

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LVI.—No. 20

SUNDAY, MAY 17, 1936

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
London's Bishop—The Editor	305
Townsend's Turgid Tirade—Mimnermus	307
A Freethinker Among Religionists—J. Reeves	308
Things Worth Knowing	308
The Message of President Benes—C. Bradlaugh Bonner	309
Some Objections to Atheism—H. Cutner	310
Premonitions of the Reformation—T. F. Palmer	314
Eddington and his Theories—G. H. Taylor	315
"The Essence of Revelation"—G. Bedborough	316

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

Views and Opinions

London's Bishop

It is nearly forty-five years since I first came across Arthur Foley Winnington Ingram, now Bishop of London. He was then at the head of Oxford House, Bethnal Green, a kind of missionary establishment. More than once, after I knew him he assured the public that he received nothing for this work. This was quite true, although, to have been complete, the statement should have been accompanied by the acknowledgment of £1,000 annually from St. Paul's Cathedral for doing nothing. Ingram always appears to have had good friends behind him, and in the semi-political world of the State Church, this is likely to carry a man much farther than outstanding ability. But being well paid for doing nothing in one direction might well be set against getting nothing for doing something in another. I was then lecturing every Sunday to very large audiences in Victoria Park, so that we were both engaged in the same parish. I know that I managed to increase the number of Freethinkers in that district, but I never heard of Ingram increasing the number of Christians. On several occasions Ingram opposed me in the Park, and these were the only occasions I ever heard of his venturing in that direction. But he has very often referred to the gallant way in which he met Atheism in the East-End; and to a West-End audience the Bishop's conduct must have seemed heroic. At the time he impressed me with being anything but straightforward, and with using arguments that belonged to the very primitive stage of religious reasoning.

I have always attributed to Ingram an organized attack on my platform. I do not mean a physical force attack, although I once caught him inciting others to that. But my subjects were announced for a month ahead, and for some weeks there arrived a different, fresh, succulent parsonette, just from college, and primed to oppose me on the subject of the day. To anyone even very moderately equipped, these

curates were what the Americans would describe as "pie." It became a perfect massacre of the innocents, and after a few weeks the experiment was dropped.

But I was always interested in Ingram, and I remember the late W. P. Ball asking me "Why?" After due thought I replied that it was because he was in my judgment unique. He could be more kinds of a fool in five minutes than any other man I had ever met then, or have ever met since. He was more interesting than I afterwards found James Douglas, of the *Daily (and Sunday) Express*, because while there was some doubt as to whether J. D. was really as foolish as he appeared, one was never in doubt as to A.F.W.I. He was pure metal right through. When he did say something sensible, he nearly always said it in a way that no sensible man would, and when he said something foolish the folly of it was riotously aggressive. Given the slightest chance of saying something stupid, Ingram achieved it with distinction. Right through his life he has remained true to the promise of his early years.

* * *

God and Earthquakes

I was reminded of these early experiences by reading a chapter which the Bishop had contributed to a book recently issued. The volume is made up of 45 separate chapters written by as many preachers and semi-preachers, in answer to questions asked by members of the Boy's Club of St. Giles, Edinburgh. The Bishop takes the question, "Why, if God is love and almighty, and if he loves every one individually, does he permit such happenings as earthquakes, causing the death of thousands?" This is a very old religious conundrum, and not even the wisest of preachers has ever been able to give a reasonable solution. But it takes a man like Bishop Ingram to wallow in the absurdities of the theistic case, and take an obvious pride in being as foolish as is possible.

The Bishop believes in a God who is full of love, but he explains:—

I do not profess to base my belief in the love of God on anything I see in the world to-day. I do not pretend to find my proof of the love of God in this difficult, perplexed, and very puzzling world as I see it to-day.

Would any other man have so completely given away the game as this? There is nothing in the world that the Bishop can see which gives any basis for the belief in the love of God. Well, if one cannot find among men any evidence of God's love for man, where can it be found? Here is the answer: "I base my belief in the love of God upon the Incarnation. That I say was a demonstration of love that was meant to last for all time." So, there was no evidence of the love of God before the Incarnation or

after the Incarnation. God had one burst of love, and then let the world go to the devil in its own fashion. So far as this world is concerned the love of God is unbelievable, but there is the "Incarnation" which is said to have occurred about two thousand years ago. To establish an unbelievability the Bishop evokes an absurdity. I agree that if a man can swallow the Incarnation he ought to be able to believe anything. All the same I do not know any man other than Bishop Ingram who could state so absurd a position with so great a pride.

But wait! I said that I knew of no other man who could be so variegated in his foolishness as Bishop Ingram. Here is evidence. Having said that he can find no evidence for the love of God in the world of to-day, he immediately cites the discredited witness in his behalf. It is true, he says, that two hundred thousand people are killed in an earthquake. But, he asks, does that differ from what is going on every day? Death, he says, helps his belief in the love of God, for if people were not killed off people would go on living, and in the end we should lose the sight of "the old grandfather with the little child on his knee, the grandmother with her grandchildren around her."

I pause for sobs—or laughs. Remember the question asked by the boy was why should thousands of people—including grandmothers and grandfathers with children on their knees—be suddenly wiped out? The reply to that is that when God made things he arranged that people should multiply at so great a rate that there had to be a kind of clearance slaughter every now and again to prevent the fecundity of man (designed by God) robbing life of its best things. And the Bishop finds the evidence for God's love in this kind of post-natal Malthusianism, in the very world which he has just said offers no evidence at all. But suppose the boy asked a supplementary question and enquired why did not God so arrange things that this periodic slaughter should have been unnecessary? What would Ingram have said? Probably he would have said, "Look at the Incarnation. There was enough love there to last for all time." Certainly without the Incarnation (and good pals) A.F.W.I. would not be where he is, but would that fact be enough to satisfy the boy? A series of earthquakes seems to be a fairly heavy price to pay for the Bishop and his kind.

* * *

A Curious Apology

There is yet another reason for the Bishop's belief, drawn from a world which is without evidence of God's love. God, he says,

only made us that so many millions of people might sun themselves *in the sunshine of his own happiness*; and death makes it possible to have so many more millions of people enjoy life. They have their probation time here, and if they did not pass away, there would be no room for thousands of others.

I have had to italicize a few words, they are so characteristically Ingramatic. God creates man so that he may witness his (God's) happiness, and keeps on creating them so that he may have a greater number of worshippers, and then sends along a few earthquakes to clear off their surplus numbers. Would anybody but Bishop Ingram have discovered that God made man for this purpose, and then goes on creating and earthquaking in order to establish something like an equilibrium? God seems very much like Ingram in the stupidity of his plans. He goes from blunder to blunder, from crime to crime, much as a swindler is forced from small to greater offences.

