

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •
— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIV.—No. 4

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 1934

PRICE THREEPENCE

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

Views and Opinions.

God and the Court of Chancery.

WHAT is the world coming to? The other day a case came before Mr. Justice Luxmore, which involved a claim for the return of between £4,000 and £5,000 from a lady who described herself as a "Prophetess of the Lord." The claim was made by the Receiver of the estate of a Mrs. Upcher. This lady was still living, but had been judged incapable of administering her affairs. It was claimed by Mrs. Clarke that the money had been given her to "carry on the Lord's work." The Judge enquired whether Mrs. Upcher in giving the money had acted on "independent advice," otherwise Mrs. Clarke could not hold the gift. The reason being, we presume, that without the proof of independent advice there was no evidence that unfair means had not been adopted to obtain the gift. And in this case the money had been used for the purchase of property and furniture. The following conversation took place with regard to the judge's ruling that to make the gift valid there must be independent advice:—

Mrs. Clarke: Does that stand with regard to spiritual gifts?

The Judge: It stands more certainly with regard to spiritual gifts than with regard to any other... Where the relationship between two people is that of spiritual teacher or adviser or leader in spiritual matters, and follower, no gift can stand unless the giver has independent advice.

So the money was ordered to be returned.

Now it is quite easy to see the legal wisdom of a gift of money being subject to independent advice. But the striking thing is that while this rule applies to all gifts, in the opinion of the judge it is specially necessary in the case of spiritual leaders and teachers. I rather like that "more certainly." It is such a fine commentary on the superior morality of the religious. They, apparently, need *very* careful watching. The Lord may inspire men and

women to give money to his prophets and prophetesses, but the inspiration is counted as naught unless it is endorsed by an independent agent—say, the President of the N.S.S. In days of old, the Lord succoured his prophet Elijah by sending food per Raven-express, and no one dared to set the gift on one side. To-day he sends a cheque per Mrs. Upcher, and a mere Judge in Chancery says that he doesn't care a damn—or its legal equivalent—the cheque must be returned. It is a situation which reminds one of a consequence of the Oaths Amendment Act. In substance that Act says that, if a man is without religious belief, his evidence must be taken on his giving his word of honour that he will speak the truth. But if he is a Christian, then what he says must be sworn to before it can be considered. It is another instance of having to be specially careful where religious folk are concerned. So I ask, What is the world coming to when a mere Judge can thus set himself and his Court against the "spirit of the Lord"?

* * *

An Affront to Deity.

Another illustration of the present position of religion occurs in connexion with the purchase of the *Codex Sinaiticus*. The total purchase price is £100,000, of which £50,000 takes the shape of a Government grant. This time the trouble comes from the Cleveland Bay Horse Society in the form of a letter sent to the Minister of Agriculture. The Society is of opinion that the £100,000 would be more wisely spent in trying to "secure a better breed of horses." Ye Gods! This Christian country has a chance of securing one of the oldest manuscripts in the world of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ with the Old Testament thrown in; and a body of professing Christians suggests that the money would be better spent in raising horses—not asses, but horses! Once upon a time, and for such conduct, the Lord would have visited the district in which these blasphemous men lived with at least the fate that overtook Sodom and Gomorrah. At the very least he would have seen to it that for seven years every horse born unto the members of the Cleveland Bay Horse Society would be either spavin-legged or broken-winded. But nothing is done; the Lord remains inactive; the Minister of Agriculture merely smiles. Really, if a great war does break out, if London is wiped out, if Lord Rothermere becomes dictator of Britain, or James Douglas becomes Minister of Education, it will serve the people right. Be not deceived! The Lord is not mocked. He will not forever tolerate Judges who say that his servants specially need watching, or suffer his inspirations to be set on one side by the Court of Chancery, or submit to be told that breeding horses is preferable to collecting ancient copies of his own book—the book of which he thought so much that he was willing to blot out whole peoples for questioning its truth.

A Home of the Blest.

In this dark outlook there is one corner of the world on which the Lord may look with satisfaction. This is Canada. A large part of the country appears to be very near that stage of human development which prevailed when the Lord walked the earth and performed those miracles that made him feared and famous. Between a certain proportion of the people of Canada and the natives of Central Africa, the principle differences seem to be those of clothes, language, and housing accommodation. Mentally there are not very great distinctions.

In last week's issue of the *Freethinker*, we reported a case in Montreal in which a Judge of the Superior Court annulled a marriage of twenty-four years' standing, because a Roman Catholic man had been married by a Protestant Minister. Before that, we had the case of a bailiff of the High Court confined in a criminal asylum on a trumped-up charge of blasphemy, but whose real offence was that he had made public his discovery of his wife in criminal conversation with a priest. These things must have done much to convince the Lord that there were still parts of the world where his religion could not be brought into disrepute with impunity.

Now a further proof is to hand. A discussion has been proceeding in the *Toronto Star* dealing with the Virgin Birth, and a reporter was detailed to elicit the opinions of leading Christians about it. The first visit was to a Roman Catholic, Monsignor Hand. He was asked, "Will you please give your opinion regarding the modern interpretation of Adam and Eve's sin?" The reply was:—

The Catholic Church does not recognize the term "Modern interpretation." Our Church accepts the statement of the fall of our first parents. We also accept the statement of the consequence—the punishment for an offence against God. This made necessary the advent of a Redeemer.

There should now be joy in heaven. There are none of your modern views here. The reporter next went to a Methodist, where he met with a series of statements that must have ruffled the angelic hen-coop, and certainly left a stain on the white sheet of Canada's religious purity. The man was probably one of those emissaries of Moscow that Mr. Bennett is so anxious to deport, for he actually said that he did not believe in the reality of the serpent, or of the fall, or of the Jonah story. But this exhibition of Canadian infidelity was atoned for by the next witness, a Presbyterian. There was no mincing matters with him. He believed in the Shorter Catechism, and would have believed it if it had been either shorter or longer. He accepted it, not symbolically, but literally. He would not permit women to preach; he believed in the story of the Garden of Eden; and when he was asked whether he believed in sending people to hell for a crime committed by someone thousands of years ago, he replied, "I absolutely believe that God from all eternity elected some to eternal life and others to eternal death." Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Of such is the kingdom of heaven—not the filmy heaven to which Sir Oliver Lodge would send us, but to the heaven of harps and hymns, of angels and animals dear to the souls of such men as Torquemada and John Knox and Charles Peace, and other fine and typical Christian characters.

The last witness was Canon Dyson Hague. He earned the place of a gem in the crown of the Saviour, by saying, "I accept the scriptural account of the Virgin Birth and of our first parent's fall, otherwise all is built on sand instead of on rock." Then, soaring into heights of abstraction, sufficient to turn the man of ordinary mentality dizzy, he burst forth "When a soul accepts God as the final authority,

then the truth is seen as above reason." Oh, the power of the glorious gospel that enables a man so easily and so lightly to surmount what the sainted Mrs. Eddy calls "this mortal mind." How powerless is scepticism against such reasoning as this! The Canon shows the sinner a veritable road to paradise. Canada has been, with India, called a gem in the crown of the British Empire. It is more than that. Its spiritual significance will continue to shine in heaven when the British Empire is no more, and Ramsay Macdonald has ceased to weave his brow into the model of a relief-map of a miniature railway, as a consequence of too prolonged a pondering on the problems of this wicked wo-r-r-ld.

* * *

Treasure our Rarities.

Let us remember also to the religious credit of Canada that the men cited are among the leaders of Christian thought. And there are many others, in Quebec, in Montreal, and in other parts of the Dominion. It is true we have similar figures in this country—in the Salvation Army, in the Bible Students' Association, and in the wilds of Cornwall and Devonshire, of Wales and Scotland. But they are not counted as leaders. It is true that the spiritual kinship of these people is wide, and its members form a numerous family. They represent that waiting army which, when mobilized by some spiritual Hitler, backed by a godly Goebels and Goering, may yet make an effective stand against the forces of materialistic Freethought. For the moment the light-hearted sceptic may smile at these godly men. But so did ancient Rome smile at what they considered the extravagance of the first Christians. But the time came when these laughed-at Christians sat upon the throne of the Cæsars, when the music of the Greek poets was drowned by the hymns of triumphant monks, and the philosophy of Greece gave way to the reveries of a Simon Stylites.

The Christians of Canada should be treasured as we would treasure the discovery of a prehistoric animal in Loch Ness. They are illustrative of the type that first followed the Carpenter of Nazareth, and their descendants may yet deal with modern civilization as Christians dealt with ancient culture. Canadian Christians, and their spiritual fellows in all parts of the world, are of the material of which true Christianity is made. They represent what our rationalizing unbelievers and sentimental ethical culturists so often sigh after, true, real and uncorrupted Christianity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Some Saintly Shams.

"The system which begins by making mental indolence a virtue, and intellectual narrowness a part of sanctity, ends by putting a premium on hypocrisy."

John Morley.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."—*Shakespeare*.
PRIESTS are the most astute of all showmen, and beat politicians hollow in their clever adaptation to changing circumstances. Not long since priests of the Roman Catholic Church proclaimed their "Virgin of Loretto" as "the Madonna of the Airmen." Doubtless, the Romish ecclesiastics hoped by this smart action to give additional popularity to a very famous and money-making religious shrine. Italy is a beautiful country; tourists have surplus cash; why should not one of "God's" representatives share the spoil with hotel proprietors and railway-companies?

