

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •
— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIII.—No. 20

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 1933

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS.

	Page
<i>Principle and Practice.—The Editor</i> - - -	305
<i>The Oxford Group Movement.—A. D. McLaren</i> - - -	307
<i>The Colleagues of Bradlaugh.—Mimmermus</i> - - -	308
<i>You've said a Mouthful, Big Boy!—C. S. Fraser</i> - - -	309
<i>"Under Western Eyes."—F. G. Cooper</i> - - -	314
<i>Biological Concepts.—G. H. Taylor</i> - - -	315
<i>"Powder and Shot."—G.F.G.</i> - - -	316
<i>The Origin of Law.—A.H.</i> - - -	317

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

Views and Opinions.

Principle and Practice.

ON the whole the attitude of the press towards the Bradlaugh Centenary has not been bad. True it has not given all the publicity that we Freethinkers would have desired, but we must bear in mind that we live in England, and in this country it is not the custom to do anything that will bring an avowed Atheist prominently before the public. The rule is to ignore his Atheism, and to stress other aspects of his career, or even to offer an insult by way of paying a compliment by saying that the Atheist was almost a Christian, or was a Christian without knowing it, or was as good as many Christians. This kind of Christian tries to save the character of the Atheist by insulting his intelligence; for men of the Bradlaugh type knew Christianity, their rejection of it was deliberate and based upon the most solid of grounds. Bradlaugh did not disbelieve in a God because of the character of many who believed in one, but because he knew that such a belief was intellectually untenable. He did not disbelieve in Christianity because he was offended by some Christians, but because he had analysed the claims of Christianity and dismissed them as worthless. And Christians who desire to pay their tribute to the memory of the man might at least do it without tempering their praise with impertinence.

I am not now, however, concerned with this curious way of praising Bradlaugh, but with the action of Mr. Arnold Lunn with regard to the meeting which the Bradlaugh Centenary Committee has arranged to take place in London on Saturday, September 24, in a hall in the Euston Road which is owned by the Society of Friends. The other day Mr. Lunn was preaching in a Church at Oxford, and a summarized report of the sermon appears in the *Church Times* for May 5. The passage that concerns the Bradlaugh Centenary runs as follows:—

I have seen a notice to the effect that the headquarters of the Society of Friends in the Euston Road is to be placed at the disposal of those who are

celebrating the centenary of Bradlaugh, the great Victorian Atheist, who devoted his life not only to the destruction of Christianity, but to the destruction of Theism. Unless the Quakers unite in protest against this reunion with Atheism we shall reluctantly have to conclude that the inner light is guiding their present leaders to the outer darkness.

Let me take, first of all Mr. Lunn's presentation of the facts. Freethinkers will not expect him to be fair to them, but he might at least act with justice towards his Christian friends. One would imagine that the Society of Friends had suddenly awakened to the greatness of Bradlaugh and were thinking of throwing in their lot with the National Secular Society, a Society which was founded by Bradlaugh, and to which he gave his services during his life. The statement that the society had placed its hall at the disposal of the Bradlaugh Committee is true only in the sense that a bootmaker places his boots at the disposal of his customers after they have bought and paid for them. The Society of Friends happens to own a hall which it lets for public meetings to all sorts of people with all sorts of opinions on religion and politics. It is in no way responsible for the opinions expressed, and is in no way identified with them. The building is not even a Church, and so cannot be accused of infringing the primitive taboo against the profane handling of "sacred" buildings or objects. There is no possible objection to the Society letting the building for the purpose of a public meeting which is to pay tribute to the memory of a great man and a great reformer. It is a case of letting a public hall for a public purpose.

* * *

Lunn and Liberty.

What then has Mr. Lunn in mind when he speaks of a letting of the hall to the Bradlaugh Committee as involving a reunion of the Society of Friends with Atheism, and calling upon members of that Society to raise a united protest. Perhaps he thinks that he may be able to get the Society to break the legal contract into which they have entered. I do not think he will succeed in this. That is not the nature of the Society of Friends. It is far more likely that Mr. Lunn thinks it inadvisable to let the character and the work of Bradlaugh be known more than is inevitable. He thinks that Christians should continue the persecution of Freethinkers dead as well as living, and that so far as is possible the public should know as little as possible of Freethinkers and their aims, save as they are presented in the garbled and untrustworthy accounts furnished by Mr. Lunn and his friends. It is quite certain that if Mr. Lunn had the control of the hall in question it would never have been let to the Committee, and it follows that if Mr. Lunn had the control of all the halls in the country Freethinkers would never be allowed to use any of them. His bigotry extends so far as it has oppor-

tunities for its exercise. He believes the best way to meet Freethought is by the policy of suppression. Do not let anyone listen to it if it can be prevented. Suppression and boycott are the best weapons to use against Freethinking criticisms of Christianity, and in this respect one must admit that Mr. Lunn is following the example of historic Christianity. He has himself tried debating with at least one Freethinker who may be credited with knowing the case for Freethought, and he would be unwise to make many essays of that kind. So he, in substance, comes back to the advice given by a very pious king of France that the only way to argue with an unbeliever is to plunge a sword into his belly. The times will not permit Mr. Lunn to do this, but the weapons of boycott and suppression are still available, and he would use these as far as he can. There is no questioning the fact that Mr. Lunn is a very good Christian, and this serves only to illustrate what I have so often said, namely, the better the Christian the worse the man, the better the man the worse the Christian. I repeat, I do not think that his outburst will have any influence with the Society of Friends. Alone among Christian bodies they have never been guilty of persecution. Probably when Mr. Lunn reflects upon this he may say as the Scotch lady did when she was told, after rebuking a man for breaking the Sabbath, that "Our Lord" plucked corn on the Sabbath Day. "Ah well," she replied, "perhaps he did, but I dinna think the mair on him for doing it."

* * *

Bradlaugh and his Age.

I am inclined to think that what Mr. Lunn fears is that the occasion of Bradlaugh's Centenary may be utilized to further the Freethought cause. If that is so I will so far flatter his Sherlock Holmes propensity by saying that this should certainly be one of its consequences. More, I confess that, so far as I am concerned, it is the main cause of the part I have taken in the proceedings. The Bradlaugh Centenary is not a mere birthday party, having no interest to anyone beyond the family circle. It is a commemoration of a circumstance which is common to every Tom, Dick and Harry that was ever born, in order to emphasize the work done by a particular person, and to bring home to a wider circle the value of that work to the whole of the community. Every human being either has or will achieve a centenary, but every human will not have the same claim to the attention of his fellows at the end of a century as Bradlaugh has. The occasion should be a gigantic advertisement of the social and intellectual value of the principles for which Bradlaugh stood. And it will be if the Freethinkers of the country act as they ought to act. Bradlaugh in his life acted as inspiration for many thousands. In his death that inspiration should still be made evident. It is the one way in which we can realize the social function of what the cowardice of traditional Christianity has named the King of Terrors.

But the justification, so far as the general public is concerned, rests upon a consideration of wider content. This is, that Bradlaugh's work as a Freethinker was of great benefit not merely to those who consciously accepted his teaching, but also to those who repudiated it. He turned thousands of Christians into Freethinkers. He also humanized very many more thousands of Christians who still retained the traditional name and professed belief in the traditional doctrines. It is idle to assume that the humanizing of Christian doctrines, and the toning down of the crude and brutal teachings of early nineteenth century Christianity are to be placed wholly to the credit of either Bradlaugh, or to the band of

splendid workers in the Freethought Movement. But there is no question that their work was a very important, if not a dominant item in the change, and that among these no name stands higher than that of Bradlaugh. And among those who have benefited by the life of Bradlaugh is Mr. Lunn himself—that is if I am not doing him an injustice in assuming that he has repudiated the crude views of religion held by his immediate ancestors. The work of Paine, Carlile, Owen, Hetherington, Watson, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Foote and scores of other men and women, all of whom aimed at educating the ordinary man concerning the truth and social incidence of religious beliefs, so changed the general atmosphere that it became possible for men in the higher walks of life to say more than they otherwise would have dared to say. And in turn this had an inevitable reaction on the Christian Churches and on individual Christians. They began to admit as true what they had previously denounced. It took well over a century of hard fighting for responsible Christians to admit the non-Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch, the composite character of the Bible, the brutality of the Christian teaching of eternal torment, and the truth about the "sacred scriptures." Orthodoxy never advances by weight of its own impetus. It moves only when it is kicked. Every one of the existing orthodoxies among "advanced" Christians was a heresy of yesterday. Religion is as incapable of purifying itself as a foul drain is incapable of cleansing itself in the absence of the introduction of some new agent.

* * *

A Greatness that is Above Creeds.

But Mr. Lunn, I am pleased to say, is not completely representative of either British public men or of the better type of Christian. For among these it is recognized by many that, quite apart from the particular opinions held by Bradlaugh, there was much in him that a country can only despise, or lightly regard, at its peril. Bradlaugh brought to his work a combination of personal energy, personal integrity, courage, clarity of mind, singleness and persistency of purpose, and oratorical power such as is seldom found in a single individual. These are valuable social qualities in any society that develops a sane sense of values, and to all who can look through the word or the action to the man beyond. Fearlessness and honesty of thought are not yet so common with us in any walk of life that we can afford to ignore such qualities where they exist, or connive at the suppression of those who manifest them. Bradlaugh's opinions on religion and politics may be matters for discussion, but there is no room for discussion as to the value of the man who was far above social or financial bribes, and who was ready to brave the strength of vested interests and the malignity of entrenched superstition in the name of oppressed humanity. When every deduction has been made that it is possible to make, Bradlaugh stands unquestionably a great man. The "great Victorian Atheist" ranks as one to whom worthy men of widely different views may justly unite to give honour. But Mr. Lunn is evidently a better and a truer Christian than even he thinks he is. He belongs to that historic Christianity which is responsible for some of the blackest pages in European history, which lives by the ignorance of the crowd and batters upon the superstitions of whole peoples. It followed Bradlaugh with indiscriminating hatred from his boyhood onward, and drove him to an early grave, but with his lion-spirit unbroken and the promise of ultimate victory to cheer his closing years.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Oxford Group Movement.