The Bishop's answer is not yet complete. In earthquakes people die suddenly. Why? The Bishop has a two-fold answer. First, that part of

the earth where the 'quake occurred was the last made "and so was not quite settled down." But as a theologian he believes that:—

All these great things are allowed to happen to prevent us being drowned in security. Our great danger in the world to-day is to have a totally wrong conception of our condition. We want to feel ourselves on solid earth and to make our homes here. We drift into the idea that this is the place where we ought to be and stay; whereas, as a matter of fact, we are "strangers and pilgrims on this earth. . . ." The reason, I believe, why God allows these startling calamities to happen on this little earth is to wake us up to a real idea of our condition. Some are simply going on as if they were going to stay here forever. . . . These things wake us up. We live here for a few passing years, and—this much you and I do know—the world is all done with so far as we are concerned.

Now I do not say that other theologians have not said this kind of thing, there is nothing original in the Bishop's stupidity, but I do say that no other prominent Churchman has ever stated such silliness in a way that so closely laid bare the essential selfishness, barbarity and brutality of "pure" Christianity. One may well wonder at a man with the mentality of Bishop Ingram occupying his position in the national Church. I remember Ingram once saying that life would not be the same to him without the faith in Jesus Christ. I agree with this, much as we might disagree with its interpretation.

Consider what the Bishop is saying. First, there is nothing in the world as we see it that can prove the love of God. Then he spends the rest of his answer in trying to show that God's love is expressed in the arrangement of the world that can offer no proof of it. Then when earthquakes happen, he says that as we all have to die, it does not matter whether we die by earthquake or in our beds. God made man, but he made him so silly that unless he has a periodical "clean up" the world cannot be kept sweet and clean, and grandmothers and grandfathers would not be able to hold children on their knees. (I believe this is the kind of apology the Nazis offer for *their* clean up.) To keep the numbers down God brings into play the poison gas of volcanoes and the high explosives of earthquakes. Alternatively, not for the reason just stated, but because certain parts of the earth are newly made, and must be permitted to harden, much as a cook sets on one side a jelly to stiffen. Next, God who made man to bask in God's happiness finds that man is apt to forget him and his happiness, so God arranges a number of startling calamities to quicken our memories. But for these reminders man would live as though he were here for ever. Finally, if the earth will collapse in the end, what the devil does it matter whether there are earthquakes or not, seeing that we who are now living will be somewhere else soon, and the poor beggars who are living must do the best they can?

I repeat, is there any man in any prominent position anywhere who could be guilty of such childish stupidity as this? Let us freely acknowledge that Ingram is unique in his way. Let us also marvel at the good pals who have placed him where he is. I remember the *Athenaeum* saying at the time, that his appointment was an insult to the memory of his predecessor—Bishop Creighton. But I have little doubt but that Ingram saw the hand of God in his appointment. There was something of the miraculous in it.

I notice that Ingram's God is very much like Ingram. Those who know Ingram know also that God acts just as Ingram would act, and thinks just as Ingram thinks. It may be that Ingram is very much like God. I do not know. All the same, in the

next world, where things will no longer be "seen through a glass darkly," we can imagine the Ingram that is God addressing the God that is Ingram and wondering why he gave the game away so completely to the boy of the St. Giles' Club. And it would also be interesting—provided the St. Giles' boy was just an ordinary common-sense kind of a boy—to get his opinion of the Bishop's answer. Still, once more, long life to Arthur Foley Winnington Ingram, Bishop of London, and his ten thousand a year. In the history of the English bishopric there has never been one quite like him—so frankly absurd, so boisterously inconsequent, so gloriously unintelligent, and so irresistibly laughable. It is not likely that between now and disestablishment, we shall look upon his like again.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Townsend's Turgid Tirade

"Mankind has become more humanist, more free from the gods."—F. J. Gould.

"New occasions teach new duties."—Lowell.

THE collapse of the Christian Churches, not only in this country, but in Europe, was the burden of an address given by the Rev. H. Townsend, at the City Temple, London, at a meeting of the Baptist Union. So far as the Baptists themselves are concerned, pessimism is justified, for that once-powerful Nonconformist body is definitely on the down-grade. In the last ten years there has been a decrease of 15,000 members, and the number of Sunday-School scholars has shrunk by 75,000. This is certainly disheartening from the Christian point-of-view, but so many other Free Churches are in a similar distressing plight. Even the wealthy State-supported Anglican Church is losing members and prestige. The Spiritualists form the only body which can boast of growth, and they are quite outside the ringed fence of Orthodoxy.

Brother Townsend, in his speech, attempted to explain the cause of this religious disintegration. He said:—

The human race is staggering beneath the load of progress, having lost such deep simplicities as confidence and peace.

And he asked that people should "do their own thinking on the basis of the Christian Gospel." It would have been far better if he had done some thinking himself before he talked as he did. When an orthodox preacher does not know what he is talking about it seems idle to listen to him. But his audience did listen, so he invites criticism to his verbiage.

It should be quite unnecessary to remind Brother Townsend that you cannot lose what you never possessed at all. When he says that "the human race" has lost "confidence" and "peace" he is talking sheer unadulterated nonsense. He was a Baptist addressing his own co-religionists, who form one of the many minor sects associated with the Christian Religion. Yet he speaks as if he were a Tory candidate at a small-town election, and derides progress with the gusto of a political soldier-of-fortune.

Does he really sigh for the "good old days" when newspapers cost fivepence each, and when towns of twenty thousand inhabitants had less than a dozen copies? Does he wish to return to the time when half the population could not read or sign their names? Does he look with longing eyes to the days when children of seven years of age were employed

daily for twelve hours and more in mines, shops, and factories? Does he pray for executions to take place again in public? Does he want a return to the drunken, disreputable, dirty habits of Victorian England? Or would he prefer that the fires of Smithfield and Stratford were relighted, and men and women burnt alive for heterodoxy? Progress indeed! "Always towards perfection is the mighty movement towards a complete development and a more unmingled good," says Herbert Spencer, and the humanistic trend of modern thought during the past century and a half proves the wisdom of the great philosopher. "The very things we boast of," says Emerson, "will one day be quoted to prove our ignorance."