The riddle of this Italian shrine is easily read by all but devout followers of this Romish Church. The innocent faithful are invited to believe that the house

in which the "Virgin" Mary brought up her family at Nazareth remained there for thirteen hundred years. This in itself is an astounding story, but religious faith is capable of even greater strain. The yarn continues that some of the angels at length became alarmed for the safety of the old homestead, and, failing appeals to the landlord, they cast decorum and law to the winds and intervened on their own sacred account. One fine morning the house vanished, leaving not a solitary brick behind as a souvenir. The compassionate angels had carried the precious building right across the Mediterranean Sea to the Coast Dalmatia, where it remained for three years, whilst the winged workmen recovered their breath. Then once more the angels pulled all together and took the house on its final journey across the Gulf of Adriatic to Loretto, where it was fixed—without a window or a chimney-pot being out of place.

Loretto was twice blessed, for it possessed not only the Holy Virgin's house, but an image of the famous lady herself, which was almost as old as the marvellous building. The story, which is as true as the Gospels but not more so, says, this particular image was carved by an old friend of the holy family, better known as "Saint Luke," one of the four alleged biographers of Christ. Sculptor and fiction-writer, "Luke" appears to have been almost as many-sided in his genius as the great Michelangelo himself.

This Loretto shrine, with such attractions, became one of the greatest show-places of the Christian world. Among other adornments the sacred image had a gold crown with over three hundred diamonds, and eighty-eight rubies, the gift of the pious Queen Christina of Sweden. This Queen gets the credit, but she may have acted like the equally pious Ramsay Macdonald, who purchased the *Codex Sinaiticus* with other people's money, and made a gesture to the clergy which cost him nothing but the contempt of his old friends.

During the French Revolutionary Wars this Loretto shrine was sacked, and this precious image was part of the loot. This time there was no angelic intervention. The image was restored when Napoleon made terms with the Roman Pontiff. The anxiety of the Catholic priests for its restoration may have some association with the revenues of the shrine, which have been estimated at £12,000 a year. This Loretto doll has been credited with many similar "cures" to those of Lourdes and so many other popular shrines, which "miracles" can be easily explained by those who have made a study of faith-healing. All miracle-workers, however, it will be noted, whether Roman Catholics or Eilm Four-Square Gospellers, stop short at the restoration of an amputated limb.

This child-like credulity runs all through religious history. To-day, journalists try very hard to flog up enthusiasm for an alleged Loch Ness "monster," but in the Ages of Ignorance and Faith the world was full of monsters for the true believer. Even the flowery fairy-tales of the Old and New Testament were not sufficiently numerous to satisfy the voracious appetites of credulous Christians for the marvellous. The legends of the so-called "saints" are so utterly improbable that they have a pathological value. I remember taking a child to the National Gallery, and halting before a picture of some saint with scores of arrows sticking out of his body. "Looks like a pin-cushion, don't he, daddy?" said the little critic by my side. The mind of the normal, bright child saw clearly enough where the eyes of the superstitious were clouded.

For example, "Saint George" is supposed to be the patron-saint of England. He was not alleged to be English, and he never did anything for this country. The chief exploit that we connect him with, the slaying of the dragon, is the one incident that is confessed, even by his warmest admirers, to be a mere solar myth, just a version of Apollo and the python, Bellerophon and the chimera, Perseus and the sea-monster, all "caviare to the general." There was a famous battleship once named "Bellerophon" in the British Navy, and the sailors, not classical scholars, named her the "Billy Ruffian." Even the alternative and comparatively respectable "Saint George," who is alleged to have suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Diocletian, was a ludicrous figure, like some of the pantomime characters in the *Arabian Nights*. This particular "Saint George" was, we are told, killed three times, coming to life again on two of the occasions. Among the commonplace incidents of his humdrum life were that he was burnt to death, beheaded, eaten by wild animals. Coming to life again, he was set on a wooden horse, and a fire lighted under him. Sixty nails were driven in his head, and he was sawn into four pieces, and these fragments were thrown into boiling pitch. Again he came to life, and he was finally forced through the pearly gates of heaven on a wheel generously spiked with swords. What a personality! Even the Reichstag fire trial could have had few terrors for such a hero.

This imaginative nonsense is parallel with such Oriental foolishness as the story of Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, and so many legends of the Old and New Testaments. All this may be of financial benefit to hundreds of thousands of priests, and their innocent satellites, but of what real value is this clotted nonsense to men and women in the twentieth century? The so-called Christian "saints" are as big a disappointment as the Christian Bible itself. What good they ever did for mankind is of microscopical importance. One red-nosed comedian, who nightly sets his audience rocking with happy laughter, is worth all the saints in the calendar. At least, Punchinello passes his life radiating happiness. The so-called "saints" are the most pathetic shams from which human beings ever sought to extract exalting sentiment, and these monkish extravagances are but artful elaborations of the equally pious fictions found between the covers of the Christian Bible, which is largely but a hotch-potch of wildly improbable Eastern stories, no more true than the pages of the *Arabian Nights* or *Baron Munchausen*.

MIMNERMUS.

"God and the Astronomers."

THE title of our article is the title of the latest work by Dean Inge, the Dean of St. Paul's (*God and the Astronomers*. Longmans, Green, 12s. 6d.) In this book the Dean discusses the facts, opinions, and theories put forth by Sir James Jeans and Prof. Eddington, which have caused such jubilation in the Christian pulpits and press.

Dean Inge is by no means so enthusiastic in his welcome as the pulpit and press, and is inclined to look this gift-horse very critically in the mouth, and even treat the donors as hostile witnesses. The two astronomers, after all their obscurantist efforts in favour of religion, may very well ask with Falstaff, "Call you that, backing of your friends!"

The Dean's special aversion is the law of Entropy, of which he observes: "Entropy gives us a clear picture of the whole universe slowly running down

like a clock, a picture which on the face of it implies a dysteleology of the most absolute kind, an unrelieved pessimism as to the ultimate fate of the world. Spengler calls it a new *Götterdämmerung*, a reference to the well-known Scandinavian mythology, in which the Titans will at last defeat the gods." (p. 24.) A Buddhist might view the prospect with equanimity, but not the European, "The theory which science bids us to accept seems to reduce the creation to sheer irrationality. It is not unthinkable or impossible, but it is, in the judgment of many persons, intolerable." (p. 24.)

Yet, according to the teaching of modern science, nothing is more certain:—

The astronomers tell us as a certain fact—Eddington says it is the most certain truth of science—that the whole universe is steadily and irrevocably running down like a clock. The inevitable end, says Jeans, is annihilation—annihilation of life, of consciousness, of memory, even of the elements of matter itself. That is the doom of all that exists—annihilation from which there can be no recovery and no return.

It seemed to me a very marvellous thing that this creed—more pessimistic than the Ragnarok or *Götterdämmerung* of the old Scandinavian mythology—should have co-existed with all the rosy predictions of what has been called the Century of Hope, the nineteenth century, which was to be followed, it now seems, by the Century of Disillusionment, the twentieth. (W. R. Inge: *God and the Astronomers*, p. 8.)

Not so marvellous, after all, when we remember that the children of the last century were brought up in the belief that after the judgment day there would be a grand pyrotechnic display during which the world and all it contained would go up in smoke and flame.

The supposed *Law of Progress*, continues the Dean, "inevitable, endless, continually increasing and advancing progress, was the lay creed of men of science," and the evolutionists, headed by Spencer and Darwin. Yes, and they were not the only ones; the educated religious world followed them. Tennyson, their poet, and spokesman, voiced the aspiration:—

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of the suns.

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

The religious Victorians faced the coming destruction of the world with equanimity because they thought they would be magically transported to another world and live happy ever after. If the thought of the death of the universe ever occurred to them they put it aside and declined to face it. But the inexorable verdict of science proclaims the ultimate death and annihilation of the universe with its myriads of constellations, and suns and stars whose number is greater than the sands of the sea shore.

The theological consequences of this to the Pantheist and Immanentist are disastrous. For the Pantheist believes that God is everything and everything is God. The Immanentist believes that the essential presence of God pervades the universe. The same is true, as Dean Inge points out, of the "emerging" God of Professor Alexander: "His fortunes are entangled with those of the Cosmos, which is merely the externalization of Himself. This notion of God is common to most of our philosophers, including even the late Professor Pringle-Pattison, who, great and inspiring teacher as he was, was never quite a

Theist in the Christian sense. And all the time it was certain, known to the very men who preached this optimistic and pantheistic creed, that the ultimate fate of such a God was just to die." (p. 9.)

The same applies, continues Dean Inge, to the New Idealists, Croce and Gentile, Bergson and Wildon Carr: "For all these writers, God is bound up with His creation. The World is as necessary to God as God is to the world. God is realizing Himself in the historical process." Only those acquainted with the literature of the Established and Nonconformist Churches are aware of how largely these views are held by the Modernist clergy who pervade both Churches. "We Christians," declares Dean Inge, "reject altogether the evolving emerging God who seems to be the God of the New Realists and New Idealists alike. . . . Can we imagine Him literally *surviving* His creation, and living on without it?" (p. 11.) And further: "though God might exist without a world, it is difficult to imagine any reason why He should choose to create a world for a period only, and then destroy it." (p. 29.) And if the Universe is substituted for "a world," the problem becomes still more inexplicable.

Dealing with the deplorable condition of Europe during and after the dissolution of the Roman Empire, Dean Inge observes that: "for many centuries it [Christianity] was more detached from life in this world than the Greeks had ever been. . . . the eternal world, with its ideal values, was now definitely envisaged as a *future* life, and the popular pictures of heaven and hell, as places of future retribution in kind, sucked the vitality out of secular interests more completely than the contemplative life of Greek philosophy had done." (p. 81.) It caused the Dark Ages, and as he further observes: "A man would need to be a very robust optimist to take a cheerful view of the world in the Dark Ages. War, poverty, ignorance and violence sum up the salient features of life at that period." (p. 147.) And again: "If the universe were to be dissolved in ruin to-morrow, that, for the thought of early and medieval Christianity, would be a quite acceptable end to a sorry business. We must remember that for about six hundred years, from about 500 to about 1,100, civilization was in very truth in a dismal backwater." Most modern authorities put this period at a thousand years.