MANY different forms of what is called "Protestantism," ranging from the Kensingtonites within the establishment to the British Israelites outside it, have flourished in England since the Reformation. This Protestantism is by no means a spent force, but it is visibly on the wane. For several decades the religious Press, the monthly reviews, and the public utterances of a fair proportion of the pastors who serve the "spiritual" interests of the flocks of the "free churches," have borne ample testimony to this fact. From time to time, however, leading representatives of the various denominations try the effect of a revivalist campaign. The present Group Movement is the latest large-scale enterprise to rally the youth among all parties and sects in the Protestant churches, and it is of interest to Freethinkers as it shows the drift of currents of thought which no power in England or elsewhere can possibly stem.

Our two oldest universities which, according to John Stuart Mill, "formerly seemed to exist mainly for the suppression of independent thought," are supplying many of the pioneers in the present campaign. The Oxford Group Movement is only one section of a wider movement. It is not officially connected with the University, but the choice of the name is significant. The ancient seat of learning, whose motto is, "The Lord is my light," has always been a stronghold of some form of religious activity, preferably, of course, a highly cultured form of Anglican orthodoxy. But the group movement associated with Cambridge University owes its origin to a number of Methodist students, several of whom were preparing for the ministry—not for holy orders.

Mr. A. J. Russell's book, *For Sinners Only*, gives a detailed account of the Oxford Group Movement. It has had a circulation of more than 100,000. Many things in it are suggestive signs of the times. It emphasizes that Christianity is not to be identified with other-worldism, that it is not even mainly concerned with other-worldism. "We have no abiding city here." Perhaps not; but the ordinary man and woman are becoming much more interested in this "city" while they are here than in speculating about where they will spend eternity. Again, conversion as understood by all revivalists hitherto is not the aim of the Movement. Mr. Russell has more to say about "winning disciples" than about "saving souls." Faith and prayer, too, seem to be under a temporary cloud. They are to be regarded as secondary factors in the solution of our modern problems, and each member is to work actively for the best he knows before resorting to them. Since we were taught that "we walk by faith, not by sight," we have learned that this, like many other texts, must not be too rigidly interpreted. Moreover, members of the Group will not argue. Christ did not argue. We should all agree, I think, that in the combat with unbelief "the essential truths" of Christianity were never established by argument; but what of the questions which for centuries formed the staple of controversy among Christians themselves—the nature of Christ, the meaning of sacrifice, grace, predestination, and other dogmas of the historic faith? What emerges from the existing welter of religious movements and discussions can be summed up in a few words: argument concerning a supernatural creed does not foster reverence for it, and as for coercion it is becoming unsuited to the spirit of the age.

How then is the sceptic to be converted, or at least answered? By Scripture. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." As a youth I was always warned that unbelief was itself a very

real kind of sin, and that the great abyss lay underneath it; but since then I have been frequently told by "liberal" Protestants that evolution and the Higher Criticism have only strengthened their faith. The Oxford Group Movement seems to have a short and easy method of disposing of "intellectual difficulties." They "became irrelevant under the growing conviction of the sins of my own life," says one of the members in Mr. Russell's book. Translated into the vernacular of Bill Smith this would serve very well for the testimony of a new recruit to the Salvation Army. The modifications of theology, due to the progress of science and modern thought, have been unnecessary from a soul-saving point of view.

Sex is not to be repressed. It is to be sublimated. Much that was once urged in the way of repression was morbid, tainted with a philosophy of life now discredited. It is not added, however, that this morbidity in all its repulsiveness came from the New Testament. The ideal of a well-balanced life with "nothing in excess" is Greek, not Christian.

Writers on the Group Movement wish to make it clear that they are not introducing anything new into Christianity, but are really continuing the early Christian fellowship. This appeal to the unity of the brethren of the apostolic age is curious and instructive to one who recalls the differences between the Petrine and the Pauline factions in the New Testament, and the contentions of one kind or another which have never ceased throughout the history of the faith. In the Establishment alone there are at least three distinct and more or less hostile parties, and this very year the Anglo-Catholics are enthusiastically celebrating the centenary of the Tractarian Movement, while the Evangelicals are just as acrimoniously opposing it. Outside all the "warring sects" stands the Roman Catholic Church, with the vicar of Christ at her head, offering the one and only remedy to "meet" the perils of modern thought. She has no new "arguments" to advance, she does not need them. "Return to Mother Church as a prelude to the conversion of the English-speaking world to the ancient faith." This is her plea, and if it is effective there will be an "end of controversy."

Complete surrender to the authority of Christ is another point insisted upon by the Group. The exhortation is an old one. It has in its time been found compatible with slavery and oppressive conditions in industry, to say nothing of the suppression of free inquiry into the credentials of this authority. This preaching and exhortation is worse than delusive. It adds sanctity to the degrading and unjust conditions of social life. A few weeks ago a Roman Catholic bishop in Ireland, addressing his flock, said that if some of them were poor and hungry here they must remember that the greater would be their reward in heaven—exactly what the Protestant Wilberforce said a little more than a hundred years ago. There was a time when men and women did surrender completely to the authority of Christ. We know the sort of product that resulted.

For Sinners Only contains a good deal about "spiritualized scholarship." Members of the Group who possess the necessary qualification are to become missionaries to bring the results of modern culture to "the man in the street." This can hardly be called a return to early Christian fellowship, which scorned the knowledge and wisdom of the world. Where was this "spiritualized scholarship" throughout the long centuries when Christianity was "proving its divine origin by the way it spread over Europe?"

In March of the present year a writer in the *British Weekly* said that it is not all to the Church's discredit that the outsider is hostile or indifferent, that some

reject Christianity, not because they do not understand it, but "because they do understand and are not prepared to pay the price." That is profoundly true. Some time previously—I think about the time when the anti-Jewish crusade in Rumania was at its height—this same organ of the sensitive Nonconformist conscience asserted that some people have "no right" to be Christians. How often have we said the same thing to the reverent agnostics and the whole fraternity of those who reject Christianity, but "only intellectually," retaining a keen sense of the essentials of Christian ethics.

In reading *For Sinners Only*, I could not help noticing how easily the unbeliever is reduced to silence without any argument. Does this represent the experience of Christians generally? At one time the comparatively mild critic of the Christian system was more or less depraved morally, and the sceptic who proclaimed his views in the highways and byways was a monster of iniquity. This method of refuting the "infidel" still appeals to some Christians.

Red Rags, Essays of Hate from Oxford, just published, is interesting, and contains a criticism of the Group Movement, and a protest against orthodoxy in all its manifestations, religious or secular. With so many competitors for the suffrages of the youth of to-day, all offering something to satisfy "the deepest needs and impulses of human nature," it is well that Young England itself should have something to say about these "needs."

A. D. McLAREN.

The Colleagues of Bradlaugh.

"The only true conquests—those which awaken no regret—are those obtained over ignorance. The most honourable and most useful pursuit of nations is the extension of intellect."—*Napoleon*.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH was the Napoleon of the Free-thought Movement in England, and, like Napoleon, he owed much to his able lieutenants. Indeed, a mere recital of their names stirs the mind like reading a list of the Marshals of the Emperor. For each of these men and women were, in their way, the apostles of Freedom. They were knight-errants of the evangel of Liberty, and were potent because of their sincerity not less than their ability of which they had their full share.

Recall some of the names. John M. Robertson, a critic and scholar of European renown, G. W. Foote, an incomparable orator and writer, Charles Watts, a prince of debaters. There were women too, for Free-thinkers always regarded them as being "on the level" and not, as the Christian Churches did, as being "the weaker vessels."

The women associated with nineteenth century Free-thought deserve special mention, because they had to be heroines as well as apostles. In those far-off days Free-thought was, far and away, the most hated movement in England, and audiences were abusive and hostile. The whole vocabulary of theological abhorrence was used against these Atheists, and frenzied believers thought nothing of hurling abuse, and even sticks, at the speakers. But Liberty never failed of her votaries, and Harriet Law, Annie Besant, and Mrs. Thornton Smith and others, went into the arena and fought these wild beasts. The ordeal of the public platform in an unpopular cause is one of the most unenviable of all positions. It was one thing for Harriet Martineau to write well-phrased iconoclastic articles in the security of her own sheltered home, but it was a very different proposition to address turbulent crowds night after night, endure stuffy lodgings, and

take exhausting railway journeys between each lecture. These Free-thought men and women cared nothing for wealth or notoriety, but only for intellectual honesty, and the brave doings of these pioneers thrill and fascinate by very reason of their simplicity and hard-usage.

Harriet Law was once known throughout the length and breadth of England. She was a clever debater and lecturer, and knew the Christian Bible from cover to cover. It used to be said that she could recite the lot, genealogies and all, but that was a pardonable exaggeration. She was, however, more than a match for any opponent, as many of them remembered to their cost. Mrs. Thornton Smith did doughty service on many a platform, and conquered audiences by her charm as much as her oratory. We could do well with a dozen ladies of like capacity to carry on our evangel to-day. The outstanding personality, however, among the women-lecturers was Annie Besant, who no sooner joined the movement than she gained a share in leadership by her rare talents. For fifteen very stormy years this unusually gifted woman was in the very forefront of the battle for liberty. No phase of Democratic propaganda escaped her vigilant attention, and she carried the traditions of Bradlaugh's *National Reformer*—Atheist, Republican, and Malthusian—from John O'Groats to Land's End in the face of the most prolonged and determined opposition.

Possessing a fascinating personality, she was also a born orator. Moreover, she was cultured to the finger-tips, though she carried her weight of learning gracefully. Brought up amid the ease and comfort of a middle-class home, she never flinched at the stern call of duty. Matriculating at London University, she took the Bachelor of Science degree with honours. She knew both French and German, and translated Soury's *Religion of Israel, Jesus and the Gospels*, and Ludwig Buchner's works, all of which had a large sale. As a debater and orator, she had no serious rivals of her own sex, and some of the foremost women speakers on the Temperance and other platforms seemed commonplace by comparison.

Forced into journalism by the accident of her position, but, even in the narrow way of propaganda, she, like Bradlaugh, found time to encourage genius. He, it will be recalled, introduced that shy genius, James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, to the reading public; whilst she published Bernard Shaw's early writings, including *The Irrational Knot*, a novel, long before that brilliant writer had climbed the bastions of success.