When did the "human race" enjoy such "deep simplicities" as "confidence" and "peace"? The history of the "human race" is largely a record of wars. During the nineteenth century our own country was engaged in warfare with many nations of the world, including Afghans and Zulus. Other Christian countries were as bellicose. The last great war was so terrible, so devastating, that many people regard it as an unanswerable indictment of Christianity, whose priests for so many centuries occupied a position of commanding influence. The net result of near two thousand years of power of the Christian priests was that Europe was ankle-deep in human blood. The outcome would have been much the same had we been ruled by gorillas, so full of blood-lust have been our "pastors and masters."

The Rev. H. Townsend speaks of the lost "confidence" of the human race. Confidence in what? The great religions of the world teach contradictory dogmas. When the oracles are at variance the votaries may be permitted a wise scepticism. Brother Townsend is not in a position to speak for the whole human race. So far as he is concerned, the Christian Religion is the last word among the theologies. What does this vaunted Christianity teach? It informs us that the Christian "god" put a man and a woman in a garden, and for an act of petty larceny punished them, not only with death, but visited their crime on all mankind whose everlasting fate will be determined at a Judgment Day. Mankind, in its turn, became so wicked that this "god" drowned them all, except eight persons. Afterwards this "god" became the War-Lord of the Ancient Hebrews, who were his chosen people, although he could not always help them to victory. And so on through the sacred record, until the climax when this "god" is put to death to appease himself. Even the belauded New Testament ethics cannot be adopted by any man, and at the same time keep him out of the workhouse. Indeed, he would be lucky to escape Earlwood or Colney Hatch. What a scheme to invite confidence!

It will not do! If you are a reading man, you will remember that many years ago it was decided in a memorable law-case that a disbelief in the Christian Devil did not invalidate a man's right to be a Church communicant. You will also recall that Lord Westbury, in the matter of the heretical *Essays and Reviews*, in addressing the jury, uttered the weighty and memorable words: "Gentlemen, your verdict kills the Devil and puts out Hell-fire." The verdict of the jury of the entire civilized and educated world is now dead against Satan and his fireworks. This is a verdict that brings relief and delectation to all except those salaried sons-of-God who use the lever of fear with which to force open the doors that they may exploit their less-educated and more-gullible brethren.

Slowly, with lapses into its "loved Egyptian night," our countrymen are beginning to shake themselves free of the clutches of Priestcraft. Bewildered by the new light, even missing the guiding hands of the priests, they stand amazed on the threshold of

the future. The fundamental question of man's place in nature has been solved, and the wider outlook has already begun to bear fruit in all practical affairs of life. Sooner or later it will lead men and women to a happier, more consummate condition of life, and to loftier ideals. If people do their own thinking, it will most definitely be outside this most ineffective Christian Gospel.

The Baptists, to whom Brother Townsend addressed his remarks, are worthy folk, but they represent only a backwater in the river of thought. The decrease in their membership and position shows that they are fast losing their hold on the rising generation. Yet one thing may be said on their behalf. As Ingersoll has told us: "Baptism itself is a good thing, provided that one adds a little soap."

MIMNERMUS.

A Freethinker among Religionists

AMONG the interesting experiences of a school inspector (myself, now in retirement) were the periods spent at a large number of the dwellings of clergymen. These were, in most cases, country vicarages and rectories. The incumbents were as a rule very hospitable, and took one home to lunch or tea, and a pipe or cigarette after the inspection.

Most of these men and their families were ordinary, conventionally cultivated people, taking not more than a tepid interest in the school, and intellectually somnolent. Being rather afraid that religion would be introduced into the conversation, I usually tried to confine the talk to general topics; and it must be confessed that very few brought in the dangerous subject. One here and there, however, bubbled over with piety; and in one case I had to listen to a general homily about the predominance among the people of recklessness, irreligion and immorality, and this while the rather excited talker remained on his feet, almost dancing at times, while he carved the meat and ate his lunch.

Interest in education was commonly wanting. When this subject was mentioned the man usually said little; but his wife or daughter would not infrequently mention "the Godless Board Schools," and would ask, "How if you educate everybody will you get farm labourers and domestic servants?" In two cases, however, out of perhaps a thousand, I found real educational enthusiasts. One of them, a rural dean, was very appreciative of the advance promised by the Fisher Act of 1918, and asked me to give a paper on the subject at his Ruridecanal Conference, which I did, afterwards lunching with the dozen or so vicars and rectors who were in attendance.

On some occasions the religious teaching in the schools was being given by the vicar or curate when I entered schools in the morning, and I was able to hear something of the matter taught. This was usually deplorable stuff, deplorably taught (from the point of view of teaching method). And I recalled such cases recently when a well known educationist, Frank Roscoe, told in an article in the *Schoolmaster*, of a lesson he had heard, of which the miracle of the loaves and fishes formed the subject. The children were told, "We cannot understand how it was done, but we must believe it because it's in the Bible." Roscoe went on to say that the following (secular) lesson was on science, and that the children were then told that they must not believe anything unless it could be proved.

The Nonconformist schools were nearly extinct when I began to inspect. But the few ministers I met seemed to be fairly interested in their schools and the

children. But, so far as I could observe, this was not the case with the Roman Catholics—except, of course, in the inculcation of theology and ecclesiasticism. The men, as a rule, were of a "jolly" type, especially the Bishop and four others at P—, where the talk during lunch was of a variety of things, but not at all of religion. Similarly at B—, where there was a sort of priestly sanatorium in the presbytery, with five occupants. Apparently none of these priests, or of a number I met singly, cared much if anything about the progress of education, in the ordinary sense of the word.

I did not encounter more than two or three ultra-devout teachers. The most interesting one used to tell me about visions she had, which she evidently regarded as real things, and was very proud of being one of the few who were enabled to witness the doings and sayings of angels and other celestial beings. The other was an Anglo-Catholic-Communist, as were the vicar and curate of the parish in which she lived. Neither of these teachers was of consequence from the intellectual or pedagogic point of view. A small number of the more capable men teachers were evidently very unorthodox persons, though they were rather careful not to say anything definite about their unbelief. Probably Bertrand Russell is right in stating that all teachers who are much above the average are Agnostic in some degree or other.

J. REEVES.

Things Worth Knowing*

XLI.

THE MYTH OF THE HEALTHY SAVAGE

If you want to know all about the noble African you must know something of his diseases.

All health lecturers, physical culture magazines, psychological lecturers, and mind-over-matter faddists, continually cram down our throats that to be healthy, or even healthy, we must live next to Nature, obey Nature's laws, and get next to Universal Mind, like the savages and animals.

