about the *faceliac* regarding them chucked about in a profane or bibulous circle? Some of them even preen themselves on such gossip as part of the cross they are carrying for Jesus' sake! There are ardent believers who say that Church-

works with those who applaud the propaganda of the street corner evangelist and the Salvation Army; but it has not the effect it had thirty years since. Why? Because there is no clergyman who does not give his benediction to those jackals. The Church is the lion, of course, and has to be fed by a constant stream of new members if it is to live. Eighty per cent of those "converted" at the street corners eventually find their way into some church or other. In these ultra-democratic days it would therefore be base ingratitude for the Leaders of the Churches not to bless the names of the Salvation Army and the leather-lunged evangelists.

The present timid race of politicians, with very few exceptions, abjectly defer to and prostrate themselves before the Cross. One can only admire and marvel when he thinks of the magnificent courage and steadfastness of Charles Bradlaugh in face of the ferocious hostility of the orthodox hooligans of his day! What a reproach his triumphs were, and are, to the trimmers, time servers, opportunists, flunkeys and toadies who fawn and squirm about the back doors of the wealthy and powerful! National regeneration are the words upon their lips; but in their hearts is the lust for wealth, position and power for themselves. They carry purple testimonials from clerical sources, and the nation has not the gumption to say that it would prefer testimonials from some reliable persons who know them on days other than Sunday!

As the big cock crows, the little one learns. Greedy and self-considering ambition permeates all classes. The common weal may go hang. This state of things deprives the nation of the services of its best brains because pious cringing is its own reward. Individual independence and originality are condemned as dangerous. He who tamely subscribes to the conventions laid down by ecclesiasticism for our governance is preferred to the abler man who cannot be bought and will not sell his convictions. Every political party is tarred with the same clerical brush though upon occasion some bright spirit attacks the brushers—as witness, a lively correspondence in the *New Leader* on the question, "Is Christianity Socialism."

IGNOTUS.

## The Book Shop.

A FRIEND has sent me *Poets in Paradise*, by S. Fisher (Henry Sexton, Nottingham, 1s. net), and I confess that I do not look on verse or poetry as a luxury. If culture could do anything more than raise its head in what is now a transitional period of the world's history, sweet sound and sense would be vocal currency. There is ample proof that all poets are liars, but the lies they sing about are mostly white. Happiness of phrase seems to come naturally to the author of this booklet, and the influences of Whitman and Meredith, are apparent. In places, the reader is reminded of the riotous verbosity of Chesterton, but the omission of the Virgin Mary and the bones of saints and all the other stage furniture of Catholicism enhance its value. Mr. Fisher, as all poets worthy of the name, has a good word to say in praise of ale. Ale is responsible for a greater communion of men than communion port. Its popularity is so great that the places where it is distributed cause much envy, jealousy and hatred to the rival establishments trading in a vocabulary having no relation to fact. The author rather melodiously plays the harp on a melancholy past, but when he strikes a positive note he is excellent. "The Sowers" is typical of this, for all good men sow and anyone may reap. It is pleasant to know on the poet's authority that there are "pubs" in Paradise and one at every mile; and being thankful for small mercies it is an invigorating New Year's thought that they are safe from molestation by Lady Astor and all others who find much joy in denying pleasure to others.

Messrs. Jonathan Cape publish occasionally a booklet entitled *Now and Then*. The winter issue contains readable articles on newly published books, and Mr. Max Plowman has an article entitled, "The Spiritual Assertion of Value," which bears on a book, *South American Meditations*, by Count Herman Keyserling. I confess to liking Mr. Plowman's black eye for the thinker which is as follows: "Where on the earth's surface are the places of joy? In mechanized Russia? In moneyed America? In disintegrated England?" This promise, however, of something on which to bite is not fulfilled, for it is a favourite trick with all mystics, world reformers and other writers with good intentions, to slaughter science—as they think. In more books than I care to remember, the mystic who dwells in the halfway house between fog and foghorn very frequently has some fancy religion up his sleeve and an intense hatred of science, often using the word science in the most vague manner possible. Even a critical dissection of the title of Mr. Max Plowman's article will not yield satisfaction to anyone who is not bemused by words. Once again we come face to face with the "tainted" vocabulary, which is a legacy from theology. Mr. Max Plowman very cleverly transcribes Nietzsche in the following sentence: "It occurs to me that, ideally, man should use the earth as an artist uses his palette." Struck from the mint of the lonely philosopher it reads: "The world is only justifiable as an aesthetic phenomenon."