Her break with the Free-thought Movement was a tragedy, but it was not unexpected. No woman, unless made of tempered steel, could have gone on decade after decade voicing the claims of a really unpopular movement, and suffering all the odium and discomfort of hard and unremitting pioneer work. Her golden tongue has won a hearing for other causes, but the plain fact emerges that her best and most lasting work was done for militant Free-thought. In estimating her most remarkable career it is this part of her life which looms the largest, and overshadows the smaller interests that succeeded. Paradoxical as it may seem, this rare and gifted high-priestess of a latter-day charlatanism seems fated to pass through life and leave no lasting vestige save that ever-memorable time when she flamed iconoclasm over these islands.

Although belonging to a slightly later period, it is almost impossible in dealing with the women of the Free-thought Movement to avoid mention of Edith Vance. She was no orator, as she would have been the first laughingly to admit, but she had rare organ-

izing ability. For many years she was, although handicapped by blindness, Secretary to the National Secular Society, and only those "in the know" realize the arduous nature and manifold duties of the work of organizing a really national movement. She knew everybody and everything, and was a walking encyclopædia of business knowledge. She rendered great service to "the best of causes" for many years, and a real share of the success of recent times must be ascribed to her.

The names of the men and women we have mentioned are but signposts to meet the reader and direct him towards the wonderful catholicity of the Free-thought Movement, and, it is worth remarking, that the Freethought Party, like the Co-operative Movement, was originally a purely working-class organization. Daniel Eaton, the Carlile family, Charles Southwell, the Holyoake brothers, and Bradlaugh were of humble origin. From time to time a few middle-class, and even aristocratic, sympathisers joined the Movement, but it has always been predominantly and overwhelmingly Democratic. This is, in the last analysis, a great tribute to the workers themselves. For always in their ranks have been found a number of men and women who, despising material prosperity, have chosen the hard path of the pioneer, and dedicated their lives to the service of intellectual liberty. At a time when a sordid commercialism is rampant, the pursuit of liberty for its own sake, and not for any base or ulterior object, is such an exception as to be scarcely credible. In an age of compromise these Freethinkers remained ever faithful to first principles; in an age of money—grubbing and ostentation they cared only for truth. Their sole reward has been that they have opened up new vistas to men's eyes and widened the horizon of knowledge. Such idealists raise our estimate of human nature. And as time crowns their efforts it proves that they are, in Shelley's fine phrase: "the unacknowledged legislators of mankind."

MIMNERMUS.

You've Said a Mouthful, Big Boy!

EVERY week that most reliable and respectable of newspapers, the *Observer* devotes about an eighth of a column to the sayings of men and women who are in the eye of the public. Apart from the fact that these apothegms were deemed worthy of repetition, there is no indication whether they should be regarded as witticisms, wise-cracks, or just plain wind. But whichever they might be, there is no doubt that the eye of the public would open a trifle wider if some attention were drawn to the relationship between these sayings and the facts to which they refer. To make good the omission we now purpose to compile a sort of annotated anthology of these utterances from a collection made during the year 1932. We do not expect thereby to add lustre to their already illustrious authors. We merely hope to add to the gaiety of nations.

By way of introduction, let us quote what Lord MacMillan said in January of that year, a little over sixteen months ago. "I am not at all sure," said this prophet, "that this country is not on the verge of a period of the greatest prosperity it has ever known." Now assuming that there is no error in the grammar, and assuming that two negatives make a positive, the point we would like to ascertain is—exactly how many days, months or years go to make a "verge?" It is, alas, in such trifling matters of precision as these that prophets as a whole always exhibit the most airy nonchalance. Perhaps, now

that the "verge" has lasted well over a year, and the country is as deep in the mire as ever, the noble lord will favour us with another sample of his prophetic foresight.

As might be expected, the B.B.C. has come in for its fair share of notice. Sir Thomas Beecham declared: "I have never criticized the B.B.C. in my life; it is a delusion and a heresy to think so." From which we infer that if it is a heresy to think of criticizing the B.B.C., it must be rank blasphemy or treason actually to do so. We begin to tremble in our boots already! We have been guilty of calling the B.B.C. a bigoted lot of religious cowards. Hush! Was that the postman's knock; or are the minions of the law at our gates? But let us calm ourselves. Capt. P. P. Eckersley, once in the employ of this powerful organization which threatens to be the New Religion, said: "I doubt if broadcasting as we know it merits criticism." Perhaps he is right. Indeed, we are sure he is—for we have sold our wireless set. The same gentleman also said: "One is continually distressed to find in the B.B.C.'s outlook a strong admixture of that culture which is the hall-mark of the upper democrat." That was tactful of him. Personally we would have substituted for the words "upper democrat" the words "upper House of Convocation." But then we are notoriously tactless. Somehow we cannot get into the habit of worshipping the Powers that Be. We keep on thinking of that refrain:—

"O, I don't care a D, says I, UC,

For the Powers that R, nor the Powers that B."

Of course, if we were paid handsomely by them, our sense of tact might (or might not) develop in proportion. We might even adopt the tone of Mr. Harold Nicholson, who declared that: "There are few denizens of Broadcasting House who do not endeavour, from early morning till late at night, to combat evil and to promote the good." But—dear, dear! Are things indeed as bad as all that? What hard-working heroes these "denizens" must be! Missionaries, did you say? Pooh! Their jobs are mere child'splay in comparison. But what are the hundreds of thousands of priests, presbyters and parsons in the country doing? Is not Mr. Nicholson's comment somewhat of a slur upon *their* activities?

As a set-off against the Holy Office of British Broadcasters we are faced with that child of Satan, the Cinema. What a glorious subject this is for the enthusiasm of the righteous to wallow in! Hark to the Rev. Dr. Gregory. "The picture house as at present conducted is one of the greatest menaces to the history of civilization." We seem to have heard something like this said about every pleasure which was available to the poor, and of every recreation which proved more attractive to the public than the sort of "recreation" provided by the Rev. Gregory and his ilk. And the odd thing is that it was usually a parson who said it. But when such statements are backed up by the aristocracy, it is surely high time that we—of the unholy and lower orders—should sit up and take notice. Lord Crawford, for example, said: "I look upon Hollywood as the most corrupt influence in the world." What he thinks of Elstree he doesn't say. Perhaps with a prohibitive tariff against all foreign films the noble lord will reserve his judgment upon our own "Hollywood" till such time as it becomes a Society for the Propagation of Parsonic Piffle—(beg pardon) Pictures. Then, again, listen to the Rev. Wm. Younger, who declared that: "Most of the film posters on the hoardings appear to have been born in hell." This terrible indictment would have been utterly crushing were it not that most of the Bible placards on Church hoardings appear to have been born in Bedlam.

In view of these film profundities it is most confusing to the poor, uninstructed public to read remarks such as the following. Mr. James Whale is quoted as saying: "*Hollywood is the most respectable place I have ever visited.*" But clearly this should be discounted on the strength of the better-known dictum that one should go to "Heaven for health, and Hell for society." Mr. A. P. Herbert, on the other hand, makes a quite unequivocal statement. "*I cannot, at the moment, think,*" he said, "*of a single human activity outside religious worship which has not recently been condemned by some indignant prelate or belligerent Church Council.*" But why "recently?" Unless history is all lies, the habits of medicine-men and priests seem to have been the same from time immemorial. And then we have Sir Herbert Samuel asserting that: "*If the cinema had never existed, there would probably be more crime, rather than less.*" How dare he say such terribly wicked things! Contradicting Christian divines and all! That his opinion is supported (though feebly) by a real Christian and a fellow politician scarcely mitigates his crime. Mr. Oliver Stanley, M.P., is indeed reported as saying: "*If people go to the Cinema on Sunday evenings, I, for one, will not admit that Christianity condemns their action until I am sure that Christianity approves their social condition.*" But supposing people want to go to the Cinema on Sunday mornings and afternoons too, what then, Mr. Stanley? And supposing Christianity does tacitly approve their social condition, would you then approve of Christianity? Perhaps you had better ask the Bishop of Stepney for an answer to these questions. So eminent a "big boy" in the "religious racket" should easily be able to get the "straight dope" on this subject from his "Chief." His remark that "*An East London child knows all about film-stars, but has never seen a country star-lit sky,*" strongly suggests that his Chief—reputed to be Almighty—is all in favour of maintaining the social conditions which Mr. Stanley seems to deprecate. Otherwise, what is to prevent the said Almighty Chief from altering these conditions by one of his popular little miracles?

The mention of certain politician's views on the Cinema brings us to their views on politics. Let us, therefore, regale our souls with a few sips from the nectar of their wisdom on this topic. Last September Herr Hitler, so prominent in the eye of the world at present, declared his belief that "*Providence has chosen me for a great work.*" This is, of course, very comforting to Herr Hitler. But the puzzling thing about this sort of conviction is to discover whether the Providence referred to is the one which is reputed to inhabit those salubrious upper strata of Christianity's cosmos, or whether he is the one in charge of that ultra-tropical grill-room in the lowest basement of the same cosmos. Individual opinions on this ticklish point are always very definite, but the strange thing is that they vary in accordance with the nationality and political views of their holders. As a set-off to Herr Hitler's opinion of himself we have another politician's views on his own tribe. Earl Winterton said: "*If we took all the men who have held office for the past twenty years on board ship, and some deplorable disaster happened . . . life would still go on.*" To which, by way of rounding off the total, we might add all other politicians for the same period. But why call the disaster "deplorable"?

Next week we shall present a few gems from the sayings of the great anent that blessed subject, Religion.

C. S. FRASER.

Acid Drops.

The wonders of our Royal Family are known to all. But it is left for the *Daily Express* to indicate the true measure of their greatness. After assuring the world that ours is the best loved and hardest worked Royal Family in Europe it remarks "the next three months are graced by their birthdays." The condescension here displayed is only equalled by W. S. Gilbert's:—

For he might have been a Russian
A Frenchman, Turk or Prussian,
Or perhaps I-t-a-l-i-a-n;
But in spite of all temptations
To belong to other nations,
He remains an Englishman.

May, June and July would be dull months indeed if the Royal Family had not selected them for their birthdays.

Example number two. Picture in the *Daily Express* for May 8, depicting a fainting man on the ground at the Hyde Park demonstration. Lettering, "A casualty during a disturbance between hecklers and Socialist supporters." Same picture in *News-Chronicle*, lettering, "Ambulance attending a fainting case in the huge crowd." Our papers really do cater for all tastes. What a guide they will furnish for the future?

Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is never more fatuous than when he airs his piety, for example, take a speech during his visit, just concluded, to America. In the U.S. President's launch, and in what a special correspondent calls a "bewitchingly beautiful setting," he spoke with "impassioned earnestness"—how well we know it—to his American auditors. He spoke of the "grim paradox" of modern life, millions hungry in a world overflowing with abundance, and added, "God never meant it to be like this. It is man's mistake, and it is our task to end it." This empty talk is said to have made the Conference one "of unusual emotional warmth and human significance"—the warmth of hot air, and the significance that attaches to humbug. We are astonished that Sir Walter Layton should "put over" stuff like this for, as a rule, his contributions to the *News-Chronicle* do not smack of its characteristic unction.

In a new work on the *Orders, Decorations and Medals of the World* to which he writes an introduction, General Sir George MacMunn says you can "get a man into Hell's mouth for four penn'orth of bronze," and that Ministers and Rulers have throughout the ages "found it good business to reward a life's devotion with a few pounds worth of gilt and enamel," and "happily human nature responds to this urge." The desire for distinction, says this gentleman "leaps in the human breast," but, if it does, it is due to the Ministers (political and religious) and to the Rulers that this desire is degraded by its exploitation in war, diplomacy and politics. The only distinction worth having is that which appertains to the worthy performance of private duty and public service, and the overwhelming body of those who perform both get no "Orders, Decorations or Medals." Yet this book "has been seen by the King, is approved by the contributing States, is in four volumes and in four languages, and it has taken twenty years of research and the assistance of sixty-seven Governments to produce." That the tinsel finery of military decorations and the "gilt and enamel" of "honours," bought or bestowed, should be thus belauded, and that intelligent men and modern Governments should lend their aid to such a task while modern civilization is supposed to be trembling on the brink of collapse throws a sinister light on the mentality of so many of those who "are set in authority over us."

The Annual Assembly of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland was recently held—in Glasgow. The President, Rev. Dr. Rowntree Clifford, delivered what must have been a depressing address. "There is no

gainsaying the fact that the Church does not hold its true place in the life of the community." Again; "Church life was never harder than it is to-day." And again, "in the growing secularization of the Sunday, in the passion for pleasure, in the wonders of the wireless, in the indolent scepticism, in the daring and unregulated thinking, and the decadence of public worship," all these mean "that the place, power and usefulness of the Church are being seriously challenged." They certainly are, and so seriously that the rev. gentleman's notion that "all that is required to get rid of all these influences is" a revival of religion shows that his recognition of the probabilities is less exact than his list of hostile actualities.

In its Annual Report the Baptist Union refers to the "movement to form a religion without God." What movement is that? The "religion of humanity," says the report; and proceeds to declare that the latter religion is "built up on the scientific study of psychology, biology and the like. These ideas are being widely spread by scientists, philosophers and novelists," and are a "grave menace to Christianity." The study of the sciences mentioned does indeed menace Christianity, but it does not involve any new religion, humanitarian or other. In fact the Baptist Union Report itself shows an uneasy sense of what really does happen as knowledge grows and is spread abroad, for it says "the belief of the educated classes becomes in time the common opinion of men." The educated "classes" to-day include all classes, and so far as any class is "educated"—in the exact and true sense of that word—it finds religion false and superfluous.

A Cornish reader writes from Hayle that, at a procession at Camborne, on April 22, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Trevithick's death, an uninvited person joined the company bearing a banner with the words "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found." The procession was entirely a lay one, and included engineers, representatives of scientific societies, Cornish patriotic bodies, school children, the District Council, the Fire Engine and a Traction and other engines. Our correspondent wonders "what would be thought if Mormons or Atheists or Communists displayed such bad manners and pushed their way and carried their catchwords into a similar celebration?" We fancy the Christians would give a display of "muscular Christianity" or, alternatively, as being more safe, call the police. They are often as lacking in courtesy as in courage.

How safe are the speakers selected by the B.B.C. to broadcast their ideas on God and Jesus! The latest example, the Ven. A. E. J. Robinson, commenced by admitting the difficulties the educated man encounters in his study of the Bible, and that modern times do not exactly help a belief in miracles. But warming up, the Venerable soon got into his stride and delivered a sermon (no doubt based on what he has said during the past fifty or sixty years many times), which might well have been given by any Salvation Army convert—except, of course in the tone of voice. It was pure unadulterated belief in the whole of the Gospels as if there had never been the slightest criticism of the holy records. And these be our teachers forsooth!

Communism says the Rev. Dr. Grimley is already "foredoomed" as it is attacking "the Church of God." Whether Communism is foredoomed or not, does not concern us here, but we can assure the rev. gentleman that his Church is "foredoomed" for certain. Our attack, based on truth in science, history and philosophy, is being felt wherever the Cross is planted; or else why this whining? We can answer: the Church knows its real enemy is the propaganda of Freethought, and that it is irresistible.

There is, we learn, to be a Government effort made to fight "the fly peril." News such as this is calculated, we should imagine, to cause a "great sensation" (as the

popular papers say) in Heaven, wherein is presumed to reside the Creator of the fly and the fly peril. As the matter is so intimately concerned with God, we think the leaders of the Christian Churches might well be interviewed by the Press. It would be interesting, for instance, to know whether to interfere with God's scheme of things, such as destroying flies and preventing breeding, is right or wrong. Assuming this to be ethically correct, would a national day of prayer be an efficient and sufficient method of eliminating the "fly peril?" The answers to such questions as these couldn't fail to be of interest to readers of popular newspapers. We present this suggestion free of charge to any enterprising editor who may care to adopt it.

Dr. Goebbels of the new German Government declares, "There can be no Art for Art's sake in a Nazi State; Art must have a sense of responsibility." This no doubt seems an eminently reasonable pronouncement to a Government that has revived the ancient Christian art of Jew-baiting.

The Pope, receiving some British pilgrims recently, referred to the "many beautiful pages" in the religious history of England, and predicted that "still more beautiful pages are reserved for the future." We hope not. The beauty of the stake, the rack and the thumb-screw; the exquisite and enchanting panorama of medieval piety, bedecked in ignorance, credulity and filth, the chop-logic that did duty for thought, and the servility which darkened life for the people combine to make those pages to which his Holiness so feelingly and, perhaps, enviously looks back, one of the most repulsive chapters in the history of the world. They were an outrage both upon Truth and Beauty, and to suggest that still more of them are "reserved for the future" is, fortunately, not only to abuse the confidence of his own dupes but to insult the commonsense of mankind.

The Rev. Wyndham Heathcote, a Unitarian Minister of Sydney, predicts that the Soviet attempt to "liquidate religion" is likely to fail, and adds that, "revolutionary France set up an altar to reason," but "the religion of reason immediately liquidated itself." If he is very confident of the accuracy of this ridiculous assertion why does Mr. Heathcote go on to say that the Russian experiment is one by which "the world cannot fail to be influenced." So far as there is any analogy to be drawn between the French Revolution and the Russian, it is that they were alike the product of the failure of established institutions in Church and State; and that, just as that which was violent in the French Revolution was temporary and ephemeral while its fundamental ideas permeated the life and thought of Europe, so it is reasonable to believe that time will demonstrate the permanent elements and dissipate the temporary excesses of the Russian Revolution. Not only in Russia, but everywhere, religion is in process of "liquidating itself." It may well survive as an active associate of the State only where democracy has been or is supplanted by dictatorship.

The Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children reports that it has been called upon to protect 3,000,000 children from ill-usage during the past fifty years. That is not a bad testimonial to the real kindness developed by close contact with Christianity, and with the stern fight put up in order to maintain the Blasphemy Laws which it is thought prevents growth of disbelief in Christianity. Of course many Christians have belonged to the Society and helped it in its work. On the other hand the parents were Christian, on whom the Society had to keep its vigilant eye.

A religious journal remarks that the cross roads are in sight for many of our orthodox theologians. More than we are aware of and less than they *avow*. As G. W. Foote used to remark, the great difference between Jesus Christ and many of our modern parsons is

that Jesus died on the cross and they live on it. And many do better on the cross than they could ever hope to do on the square.

An official of the Religious Tract Society, interviewed by the *Daily Mirror*, on an alleged "keen demand for religious books" said "we are selling as many books with a religious theme as ever we did." What sort of books did the *Daily Mirror* expect the Religious Tract Society to sell? In the same "story" is a statement by a member of a well known firm of publishers, who said: "Perhaps there is not the same call for solid religious books," but "the lighter theological books sell well"; *i.e.*, the less theology the more the sales. Finally, the reporter discovered that "a religious novel published last summer had a wider sale than most," but whether because it was a novel or because it was religious does not appear. On the other hand a correspondent of the same journal writes to enquire whether anyone reads religious books as "he had not seen anybody reading them even in Holy Week." Publishers of religious books, says our innocent contemporary, say "that the public are keen purchasers of such literature. Would any such publisher, being offered a free advertisement for his wares, cry "stinking fish?"

Southend-on-Sea is by way of becoming as famous for piety as for cockles. An application to the local County Bench for permission to hold a concert at Shoeburyness on Good Friday in aid of the unemployed was refused, on the ground that the programme "would not be in keeping with the sacred character of the day." Sir Frederick Senior, the Chairman, read out such items as "banjo solos," and selections from "Bitter Sweet," and observed that while the Bench "appreciated the desire to help the unemployed"—they must not be helped, at least by this means on this day. Is the combination of banjo solos and the contemplation of the crucifixion more incongruous than the association of such selfish bigots with the administration of justice?

The opportunist practicability of Christian policy is only equalled by the obstinate permanence of its worst superstitions. Thus, the Bishop of Zanzibar, writing in *John Bull*, of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, says "we have sacrificed many of our European ideas and worked on African lines," and "we have from the first presented to the African no mere second-hand copy of Anglicanism, but a type of Christianity which is much more primitive." He boasts that "in one diocese we have entirely Christianized the tribal initiation rites" with good results. They seek to give the African "respect for himself and for all that is of value in his own traditions"; but they insist on instilling Christianity and its superstitious "morality" into him, although they themselves admit that "by indiscriminately absorbing Western standards he will acquire certain traits which will be highly detrimental to him." Could there be a more convincing proof of the folly and futility of foreign missions, and of the fact, so glibly admitted when it suits their case, and so utterly repudiated when it does not, that the essence of Christianity is "primitive religion?"

Mr. Robert McGuire has just been appointed the National President of the Catholic Young Men's Society of Great Britain, and his first message to every branch of the Society is particularly luminous—not to say humorous:—

Give absolute obedience to our Hierarchy and parish priests. Discipline yourselves so that when the time comes, as come it will, the Catholic Young Men's Society will be the storm troops in the fight for Christianity.