How shall I give you the truth? Last winter, I heard a health lecturer inflict such piffle on a highly intelligent audience, and I am ashamed to say, it was swallowed, hook, line and sinker. He then asked for questions. I arose, and he said, "A gentleman wants to ask a question?"

I replied, "No, I do not wish to ask a question, but I would like to give you some information."

I told him he was wrong about savages being so healthy, that they were really a short-lived people, and that they had suffered all the present diseases of civilization for thousands of years, with a very few repulsive ones of their own thrown in.

I informed him and the audience that wild animals also had all kinds of troubles of their own. Monkeys had toothache, abscesses on their feet, worms in their stomachs, headaches and tumours. Lions have just the same troubles as lambs, even to ingrowing toenails, and in addition all kinds of fleas and parasites. Birds suffer in the same way. I finished up by saying the healthiest race on earth is the protected Caucasian race, and that the healthiest branch of that big race is the Anglo-Saxon.

The diseases to which the natives of Equatorial

* Under this heading we purpose printing, weekly, a series of definite statements, taken from authoritative works, on specific subjects. They will supply instructive comments on aspects of special subjects, and will be useful, not merely in themselves, but also as a guide to works that are worth closer study.

Africa are peculiarly susceptible are smallpox, tuberculosis, syphilis, gonorrhoea, pneumonia, *beri beri*, *craw craw*, elephantiasis, guinea-worm, dysentery, diphtheria, malaria, yellow fever, and sleeping sickness, the last being one of the worst plagues. Smallpox decimated village after village, and it is exceedingly difficult to induce the natives to be vaccinated. Their bodily resistance to disease is not nearly so great as ours; consequently death is rapid, and an epidemic runs through village after village like prairie fire. The terror-stricken people flee before it, leaving the sick to die and rot. I have gone through whole villages and found only dead bodies in all stages of putrefaction, a prey to vultures, ants, and rats. The vultures are particularly disgusting as they gorge themselves to such an extent that they are too heavy to fly, so it is easy to give them a rap on the head. I never did, for the reason they are scavengers, as are the ants, the rats, and others. Other villages were inhabited by just bare skeletons, indicating that their place was first on the list to be struck with the plague. Such places were charnel-houses and repulsive to the last degree.

In one village I received one of the great shocks of my life. It had been visited by smallpox probably five years before, about 1882 or 1883, and the jungle had again taken possession. The posts of the huts were all covered with beautiful vines and creepers, which I pushed aside to look in. On the ground was a skeleton, and on the skeleton was, I judged, a fifteen-foot boa, a lively one too. It immediately lifted its flat, cold-blooded head, and slithered its tongue out at me. I jumped back and left him in undisputed possession of the skeleton. Africa is full of surprises, not because Nature is cruel, but simply because Africa still remains as it was in all parts of the world a million years ago. Man has not conquered it.

Syphilis is another devastating disease among Africans. They have not any cure; therefore it goes through all its stages. Consequently your imagination does not have to be stimulated to picture some of the sickening sights, such as bodies full of cores, nails lost, children born rotten, to live just a few days, the mother, fortunately for her, soon dying in the same condition. Here is where civilization gets one good mark, for this disease, with our methods of treatment, is getting cured. Other infectious diseases are being not only cured, but prevented.

Sleeping sickness is one of the diseases peculiar to Africa. It is, as its name implies, a disease characterized by enlarged glands, fever and sleepiness. This disease has made its appearance in this country and is receiving a good deal of attention from physicians. The specific parasite is the *Trypanosoma Gambiense*, and it is carried by the tsetse fly, and I can best describe it by comparing it with an injection of liquid fire. I am not in agreement with the prevailing mode of treatment. It is treated in Africa with Epsom Salts and Quinine, and a great many cases were cured. It was rather strange that we white men did not contract the disease. I attribute our immunity to the fact that nearly all of us made a habit of taking at least ten grains of quinine daily. We concluded that the quinine rendered us immune.

Generally speaking, the natives have no cure for any of their diseases. They depend entirely on fetish priests who practise witchcraft. The natives are short-lived, as they do not seem able to resist any serious disease. If pneumonia or any acute infectious disease attacks them, they are as good as dead. White traders and explorers brought about a great change. To-day there are regular physicians in charge to give the natives skilled attention.

African Drums,
by FRED PULLERSTON, pp. 203-206.

The Message of President Benes

THE President of the Czechoslovak Republic received the leading delegates to the International Congress of Freethinkers in the Hradcany at Prague, on Easter Saturday. In a great room all white and gold where the Habsburgs had held imperial receptions, Dr. Benes made us sit at our ease and chatted pleasantly to us in several languages.

Turning to me, he said in English, "What do your friends think of the position here in Central Europe? Do they find the outlook black and the situation depressing?"

I replied that we did not consider the time one in which to give way to depression, but one which called for fortitude and courage.

The President answered, "You can tell your friends that we in Czechoslovakia will do what we hold to be our duty. Here is our country with Nazis, Fascists and reactionaries all about us. We shall, if need be, defend our dearly won liberties to the last. Whatever befalls, we Czechs will be strong in the knowledge that we will have done all that lies in our power to maintain freedom within our frontiers. Whether other nations stand aside, or help, or obstruct, we Czechs see our path clearly and we will not deviate from it by an inch."

My duty on my return to England, the "island of the free," is to deliver to fellow Freethinkers the message of President Benes.

In Prague, that ancient and historic city, whose one-time freedom was suppressed by Rome and Austria for three hundred years, the Flag of Liberty floats boldly and proudly, defying the Swastika and the Fasces. The Czechs are pleased to be called the "English of the Slav peoples," and we English should be flattered that this should be so. If there is an Englishman not too blinded by his own insular and parochial obsessions to perceive that national welfare has become international welfare, such an Englishman will hail the Czech as a brother and turn an ear of sympathy to his difficulties and hold out a helping hand to him where he stands in the midst of enemies. Think how this people has risen, like "an eagle new-inspired," after centuries of Imperial oppression! Consider the immense obstacles Masaryk and his companions have had to overcome! A new country to be welded out of the shattered fragments of the old. The financial difficulties alone have been staggering. At the present moment there is intrigue within intrigue to overthrow the Republic.

The English should go and see for themselves in Bohemia and Moravia, these hives of industry—great clean towns set among beautifully-wooded mountains and wide fertile valleys, see for themselves the efficiency and public spirit which are so strikingly alive. Then they should ask themselves whether all this is to be handed over to the monstrous tyranny of the Fuhrer, or the cynical despotism of the Duce, or to that sinister and ancient pantaloan, the Pope. The Englishman who loves Freedom should look in his heart and say, "Are we cowards?" Yet this courageous people doubts us. Nor is that surprising after the puerile Machiavelianism of Hoare-Laval, and the "bitter humiliations" of Mr. Baldwin. Where the Abyssinian has gone, where the Chinese have gone, the Czech may go too. "Pusillanimous Albion" and "perfidious Gaul" may give fair promise and brave words, but never a helping hand when the help to be given clashes with self-interest.