Pastorial Interlude: Whilst resting our bones on a seat on Wimbledon Common, on January 28, the late winter sun was descending, a superb feast of colour—crimson, orange and gold—into a purple mist in the West. A small downy ball, orange, red, olive green, a delicate mauve, on two feet, fluffed up against the cold, hopped close up to us. A gentle voice made the little visitor make his birdland bow to two strangers in the afternoon cold. Hunger, the invisible fiend, had made him desire our better acquaintance. We knew that spring warmth and showers would make him indifferent to humans at a later time, but the impelling force of starvation made life almost of secondary consideration. It is said that if a man is hungry for one day he will lie; for two days, he will steal, and for three days he will commit murder. It is curious that we have an inversion of this in the feathered world. Hunger is one of the many goads of the human race from the beginning of time, and if hunger is in the divine scheme of affairs, one could not seriously examine any other goad as a clue to what it is all about.

The *New English Weekly* is a review of Public Affairs, Literature and the Arts, edited by A. R. Orage. This weekly is a brother of the *New Age*, which for many years was also edited by him. According to the Indian fable, the fixing of the tent-pole is the primary thing when putting up a tent, and for want of a better comparison the tent-pole of the *New English Weekly* is the Douglas Social Credit Plan. For those who can contemplate the engineering fact of this plan there is hope that all nations could live under it without wanting to blow each other to bits, or bite off each other's ears. The *New English Weekly* was launched in April, 1932, and it is interested in living facts as against dead lies; it commands the respect of all thinking people who do not want from the world twice as much as they have given. The issue for February 16, to which I commend my readers, is brilliant, dynamic, human, and in a world mesmerized by money maniacs on the one hand and the mist-gulpers of religion on the other, it sets forth a clear and direct path. The Notes of the Week are invaluable to those who could not even as a last resort consult newspapers. Mr. C. H. Norman reviews a book by Miss Sylvia Pankhurst entitled, *The Home Front*, and one of the three lessons learned from the War is set down as follows: "Secondly, the credulity encouraged by dogmatic religious beliefs renders the human mentality an easy victim for the political scoundrels who so easily reach office in times of crisis." Miss Ruth Pitter supplies a satirical contribution for all defenders of the design argument in verse entitled, "Maternal Love Triumphant or, Song of the Vertuous Femayle Spyder." There

is no doubt that if the male spider could speak his mind he would ask some awkward questions. Mr. Llewelyn Powys contributes an essay, "True Religion Undefined," full of good sense, in line with the thought of Richard Jefferies, and the writer makes the following significant statement: "It is a satisfaction to know that there is a deep instinct of life-worship capable of outlasting Christianity, a primordial impulse that will remain vigorous even though the psychology of our flighty age degenerates still further towards standardization and industrial chaos." There are two very good short stories, and Mr. Paul Banks, in his Note under "The Drama" on "Doctor's Orders," sets a high standard of criticism. G.M. in "Readers and Writers," makes an admirable point against the present dispensation. He writes: "The leisure basis of aristocratic culture is too obvious to need stressing, and the un-leisured character of life under the whip of Finance (the fate thus far of democracy) needs no argument." Students of, and workers for, Freethought are well aware of the Biblical threat in Thessalonians, "If any would not work neither should he eat." Economics have been based on this pre-historic concept, and my only excuse for using space in the *Freethinker* to recommend the *New English Weekly* is that it is doing in the economic world of superstition what the *Freethinker* has nobly done for years in the world of religious superstition.

C-DE-B.

### Is Christianity True? \*

MESSRS. JOAD AND LUNN have between them managed to produce a volume of about 400 pages of controversy, which might easily have been put into 100 pages—or even less. An ordinary reader, not knowing the disputants, would have expected that the subject for discussion would have been clearly stated in chapter one. This was naturally Mr. Lunn's job. But it is not till we reach p. 271 that it suddenly occurs to Mr. Lunn that it is time he said just what was the Christianity which he affirms is true, and that Mr. Joad is to deny.