There is an engaging frankness about many of Dean Inge's deliverances, instance the following:—

If we are asked why God made the earth, sun and stars, it is best to say simply that we do not know. Disinterested curiosity is a noble passion, but nature has not seen fit to gratify it. We have enough light to walk by, and not much more. (p. 156.)

In connexion with the Pragmatists of America, he observes: "The Americans are so much used to bluff each other that they think they can bluff nature and God." (p. 197.) And again: "The optimism of the popular religious teaching of our day seems to arise from a good-natured idea that no one really deserves to be punished. 'Dieu me pardonnera; c'est son métier.'" (p. 207.) (God will pardon me; it is his business). "It is often assumed that the production of man must be the sole or chief end of creation. This seems to me unjustifiable anthropolatry," and if the inhabitants of other worlds needed redemption, "no doubt God visited them as He has visited us." "There is, I think, something derogatory to the Deity in supposing that He made this vast universe for so paltry an end as the production of ourselves and our friends." (p. 149.) Nobody could accuse the Dean of the theological blight of dullness.

Ignorance and Prayer.

It is a rare delight to find the truth about a religious dogma, which the Freethinker alone, has usually to emphasize, publicly admitted by a leading Christian dignitary, especially when this is none other than the head of the Church of Rome. It was then a slightly belated New Year's gift to read in the *Catholic Times* of January 5, the following paragraph in its "Notes of the Week." :—

In his Christmas allocation to the Cardinals and prelates of the Court on Saturday, December 23, the Pope recalled the story which is told of a banker (the story is given as true and of recent date) who was asked his judgment on the financial situation. "I can formulate no judgment," he replied. "Then give us your opinion," his questioners said. "I cannot have an opinion," was his answer. Asked for his thoughts, his ideas, he retorted: "I have no ideas. I can give only my impression, and even for that I can give you no motives, and my impression is that nobody can know anything about it." His Holiness went on to say that that represented his views on the confused state of the world to-day. He had, however, one word to say and that was "Prayer." Napoleon had said that the first thing necessary for success in war was money, and the second was money, and the third was money. He would say the same of prayer to all those who desire peace and the well-being of nations. It is the one thing necessary, the one word he had to say.

Although we may doubt both the value of prayer and the reality of the Holy Father's ignorance on the present social problems, we can surely support wholeheartedly the connexion between ignorance and prayer, which he establishes in the reported statement.

There have indeed been two alternative methods of approach to the problems that have confronted mankind throughout the ages, the scientific and the superstitious. In order to avoid the widespread impression that the scientific method is peculiar to modern times, one can take as a formulation of its underlying principles the following quotation from the teachings of Confucius :—

In nature there are causes and effects; in human affairs actions have their motives and their consequences. If we know that it is first necessary to concern ourselves with the causes and the motives of actions before it is possible to deal with their effects and results, then we are not far removed from the truth. When the motives for actions are in confusion then it is impossible for their effects and consequences to be in order.

The essentials of this method are careful observation and consequent reasoning, so that by an ever-deeper understanding of its laws, nature becomes the servant of man instead of his master. The superstitious method, on the contrary, rests on the belief that because the causes of certain events and the motives of certain actions are unknown, they are unknowable, having supernatural origin. This method of approach to any problem leads inevitably to the advocacy of a placation of the "gods" or "God" by prayer as the only possible solution.

A simple illustration is afforded by the development that has taken place in the treatment of the phenomena of lightning. Primitive man finding a thunderstorm an inexplicable event for him made good his deficiency of reason by an abundance of imagination, and concluded it was "the gods' fireworks." The practical result of this theory was that he sought to protect his home and other property from the havoc of lightning by a suitable prayer to the gods. There was a time in Germany, for ex-

ample, which, judging from the policy of the present Government, may possibly return, when a peasant desiring to protect his house from lightning painted on the roof the pious proverb :—

"Behuet mein Haus, heil'ger Florian,
Zuend lieber das des Nachbarn an!"
("Protect my house, Saint Florian,
Set my neighbour's on fire instead!")

To-day most people who wish to protect themselves from the same danger arrange for the installation of a lightning conductor. This change is a result of the replacement of the superstitious by the scientific method of approach to the problem. Certain people, more enlightened than their neighbours, rejected the old explanation of lightning, and by investigating this and similar phenomena, began to formulate the laws of that branch of physical science known as electricity. They were naturally enough denounced as heretics, enemies of true religion and the Church, and suffered accordingly during their lifetime. It is hardly necessary to relate that they proceeded in spite of persecution and found, for example, that lightning was but the passage of electric current to the earth, through the highly-resisting medium of air, and this resulted from a discharge from clouds which had become highly charged with electricity by the friction of dust. They found also that most metals, and copper in particular, were good conductors of electricity, and could consequently be used to divert the atmospheric electrical discharge. The practical result of this knowledge is the modern lightning conductor.

At the present time the scientific method has become generally accepted in the treatment of natural phenomena. Without possessing the reputed gifts of the early fathers of religion one may safely prophesy that the new Liverpool Cathedral, for example, will be fitted with a lightning conductor. In spite of the blessing it has already received from Christ's Vicar on earth, its dedication to the glory of the Catholic God, and the prayers that have been and will be said for its safety, this additional safeguard will not be neglected. In spite of all the progress that has been made in natural science, however, there is as yet little indication of the scientific method being adopted in the treatment of social problems; and it is the domination of superstition within these realms that finds an appropriate expression in the words of the Holy Father. He is indeed echoing the feeling of helpless ignorance on questions of human relations, which is unfortunately shared by so many people to-day. There is not only no generally recognized analysis of the causes of the main social evils such as war, poverty and unemployment, but also a general tendency to assign these to the realms of the unknowable, or at least to the working of some mysterious forces outside our control. Once more let it be emphasized, this attitude of mind leads inevitably to prayer or to the passive acceptance of an unalterable fate. We have seen during the past year 450 unemployed Catholic workers leave this country on a pilgrimage to Rome, most of whom undoubtedly believed in all sincerity that they were following the best possible course to improve their situation. Similarly, about the same time, one could observe on a Sunday afternoon another section of Christianity, headed by George Lansbury and several Labour parsons, praying in Trafalgar Square for the social regeneration of the world.

It is, of course, in the nature of prayer that its effectiveness cannot be proved or disproved by experience. On Sunday, June 11, 1933, the Church of England issued an appeal for the prayers of all Christian citizens on behalf of the Disarmament and World Economic Conferences that, to quote the ap-

peal, "so far as is possible the heart of the whole nation may rise in prayer to God." There has been to our knowledge no attempt to compare results with efforts on the part of the sponsors of this appeal. But the complete failure of both Conferences has probably left the mind of the Christians undisturbed as to the use of their special effort in supplicating their omnipotent Creator. If true to their religion they will conclude that they have not prayed hard enough.

It is noticeable that although prayer is so frequently recommended by the Catholic Church to the suffering people, this institution relies on other measures to safeguard its own progress. Its apparent distrust in the omnipotence of the Christian God extends further than the installation of lightning conductors. Even in that all-important question of providing the necessary finance for the new Liverpool Cathedral the Church does not disdain to utilize the benefits of modern business organization. The arrangement made with a leading insurance company which enables the Catholics to insure their lives so that the sum accruing at their death may go towards the building fund, is surely an interesting illustration of the reliance which this Church places on human as opposed to super-human powers. In fact, those who have studied Catholicism will know that its success depends not on supernatural aid, and certainly not on the truth of its doctrines, but solely on its highly developed organizational machinery.

Experience leads us to doubt in fact not only the Holy Father's own lack of belief in the remedy he advocates, but also his assurance that he is ignorant of the causes of the present international distress. It is surprising how accurate a knowledge of the international situation, political and economic, is displayed by the Vatican when it moves in its own interests in the shadowy realms of diplomacy. We wonder whether the silence of the Vatican may be conditioned by other motives than ignorance. Is a true analysis of the causes of the suffering which the mass of the people are called upon to bear at the present time, perhaps too favourable to those "forces of disruption" from which—together with the Fascist Parties—the Catholic Church would specially protect us?

ALLAN FLANDERS.

To-morrow's the Day.

To-morrow's the day
When the fool will be wise,
The spendthrift economize,
Borrower pay.
To-morrow's the day!

To-morrow's the day
When the heroes who fought
Find the Heaven that they sought,—
Though it seems far away!
To-morrow's the day!

To-morrow's the day
In which optimists vie,
And Protectionists lie
In wait for their prey.
To-morrow's the day!

To-morrow's the day
That sells us a pup,—
After stuffing us up
With the promise to pay.
To-morrow's the day.

W. J. LAMB.

The Great Robbery.

READERS of Alan Handsacre's *The Revenues of Religion* will be under no misapprehensions as to the land-holding interests of the Established Church to-day, but many are probably not aware of the conspiracy between the Church and the "landed gentry," which robbed the people of this country (round about a century ago) of their common land, which had belonged to the community for generations.

The story of this shameless betrayal of the rights of the people is now told for the first time in a book issued at a popular price in *The Great Robbery*, by Graham Peace (Commonweal Press, 3s. 6d.). Quoting the essential figures to prove every point, and analysing the way in which the great landed estates have been built up, Mr. Peace shows that this was one of the most terrible stories in the whole of history. Space will not permit me to do more than quote a typical example of what happened. At Braunston, a village in Leicestershire, 1,500 acres of land was enclosed in the year 1801, and the rector of the parish got one seventh, whilst the Lord of the Manor, the Duke of Rutland, got six-sevenths. "The poor of the parish," remarks Mr. Peace, "got what was left." And even where there was an allotment of land to the poor, it was usually taken by the Church, to keep it in repair!