We love the "absolute obedience" message, and we trust that the slightest turning of the worm will result in the complete order of the boot. Any independence of thought should be severely suppressed. But what tickles us most is the idea that any number of Catholics, young or old, would prove of the slightest use as "storm

troops" for the Faith. Our experience has been that they run like frightened rabbits at the least show of attack. What has Mr. McGuire himself ever done against the "infidel" assault?

If you want your name kept for ever before God Almighty—of course, as a thorough adorer—you can do it for £1. For this sum, your name will be inscribed in the Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral's Golden Book, masses will be said in your honour, and the Deity will never forget what you have done. We shudder to think what piety would do without cash, and we admit with sorrow that of the two, cash is the greater. It was ever so.

A touching commentary of the great evil of sweepstakes took place in Liverpool the other day. A lady managed to induce a barman to sell her an Irish Sweepstake ticket by showing him a holy picture and saying: "You know now you can trust me, I won't do you any harm." We are willing to believe that it was the picture and not the lady who tempted the barman, who was then promptly hauled up before the magistrates and fined £2 for the heinous offence of selling a sweepstake ticket, the temptress being a police-spy. Thus can religion be magnificently employed in the suppression of a degrading vice, and once again justified in the eyes of evil-hating men.

Referring to the recent Blasphemous Teaching Bill the Rev. G. E. Grieve, President of the Halifax Free Church Council called it "a most pernicious measure." He added that "any limitation the State tried to impose on human thinking ought to be suspect in the eyes of watchful Christians." We give Mr. Grieve credit for his liberality, but what does he mean by limiting his remarks to "watchful Christians?" We hope this does not mean only that Christians should know by this time that penalties upon opinions are not good policy even from their own point of view. Mr. Grieve's further statements that he "believes the days of a radical conflict between the Church and the State are not altogether over"; and that "allegiance to the one may be difficult to reconcile with loyalty to the other" leave us wondering as to his position. If he does not like the use of the State "to coerce reluctant minorities," and thinks, as he seems to, that "Anglicans share this dislike" does he also, like the Anglicans mentioned, want freedom for the churches from State interference without freedom for the State from religious influences and professions?

Fifty Years Ago.

SIR HENRY CROMWELL was twice married, and the death of his second wife, in 1592, was the occasion of proceedings for witchcraft, which form a significant indication of the condition of public opinion on the very threshold of the great puritan revolution. Some peculiarities of the poor lady's illness aroused suspicion of evil spirits at work. The doctors and attendants could not understand the symptoms, which were not in accordance with the legitimate course of disease, and therefore must needs put them down to preternatural influence. Suspicion fell on one John Sumwell, with his wife and his daughter Alice. They were all three lodged in gaol, and the mother, broken down by misery, confessed impossible guilt. According to the law, the property of the condemned wretches was forfeited to the lord of the manor, and Sir Henry founded with it a lectureship in the parish church for the delivery of an annual sermon against witchcraft. The vigorous survival of so cruel a superstition, at a time when the opposing forces of political light and darkness were being silently marshalled for a deadly struggle, should be a warning against a thoughtless use of nineteenth-century standards in judging people of these days. Is the sermon still preached? If not what is done with the money?

The "Freethinker," May 13, 1883.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

The Bradlaugh Centenary Commemoration Fund.

SEVENTH LIST OF DONATIONS.

AMOUNT previously acknowledged, £532 2s.; Erle D. Side, in memory of Robert H. Side, £5 5s.; Cine Cere, £3 3s.; H. Good, £2; Sir D. E. Wacha (Bombay), £1 10s.; C. Hall (Senr.), £1 1s.; H. Moss, £1; Michael Pease, 10s. 6d.; Mr. & Mrs. E. A. Sandys, 10s. 6d.; F. H. Guthrie, 10s.; G. Barker, 10s.; E. Egerton Stafford, 10s.; W. W. Hensett, 10s.; R. B. Fowler, 10s.; A. E. Powell, 10s.; Auntie Bidy, 10s.; Mrs. M. Gosling, 10s.; J. Gallery, 10s.; Frank Terry, 10s.; Fred Terry, 10s.; E. T. Mullins, 5s.; Mrs. M. A. Stafford, 5s.; J. Pritchard, 5s.; W. K. Hutly, 5s.; Hon. Mrs. A. Grant Duff, 5s.; F. Newell, 2s. 6d.; Miss E. Lechmere, 2s. 6d.; D. W. Allan, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Fred Terry, 2s. 6d.; Miss F. Terry, 2s. 6d.

Total ... £554 9 6

Total required £1,500.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

E. AMES.—The Security law was a law, fought by Bradlaugh and others, which demanded from a certain class of newspapers the depositing of a considerable sum of money by them as a guarantee that nothing of a blasphemous or seditious nature should be published. It was an infamous regulation, and was obviously intended to prevent outspokenness against the Government. The same kind of law was revived in India as late as 1910. A number of papers were suppressed there, among these one owned by Mrs. Besant.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

We again remind members and Branches of the N.S.S. of the Annual Conference to be held in London on Whit-Sunday. This Conference, occurring in "Bradlaugh Year" should be made a memorable one. London is

likely to be full over the Whitsun period, and those requiring hotel accommodation and tickets for the Conference Luncheon should notify the General Secretary without delay in order to avoid disappointment. Communications should be addressed to 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Will Branch Secretaries who have not yet sent in the forms containing the name and address of delegates to the Annual Conference please remember that May 22 is the last day for receiving them. A last day has to be fixed, but that does not mean the forms should be delayed until then, the sooner they are in the hands of the General Secretary the better.

We can always depend upon our old friend, Mr. Sydney Gimson, of Leicester, doing what can be done where the interests of Freethought are concerned. At a recent meeting of the Leicester Education Committee there recently came up a report from the Consultative Committee, which included a proposal for a minimum period of three half-hours per week being devoted to religious instruction. Against this proposal Mr. Gimson raised a strong and well-worded protest, and as a result of what was said it was agreed to refer back, for a time, the proposal. Protests of this kind even though they may fail, at the time, in achieving their object, yet do great good inasmuch as they call attention to the injustice of maintaining what is fundamentally sectarian teaching in the State schools. We would wish that other Freethinkers upon Councils and Education Committees were equally vocal in all cases where the interests of Freethought, which in the case of education is a matter of simple justice to all who are concerned. We think that the secret of the esteem in which Mr. Gimson is held in Leicester politics is largely due to the fact that he has never been wanting in respect to himself. Other men and women similarly circumstanced in other places will please note.

We are pleased to see from the report of the Annual Meeting of the Glasgow Branch, that the prospects of increased work in the near future are bright. Mr. More is the new President, and Mrs. Macdonald the new Secretary. Both are very "live wires," and we believe have the necessary qualities of energy and judgment. Mr. R. Buntin is Propagandist Secretary, and Mr. McEwan Treasurer. There is plenty of scope in Glasgow for an extended and successful propaganda, and we trust that local Freethinkers will give the Society every possible assistance.

Bradlaugh Year Centenary Notes will be continued next week and each week when space permits.

Mr. G. Whitehead will open the season for the West Ham Branch N.S.S. to-day (Sunday), outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E., at 7 p.m. Lectures will be held each evening during the week, details of which will be found in the Lecture Notices Column. Mr. Whitehead will be the speaker on each occasion.

The Secretary of the Brighton Branch N.S.S. is now Mr. J. C. Keast, and all communications should be addressed to him at 107 Kimberley Road, Brighton, Sussex. At the opening meeting held at the Level, Christians behaved as Christians always will when they have a great advantage in numbers. There is nothing better than a well-supported platform for keeping Christian rowdies quiet, and we are sure our Brighton saints will respond to the call.

Some Christian Types, by Criticus, has just been published by the Pioneer Press (4d. post free 5d.). The "types" are pictorially depicted on the cover by Mr. Cutner, and the author has drawn his subjects in vigorous and ruthless sketches which deserve, and we hope will have, a wide circulation. The booklet will be on sale on Friday next. The pamphlet will not please Christians, which is another way of saying that Freethinkers should not miss this lively little work.

"Under Western Eyes."

"A prophet is not without honour save in his own country."

IN that medley of wisdom, nonsense and obscenity known as the Holy Bible, the above text will be found in the gospel according to St. John. Its application becomes somewhat involved when considering the work of that man of genius known to the world as Joseph Conrad, born Korzeniowski, for he was by birth and ancestry Polish, and by adoption English. Nevertheless, it may be asserted with conviction that Conrad was honoured both in the land of his birth and that of his adoption, the exception which proves the truth of the proverb.

It is with his novel, the title of which I have used for this essay that I am concerned, and it is possible that there are some readers who will be interested in the remarkable wisdom and prescience displayed by the author regarding Russia. It may also be of interest to note the attitude of Conrad towards religion, especially the Christian religion. The following excerpts are from the published letters to his friend Edward Garnett, a name not unknown in Russia, for Mrs. Constance Garnett is the translator of the works of Turgeniev into English.

"It is strange how I always, from the age of fourteen, disliked the Christian religion, its doctrine, ceremonies, and festivals. Presentiment that some day it will work my undoing, I suppose! And the most galling feature is that nobody—not a single bishop of them—believes in it. The business in the stable isn't convincing." (Letter dated December 22, 1902.)

"Moreover, the basis from which it starts—Christianity—is distasteful to me. I am not blind to its services, but the absurd Oriental fable from which it starts irritates me. Great, improving, softening, compassionate, it may be; but it has lent itself with amazing facility to cruel distortion, and is the only religion which, with its impossible standards, has brought an infinity of anguish to innumerable souls on this earth." (Letter dated February 23, 1914.)