Even when he does this Mr. Lunn says he will take the existence of God for granted, and as Mr. Joad has for some undiscoverable reason agreed that God may exist, Mr. Lunn is probably within his rights in taking this as an agreed point. For the rest of his statement, Mr. Lunn, moving in the intellectual atmosphere of at least a century ago, submits that Christ vindicated his authority by rising from the dead, and is under the impression that he proves this by talking at large upon the "authenticity" of the gospels. On that line of reasoning the flying of witches through the air in the seventeenth century could be proven true by citing authentic contemporary documents.

Mr. Joad does point out that the real question here is whether the gospel stories are inherently credible, but handicaps himself severely by his belief in a "life force," and a "purposive universe," which in the hands of a better debater than Mr. Lunn would surely have led to his undoing. The pages of argument which Mr. Joad engages in concerning the "cruelty" of nature has nothing whatever to do with the existence of God, but is only indications of his character, granting that God exists. Mr. Joad also grants the historical existence of the Jesus Christ of the New Testament, although that character is as clearly mythological as any character can be, and makes the remarkable statement that the divine birth of Jesus is an obvious leaf taken out of the book of Roman Emperors, which perpetrates a double error. First, the Roman Emperors were never credited with divine birth, they were deified after death. Second, the divine birth of Jesus is a clear survival of a very widespread primitive belief in supernatural birth.

Mr. Joad also hands himself over to the "enemy" by agreeing with him that if Determinism is true then

\* *Is Christianity True?* A Discussion between Mr. C. H. M. Joad and Mr. Arnold Lunn. (Fyre and Spottiswoode, 7s. 6d.).

"morality" loses all meaning. Really a man who can write thus ought to place himself in the hands of some careful teacher of philosophy. He would then realize that save in terms of determinism morality has no meaning and moral "laws" no existence.

Mr. Joad's idea of Freethought does not advance much beyond the standpoint of a not too scholarly exposition of about 100 years ago, and Mr. Lunn moves in about the same cultural era. He wanders all over everywhere, and has a convenient way of dismissing as not part of Christianity anything that is bad because some Christians have rejected it, and claims everything as true Christianity which some believers have accepted. The pregnant fact, for example, that persecution is a logical deduction from Christian principles is never discussed.

It is a pity that the subject of "Is Christianity True?" was not in the hands of two men, one of whom should clearly state his case, while both of them declined to discuss irrelevant issues.

SIMPLE SIMON.

## Correspondence.

### THE CASE AGAINST EINSTEIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The questions raised by "Hyperbola" are of especial interest to me for this reason, that my meditations on these matters put me on the track of one of the most important principles of my *Psychology*. . . The Sophists said that there was no such thing as motion for—to express their reasoning briefly—a body at a given instant must be in a certain place, and at that instant it was at rest in that place. Diogenes refuted the Sophists by getting up and walking. Now that argument was really conclusive, but it did not indicate the precise step where the reasoning of the Sophists was faulty; in my endeavour to elucidate the matter I found that I was brought to the study of infinity, and that also a new and highly important problem had been raised: How does the mind, on the basis of ideas depending on subjective processes gain comprehension of objective realities?

All this is expounded minutely in my *Psychology*, but for those who have not the time to study the book—and it requires close attention—I offer some indications. The series, while it exists as an expressed series, can never be equal to 2; but as it becomes continued it may be seen that it approaches 2, and can be made to differ by some quantity less than any assigned quantity however small. We say then that the "limit"—this term is used technically—towards which the series tends is 2. We mean nothing more when we say, that when indefinitely extended to "infinity"—also a technical term—the series is equivalent in value to 2.

The same principle underlies all the other problems. Zeno would never allow us to reach the point where Achilles overtook the tortoise, if he induced us to follow in his own line of reasoning; and since manifestly Achilles does overtake the tortoise, there is a fault in Zeno's conception of motion, and in his conception of the processes of our minds in our comprehension of motion. And here is the crux of the matter: The processes of our minds do not imply a "continuum," we jump by discontinuity from point to point in our closest and most rigorous reasonings. This is not by choice; it is involved in the very nature of the mind, and ultimately in the essential structure of our physical organization with which our mental processes are correlated. Thus our very conception of motion is determined by this discontinuity—a body is a certain instant in one place; in another instant it is in another place; that is the only manner in which we can conceive motion.