From Mr. Peace's chapter on the Church as landholder, entitled, "Treasure on Earth," the following facts may be culled: the latest figures (1931) show the Church to have a revenue of £7,427,813, all derived from the land, via the various methods of ground rents, tithes and coal royalties.

And this immense burden has to be borne by the industry of this country—not merely the agricultural industry—for ground rents and the like make a burden on all industries. Can it be wondered, then, that the Church is in the vanguard of every reactionary movement?

All readers will not be in complete agreement with Mr. Peace's solution of what has become known as "the land question," but all will agree that Mr. Peace deserves the thanks of every Freethinker for exposing this old conspiracy between Church and "gentry," which is still responsible for much of the misery of our time. And let us not forget that the two useless "remedies" of charity and prayer are all that the Church has to offer in these cases. Secularists would do well to read the book.

JOHN ROWLAND.

Acid Drops.

Sir Evelyn Wrench in a recent issue of *Everyman*, has an article entitled, "The European Danger and the Way Out." It is worthy of record and bears the hallmark of commonsense. After surveying the state of Europe, which he visited at various times, and after very delicately pointing out that War is a wash-out, he concludes his article with the following words: "My final task would be an attempt to establish closer contact between the ordinary people themselves." Without bitterness or rancour one can say that it is only the stupidity of individuals posing as statesmen that stands in the way of the complete annihilation of a folly unthinkable even among apes.

In a paper entitled *The Melody Maker*, there is an article by the Rev. E. Ebrard Rees. He states that the negro spiritual is a very important part of the negro preacher's equipment. The following is worth quoting to indicate that the only place for the successful attack by religion is through the emotions: "These preachers get their sermon going, and soon they have worked themselves and their congregations into an ecstasy of emo-

tion. When that point is reached, they *sing* their text, or a sentence, or a paragraph, and their 'song' bears away the congregation on an emotional wave."

Christian sects have no love for each other. Dr. Hensley Henson, for example, has been studying "Buchmanite" literature, and he has come to the conclusion that "Dr. Buchman's Movement is dangerously unsound." He also says of "Mr. Russell's notorious volume," *For Sinners Only*, "Perhaps no more convincing evidence of the relatively low mentality of the so-called religious public would be found than the fact that this book should have commanded so eager a welcome." Dr. Henson read two other "Group" books as well, "with melancholy wonder . . . such megalomaniacal self-confidence, such lack of proportion and charity are without parallel in religious literature except in the writings of obscure sects." Dr. Henson also attacks the "deep sharing" and "confessions," and altogether is opposed to the "movement." He has our sympathy, but almost all the attacks in Buchmanism can be found in the other Christian sects—not even excepting his own. Indeed, to the outsider, "true" or "genuine" or "real orthodox" Christianity is just as stupid as Torreyism, Moodyism, Boothism, Wesleyanism and Church of Englandism. They are all in the same boat and use the same skulls.

What does "Mother of God" really mean? Here is the pious answer to a puzzled believer: "A mother is the mother of a *person*. There is only One Person in Christ Our Lord, namely the Person of God the Son. Therefore Mary is the Mother of God the Son, *i.e.*, the Mother of God." We hope the puzzled believer is now satisfied that God had a Mother.

The organ of the Vatican, the *Osservatore*, calls attention to a fact that we had altogether failed to notice, that the year finished without any word from the Pope:—

In the piteous and criminal conditions in which the world finds itself the terrible silence of the Pope is the only appropriate gesture.

The "terrible silence" of the Pope is more likely due to the simple fact that he doesn't know what to say. We admit the difficulty in finding the *mot juste*, even if one is the Agent of Omniscience, when the conflicting nationalistic sentiments of every country have to be played up to with the impossible objective of Holy Church still retaining the affections of all. We must not put even on Omniscience more than it can bear.

A minister declares that, "Men of all sects realize the need of some sort of religion—and most of all the serious men who have lost their faith." Of course, we are willing to admit that there are men with half-liberated minds who may sigh for the crutches they have dropped. But men with fully-liberated minds have learnt how to walk without crutches.

From the *International News* we learn that a prehistoric peccary has been discovered in a cave in Cumberland, U.S.A., and "the Smithsonian Institution is now in possession of data indicating that their country was inhabited by living beings as long as three million years ago." Archbishop Usher, who pinned his faith to 5,938 years, will be surprised at some of the news when he has answered the last trump and sits down for a comfortable chat in the New Jerusalem.

An amusing column in the *Methodist Times and Leader* tells of many species of fools in the pulpit. The text of the article is a pardonable misprint intended to quote from *Tools for Preachers*. The witty printer gave the title more aptly as "Fools for Preachers." The *Methodist Times* admits the truth of the tradition that the fool of the family was generally destined for the Church. It goes farther and adds: "If the truth be fully told, no man can be a good preacher who is not some sort of a fool." We could hardly improve on this dictum. The *Methodist Times* is an authority on preachers and fools.

A clergyman has been bound over for using insulting language, and evidence was given that he had posted a placard with the words, "The Last Day," on the window of the house of his brother-in-law. One will look in vain for the uplifting effect, even in a social sense, of Christianity.

Mr. Hilaire Belloc is about to attempt an ambitious scheme. It is to attack a terrible "evil." "This evil," he says, "is the attack conducted against the Catholic Church, and the attempted undermining of that Faith in those who are so fortunate as to possess it, by historical suggestion." The historical attack against Roman Catholicism will certainly not suffer if the coming onslaught on it is anything like the methods used by Mr. Belloc in the past against the "enemy." But we are certainly curious as to how he will deal with the rack, the thumbscrew and the stake of the Inquisition; with the ghastly dungeons wherein men were imprisoned for "heresy" or for any other excuse invented by Catholics, for the whole or greater part of their lives under the foulest conditions; with the wholesale rape and massacre of "religious" wars; with the burning of witches—that is, the torture and horrible death of men, women and children for an impossible "crime"; with the lying, the deceit, the dirty lives of many Popes, Cardinals, priests and nuns, and the hopeless credulity and ignorance of the mass of Roman Catholics. We say we are curious how he will deal with these things, but we are afraid our curiosity will remain unsatisfied. We know Mr. Belloc.

From an American exchange:—

Columbus wrung gold, silver and emeralds from the HOPELESS natives.

We present this to *The Licensed Victuallers' Gazette*.

The *Paris Temps* of January 5 reports that the Pope has lost about 1,100,000 liras on the American stock exchange owing to the fall in prices. To meet the financial situation the Vatican City Council has dismissed 600 employees, cut the salaries of the rest, and imposed new taxes. One would have thought that with the legions of angels waiting to serve the interests of Holy Church, the Pope would have got some real, sound tips about stocks. But these spiritual guides never amount to "shucks," where hard common sense is required. Still, we have no doubt that the Lord will see the Pope through somehow or other.

Visitors to the Exhibition of British Art at the Royal Academy will be, we hope, thoroughly thrilled. There is actually on view a Relic of the True Cross. We often wondered where these Relics could be found as—in spite of the fact there are no fewer than 183,456 bits of the True Cross scattered all over the world—so far, we have not been lucky enough to come across even a single one. Whether the Contemplation and Adoration of the Holy Relic will result in the wholesale conversion of visitors cannot as yet be known, but if anything ought to accomplish this, it ought to be surely such a Venerable memento of Calvary. We ought to add, of course, that the proof of its genuineness rests on precisely the same proof as on the other 183,455 portions of the True Cross. Just pure unadulterated Faith, that's all.

The Holy Church in Ireland is having another of its life-and-death struggles against the enemy. A strong movement in South Leitrim against jazz dancing has arisen, and 3,000 men and women in procession, with five bands and banners with "Down with Jazz" emblazoned on them, marched to the Town Hall. The speakers included notable priests, and a letter from Cardinal MacRory was read out. This gallant defender of the historic Faith wished the movement every success, and added, "I know nothing about jazz dances except that I understand they are suggestive and demoralizing . . . a fruitful source of scandal and ruin, spiritual and

temporal." But how did these demoralizing dances catch on in a country so thoroughly priest-ridden as Ireland? Is it due to the fact that the people preferred jazz to Jesus? That—hush!—the Church is not *quite* as powerful in Ireland as it makes out to be? Perhaps it is actually being found out!

We wish the B.B.C. would take a lesson from the French Government, which took over the Radio-Paris on January 1. The dreary sermons which were one of the unpleasant features from this station were immediately stopped, and the priest who delivered them has now to use Radio-Luxembourg, which is a privately-owned station. What a relief it would be to millions of listeners here in England if all the religious services, sermons and talks were also broadcasted only from some privately-owned Radio! Why the British public has no say whatever in the matter is a complete mystery.

The Rev. Archibald Harrison asks, "why the young people drift from the Church?" Of course he asks the question only to answer it himself in his own way. He thinks that "nothing could be farther from the truth than that education and evangelism are opposed to each other." Anybody who believes this must mean that they do not wish children to have any education which opposes evangelism. Dr. Harrison rejoices that "of recent years there has been a marked improvement in the religious teaching given in the elementary schools." His use of the word "improvement" is significant. He means there is *more* religion taught. But is it not a queer dilemma for the religious world to face if this "improvement" in the shape of increased religious teaching is accompanied by (if not the cause of) a "drift" of young people from the church? It seems to confirm our frequently repeated observation that the more our educated young people have religion thrust upon them, the less they like it.

For the benefit of the many theological students who read the *Freethinker*, we cull the following paragraphs from *Punch* :—

The Rev. F. H. — has decided to discard his clerical collar after having worn it for sixteen years.

Daily Paper.

It must have been a very good one in the beginning.

"I now simply have to work, and I enjoy every minute of it," he said, "but I want you to let me off with four sermons a week instead of five, for it is Lord Horder's order."—*Daily Paper.*

And he might have added, "Horders is horders."

OUR CYNICAL ADVERTISERS.