The problem before the reader of the book *Under Western Eyes*, is the problem of betrayed confidence, and concerns one Razumov, a student in the University of St. Petersburg, who, in support of his own moral rectitude, betrays a fellow student, by which act he is himself ruined. It is a sombre story of the struggle of the few against Tsarist oppression, presumably at the end of the nineteenth century, or even early in the present. The M. de P— of the story, the Minister-President of the notorious Repressive Commission, who is deservedly assassinated by the student Haldin, might stand for the equally repressive Stolypin or Plehve, so close is the resemblance. Here is Conrad's description of his own created character: "that fanatical, narrow-chested figure in gold-laced uniform, with a face of crumpled parchment, insipid, bespectacled eyes, and the Cross of the Order of St. Procopius hung under the skinny throat. He served the monarchy by imprisoning, exiling, or sending to the gallows men and women, young and old, with an equable, unwearied industry. In his mystic acceptance of the principle of autocracy he was bent on extirpating from the land every vestige of anything that resembled freedom in public institutions; and in his ruthless persecution of the rising generation he seemed to aim at the destruction of the very hope of liberty itself. It is said that this execrated personality had not enough imagination to be aware of the hate he inspired. In the preamble of a certain famous State paper he had declared once that the thought of liberty has never existed in the Act of the Creator. From the multitude of men's counsel nothing could come but revolt and disorder; and revolt and disorder

in a world created for obedience and stability is sin. It was not Reason, but Authority, which expressed the Divine Intention. God was the Autocrat of the Universe."

All of which describes with precision the attitude of the corrupt despots who controlled the destinies of Russia under the Tsars. The soul of Conrad is expressed in this phrase pronounced by one of his characters, Natalka Haldin, the sister of the fellow student of Razumov whom he betrayed to his death: "I would take liberty from any hand as a hungry man would snatch a piece of bread."

Victor Victorovitch Haldin, the student who hurled the bomb which removed the tyrant M. de P—' has taken refuge in the room of his friend Razumov, to his indignant amazement and panic-stricken disquietude, and after confessing his action he pronounces these words: "Yes, Razumov. Yes, brother. Some day you shall help to build. You suppose that I am a terrorist, a destructor of what is. But consider that the true destroyers are they who destroy the spirit of progress and truth, not the avengers who merely kill the bodies of persecutors of human dignity. Look here, brother! Men like me leave no posterity, but their souls are not lost. No man's soul is ever lost. It works for itself—or else where would be the sense of self-sacrifice, of martyrdom, of conviction, of faith—the labours of the soul? What will become of my soul when I die in the way I must die—soon—very soon, perhaps? It shall not perish. Don't make a mistake, Razumov. This is not murder—it is war, war. My spirit shall go on warring in some Russian body till all falsehood is swept out of the world. The modern civilization is false, but a new revelation shall come out of Russia."

And as Razumov leaves his rooms, ostensibly to provide the means of escape for Haldin, but actually to betray him into the hands of the police, that last pronounces these valedictory words, "Go with God, thou silent soul." And Razumov, proceeding on his way, soliloquizes "Everything was not for the best. Despotism, bureaucracy, abuses, corruption, and so on. Capable men were wanted. Enlightened intelligences. Devoted hearts. But absolute power should be preserved for the great autocrat of the future. The logic of history made him unavoidable. The state of the people demanded him. 'What else,' he asked himself, ardently, 'could move all that mass in one direction? Nothing could. Nothing but a single will.'"

During his interview with General T—, the head of the police, that dignitary remarks, "I detest rebels. These subversive minds! These intellectual debauchés. My existence has been built on fidelity. It's a feeling. To defend it I am ready to lay down my life—and even my honour—if that were needed. But pray tell me what honour there can be as against rebels—against people that deny God himself—perfect unbelievers? Brutes! It is horrible to think of."

Mrs. Haldin with her daughter, living in exile in Geneva, become known to Razumov, who has also gone to that haven of political refugees after the execution of Victor Haldin quite unsuspecting that he is the betrayer of her son. The mother remarks, "In Russia all knowledge was tainted with falsehood. Not chemistry and all that," she explained, "but the Government corrupted the teaching for its own purposes." And again, "With us in Russia the Church is so identified with oppression that it seems almost necessary when one wishes to be free in this life to give up all hope of a future existence."

Conrad's understanding of the Russian character is indicated in this paragraph: "I suppose one must be a Russian to understand Russian simplicity, a terrible, corroding simplicity in which mystic phrases clothe a

naive and hopeless cynicism. I think sometimes that the psychological secret of the profound difference of that people consists in this that they detest life, the irremediable life of the earth as it is, whereas we Westerners cherish it with perhaps an equal exaggeration of its sentimental value." And this utterance from the lips of Natalka Haldin is surely prophetic in the light of subsequent events: "Everything is inconceivable. The whole world is inconceivable to the strict logic of ideas. And yet the world exists to our senses, and we exist in it. There must be a necessity superior to our conceptions. It is a very miserable and a very false thing to belong to the majority. We Russians shall find some better form of national freedom than an artificial conflict of parties—which is wrong, because it is a conflict, and contemptible because it is artificial. It is left to us Russians to discover a better way."

Peter Ivanovitch, leader of the Russian Party domiciled in Geneva, and his Egeria, Madame de S—, are characters introduced into the story, so I imagine, for the purpose of depicting certain types of intellectual anarchists, types prone to words, not deeds, and whose sincerity is not convincing. Peter Ivanovitch, the great feminist, is pleased to consider himself as the Russian Mazzini, but there is only a faint shadow of resemblance between the Italian protagonist of freedom and liberty, and the "heroic fugitive" of world-wide celebrity, who preached the regeneration of his country through the spiritual supremacy of its women.

"I have never changed the faith I held while wandering in the forests and bogs of Siberia. It sustained me then—it sustains me now. The great powers of Europe are bound to disappear, and the cause of their collapse will be very simple. They will exhaust themselves struggling against their proletariat. In Russia it is different. In Russia we have no classes to combat each other, one holding the power of wealth, and the other mighty with the strength of numbers. We have only an unclean bureaucracy in the face of a people as great and as incorruptible as the ocean. No, we have no classes. But we have the Russian woman! The greatest part of our hopes rests on women." Thus, the great apostle of freedom through the spiritual supremacy of women.

Sophia Antonovna, a Russian woman of the people, is a character of a different type; she has rebelled against the existing ruthless and cruel regime, and been made a revolutionary by circumstances which she relates to Razumov. "Her father was a clever but unlucky artisan. No joy had lighted up his laborious days. He died at fifty, all the years of his life he had panted under the thumb of masters whose rapacity exacted from him the price of the water, of the salt, of the very air he breathed: taxed the sweat of his brow and claimed the blood of his sons. No protection, no guidance! What had society to say to him? Be submissive and be honest. If you rebel, I shall kill you. If you steal, I shall imprison you. But if you suffer, I have nothing for you—nothing except, perhaps, a beggarly dole of bread—but no consolation for your trouble, no respect for your manhood, no pity for the sorrows of your miserable life. And so he laboured, he suffered, and he died. He died in the hospital. Standing by the common grave, she thought of his tormented life—she saw it whole. She reckoned the simple joys of life, the birthright of the humblest, of which his gentle heart had been robbed by the crime of a society which nothing can absolve." "Yes, Razumov," she went on in an impressive, lowered voice, "it was like a lurid light in which I stood, still

almost a child, and cursed not the toil, not the misery which had been his lot, but the great social iniquity of the system resting on unrequited toil and unpitied sufferings. From that moment I was a revolutionist. As I could not go to the church where the priests of the system exhorted such unconsidered vermin as I to resignation, I went to the secret societies as soon as I knew how to find my way. I was sixteen years old, Razumov—no more! And—look now at my white hair! . . . Crush the social infamy! A fine watchword! I would placard it on the walls of prisons and palaces, carve it on the hard rocks, hang it out in letters of fire on that empty sky for a sign of hope and terror—a portent to the end."

I have endeavoured to make clear the spirit of informed sympathy with which Conrad wrote this book, a fellow feeling for those who fight and struggle for that freedom and liberty which is the common heritage of all mankind, and in doing so I am not unmindful that Conrad himself had been a victim of that system of iniquity which Sophia denounces. In the year 1862, when he was only five years of age, his father was exiled from his home in Warsaw for being implicated in the last Polish struggle for liberty, and his wife and son followed him, the former dying in exile. That circumstance would impress itself on a child's mind with profound significance, and influence his mature years in his attitude towards autocracy.

To those who have not read Conrad, I commend his work to them in the words of his friend, Mr. R. B. Cunningham Graham:

"Read and admire: then return thanks to Allah who gives water to the thirsty and at long intervals sends refreshment for the soul."

F. G. COOPER.

Biological Concepts.

SELECTION.

As propounded by the Darwinians Natural Selection became, in the hands of certain schools of philosophy, the instrument whereby a Purposive Agency of some kind worked on the evolutionary material. Peleologists and Vitalists treated it as the principle which preserves and transmits the benefits of variation. (This is not to say, of course, that Darwin himself would have approved of such interpretations.)

"The hypothesis of Natural Selection, in the form in which Darwin stated it," says Prof. Hogben (*Biology and Humanism*), has been modified out of all recognition to accommodate later enquiries into heredity and variation, enquiries which followed the course prescribed, not by the *Origin of Species*, but by Mendel's experiments.

It is now known that the fundamental fact of evolution is not selection, but mutation (abrupt variation). That is to say, evolution could still have occurred without selection; evolution, in brief, is *not* dependent on a struggle for existence.

We have already sought to dispose of the notion that mutation is the work of an Intelligence (*Freethinker* No. 17), and it has now to be added that selection, too, cannot be regarded as indicative of purpose. This, one would think, is made abundantly clear in *The Scientific Basis of Evolution*, by one whose name Hogben opines, will in time rank with that of Darwin himself; namely Prof. T. H. Morgan (U.S.A.).

"Only by a perverse use of the term," writes Morgan, "could Natural Selection be interpreted to mean a creative agent in nature," for "selection has not produced anything new, but only more of certain kinds of individuals; evolution, however, means producing new things, not more of what already exists."

What, then, is the fundamental difference between Darwin and Morgan? Briefly this, that "Darwin believed in the origin of species by natural selection. Morgan believes in the origin of gaps by natural selection." (Hogben, *Natural Selection and Research*). Hence while the title of Darwin's book laid emphasis on species *forming*, its author's enduring contributions are concerned with how species *cease* to exist.

"To Darwin's generation it seemed that without Selection there could be no evolution . . . On this view the struggle for existence is the agency which makes species change. Evolution becomes a necessity. But for Morgan evolution is only a necessity insofar as it happens that mutants do from time to time appear." (*Ibid.*) In brief, the struggle for existence has no creative rôle.