Underneath this discontinuity lie a series of processes on the physical side, just as—to give a gross image—underneath the tolling of twelve o'clock by Big Ben there is an elaborate working mechanism. In this, however, even if the mechanism be traced down to the movements

of the molecules themselves, we never reach a "continuum," nor do we in the case of the mind.

And here we come to the point where we see how the Relativitists, whose psychology is basically false, are led to talk mystically about space-time continuum, and the coalescence of space and time, and hence finally to cast forth those pearls of abracadabric nonsense that we find in the best sellers of Jeans and Eddington.

I am sure that with his clear common sense "Hyperbola" had already reached the right conclusions, but what I have said may now be applied without great difficulty to each of the problems he has given us in turn.

Take, for instance, that of the intersection of the two straight lines. If the zero of divergence from parallelism be a mathematical convention indicating an approach to zero as near as we please, then there will be one intersection at a distance as remote as we please; if the zero be absolute there will be no intersection; and there will be no basis for the meaningless talk of the Relativitists about the "curvature of space." They are back to the Sophists with this difference that the Sophists did not believe in their own mystifications; they had that little something the Relativitists haven't got—the grain of good sense.

ARTHUR LYNCH.

### A HERESY HUNT IN SYDNEY.

SIR,—A few weeks ago there raged in the city of Sydney (N.S.W.) Australia, a theological war in which the Anglican Archbishop was the central figure.

The Archbishop appointed to a certain parish a cleric who was not to the liking of a number of parishioners. However, the Anglican synod, after a heated debate among its members, decided that Archbishop Wright was right, and hostilities ceased—at least for a time.

Now they're at it again, and this time it is Dr. Angus, Professor of Theology, at St. Andrew's College, within the University of Sydney, upon whom the theological guns are trained.

At a recent Presbytery meeting Dr. Angus was raked fore and aft for his alleged denial of the Divinity of Christ, and it was said that students under his care have had their beliefs seriously disturbed by this heretic, who has been asked to recant or vacate his chair.

So far Dr. Angus has done neither, but he has promised to fire a broadside in retaliation at the opportune time.

Up to date no word of protest had been uttered by these Presbyterian divines against economic conditions which have forced seventeen people to take their lives by jumping from the Harbour Bridge.

They are now, of course, suffering eternal torment, the archiepiscopal blessing which the Bridge received before it was officially opened, notwithstanding.

J. M. KENNELLY.

Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

### "THE FOOL HATH SAID."

(A book by Dr. Cyril Alington, Headmaster at Eton.)

Methinks the title picked by Eton's Head  
For controversial tract, "The Fool hath Said,"  
Suggests, to folk not void of manners quite,  
Just this, that, be his reasoning wrong or right,  
Himself, so quick to call opponent "Fool,"  
Has learnt the language of his Lower School.

H.S.S.

Patriotism is too often the hatred of other countries disguised as the love of our own.—Horace Smith.

### Society Notes.

The Birmingham Branch N.S.S. has arranged another Whist Drive for Saturday, March 11, in the Shakespeare Rooms (the Dickens Room), 174 Edmund Street. Games and other items will also be included. There are prizes to be won during the evening. Tickets are 1s. 6d. each, including refreshments. Opportunities for social intercourse among Freethinkers are very desirable and should be supported by all within reasonable distance.

Reports to hand from the Ashington Branch N.S.S. indicate a band of real workers in that area. Meetings are being held, a speakers' class has been formed, and contains some promising material, and letters to the press constitute some of the activities of the Branch. The finances of the Branch are also in a healthy condition. There is the same trouble in Ashington as elsewhere, that is, too many unattached Freethinkers. We cannot expect Christians to help the Cause consciously, but the workers in all N.S.S. Branches are justified in expecting Freethinkers to help, even if only by the moral support of membership. The local Secretary, Mr. T. Holliday, 89 Ariel Street, Ashington, Northumberland asks unattached Freethinkers in the district to get in touch with him.