Whom God Hath Joined, trifle loose, 2s. 6d.

Bookseller's Catalogue.

The Chairman—The Government cannot be soldiering under two flags. If they writ me, by heavens, I will say $\frac{1}{2}$ cmfwy vbkg zxfiflxz. By heavens—. I will say no more.—*Irish Paper.*

By heavens you have said too much.

LE NOM JUSTE.

The Rev. T. Caddy, of the Maidenhead Methodist Church, spoke at a temperance demonstration at Maidenhead.—*Daily Paper.*

Canon W. E. S. Holland, at the alliterative "London Laymen's Lunch," spoke of Indian fanaticism, and seemed surprised that a recent murderer had in his possession "a revolver, many cartridges, and a New Testament." We must remind the Canon that many of the worshippers of Jehovah lived before the revolver was invented, and so had to content themselves with cruder weapons.

What a pity that "God's Word" was not an English "word." It would have saved us from dependence on a bunch of foreigners. Here comes a native Assyrian (now a naturalized American) Mr. George M. Lamsa of Philadelphia, who knows Aramaic, which is more or less spoken still in Mesopotamia (which indeed is another

blessed word). Lamsa puts us all in the wrong. He gives us the genuine word of God straight from "the very language used by our Lord." The learned Lamsa laughs alike at the Authorized and the Revised and every other version of the "Word" of the Aramaic author.

Happy indeed are the samples given in the newspapers of this new translation. "It is easier for a ROPE (not a camel) to go through the eye of a needle." But as neither a rope nor a camel can do the trick there seems little gain there! "Talent" (in the famous parable) "should be province or city." This leaves us guessing how a province or even a city could be wrapped in a napkin. Mark i. 34 is now translated: "He did not allow the insane to speak because some of them were acquaintances." This seems to rival the Vicar of Mirth on the Music Halls who says: "I know you too well to call you Ladies and Gentlemen." Best of all is the improved version of the Gadarene Swine story. It now appears that "it was the lunatics, not the expelled devils who attacked the swine: the Aramaic word 'al' meaning 'attack,' as well as 'enter.'" "God speaks to man on every page of His Holy Word," said Spurgeon. Yes, but what does the "Word" mean?

We are asked a few questions :—

James Douglas asks: Are smutty smokeroom chestnuts manna for our muses?

"Strike the Lyre," is the muse's reply.

Canon F. R. Barry asks: Can the Christian ethic meet the world's need?

The Christian ethic only concerns itself with the world's need for the other world.

The *Daily Express* asks: Have you ever considered your *Daily Express* something more than the most worthwhile newspaper in the world?

Never!

Fifty Years Ago.

DEMANDS OF THE AMERICAN LIBERALS.

MONROE'S *Ironclad Age* gives the following *resumé* of the constitutional demands of the American Liberals :—

1. We demand that the churches and other ecclesiastical property shall no longer be exempt from just taxation.

2. We demand that the employment of chaplains in congress, in State legislatures, in the navy and militia, and in prisons, asylums, and all other institutions supported by public money, shall be discontinued.

3. We demand that all public appropriations for educational and charitable institutions of a sectarian character shall cease.

4. We demand that all religious services now sustained by the Government shall be abolished; and especially that the use of the Bible in the public schools, whether ostensibly as a text book or avowedly as a book of religious worship, shall be prohibited.

5. We demand that the appointment by the President of the United States, or by the Governors of the various States of all religious festivals and fasts shall wholly cease.

6. We demand that the judicial oath in the courts and in all other departments of the Government shall be abolished, and that simple affirmation, under the pains and penalties of perjury, shall be established in its stead.

7. We demand that all laws directly or indirectly enforcing the observance of Sunday as the Sabbath shall be repealed.

8. We demand that all laws looking to the enforcement of "Christian" morality shall be abrogated, and that all laws shall be conformed to the requirements of natural morality, equal rights and impartial liberty; and that no privilege or advantage shall be conceded to Christianity or any other special religion.

The "Freethinker," January 27, 1884.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL F

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W.H.F.P.—So far as we know neither is of any commercial value. The Bentham may be worth two or three shillings.

A. KIRKHAM.—We are sorry your article on "Nature" appeared under the signature of A. Kirkman. Please accept our apologies.

BRADLAUGH CENTENARY FUND.—Amount previously acknowledged £1,062 1s. 3d.; R. S. Aiyer (India), 5s.; F. L. Norman, £1; P. G. Bamford, £1; W. Reeves, 5s. Total £1,064 11s. 3d.

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.

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.

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

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."

Sugar Plums.

This will be the last opportunity for reminding those who have not yet procured tickets for the Annual Dinner to do so without delay. The dinner takes place on Saturday, February 3, in the Holborn Restaurant, which is at the corner of Kingsway, Holborn end. There will be a large gathering, and everything points to a really enjoyable evening. Vegetarians when ordering tickets must mention they require the vegetarian menu. All enquiries to the General Secretary, 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

One month after the dinner, that is, on March 3, the Executive of the N.S.S. has arranged for a Social to be held in the Caxton Hall, Westminster. There will be plenty of dancing, some musical items, and a "few words" from the President. Tickets, including refreshments, will be 2s. 6d. each, and may be had from Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, or the N.S.S. 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. The General Secretary will have tickets on sale at the Annual Dinner for any who may desire them.

It may help provincial members and friends in their arrangements for attending the Annual Dinner of the N.S.S. on February 3, to know that the following excursions to London will be run on that day:—

Liverpool (Lime Street) 11.30 a.m. Return fare 10s. 6d. Return time 12.30 a.m.

Birmingham (New Street) about 8.10 a.m. Return Euston about 12.30 a.m. Return fare 12s.

Leicester, 11.40 a.m. Return St. Pancras 12.0 midnight. Return fare 5s. 6d.

Coventry, about 8.40 a.m. Return about 12.30 a.m. Return fare 10s. 6d.

Bradford (Exchange) 7.25 a.m. Return Kings Cross 11.50 p.m. Return fare 16s.

Bradford (Exchange) 11.10 a.m. Return Kings Cross 11.50 p.m. Return fare 10s. 6d.

Leeds (Central) 7.50 a.m. Return Kings Cross 11.50 p.m. Return fare 15s. 6d.

Sheffield (Victoria) 7.30 a.m. Return Marylebone 11.0 p.m. Return fare 14s.

Nottingham (Victoria) 8.21 a.m. Return Marylebone, 11.0 p.m. Return fare 12s. 6d.

Manchester (London Road) Friday February 2, 12.0 midnight. Return Euston 12.40 a.m., Sunday, February 4. Fare 15s. 6d.

Derby, 7.25 a.m. February 3. Return St. Pancras 11.50 p.m. Fare 12s. 6d.

Visitors requiring hotel accommodation in London should communicate their requirements to the General Secretary at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Mr. Cohen had a crowded meeting on Sunday last, and his lecture was, if close attention, laughter and hearty applause are to be trusted, thoroughly enjoyed by those present. There was also an unusually good sale of the *Freethinker*, all copies being sold at an early stage of the proceedings. Mr. More, the President of the Branch, occupied the chair.

The Glasgow Branch has been holding uniformly good meetings this season, and there is no reason for assuming that the success will not continue. There is a good working committee, and an energetic Secretary. There is plenty of good material in Glasgow and district, and we see no obstacle to the Branch being five times its present size and at least three times as active.

On Sunday next (February 4) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. There will be, we expect, the usual good audience.

A new Society, The Secular Society of Ireland, has been established in Dublin. On its membership form it states that the Society has been formed

Convinced that clerical domination in the community is harmful to advance, the Secular Society of Ireland seeks to establish in this country complete freedom of thought, speech and publication, liberty for the mind, in the widest toleration compatible with orderly progress and rational conduct. With that end in view, the Society takes for its aims the following programme:—

- To oppose unremittingly, with a view to terminating: (1) The system of clerical management, and consequent sectarian teaching, in schools; (2) the immunity from payment of rates and taxes enjoyed by the various churches; (3) the clerically-dictated ban on divorce; (4) the Censorship of Publications Act; and (5) all other impediments by way of religious tests or regulations dictated in the interests of those who make a profession of religion.

It also declares that:—

Freedom cannot exist until the sectarian clergy of the various denominations have been curbed of their power of interference, and the people stand free of the worst of all despotisms—hierarchy.

At present the public is only admitted "by invitation." It held a meeting on January 17, reported in the Press, at Lincoln Chambers, Lincoln Place, and claims to have among its members professional men, commercial men and others interested in art, letters, and the theatre. The *Freethinker* is distributed free at all meetings. We wish the venture every success. There is need for such a society in many parts of Ireland, and we shall watch its career with interest.

The East Lancashire Rationalist Association have a return visit from Mr. F. C. Saphin, who will speak in the Phoenix Theatre, Market Street, Burnley, to-day (January 28) at 2.45 p.m. and 7.0 p.m. Further details will be found in the Lecture Notices column. A return visit is complimentary to the speaker, and the local saints will see that it is successful as far as attendance is

concerned. We are pleased to note that a number of Burnley saints will be at the Annual Dinner in London on February 3.

We have received a copy of a new quarterly magazine (*Vanguard*) published at the price of twopence. The magazine is issued from the International Publishing Co., 2 Malden Crescent, Chalk Farm, and will be sent post free for tenpence per year. The magazine is nicely got up, and the first number consists of an article by Ralph Sykes, on "War Resistance," and a very useful and informative article by Allan Flanders on "Catholicism on Fascism." The Holy Roman Church needs watching with regard to Fascism as it does with other social movements with which it becomes associated.

In the *Northampton Chronicle and Echo*, a correspondent suggests that the Bradlaugh statue should be taken away from Abingdon Square and "placed out of public sight for a time." The editorial comment is "What will Northampton Liberals say about this?" We do not think this correspondent's opinion to be of any importance, but if the statue is removed from Abingdon Square, and Liberalism has not had the "guts" to prevent it, we shall consider it demonstrated that Liberalism is really dead in Northampton.