No mutation, no evolution. No struggle, and therefore no selection, and evolution would still go on. Take away mutation, and you take away the natural agency which makes for evolution. But it is not so with selection. Let us posit a universe so large and so abundantly supplied with the necessities of life that no struggle occurred; here is a universe in which natural selection does not operate. All the species we know to-day would be present, and many others beside (*i.e.*, those which have been swamped out by selection). Evolution would have occurred, but the pageant of life would present a more continuous appearance to the taxonomist. No striking gaps. No fossil relics. Only living forms. No holes made by struggle.¹ No missing links.

What natural selection *does* account for "is the absence of many kinds of living things that could not survive." (Morgan), owing to (a) being destroyed; (b) not being able to compete with the stock type; (c) finding no new environment suitable for their needs; or (d) not being able to meet the conditions of the inorganic world.

With regard to the ceasing of species, then, Darwin's theory is acceptable as ever, preference now being for the term "survival value." But with regard to species forming "it has been superseded by exact experimental enquiry into the mechanism involved in the production and preservation of new hereditary types." (Hogben, *Problem of Species*), for which the work of Mendel was the starting point. "For Morgan, the preservation of new characters ultimately resides in Mendel's law of segregation. It has its material basis in the chromosomes." (*Ibid.*) By studying the chromosomes it is now possible to state whether a given mutant is of the kind which will be transmitted; details of this important discovery may be consulted in Hogben's *Nature of Living Matter* (Chap. vi. and vii.). A new phase arrived when chromosome maps of allied species of the vinegar-fly, of which new mutants are continually appearing, were constructed by Metz and Sturtevant in 1923. Using Mendel's atomistic conception it is possible to state the conditions under which a genetic character will persist.

Having arisen, it is possible to determine why new varieties do not revert by hybridization, thereby occasioning an indefinite number of new combinations. The Yokohama can be made to retain those characteristics which distinguish it from the White Leghorn, by separating the two strains by a partition of wire netting. No wire netting, however, is required to prevent a White Leghorn and a Turkey from losing their genetic individualities, for, says Hogben, we are here met with the fact of *species incompatibility*, a problem which has already been at-

(Continued at foot of next column.)

¹ Digressing into politics, it may be noted that here nature evidently gives no support to the notion that competition is the mainspring of progress.

"Powder and Shot."

LATTERLY in these columns we have mentioned that the Industrial Christian Fellowship were celebrating *Industrial Sunday* on April 30, and have recorded the further fact that the I.C.F. had obtained the signatures of many industrialists to one of its manifestos and the signatures of prominent Labour leaders and Trade Union leaders to another.

At first glance the reader might be tempted to think that the necessity for two independent manifestos this year was perhaps an exhibition of studied class distinction, or at least was just silly snobbishness on the part of the drafters. But when these documents are seen side by side a deeper significance can be attached to them. For example, compare the opening paragraphs:—

Workers' Manifesto.

The grim spectacle of millions of workless citizens in our own and other industrial countries is a challenge to all Christian men and women.

Large-scale unemployment is a foul blot on human life. Its existence is a standing reproach to the nations of the world for their failure to cope with this grave economic and social evil.

The greatest paradox of our time is that with idle land, idle plant, and idle machinery, large numbers of our fellow-citizens willing and indeed anxious to maintain themselves and their families, cannot find an opportunity to use their labour. This paradox, which is now universally admitted, is one of poverty in the midst of plenty, of power to satisfy material needs and inability to apply that power.

Employers' Manifesto

Industrial Sunday provides an opportunity for the general recognition of the importance of industry in our National life and of the importance of religion in industrial matters.

Both the physical and moral well-being of our people are dependent on employment. Employment is dependent on efficiency and confidence. Confidence is the off-spring of faith; faith in our fellow-men with whom we work and among whom we live; and above all, faith in that Higher Power which, while aiding and inspiring our efforts does not take from us the responsibility of helping ourselves.

Industry can only be successful if it serves the best interests of the community. The basis of successful industry is Service. Those who are privileged in industry to participate in the conversion of the natural resources of the earth to the use and service of man, can under Providence only succeed if all engaged therein are inspired by the sense of service to the community, and in work as in sport forgetting self "play for their side."

The Churches have made their appeal to the workers' leaders by reciting the features of the present economic crisis in a form with which they are fully in agreement. It is couched in just the same language as that which we have heard so frequently uttered at a variety of Labour Party meetings. No one can deny the truth of what is written there and the Labour leaders who have endorsed the manifesto no doubt recognize in it the contents of many a speech of their own.

(Continued on next page.)

tacked with success, notably in the case of the donkey and horse.

At every point then, deterministic biology is freeing philosophical speculation from the encumbrance of unrelated "principles"; and selection, so far from being an instrument of Preservation employed by some intelligent, creative agent, becomes merely a name for the survival of inherited variants, both the arrival and survival of which can be scientifically explained.

G. H. TAYLOR.

With a similar regard for "atmosphere" the drafters of the employers' manifesto have endeavoured to administer a little lecture to the industrialists without hurting their feelings. The employers' manifesto records a truism when it says: "Both the physical and moral well-being of our people are dependent on employment." The next step, however, is ill-directed, and if the industrialists were to follow blindly these clerical "economic advisers," it would lead them into worse fogs and disasters than those in which they have already involved the whole world. The document continues, "Employment is dependent on efficiency and confidence." Here is a finely turned phrase that can be counted upon to please the industrialists indeed. For is it not the efficiency and confidence of employers that is meant here? But then the I.C.F. on the strength of their appeal to the Trade Union leaders and self-evident facts should have gone further and declared that the enormous unemployment had *per se* resulted from the inefficiency of the industrialists. This they have neglected to do, and it requires nothing more than the further definition that "confidence is the off-spring of faith"; to assure the industrialists that the Churches have no intention of exposing their responsibility for the world crisis. Instead they will very naturally welcome these fresh efforts of the Churches in continuing their role of throwing off smoke screens with which to deceive the workers to relieve the employers of troublesome labour disturbances.

Who knows on what employment really does depend better than the industrialists? Or to put it another way. Who knows better than the industrialist what are the essential conditions to keep in existence the reserve army of unemployed, which is used to drive down wages to a level which barely suffices for the wage-earners to keep themselves alive? By fostering the Christian ideology which encourages people to accept the most intense suffering and deprivation of their rights, without question the Churches have prevented people from developing that independence of thought and self-reliance which alone can help people to effect a change of system.

It is not surprising to find the industrialists only too ready to line themselves up behind the priests and parsons. When the latter write "confidence is the off-spring of faith; faith in our fellow-men with whom we work and among whom we live" the industrialists have no difficulty in agreeing. For they know that the unemployed can be made to go without a little more to ease the burden of taxation on the rich. Yet great as the faith of the industrialists in their power to continue exploiting the workers may be, it is not enough. They are besought by the I.C.F. to have above all "faith in that Higher Power which while aiding and inspiring our efforts does not take from us the responsibility of helping ourselves." Helping themselves to what? Ah! that is the question. The manufacturers who have shut down their factories in a process of rationalizing and who are enabled to live in comfort on their accumulated fortunes have known how to profit from this good advice of the clericals. And in so far as they think it necessary, they applaud the idea of putting the responsibility for the misfortunes of their displaced workpeople upon the Almighty.

One hundred and fifty years ago the workers were stirring to help themselves to rise above their unspeakable conditions to such good purpose that the employers were sent running to the Government for assistance against them, crying:—

The conditions of success for the landowner were enclosures and corn laws: for us they are cheap and docile labour, men and women forced to take

such wages as we think well to give them. Prosperity and social peace point the same way. Insubordination is the enemy, yours and ours. Scratch a Trade Unionist and you will find a Jacobin (revolutionary); catch him talking in his sleep and you will overhear an Atheist. (*The Town Labourer*, J. L. and Barbara Hammond, p. 114.)

This is a clear indication that the workers of that time had no illusions as to who was their enemy. But we can imagine that in 1933 the industrialists find in the manifesto of the I.C.F. all the assurances they need as to their immediate security. For if you scratch a Trade Unionist nowadays you are most likely to find a Churchwarden; or if you should overhear him talking in his sleep you will hear him reciting passages from the Popes' encyclicals. These manifestos about which we have written emphasizes all too well what Mr. Baldwin said with as much truth as wit about the British Labour Movement in 1927:—

If we have taught our opponents nothing else . . . we have taught them that if they wish to make an appeal to the English people, they must put order before anarchy, gradualness before violence, and compensation before confiscation. They must be clothed in an English dress, and Karl Marx instead of looking like a German Hebrew, must be made to look like a Nonconformist minister, or a Trade Union leader.

G.F.G.

The Origin of Law.

It is the fashion to jeer at law-makers (*i.e.*, politicians), lawyers, and, to some extent, at law. We all know that Mr. Weller thought the latter "a hass." Those who, as Pope puts it

"Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer
And without sneering teach the rest to sneer."

have much to answer for. Poets have been among the worst offenders. Tennyson wrote of

"The lawless science of our law,
That codeless myriad of precedent,
That wilderness of single instances."

Another poet, May, said:—

"The law is blind, and speaks in general terms,
She cannot pity where occasion serves."

Lord Brougham described a lawyer as "a gentleman who rescues your estate from your enemies and keeps it for himself." Goldsmith affirmed that "lawyers are always more ready to get a man into troubles than out of them." Swift thought laws "like cobwebs, which may catch small flies, but let wasps and hornets get through." Emerson stated, perhaps ironically, that if a man will keep the law his way will be strewn with satisfaction." There are, be it observed, as many contradictions in these opinions as there are in the law itself, and in the "opinions" of lawyers as to the meaning of any particular section of it. The lawyer, much abused as he is for cupidity and want of precision, might with justice retort that it is the carelessness of lay persons that gives him most of his opportunities—and "costs."

Law, like religion, is part of the total evolution of man. A great authority (Edward Jenks) says: "If we want to know what law was, not what it ought to have been, we must look not at the books of the philosophers, but at the codes of the practitioners; at the rules which men felt themselves bound to obey, not because they thought them wise or good or pleasant, but because they could not help themselves." Law, that is to say, is the alternative to force; "the rule of the camp, the shop, the field." The King, Parliament, the State, as the head and source of law, are comparatively modern. The first laws were made by common folk for themselves.

A.H.

Correspondence.