In Sunderland the movement is very well served by the local N.S.S. Branch. Under the direction of a capable and enthusiastic set of officials full meetings are held each Sunday evening in the Co-Operative Hall, Green Street. A speakers' class is held regularly, and there will be additions to the number of speakers available for local open-air meetings as a result. An effort was made to get the *Freethinker* in the Public Reading Rooms in Sunderland. The Library Committee however maintained the general standard of bigotry and little-mindedness of most library Committees, and the effort has not yet been successful. The local Branch does not consider the matter settled. An active part has also been taken on the Sunday Cinema question in Sunderland. At the Annual General Meeting held on February 20, Mr. J. Hutcheon and Mr. F. Radford were again elected as Chairman and Secretary respectively. Mr. F. Barber is Vice-Chairman; Mr. R. S. Straughan, Treasurer; and Messrs. M. Shaw, C. Vysa, J. Walton and J. Head serve on the Committee.

The Social to be held in the Caxton Hall, London, on Saturday evening, April 1, should in every way be as enjoyable as those previously held. Dancing, musical items, and a few words from the President, will take place in the splendid Council Chamber. An excellent band will be in attendance, and arrangements for refreshments will again be in the hands of Mrs. Venton and her company of workers. Four hours healthy enjoyment, with light refreshments included, for 2s. 6d., is not a business proposition. It is meant to be an opportunity for Freethinkers to meet in a little social intercourse, and to introduce an orthodox friend if desired. It is expected that all Freethinkers within a reasonable distance will take advantage of the opportunity. Tickets may be had from the offices of the N.S.S. 62 Farringdon Street, or the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

R. H. ROSETTI,  
General Secretary.

### Obituary.

DANIEL STRIBLING WOODROFFE.

ON Wednesday, March 1, the remains of Daniel Stribling Woodroffe were interred at Willesden Cemetery, Cobbold Road. His health had been gradually declining for some time, and death took place on February 25, from Cerebral Thrombosis, at seventy-five years of age. Although not a member of the National Secular Society, he was a convinced Freethinker for many years and until his death. In accordance with his wishes a Secular Service was arranged and duly carried out in the presence of relatives and friends by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

### SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

#### LONDON.

##### INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4, near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Rev. H. M. Brook, B.Sc.—“Does God Make Himself known to Man?”

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.30, R. Dimsdale Stocker—“A Religion of Human Fellowship.”

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. J. C. Flugel, D. Sc.—“The Myth of the Golden Age.”

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, March 13, Mr. R. F. Turney—“Charles Darwin: Freethought.”

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 7.30, Tuesday, March 14, Prof. Cyril Burr—“The Psychology of Memory.”

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road, Camden Road): 7.0, Dan Rider—“The Rents Bill.”

WEMBLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Mitchell's Restaurant, High Road, Wembley): 7.30, Discussion of “Sunday Cinemas for Wembley.”

##### 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, March 12, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Wood. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Engineers' Hall, Price Street, Birkenhead, near Hamilton Square): 7.0, Wm. J. Paul (Neston)—“The End of Religion in Education.”

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Dickens Room, 174 Edmund Street, Birmingham): Saturday, March 11, 7.0, Whist Drive. Prizes to be won. Tickets 1s. 6d. each including refreshments.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 8.15, Rev. E. W. Bowes, M.A.—“Ultimate Value.” Members' Meeting at 7.0.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. A. Lacey (Secretary, Blackburn Branch N.S.S.)—“The Value of Ideas.”

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (No. 2 Room, City Hall, Albion Street): 6.30, Mr. Arnold Brown—“Birth Control.”

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Chapman Cohen (Editor of the *Freethinker* and President National Secular Society)—“The Menace of Mass Opinion.”

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, C. J. Harrison (Liverpool)—“The Vanguard of Rebellion.”

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Mr. H. W. Speare—“Origins of Religion.”

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Rooms, Green Street): 7.30, A Lecture.

### Rationalist Press Association (Glasgow District)

Central Halls, 25, Bath Street.

Sunday, March 19, at 3.0 p.m.

DR. NORMAN HAIRE, Ch.M., M.B.  
“Religion and the Abortion Laws.”

Questions and Discussion

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THE BISHOP OF LONDON'S OPINION.

"IN the study of the Bishop of London the other day," remarked the Rev. A. J. Waldron, "I took up a certain book, and the Bishop asked, 'What do you think of it?' I said, 'It has done more to damage Christianity during the past few years than all the rest of the sceptical books put together!' He said, 'That is my opinion too.'—*Sunday School Chronicle*.

This book, *The Churches and Modern Thought*, of such service to the Militant Freethinker, can be obtained from the PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, post free for one shilling and threepence.

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