I cannot believe the Freethinkers of Britain, who last century were ready to challenge Governments, not merely to challenge but to fight them till victory was gained no matter the cost, will let their Czech comrades feel that they stand alone. I hope at least

that wherever a meeting of Freethinkers may be held in this country, it will pass a resolution of Brotherhood with the Czech Freethinkers, and wish them well in their struggle with Rome and with Fascism; and send a copy to the President of the Volna Myslenka, Drevna 6, Prague II.

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

Some Objections to Atheism

I POINTED out in a recent article that there were quite a number of regular readers of this journal who, starting as believing Christians, never relinquished their faith, and were utterly unmoved by our arguments; and, in consequence, not worth bothering about. I still think so; but a correspondent urged by some of my own articles, has sent me a few questions, and begs for an answer.

These questions are typical of the religious enquirer. They have all been dealt with, times out of number, in these columns. The various arguments they embody are as old as the Theistic idea itself, and many of them have been thrown overboard even by uncompromising believers. Yet they come bobbing up every day, every week, every year, as if they were quite new. The enquirers never seem to take the trouble to read even the critics on their own side; and they rarely, if ever, ask themselves what do the words they use actually mean. Had my correspondent even a cursory knowledge of some of the books advertised in these columns he would never have asked me to answer his questions.

Take for instance the design argument. In one form or another it is always with us. It seems so obvious to the uninstructed mind. Here is a world—a universe. It could not have come here by itself—it must therefore have been made, made by God. This argument—which I have reduced to its simplest terms—has filled innumerable books, and probably has done more for the cause of Theism than any other. It matters not that we, on our side, have shown it is nonsense; it even does not matter that quite a number of Theists, like Adam Clarke and W. Gillespie, have also thrown it overboard. The people who use the design argument never stop to inquire as to the meaning of the terms they use or, indeed, as to its inherent absurdity. Can we Atheists make a world? Of course not; therefore God created the Universe. It follows just as simply as that.

My correspondent insists that the world is governed by Law; therefore there must be a Lawgiver; therefore the Lawgiver is God—and, naturally, this God is the Christian God. And he adds, "If we cannot understand why God made certain Laws, surely it is our own puny intelligence that is at fault." And on top of this brilliant piece of logic, I am next told that "God endowed man with intelligence and free-will," and that therefore "no sane person can blame God, in any way, for the chaotic conditions in the world to-day."

You will notice that our friend does *not* say God endowed us with a "puny" intelligence. Our intelligence is only "puny" when it comes to trying to understand God's Laws. Directly freewill is introduced, our intelligence is endowed by God, and presumably is not quite so "puny." Attentive readers of this journal need not be told that the word "Law" in connexion with the Universe does not mean quite the same thing as an Act of Parliament duly passed by the Legislature. It means nothing but an observed sequence of events. It does not mean that there was a sort of glorified being ordering a cherry-tree always to grow cherries and not apples; ordering a stream of

water always to flow downwards; ordering two half-pennies always to make one penny; ordering storms, and earthquakes, and cancers. Even the instructed Modern Theist does not like his Theism put as crudely as that. He goes on a sort of higher plane, and, by using more polished and involved language, he manages to fog the issue so beautifully that his followers really believe that he has proved his case. He does not like asking, how do you account for the potato? Instead, he will put the conundrum, how do you account for the seven notes of music, or why is it that a natural landscape is always in harmonious colours?

If my correspondent, or anybody else who is in difficulty over this question, will take the trouble to think, he will discover that all we know—as Mr. Chapman Cohen has so brilliantly shown in many books—is *experience*. The "how" of this experience is left to scientists to discover if anything can be discovered. And any talk of "law," in the sense of man-made laws, is utter nonsense. Büchner put it as follows:—

The laws by which Nature works and acts in her endless movement, in her ceaseless being and becoming, in building-up and destroying, are not, as the childlike phantasy of nations used to imagine them in ancient times, and as weak and uncultivated minds still believe at this day, laid down to Nature by some lawgiver or lawgivers standing outside or above Nature, but are the necessary and natural expression of the interaction of all physical forces. By analogy with human activity and conditions, the inaccurate and misleading name of "law" has been employed to express this fact. But the analogy is inapplicable, because the phenomena or facts of Nature, interlinked by absolute necessity, have nothing in common with the arbitrary commands of a human lawgiver.

If my correspondent does not see this, then he had better stick to his God-idea.

Then my Theistic friend finds further proof for the existence of God in the "law of conscience." This presupposes that "conscience" has been, is, and will be, always the same for mankind; that it is something created by God, unalterable in time and place. Unfortunately the common experience of mankind has proved that this is unmitigated nonsense. There is no such thing as "virtue" as a fixed unalterable quality, the same in every race, in every age. Certain ideas are encouraged as good for a particular group of people at a particular time. Other groups have other ideas; and which is the better depends on all sorts of circumstances. I believe in monogamy, but that is not "virtue" on my part, or a law of conscience inculcated by God. Quite as virtuous people as myself do not agree with me, and that is all there is to it. I do not believe in vaccination or vivisection, but I have met numbers of virtuous men and women who do. How can "conscience" as directed by God come in here? Strangling was considered a virtue by Thugs. Why did they think so?

Another objection to Atheism and proof of the existence of God, is given in "the universal belief of a Divine Power." There is no such universal belief; but even if there were, is the "Divine Power" so universally believed in, the same everywhere? Does the Kaffir witch-doctor or the African pygmy believe in a Divine Power exactly the same as my correspondent—or is he "mistaken" a little? In other words, would my correspondent and other Theists worship and adore the Kaffir witch-doctor's Deity, and recommend him as suitable for all white men? If not, why not?

Then my attention is drawn to "the latest argument from motion in Arnold Lunn's brilliant work *Now I See*," I am afraid this "brilliant" book made me laugh, particularly the section in which the

"brilliant" author tried to explain the arguments on the existence of God taken from Thomas Aquinas—some of which, if I remember aright, he was quite unable to understand. But as Mr. Lunn is not generally cited as a "brilliant" defender of Theism by other Theists, we can pass him by.