THE N.S.S. AND ITS PRINCIPLES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I can foresee the Conference this year developing into a "nine days' wonder." Miss Moore and Mr. Green have set the ball rolling, and I am wondering whether even your traditional good management and the lusty use of the historic hammer will succeed in bringing that ball to rest before nightfall. As regards the basic revision of our "Aims and Objects," we shall all be bursting with ideas, and I can almost feel the electric current that will pass through the assembly when this item on the Agenda is reached. May I therefore suggest that those who are interested in this matter should commence, as the Americans would say, *right* now to marshal their ideas into definite and concise form. Let them re-read the letter by Miss Moore and Mr. Green, and make up their minds exactly what is to be thought about it, being prepared, moreover, to express themselves in the space of a few minutes.

If it comes to a question of revision, my ideas are as follows: It seems to me that if your objects are X, Y and Z, it is best, if you can manage it, to be able to say that they are *primarily* X, and *therefore* Y and Z. This gives a logical coherence to the matter, which at one and the same time clarifies our position and argues our case. Catching the eye of the outsider, I think this form of statement would be likely to make the strongest appeal. I hold that our position is capable of statements in this form, and that along these lines it could probably be made unexceptionable to most of us.

It seems to me that we are *primarily* a secular movement, that is to say that our naturalistic outlook is the keynote. Our Freethought follows from this because of our evolutionary interpretation of social growth. Our opposition to religion is likewise a logical consequence of our naturalistic philosophy. On the ethical side we are merely dealing, once again, with the naturalistic approach to our subject, operating in the particular sphere of morals. Our political interest in secular education is once again a development from our basic position of naturalism. We are in truth the SECULAR Society. All this commits us, therefore, rather to a method than to an inflexible doctrine. In this way we do not necessarily identify ourselves permanently with this or that policy, this or that system of life, this or that moral code. We change with the changing results of scientific discovery, side by side with which our philosophy grows and is modified.

I suggest that the proposed draft submitted by Miss Moore and Mr. Green could be thrown into this connected form without essential modification. At present it appears as a series of more or less isolated propositions. The task of pulling these together into a unified framework along the lines above suggested could best be performed, sir, by yourself. For you to do so would greatly shorten our work at the coming Conference.

MEDICUS.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY.

THE Dinner on Sunday at Reggiori's Restaurant, King's Cross, was an unqualified success. Speeches afterwards by the President (Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe), Dr. R. A. MacLeod, Mrs. Hornibrook, Mrs. Ratcliffe, Miss Wood, and Messrs. A. D. Beckwith, G. Cores, L. Ebury, F. A. Hornibrook, T. F. Palmer, G. Royle, and C. Tuson kept the audience attentive until 11 p.m. The eighty-seven guests were each presented with a bouquet of pansies. The dinner was a credit to the Restaurateurs. Satisfaction was expressed with the splendid Hall, which has been reserved for the future Sunday evening meetings of the Society, and a spirit of optimism with regard to the Society's activities formed the keynote of an enjoyable evening.

The first outdoor meeting of The Metropolitan Secular Society took place last Sunday in Regents Park, when Mr. C. Tuson had a large audience. The meetings start at 3 p.m.

C.W.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"President Roosevelt's Dictatorship."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Who Invented God?"

FULHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (opposite Walham Green Church): 7.30, Monday till Friday, both inclusive, Mr. G. Whitehead.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, May 14, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, May 15, Mr. L. Ebury. Albert Street, Regents Park, 8.0, Thursday, May 18, Mr. C. Tuson.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Regents Park): 3.0 and 6.0 p.m.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, May 14, Mr. L. Ebury. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Wednesday, May 17, Mr. C. Tuson. Clapham Junction, 8.0, Friday, May 19, Mr. F. P. Corrigan.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Outside the Technical College, Romford Road, Stratford, E.): 7.0, Sunday, May 14. Monday to Thursday evenings inclusive, 8.0, Mr. G. Whitehead.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, May 14, Mr. B. A. Le Maine and Miss Nancy Price. 3.0, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson, Saphin and Hyatt. The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature can be obtained during and after the meetings, of Mr. Dunn, outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

WOOLWICH (Beresford Square): 8.0, Sunday, May 14, S. Burke. Lakedale Road, Plumstead, 8.0, Tuesday, May 16, S. Burke. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, May 17, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke. Beresford Square, 8.0, Thursday, May 18, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Friday, May 19, Messrs. F. W. Smith and S. Burke.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BRIGHTON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Level): 3.0, Mr. de Lacer. A Lecture. Members are requested to support the platform.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (West Regent Street): 8.0, R. Buntin—"Spiritualism." The *Freethinker* and other Freethought literature on sale at above meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, A. V. Shortt, A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE SECULAR SOCIETY N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.30, Mr. Alan Manders.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 7.30, Friday, May 19, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 8.0, Saturday, May 13, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, May 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH (Lambton Street): 7.0, Sunday, May 14, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TRAWDEN, 7.45, Friday, May 12, Mr. J. Clayton.

ACCRINGTON MARKET, 7.0, Sunday, May 14, Mr. J. Clayton.

NELSON MARKET, 8.0, Tuesday, May 16, Mr. J. Clayton.

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

For an Illustrated Descriptive List (68 pages) of Birth Control Requisites and Books, send a 1½d. stamp to:

J. R. HOLMES, East Hanney, Wantage, Berks.

ESTABLISHED NEARLY HALF A CENTURY.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

Issued and Sold by

THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE & Co., LTD.)
61 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4.**ROBERT ARCH**

SOCIETY AND SUPERSTITION. 4d., postage ¼d.

CHAPMAN COHEN

A GRAMMAR OF FREETHOUGHT. Cloth Bound, 5s., postage 3¼d.

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING. Three Complete Volumes. 7s. 6d., post free.

GOD AND EVOLUTION. 6d., postage 1d.

MATERIALISM RE-STATEd. Cloth, 2s. 6d., postage 2¼d.

GOD AND THE UNIVERSE. Cloth 3s., postage 3d., Paper 2s., postage 2d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY. Cloth 2s. 6d., postage 3d.; Paper 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

WAR, CIVILIZATION AND THE CHURCHES. Cloth 3s., Paper 2s., postage 3d. and 2d. respectively.

Prof. J. W. DRAPER

CHRISTIANITY AND CIVILIZATION. 2d., postage ¼d.

HISTORY OF THE CONFLICT BETWEEN RELIGION AND SCIENCE. 395 pages. 2s., postage 4¼d.

ARTHUR FALLOWS

REALISTIC APHORISMS AND PURPLE PATCHES. Paper Covers, 3s. 6d., postage 4¼d.

H. G. FARMER

HERESY IN ART. 2d., postage ¼d.

G. W. FOOTE

BIBLE ROMANCES. 2s. 6d., postage 3d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK. 2s. 6d., postage 2¼d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. 2d., postage ¼d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. 6d., postage ¼d.

SHAKESPEARE AND OTHER LITERARY ESSAYS. Cloth 3s. 6d., postage 3d.

DAVID HUME

AN ESSAY ON SUICIDE. 1d., postage ¼d.

Col. R. G. INGERSOLL

THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. 1d., postage ¼d.

WHAT IS RELIGION? 1d., postage ¼d.

WHAT IS IT WORTH?—1d., postage ¼d.

ARTHUR LYNCH

BRAIN AND MIND. 6d., postage 1d.

W. MANN

CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA. 6d., postage 1d.

MODERN MATERIALISM. Paper 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN MORALITY. 2d., postage ½d.

SCIENCE AND THE SOUL. 3d., postage 1d.

THE RELIGION OF FAMOUS MEN. 1d., postage ¼d.

GERALD MASSEY

THE HISTORICAL JESUS AND MYTHICAL CHRIST. 6d., postage 1d.

A. MILLAR

THE ROBES OF PAN. 6d., postage 1d.

UPASAKA

A HEATHEN'S THOUGHTS ON CHRISTIANITY. 1s., postage 1d.

GEORGE WHITEHEAD

JESUS CHRIST: MAN, GOD, OR MYTH? Cloth, 3s., postage 2¼d.

MAN AND HIS GODS. 2d., postage ¼d.

RELIGION AND PSYCHO-ANALYSIS—

RELIGION AND WOMEN. 6d., postage 1d.

GOD, DEVILS AND MEN. 9d., postage 1d.

SEX AND RELIGION. 9d., postage 1d.

The Secular Society, Ltd.

CHAIRMAN—CHAPMAN COHEN.

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1893 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

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

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

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

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

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

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

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

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Materialism Re-stated

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

A clear and concise statement of one of the most important issues in the history of science and philosophy.

Cloth Bound, price 2/6. Postage 2¼d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

SPECIAL OFFER.

Essays in Freethinking

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Three Volumes Complete of "Essays in Freethinking" will be sent post free for

7s. 6d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

**THE
CRUCIFIXION & RESURRECTION
OF JESUS**

BY
W. A. CAMPBELL.

WITH A PREFACE BY

The Rt. Hon. JOHN M. ROBERTSON.

In his Preface Mr. Robertson says:—

This book "is worth study by plain men who are concerned to hold reasonable opinions."

Cloth 2s. Postage 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

**The
Revenues Of Religion**

By
ALAN HANDSACRE.

**A RECORD OF ESTABLISHED RELIGION.
IN ENGLAND.**

Official Facts about Church Revenues.
History—Argument—Statistics.

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.
Paper 1s. 6d. Postage 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

SECOND EDITION.

MOTHER OF GOD

By
G. W. FOOTE.
WITH INTRODUCTORY NOTE

By
CHAPMAN COHEN.

Post Free - - - 2½d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

**A DOUBLE-SIDE EDISON BELL RECORD.
"THE MEANING AND VALUE OF
FREETHOUGHT"**

AN ADDRESS BY

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Price 2s. By Post carefully packed 2s. 9d.
Foreign and Colonial orders 1s. extra.

OPINIONS

Random Reflections and Wayside Sayings

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN
(With Portrait of Author)

Cloth Gilt - - - - - 3s. 6d.
Superior Edition bound in Full Calf 5s. 0d.
Postage 3d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

**THE OTHER SIDE
OF DEATH**

By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

Cloth Bound **THREE SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE**
Postage 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

Heathen's Thoughts on Christianity

BY
UPASAKA

Price—ONE SHILLING. Postage—One Penny

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.

**Christianity, Slavery
and Labour**

BY
CHAPMAN COHEN

THIRD EDITION. REVISED AND ENLARGED.

Paper - 1s. 6d. Postage 2d.
Cloth - 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.