A New Crime.

Of the making of new crimes there is no end. When "Dora" came down like a wolf on the fold she made so many new crimes that nervous people were continually kept in a state of apprehension when they entered a sweetshop, or a public house. They have been obliged to keep their watches and timepieces rigorously at exact time in case they may fall into the error of buying a cabbage five minutes beyond the permitted hour. Some portentous police officers—especially in rural areas where their duties are not too burdensome or exacting—who are not possessed of a sense of humour, but of an impressive sense of their own personal importance—find enormous satisfaction in vigilantly pouncing on any one who purchases a packet of cigarettes after 8 p.m.

A Cumberland friend has called the attention of the present writer to the report (which appears in the *Carlisle Journal* of November 10) of a case before the Wigton Magistrates, in which Joseph McGuffie, a motor driver, was summoned for failure to wear in a conspicuous position, whilst driving a public service vehicle, the badge issued to him by the Traffic Commissioners. It is perhaps most convenient to quote from the newspaper report:—

Police-Constable Armstrong gave evidence that on Tuesday, October 10, he had occasion to stop the defendant in High Street when driving a motor-bus, and noticed that he was not wearing a badge. When asked if he had one defendant produced it and then put it back in his pocket. When told that he must wear the badge, defendant became very abusive and insolent and remarked: "trying to be smart!" Defendant when asked for his driver's licence drove off and shouted, "I'll see you later." Ten minutes afterwards he again stopped defendant in High Street, and asked for his driver's licence and insurance card. Defendant said, "You always pick out me"; and when told he would be reported said, "Do what you like. I don't care!" Witness added that he had only spoken to the defendant once before—about four and a half years ago.

Defendant told the Bench that this Constable would hardly let him stop and drop a passenger in the town, and was "at him" every Tuesday.

Supt. Thwaite: The Constable says he has only spoken to you on one previous occasion.

Defendant: That's not true, Sir.

The Bench fined defendant £1 and 9d. costs for

not wearing his badge, and £2 with 9d. costs for being abusive to the police-constable.

The Chairman (Mr. Parkin-Moore) said: "This is a thing the magistrates are determined to put down. The police are there on behalf of the public and to protect the public, and the Bench are determined to back them up in their duty."

The "thing" the magistrates were determined to put down consisted of what? Insolence to the Police? What is insolence? The late Lord Birkenhead, when a Barrister, used to be "insolent," we are told, to Judges on the Bench. Members of Parliament are often "insolent" to Cabinet Ministers. It is not explicitly stated what plea the defendant returned to the charges in the case above quoted. But from the tenour of the report one infers that he denied the charges and pleaded not guilty. In that event it was the duty of the magistrates to give the Defendant an opportunity of being represented by a solicitor, and of leading evidence on his own behalf. In any view, according to the newspaper, the case was decided on the evidence of *one witness* for the prosecution, who was not subjected to cross-examination.

But, aside from this, and accepting the Constable's evidence as substantially correct the "insolence" complained of consisted of these expressions, "Trying to be smart!" "I'll see you later"; "You always pick out me"; "Do what you like. I don't care!" No wonder these Courts are spoken of as "Petty Sessions." They are often very petty indeed. And they are out with a high hand to back up petty constables with an obvious lack of humour or common-sense.

Anyway, the driver had not required any attention from the police confessedly for a period of four and a half years. But along came the Traffic Commissioners with their Doraesque badge and queered the pitch! It brought discord and bad feeling into the hitherto peaceful atmosphere of Wigton, and Driver McGuffie had to be made an example of to let other drivers see how they are to be treated for contumacy. £1 fine if the badge is not worn. £2 fine if "insolence" is offered to a police-constable.

It is high time that the functions of lay magistrates were more circumscribed. In the rural police courts the Clerk is really the deciding authority in many instances, unless the Chairman of the Bench happens to be a trained lawyer. How are poorly-educated defendants to be guaranteed a fair trial when they intend to plead not guilty, unless they have legal advice?

The writer does not commend the indiscriminate use of insolence, vituperation or abuse. But what reasonable mind can say that the language attributed to McGuffie amounted to any one of these things? And there is no evidence of how the Constable accosted the defendant. Everybody knows that self-important local policemen can often be extremely provocative, and, human nature being what it is, they must at times expect Rolands for their Olivers. Even highly-educated men lose their tempers upon occasions when they have been tried and unduly strained by the blatant stupidities of contentious opponents. Even unoffending persons have been subjected to browbeating and abuse from swollen-headed lay magistrates. Mr. Nupkins is not dead. Our Courts of Law should always be distinguished for an atmosphere of courtesy, placidity and strict impartiality.

A concluding comment on the case of Driver McGuffie of Wigton. The Constable deposed that he had not spoken to defendant for four and a half years. Ah, this is suggestive of much! In a small community like Wigton, one may be sure that public servants like the constable and the driver were well

enough known to each other. And yet the former declares he had only spoken to the latter *once*—and that was four and a half years ago. How doth Dora add to the irritability of neighbours who are anti-pathetic towards one another? And the Squires and Squireens along with their local fellow-sports, the clergy, keep the yapping, snapping bitch alive!

IGNORUS.

The Book Shop.

MR. KAREL CAPEK, who was prophetic enough to see and define the coming of the robot, is a most peculiar writer. In all his work he is peculiar in so far that his subject matter never wanders further than the confines of the human heart. He is what I would call a straightener, which distinguishes him from the ruck of ordinary writers, who are so twisted that they would be unable to hide behind a corkscrew. There is no mistake about this writer's purpose, for he is, to quote Gorki, in the "desperate struggle for liberty and culture on the part of those few people who manfully and defencelessly place themselves 'twixt the hammer and the anvil." In the form of a pleasant gift, Mr. Capek's latest book has come to me. It is entitled, *Dashenka—the Life of a Puppy*. It has a gaudy jacket of orange and blue surrounding the reproduction of a photograph of a fox-terrier. The book is written in a whimsical vein, and it is intended for children of all ages. It contains many excellent photographs, laughable sketches and, just as a sample from bulk, here is one of the author's serious thoughts written with a smile. "Some animals assert that man is evil, many men say so too; but don't believe them. If men were evil, and without feeling, you dogs would not have joined them, and even now you would be living wild on the steppes. But since you are friends with them, it is obvious that a thousand years ago they had already stroked you, tickled your ears, and fed you." The price is 5s. net, the publishers are George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., and to buy it is the best form of going to the dogs.

The Editor of this paper puts readers and writers alike in debt by his magnificent and comprehensive sketch of two giants in the history of liberty and free speech. To the writer who has made a contact through essays, speeches and writings with Bradlaugh and Ingersoll, there has always been a feeling that they were both veritable landmarks in history. It is therefore a welcome addition to any library to have this book, which has been very favourably reviewed already. It provides fresh facts, evidence and extracts that make much reading very ordinary in comparison. Some of Mr. Cohen's extracts I find have been underlined in my own copy of Ingersoll's speeches and lectures, and they are too good to suffer by neglect. Freethinkers will now have an authentic and standard book from which they will derive inspiration and power to sustain them in the artificial hubbub made by the press and other self-interested parties and organizations. Newspapers are shouting at the top of their voices, and it is a double pleasure to make acquaintance with fundamentals stated so simply that they cannot be refused acceptance. Bradlaugh with the quarter-staff and Ingersoll with the finesse of a skilled fencer are both figures to be remembered with gratitude; it is an ironical comment on two heroes like these that the Almighty required two such leaders to speak up for those who are supposed to be his very own children.

C-DE-B.

There is a "feeling for" sheer truth as there is a "feeling for" faith, or a mystical outlook on the cosmos, and this nominally negative conviction is just as positive as that of any fanaticism of faith.

J. M. Robertson.

Catholic Horticulture Up to Date.

"The Catholic Teachers' Federation held its Twenty-first Conference at Preston yesterday, . . .

"The Bishop of Lancaster said they should encourage greater self-reliance among school children. Sometimes he thought our schools savoured too much of the hothouse and not sufficient of the cold chamber before the class was turned out to face the rigours of the weather."

From a Manchester Daily Paper.

WITH appropriate diffidence, Sir, may I beg
To enquire if the Bishop is pulling our leg?
Or was it a casual slip of the tongue
That he made in his recent advice to the young.

Their fault is apparently not in defiance,
But quite the reverse—they need more self-reliance!
"Too much of the hothouse"; so when they grow older
They'll not be prepared when the weather gets colder.

What hothouse? A pot-house? Or what house? I
wonder.

Perhaps it's the hothouse that's waiting down under.
Just what does he mean? We are bursting to know
Into which of his cheeks he has let his tongue go.

But surely the Bishop can never be serious,
Giving advice that is so deleterious!
Leaning-post makers are robbing their own
By encouraging people to balance alone.

So may we just venture a word in conclusion?
(Assuming the Bishop permits the intrusion):
The Catholic hothouse is frankly essential,
And founded on principles truly prudential.

To "monkey about" with it surely is asking
For trouble; it's simply the Devil unmasking.
Our humour refuses to see any merriment.
Round such a madcap, foolhardy experiment.

If we go letting the temperature dwindle
The fact might emerge that the place is a swindle.
The *children* might learn to enjoy a cold breath;
But think of the *Bishop*! Why, he'd freeze to death!

Yet *really*, of course, for these tender exotics
The Bishop had planned less audacious thermotics;
His purpose, we guess, was a *partial* exposure,
But still with the roots in the hothouse enclosure.

TWINKLE.

Ancient Wisdom.