Finally, there are two other arguments which should clinch the matter, but which, coming from a reader of the *Freethinker*, seem astonishing. "Among the intellectual giants from Copernicus and Ampère to Pasteur, Darwin and Jeans, the proportion of unbelievers was negligible," and "the most notorious Freethinkers or Atheists, like Renan, Diderot, Voltaire and Berthelot renounced their godlessness on their deathbeds."

The plain answer to these foolish statements is that many of the really great scientists were unmistakably unbelievers. It is just like Christian impertinence to include Darwin, for example, among believers. As for "infidel deathbeds," it is very, very, late in the day to produce them as arguments for the existence of the Christian God. One can take each individual death-bed and prove conclusively that there never was a recantation; one can show—as Foote did in *Infidel Deathbeds*—that the stories are simply Christian lies. But always will the pious believer bob up with the same drivel; always will he imagine he is clinching his argument with wonderful proofs. Needless to say, it is very difficult to catch up with Christian lies and so the "infidel deathbed" will do duty as long as Christianity remains. But I do advise my correspondent either to give chapter or verse for the recantations of famous infidels, or admit he is just repeating what he is told. If the latter; let him remember a good thumping Christian lie will win every time—with Christians.

Most readers will perhaps wonder why I have taken my correspondent seriously. Well, there are always new readers who are impressed with Theistic arguments, and are not quite certain how to meet them—particularly those oft-repeated ones on Law and a Law Giver, on Conscience and Virtue, and on Infidel Deathbeds. I do hope that my elementary exposition will be of some help in the first place. A course of reading of our books and pamphlets will then show, not merely how to approach the questions, but also the utter untenability of Theism from whatever angle that belief is approached.

H. CUTNER.

Acid Drops

The Rev. Dr. Rees Griffiths, in a recent issue of the *Christian World* "improves the occasion" by dilating upon "Sanctions." Bearing in mind the religious origin of the word (it is from the same root as "sacred," but with the derived secular meaning of something established, or fixed), one need not feel so greatly surprised at the manner in which it has been twisted about to suit the Christian statesmen who have been conducting affairs. Dr. Griffiths simply rubs it in when he says that "sanctions are the solemn application of power to save a nation's soul from selling its birthright for a mess of pottage." Perhaps it was the corrupting influence of the religiously derived word which gave us a League of Nations of which hardly one member could trust another, and who, when they haven't been lying to each other, have been lying to those whom they claimed to represent.

And there are one or two things that ought to be borne in mind by Freethinkers—Christians are not likely to remember them except to hide them under a crowd of lies. The Abyssinian war commenced in the piratical action of one of the most Christian nations in Europe, in the home of the headquarters of the most powerful

branch of the Christian Church. Agreements were broken, lies were told, the most brutal of all varieties of warfare was waged, poison gas was showered on women and children, hospital tents were deliberately bombed, and all without a single word of protest from the Roman Catholic Church, which has gone hand in hand with the chief of one of the most brutal expressions of gangsterism the world has known.

And outside of Italy there existed an assemblage of nations, overwhelmingly Christian, which have demonstrated their inability to work in agreement on any scheme that involved the genuine humanizing of man. In the case of a war such as that of 1914-18 the world was shown that Christian countries could bury sectional animosities and differences so long as the end in view was the killing of people, or so long as there was a prospect of plunder. But the same collection of nations has shown itself incapable of combination to any effective purpose when that combination sought to raise humanity to a genuinely higher level. There are many impostures in the world, but there are not many dangerous ones that cannot count, and do not count upon organized religion lending a helping hand.

Colombia's Liberal Government is trying to change its constitution so as to abolish religion and religious interference from the State. The Roman Catholic Bishops are terribly alarmed for the proposed changes include suppressing the name of God, and the Catholic Apostolic Roman Religion as the religion of the nation, not recognizing the rights of the Church, and forbidding religious teaching in schools. The Liberal Government also wants to make divorce easy, to tax churches, episcopal and parish houses. This programme is a splendid one, and we are pleased to be able to record it. What will the Church do? Still proclaim its growing numbers?

Prebendary Austin Thompson has an easy way of settling what he admits to be difficulties in "the incidents of the Risen Life" in the Gospel. They are "difficulties because we do not realize that in the Gospel story we are studying the Life of God." We entirely agree. The difficulties of the Resurrection, the Virgin Birth, and the miracles, all disappear if people will only see that the Gospel story is that of a God and not of a man. We have said so hundreds of times in these columns, but there seems to be still a number of people—like reverent "Rationalists"—who insist that Jesus was really a man. This is sheer blasphemy. Jesus was God, very God of very God.

The Catholic Church in Mexico has produced its nemesis. Its record is a bad one, and we see it is reported that school-teachers have to sign a pledge that they will "strive to bring about the extermination of every religious idea, and to nullify the pernicious work of the Roman clergy." Personally, we do not believe in turning teachers into propagandists, nor do we believe in using children as instruments of propaganda. A teacher does his work best when he has trained his pupils in such a way that his teaching acts as a prophylactic. But it sometimes happens that in order to protect the defenceless, severe steps have to be taken, and Mexico is not by any means the first country that has had to take steps to curb the mischievous activity of one or other branch of the Christian Church.

Really, this is most unfair! Mrs. McQuoid has a son, Winston, "who never showed any desire to paint." But she was convinced he had "talent," so on the eve of his twelfth Birthday she "remained awake all night praying and concentrating." The result—for all those who believe in prayer—was a foregone conclusion. Winston sent a picture to the Royal Academy and it was accepted and hung. Now, we protest against calling in God to help someone in an open competition. An artist might stand a fair chance against another artist; but he is bound to be beaten if God is helping the other chap. It's not merely unsportsmanlike—it's un-British, to use a conveniently stupid remark.

The Rev. "Dick" Sheppard is anxious to know if you are a "halfpenny churchgoer"? That is, do you loyally support your church a little more than with your mere presence? Mr. Sheppard politely points out that some English people expect:—

A church to arrive, presumably from heaven complete with a nice-looking, pleasant-speaking, broad-minded, games-playing parson in attendance, without any assistance from below.

The "assistance" should be cash, and plenty of it too. If the Rev. "Dick" goes back far enough he will find this question of cash always to the front. Even that bonny little affair between Peter and Mr. and Mrs. Ananias was over cash. In fact, if you want religion, you must pay for it. And you can't be saved without. What a farce this religion plus cash is!

We never can understand why God so often does *not* look after his own. Here comes the Bishop of Shillong, India, "with nothing left but two hands for begging." His Cathedral, seminary, and house, were all destroyed by fire on Good Friday. On Good Friday of all days! Surely this was just the time when God or "Our Lord," could have given the Bishop a "generous gesture," and either saved his church and home or sent him a blank cheque to be filled in for future needs? If not, what is the use of a God who cannot protect his own mansions?

Archbishop Hinsley, who never allows a week to elapse without being good Catholic news, has sent out an "urgent call" to stem the "heart-breaking" leakage of children from the Faith. And Mgr. McGrath sends out an equally urgent call to save Wales from Paganism. In other words, all does not seem quite so well with God's Precious Church after all. Even the Catholic Evidence Guild, which specializes—like its dear brother the Christian Evidence Society—on producing evidence for Christianity and utterly fails to do so, "is apparently at a standstill," which is a "great disaster."

The Archbishop even goes further. He declares that many Catholics do not know their Faith! This is nice news for Catholic teachers and priests. But after all, is it not a matter for congratulation? A Catholic ignorant of his Faith, might very well keep on believing it. But once let a Catholic know what his beliefs really are—is that not a sure way to unbelief? How can any Catholic, fully understanding his religion, believe in it? As for the Catholic Evidence Guild which Archbishop Hinsley wants everybody to support—surely that means rank, staring ruin? A Guild, out to produce Catholic evidence without ever doing so, is sure to be found out, with direful results. Look at the Christian Evidence Society and the way it has made unbelievers!

"The results of 1935," we are told of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. "are, though not disastrous, frankly disappointing. The General Fund shows a decrease of £4,000; the Medical General Fund a decrease of £2,200." This really is good news, and we hope it means that money is being diverted from useless missionary work to deserving causes here in this country. It is also good to note that the Society is having difficulty in getting the right people for missionary work. "There is some cause for disquiet on this score," says the Report of the S.P.G. "The greatest lack is of highly qualified women to take important educational posts, and of women doctors. . . . There is need for anxious thought as to how to find and train recruits of the right calibre." Obviously, any one brainy enough nowadays would think twice before trying to propagate the stale old nonsense of the Christian religion even among savages. When will people realize for good that missionary work is a rump?

One thing, however, was said at the Annual Meeting of the S.P.G. worth recording. It came from the Bishop of Pretoria, who said that the South African Government's attempts to deprive the natives of the Cape Province of a

franchise was "deplorable." "It was a very dangerous thing," he added, "to create a huge black block, and place against it a corresponding block of Europeans." The Bishop said that South Africa need fear nothing from the natives "if it tried to win the affection and respect of the native people. All they wanted was justice and fair play." We agree—but why does not the Christian population give the natives justice and fair play? Perhaps the S.P.G. is trying to convert the wrong people. Why not spend some of the funds of the Society in converting the whites, if not to Christianity, at least to "justice and fair play"?

There is a passage in Heiden's biography of Hitler which is just as typical of Christianity as of Hitlerism: "Hitler was aware that with the aid of vigorous propaganda any lie will triumph." His methods also are similar to those of Christianity: "Hitler's oratorical campaign," says a reviewer of the book, "distinguished itself by its ruthless suppression of even the mildest form of opposition. From the first, opponents were thrust out of Hitler's meetings and cruelly assaulted, and his party systematically broke up the meetings of opponents." Quite reminiscent of the good old days of religious fervour!

Some of the May Meetings have their comic side. The Baptist Union Assembly must have presented an ugly face to its Secretary, who declared: "I have never approached any Assembly before with so awful and so humbling a sense." One speaker congratulated the Union on having "two Baptist lawyers, briefed on the same side." This exactly describes all the professional supporters of churches: they are "briefed." The Baptist President put a "poser" to the Assembly: "Allow me to ask this question," he began:—

Did Jesus come and teach and suffer and die, that religion of the same type as Judaism, only morally and politically worse, should survive in another form under the name of Christianity?

Dr. Henry Townsend answered his own question in the affirmative, for he said: "That is exactly what has occurred."

The *Church Times* is not afraid, we are glad to note, to refer to Thomas Hobbes as "one of the most revolutionary thinkers of his age, and one of the most influential." Also that "Hobbes was definitely anti-Christian, and strongly opposed to what is called supernaturalism." Hobbes was, of course, a great man, and it required some courage in the seventeenth century to be "definitely anti-Christian." We hope that the *Church Times* will continue enlightening some of its readers, at least, in the same way. Quite a large number of great men and women had no use whatever for Christianity.

Dr. J. C. Cadoux says that "Disestablishment would unquestionably throw the British throne open to Roman Catholics." Well, why not? Does Dr. Cadoux mean that Protestants cannot trust Roman Catholics? We are of opinion that the distrust is warranted—where religion is concerned—but can we trust Protestants, given equal power, any more? And why should not the King have the privilege of choosing a religion for himself, or going without one if he prefers it? Why should his religion be selected for him, and he made part of the job? How can one be sure that the King really believes in the religion he professes? He goes to Church, but that is part of his job. He says he is a Christian, but when Christianity is forced on him, how can one be certain about it? Why should a King not have the freedom of an ordinary individual? We do not know what religion the next Prime Minister will hold, nor what the religion of the Lord Chancellor of a century hence will be. But we do know, unless the law is altered, what the religion of the King's successor will be, and also of the one that follows him. The King of this country fifty or a hundred years' hence may be wiser in many directions than the present one, but the law says that in religion he must remain on the level of the cave-man for ever and ever.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

G. W. WILSON.—The copy of the paper received by you came in the working out of the plan we have for getting the *Freethinker* into new hands. Naturally, some of them are certain to be sent to subscribers. Pleased to hear from you.

J. T. BRIGHTON.—Pure rubbish, as you think. Not worth bothering with.

L. CORINA.—Nothing would give us greater satisfaction than to see Freethinkers showing greater activity in checking the manoeuvres of parsons to secure a privileged position in municipal affairs.

D. G. MOWBRAY.—Received. Thanks.

C. M. BEADNELL.—Next week.

FOR Distributing and Advertising the *Freethinker*.—Don Fisher, 3s.

A. THOMPSON.—Thanks, but the Bill for repairing Church statuary has been reprinted in these columns on several occasions.

H. MORTIMER.—We appreciate your good wishes. Mr. Cohen will be writing on the subject very soon. Our great need, now as ever, is for more readers. A marked increase in the circulation of the *Freethinker* would be the best tonic he could have.

F. L. CORRICK.—The only adequate explanation of Spiritualistic "Direct Voice communication" is that of imposture. Sooner or later these trumpet-mediums are exposed, but that, of course, makes little difference to the rush of a certain type for further deception.