OF the many religions of our day Theosophy is one of the more interesting, because it is professedly based on knowledge—on an alleged "stream of wisdom," which has been flowing through the ages. There is in it even a suggestion of science, owing to the inclusion of a sort of "chemistry."

The latter is associated with the notion that there are seven kinds of matter, physical, astral and the rest; and each is said to be constituted of its own peculiar kind of atom. Some years ago I had the opportunity of looking through Leadbeater and (Mrs. Annie) Besant's work on *Occult Chemistry*, and of seeing the models of atoms made by the owner of the book in accordance with the descriptions and illustrations given. Each model was a whole connected structure of metal, chiefly wire, bent into spiral and other forms, and could be picked up and examined. At that time it was not possible to adduce definite observational and experimental proof that the constructions were wholly imaginary. But the discovery that atoms are made up of disconnected protons and electrons has finally disposed of the whole fantasy.

Some other theosophical doctrines are not susceptible of the same kind of disproof, as, for example, the following, which is culled from a work of Mrs. Besant's:—

In this (the *All*) arises a Voice, which is a *Word*, a *Logos*, God making himself manifest. That word separates out from the *All* such ideas as he selects for his future universe, and arranges then within himself according to his Will. He limits himself by his Thought, thus creating the Ring-Pass-Not of the Universe-to-be . . . Within this Ring are the Ideas ever begotten eternally of the ceaseless Motion, which is the one Life within the Stillness which is its opposite and supports all . . .

Yet we now know enough of positive reality, of scientific-historical fact, to render us quite certain that the matter quoted is just as vacuous as the account of the atoms.

Anthroposophy—a break-away led by Rudolph Steiner—is in name (Man-Wisdom) an improvement on Theosophy (God-Wisdom), but seems to be pursued on essentially similar lines; and its adherents produce farragos of nonsense rivalling those of Mrs. Besant. A few years ago I went out of curiosity to a lecture on "Anthroposophical Science," when many physico-chemical experiments were described and the results shown on a screen. Though not specially insisting on the view (perhaps because he thought it unnecessary), the lecturer seemed to take it for granted that the effects were produced by occult means, and not by normal reactions like those of a science laboratory. My knowledge of the two sciences is not sufficiently detailed to enable me to judge of the experiments in themselves; but we may confidently conclude that any results that were really obtained were due to the operation of wholly natural forces.

As regards the general notion of ancient wisdom, anthropology and history clearly show that the bias in favour of old ideas, beliefs and customs arose very early in human society. That the attitude was established in the Stone Age is indicated by the fact that existing uncivilized peoples (whose mental condition doubtless broadly corresponds to that of the people living in the near East and in Europe, say, 50,000 to 6,000 years ago) believe that departure from the ways of their ancestors will be followed by dire results, extending even to the destruction of the tribe.

Such intense conservatism is especially characteristic of religion and other occultry, owing chiefly no doubt to the fear of invisible but ubiquitous and powerful agencies which may reduce the people to misery or death in this world or consign them to eternal torture in the next. But it is interesting to note in passing that tradition also governs some simple activities which do not appear to be occult—which have, so far as we can see, no magic, god, devil or "medicine" in them. Tylor has told us of the Dyaks (famous as head hunters) that, observing civilized man's method of felling a tree by making a V-shape cut, they recognized its superiority, but were fined for practising it; though, it was added, if they could do this without danger of detection they did so.

Such irrational slavishness to the past was possibly useful as "social discipline," when individual, reflective thought was very scanty. We note the continuance of the feature throughout the earlier oriental civilizations, the people suffering, as Breasted remarks, "from a kind of bondage to religion and to old ideas." This obviously retarded progress, for, adds Breasted, "as the Orientals accepted the rule of *kings* without question, so they accepted the rule of the *gods*. They thought that every storm was due to the interference of some god, and that every eclipse must be the angry act of some god or demon. Hence the Orientals made little inquiry into the *natural* causes of things. . . ." (*Ancient History*).

However, as is well known, the Greeks to some extent broke through the "cake of custom," and initiated rational, systematic investigation. But neither Greeks nor Romans, as a whole, became sufficiently emancipated to ensure the continuation of normal development; and the revival of a variety of ancient superstitions was followed by the establishment of Christianity, which in general brought about reversion to early ancient conditions, with the partial or total loss of the later and more advanced features of classical civilization.

Then followed the long medieval period, with extension into modern times, during which western peoples received an intense training (if so it may be called) in

childish credulity and superstition, in servility and ignorance. Therefore in spite of much advance in knowledge and thought we still have with us not only devotees of the more ordinary religions, but a section of the population who are readily responsive to outbreaks of new religious and freak revivals. Added to this there are, of course, many remnants of other superstitions which move some people to have their fortunes told by palmistry and their horoscopes cast, to avoid number 13 and to put mascots on their motor cars, to place wreaths on the statue (or is it the tomb?) of "Charles the Martyr," and so on.

However, although there is still widespread subservience to tradition, a better attitude is slowly emerging. This, as expounded by that eminent and philosophical American historian, Prof. J. B. Robinson, is expressed as follows: Any idea, belief or practice that is old, and has been widely received must be regarded with suspicion, and duly examined and verified before it is accepted. The reason for this position is clear. The further we go back in the human period the less knowledge and definite thought were at man's disposal; and therefore early ideas were on the whole more likely to be erroneous. Occultry—magic, totemism, fetichism, animal worship, the god-king, human sacrifice, etc.—disappears comparatively early; though later, and therefore on the whole less crude, but equally erroneous elements may persist for an indefinite subsequent period. But we need not doubt that, in spite of organized churches and of attempts to "rationalize" some of the remnants of supernaturalism, complete demise will follow.

J. REEVES.

Correspondence.

IS THERE A PRIMAL SUBSTANCE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I thank Mr. Cohen for his rejoinder, and in reply to his five points:—

(1) I am taking Bradlaugh to mean what he says, especially as he emphasizes by frequent repetition, as I showed. I read no confusion into his two denotations for existence, which are mutually consistent.

Mr. Cohen again makes Bradlaugh's substance the sum of phenomena, and as I have already quoted Bradlaugh's spirited repudiation of this, one feels constrained, at this stage, to ask for chapter and verse.

(2) Mr. Cohen again makes Bradlaugh's substance "conceivable without involving the conception of other things," and as I have already quoted from Bradlaugh, showing this not to be so, one feels constrained, at this stage, to ask for chapter and verse.

Criticism which follows from false premises cannot be treated as relevant. If Mr. Cohen thinks the added phrases in italics are of no moment, why did Bradlaugh use them, and insist on them? What is their significance?

(3) I have little to say about Spinoza, because I do not want unnecessarily to widen the basis of discussion. Mr. Cohen says Spinoza's substance is "quite separable from phenomena." I will not flatly contradict this, because in a fairly extensive writer it is quite possible to miss something. But if Mr. Cohen will substantiate his assertion by quotation from the famous Pantheist, I will undertake to bring forward another quotation from him showing the opposite. And in any case I quoted Bradlaugh as saying that he did not separate substance from phenomena.

(4) and (5) Here we come to the crux of the matter. Mr. Cohen says "science is not on the track of primary substance." For brevity's sake I will use only three authorities on this:—

(late) Prof. J. A. Thomson: Science "looks for one primordial substance from which all the varying forms have been evolved or built up." (*Outline of Science*, chapter on Matter).

Prof. J. S. Huxley treats of "one foundational substance." (*Essays of a Biologist*.)

Prof. J. Jeans: The conservation laws "reduce to one

simple fundamental entity which may take many forms."
(*Mysterious Universe.*)

The retort that we must not confuse science with scientists will not do in this case, since these scientists are speaking in their scientific capacity.

The *raison d'être* seems clear enough. Science analyses the complex in terms of the simpler. This involves degrees of simplicity; a thought being more complex than a molecule, which depends on a simpler existent, the atom, which is conditioned by electrons. Does this involve the idea of an ultimate simple which cannot be analysed further? Mr. Cohen's position is that it does *not*. Mine is that it does. For consider. If it doesn't, then nothing is incapable of analysis; every existent can be analysed. With what terms, then, shall we analyse the simplest existent, bearing in mind that *ex hypothesi* there is nothing simpler, and that we have noted degrees of simplicity.

If Mr. Cohen does not acknowledge an ultimate simple, then from what datum do phenomena arise? What are they composed of? What persists and takes on a succession of forms? The non-committal title is substance; science may be left to find a name; metaphysics will supply the adjectives. I put it to Mr. Cohen that he has misunderstood Bradlaugh in taking his substance as transcendent, whereas it is foundational.

Mr. Cohen says he cannot admit the distinction between what electricity is and what it does. I made no such distinction, my point being that we *cannot* make that distinction.

Science has gone much further since the time of Bradlaugh, who might have regarded qualities like those of heat and colour as dependent on the human organism for their existence. They are now regarded as externally existent, independent of immediate human awareness.

G. H. TAYLOR.

[I do not intend dealing further, at the moment, with the fallacy involved in Bradlaugh's use of "substance" and "phenomena." It is evident that to make the situation quite plain one must give a sketch of the genealogy of these terms. I will do that in the articles I have promised, and which I hope to commence in two or three weeks.

But with regard to Mr. Taylor's request for information as to where Spinoza separates Substance from Phenomena. This is to be found in Proposition 1, axiom 5, and Proposition 3. Spinoza also says that "Modes make up the sum total of existence," and also that "substance is by nature prior to its modes." These statements may have misled Mr. Taylor, but Spinoza's position is best brought out in some of his letters. The problem which Spinoza leaves unanswered is in what way his modes are derived from substance, seeing that there is no known qualitative relation between the two. This, as I said, is a question that has puzzled all his commentators.

I am interested in Mr. Taylor repeating that *science* is looking for a primordial substance. His citations merely prove that some *scientists* believe themselves to be engaged in this search, and the mere *opinion* of scientists weighs with me no more than does the opinion from such quarters that "science is revealing God." The bad scientific thinking of men engaged in scientific work would make a very large volume, and neither Jeans, nor J. S. Huxley, nor J. A. Thomson, impress me with their capacity for genuine scientific thinking.

But I will try what can be done by reducing the statement to a *reductio ad absurdum*.

If some scientific men believe that they are on the track of what they can reasonably call a primordial substance, they must mean they are looking for something that cannot be analysed into further differences of parts. But this means that we have reached some *thing* that, while it is the cause of all that follows, is itself uncaused. That is, we have reached an ultimate first cause, which I have always regarded as ultimate nonsense.

But a primordial cause, one that is incapable of further analysis, would be something that is all-alike. I do not quite know how to picture this, but assuming its existence, how does it come to change its condition of absolute oneness to a state of two-ness, and three-ness, in other words, to a world of phenomena?

It seems to me that on this line we got back to the main point of philosophic theism, namely, that it needed something outside this primordial one-ness in order to set up a causal process, and that this constituted the primordial act of creation by God.

Further, the scientific conception of "cause" implies at least two factors in operation, which in combination gives rise to what is called an effect; and, therefore, the cause exists only in relation to an effect. But how, in the name of all that is sensible can we get a "cause" out of one factor?

It looks to me as though Mr. Taylor's authorities, when they talk about a primordial substance, are talking primordial nonsense. But perhaps they meant only that they were constantly engaged in resolving every phenomenon into its constituent parts. Or, in their innocence, and under the influence of their residual theism, they may have meant that they hoped one day to come into contact with something that not merely defied their analysis, but that it was, in itself, incapable of further analysis.

Which reminds me of the man who finding that his fowl suffered by no apparent harm from having a grain of corn less on one day, hit on the brilliant idea that by taking off one grain a day from its allowance he might get it to do without food altogether. He persevered in his plan, but just as the fowl was getting used to the diet it died. But the theory remains.

It is interesting to hear that colour and heat exist apart from the awareness of them. This is fascinating, because if I see a green apple in front of me, while another man (colour blind) sees the same object as a red apple, it means that an apple may be objectively red and green at the same time. So that I must not merely revise my opinion that a cause cannot exist apart from an effect, and that the cause of any effect must consist of at least two factors, but must also believe that one thing may be two things at the same time, and perhaps that two things may occupy the same space at once, and so on to conclude that the hypothesis of a god who is a perpetual miracle-worker is the only way out of the difficulty.—C. COHEN.]

SCHOPENHAUER.

SIR,—Mr. Ryder advises Freethinkers to read Schopenhauer. A Buddhist lately advised me to do so. I have not done so yet, but I have read Prof. Caldwell's book of 538 pp., explaining Schopenhauer, or trying to. Page 148: "All causation is simply the will. There is no explanation of will." That is primitive savage animism—my own religion.

Again, p. 386: "You may reduce my personality to the beat of my heart, or to the property that all living matter has of expanding and contracting; but that very power of expansion and contraction again is just willing." However, Schopenhauer added (p. 394): "There is only one will in the world, and I am of its essence." I do not know how he proved that; the evidence seems to me to favour many quintillions of wills, of which mine is one.

He condemned Atheism as "no philosophy in itself" (p. 386), but two pages later praises Buddhism as the most Atheistic and most pessimistic of religions.

CALDWELL HARPUR.

FREE SPEECH.

SIR,—May I refer, for the second time in your columns, to the need for a combination of people based on a wider unity than is derived merely from an anti-religious attitude? In the course of a short article in the *Freethinker* of November 19, 1933, I urged the necessity of bringing together all who stood for the protection of freedom, and against the establishment of despotisms such as at present widely afflict Europe. A very great number of people are agreed as to the menace to freedom now showing itself almost everywhere in the West, but in general they seem to be content merely to voice this sentiment. Perhaps there is a feeling that to *do* something about it would be crossing bridges before we come to them, and to most people this is associated with ideas of panic and calamity-howling, so offensive to the sedate mentality of the average Britisher; but the necessity for action seems to me to over-ride such objections.

Dean Inge, in a recent address, said of modern dictatorships that they are "far more tyrannical, more searching in their inquisitorial terrorism, than the rule of any Tsar, Sultan or Emperor," and he asks, "Are we on the verge of another dark age?" The *Manchester Guardian*, commenting on the Dean's address, said, "His anxiety here is not without foundation." But in the same paper I could not get published, a short time previously, a

short letter urging the need for action on this very head. I can well understand that anyone should disagree about this need for action, but it is difficult to see why it should be plainly acknowledged yet ignored practically.

To me the Freethought Movement offers a lesson to those who doubt the power of active opinion. Our Movement brought together a number of people of one mind as to the desirability of certain values, and their combination has resulted in much more than numerical strength. We feel we can justly attribute to it a wide and effective influence in making its ideals concretely realized. Surely every large combination of earnest people has the same possibilities about it. The great subject of war has a related lesson for us. There is hardly a thinking man in the country who does not look upon war with feelings of repugnance, yet war remains imminently possible simply because those who are deeply opposed to it have not been brought together so as to make the strength of their opinion a force to be reckoned with.

The ardent love of freedom is very widespread, and is consciously realized by a huge number of intelligent people. Only recently I received from a clerical friend a pamphlet he had written, on lines similar to those on which all freedom lovers are at present thinking and speaking; but, as with others, the matter ended with speech. If we all go on talking long enough we may be left to finish our conversation over a coke fire in a concentration camp. Would any who feel an active interest in the idea of forming a league for the avowed purpose of promoting the conscious desire for freedom, kindly communicate with Mr. Ready, the Secretary of the Merseyside Branch of the National Secular Society, 29 Sycamore Road, Waterloo, Lancs.?

MEDICUS.

A "CORRECTION" CORRECTED.

SIR,—In his book *The Rock of Truth*, and in his letter to you last week, Mr. Findlay claims it was Paul who said that Jesus was "hanged on a tree." Here is his text (Acts xiii. 29):—

And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

The word "hanged" is not in this text at all, and I was therefore quite right in saying the statement was a blunder on the part of Mr. Findlay and his religious authority. It was Peter and not Paul who said that Jesus was "hanged on a tree," in Acts v. 30, and x. 39; but I am not surprised that Mr. Findlay should have preferred dealing with such an unimportant point instead of with the far graver issues I raised in my article.

H. CUTNER.

NIETZSCHE AND GERMANY.

SIR,—Many of our readers who are old enough to remember war-time journalism, must be familiar with the attempt to brand Nietzsche as a blood-thirsty advocate of Prussianism. Here are four aphorisms showing another aspect of his thinking:—

(1) But since a certain animal, the worm of Europe, the famous Rhinocera, has become lodged in the vineyards of the German spirit, nobody any longer understands a word I say. (Written after the Franco-Prussian War.)

(2) The political defeat of Greece is the greatest failure of culture, for it has given rise to the atrocious theory that culture cannot be pursued unless one is at the same time armed to the teeth.

(3) The so-called armed peace that prevails at present in all countries is a sign of a bellicose disposition, of a disposition that trusts neither itself nor its neighbour, and partly from hate, partly from fear, refuses to lay down its weapons. Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twice as far better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared—this must some day become the supreme maxim of every political community.

(4) When the Germans began to interest other European nations, which is not so very long ago, it was owing to a culture which they no longer possess to-day, and

which they have indeed shaken off with a blind ardour as if it had some disease; and yet—they have not been able to replace it by anything better than political and national lunacy.

ERIC A. McDONALD.

Obituary.

MR. PETER GORRIE.

WE regret to record the death of Mr. Peter Gorrie, Glasgow. Mr. Gorrie has belonged to the Society for full forty years, and his devotion never flagged. He was of a quiet, unassuming nature, modest in his learning, but uncompromising in his opinions. It is men of his kind that serve as the background of movements such as ours, and more is owing to the support of men of this type, than is generally recognized. He was buried without religious ceremony. The movement in Glasgow has lost a staunch friend.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Platform 1, Messrs. Collins and Bryant. Platform 2, B. A. Le Maine. 6.30, Various speakers. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Collins and Le Maine.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Mrs. Mary Agnes Hamilton—"The Ethics of Broadcasting."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. J. P. Hand—"Free Thinking and Right Thinking."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, January 29, Mr. F. R. Turney will speak on Lord Raglan's "Science of Peace."

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Reggiori's Restaurant, 1 Euston Road, opposite King's Cross Station): 7.30, E. C. Williams v. C. E. Ratchiffe—"Is Secularism Unsound?"

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Baker's Hall, Cloughton Road, Birkenhead): Monday, January 29. Mr. T. Ball—"The Gospel of Atheism."

CHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Peoples' Hall, Delamere Street, Chester): 7.0, Mr. Wm. Ll. Owen (Liverpool)—"On Compromise."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street): 7.0. See Saturday's *Telegraph*.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.45—"The Blessed Virgin Mary." 7.0, "The Ignorance of Jesus." Mr. E. C. Saphin. Chairman: Mr. Francis Metcalfe of Nelson. Tea provided in the Theatre at moderate charges.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. A. B. Mackay—"A Burns' Lecture." *Freethinker* and other literature on sale at all meetings.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Amy Capenerhurst—"Happy Moments in Music and Humour." Collection for Leicester Infirmary.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, J. Clayton (Burnley)—"The Problem of Existence."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Clarion Cafe, Market Street, Manchester): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Stafford (Liverpool)—"Why I am not a Christian."

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Arcade, Socialist Club): 3.0, A Lecture.

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If you appreciate the work that Bradlaugh did, if you admire the ideals for which he lived and fought, it is not enough merely to admire. The need for action and combined effort is as great to-day as ever. You can best help by filling up the attached form and joining the Society founded by Bradlaugh.

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