T. M. MOSLEY.—See "Sugar Plums."

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 offices of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society Limited, are now at 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. Telephone: Central 1367.

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

Sugar Plums

There promises to be a good gathering of delegates and members at the Annual Conference on Whit-Sunday. Applications for accommodation should be sent as early as possible. Most of the delegates will be staying at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet Street, where the business meetings of the Conference will be held. Mr. Cohen will also be staying at the hotel. It will save the journeying on Sunday morning. Admission to the Conference will be by delegate's card or member's ticket.

A luncheon will be provided at the hotel between the Morning and Afternoon Sessions, price 3s. Will those who wish to join in the function please acquaint the General Secretary with their intention? It will be easier to make the necessary arrangements.

A large number of slips advertising the evening demonstration is being printed, and we hope that London members, and London Branches will lend a hand at their distribution. London is not an easy place in which to advertise a public meeting, and for that reason we are, in addition to the ordinary advertising, relying upon the help of London members. Those willing to lend a hand will please write the General Secretary as soon as possible.

Apropos of this week's "Views and Opinions." We notice that the *Times Literary Supplement*, ready, as usual, to praise anything that is sufficiently orthodox, notices the book to which we refer in our leading article. The reviewer praises the intelligence of

the boys who asked the questions and the answers given by the writers of the 45 chapters. Now we have given the quality of one of the writers, and we can assure them that while the questions asked by the boys are all very old-fashioned, the answers given are exactly on a level with the chapter we have taken for criticism. The only difference between the rest of the apologists and the Bishop of London is that their fallacy and stupidity are not so blatant in expression as in the answer of the Bishop of London. But in unashamed stupidity Winnington Ingram can give most other parsons a long start and then beat them. If it were worth while we could take each of the other 45 guardsmen of the Lord and prove that they are not a whit more intelligent in their apology than is the Bishop. They are simply more artful, and more involved. We mention the fact only as an exhibition of the quality of the *Times Supplement*, when it is dealing with heresy in religion, ethics or sociology.

We have received a copy of "The National Christian Appeal" on behalf of the refugee Christian victims of Hitlerism. The purpose is a good one, and nothing that anyone can say can overcolour the tortures to which children, women and old men are subjected to in Hitler's Germany—a country to which our Government, through the King, recently sent birthday greetings with best wishes for the prosperity of Hitler. We agree with Dean Inge, that history presents nothing so systematically brutal and beastly as the Hitler persecution, and no one can do too much for those victims who have escaped the clutches of the gang of degenerates now in power in Germany. The Society's address is Sentinel House, Southampton Row, W.C.1.

But the pity of it! There are appeals to Jews to help the Jewish victims of Hitlerism. There are appeals to Christians to help the Christian victims of Hitlerism. Each one appeals to, and so helps to keep alive, the very thing that provides the victims on whose behalf is help asked. It is the religious spirit, Jewish, Christian, or other, that has kept alive the spirit of persecution from which these helpless people are suffering. Hitler's crime is not fundamentally against Jew or Christian, but against humanity. The existence of such men as Goering, Hitler, and Goebbels is a slur on humanity. We should wish them, not prosperity, for their prosperity means a further degradation of human nature, but their rapid disappearance. The way to end religious persecution is to end the power of religion, not to strengthen religious feelings in the very act of asking help against their inevitable expression.

The Conway Memorial lecture will this year be delivered by Professor Lancelot Hogben in the Conway Hall on Wednesday, May 20. His subject will be "The Retreat from Reason." Admission is free, and the chair will be taken at 7 p.m.

Professor Freud has received many, and world-wide, congratulations on achieving his 80th birthday. We are pleased to be able to recall the fact that we were among the first to recognize the greatness and the importance of Freud's teachings. It gave psychology, for the first time a genuinely scientific expression, and marked an advance upon the merely descriptive and atomistic character of pre-Freudian psychology. We also recall two other circumstances in connexion with the early days of psycho-analysis. One is the way in which certain writers who posed as educators of the people, brushed aside Freud's discoveries as being without importance, the other the concentration of the unclean puritan mind upon Freud's teaching of "sexual" impulses. Really, Freud's statements here were not fundamental to his theory, and in many directions "sensual" would be the better expression. But even "sensual" would, to the British mind, have implied "sexual," and would have implied something "pornographic." Hence the readiness of some writers, who should have known better, joining in the cry. Freud has lived long enough to see the fundamental truth of his teaching universally recognized. With the modesty of true greatness Freud recently expressed the hope that he had opened a road for others to explore.

We are indebted to the *Church of England Newspaper*, for May 8, for the information that:—

For their next Reveille meeting Commander and Lady Studd have secured two very interesting speakers, Mr. W. B. Sullivan and Mr. W. H. Cleave. Both have at some time been in prison. . . . Mr. Sullivan, who has travelled very widely . . . was leader of the Anti-God Society in London two years ago. Now he is an evangelist.

If true, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Cleave will not be the first who have found their way from prison to the evangelistic platform, and they are a lot further removed from among those who might well have gone from platform to prison—without counting those who have made that pilgrimage. But we are only concerned with saying, that as President of the only National Free-thought body in this country, we have no knowledge of either Mr. Sullivan or Mr. Cleave, neither have we any knowledge of what the Anti-God Society was to which these men belonged, either before or after their sojourn in prison, or of their employment on Free-thought platforms as speakers. Perhaps some of our readers may know something of these two latest gems in the crown of Christ.

It is, of course, quite understandable, in the desire of the *Daily Herald* to build up a large circulation, that it must carefully avoid offending the most ignorant and the most religious of its readers, but it would surely have been quite safe for it to act honestly with regard to such a man as Francisco Ferrer. In its issue for May 7, it has a notice of the death of Chief Inspector Arrow, of Scotland Yard, whose non-existence, however worthy a man he might have been, would not have been an immeasurable calamity. It says that Inspector Arrow went to Spain in 1907 and organized a special police force for the investigation of terrorist crime. It closes its notice by saying that "he never left his work there, remaining until the execution of the notorious Francisco Ferrer."

The "notorious Francisco Ferrer." That expression might well have come from a Roman Catholic like Hilaire Belloc, or from the *Morning Post*, or from the present Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, but one hardly expects it from an alleged Labour paper. Ferrer died as a victim of the Roman Catholic Church and of the religious Spanish reactionists. His only offence was the founding of the "Modern School," which was his method of educating the working and the oppressed classes of Spain. Even many Conservatives recognized the benefits of his work and treated his execution as a religious and semi-judicial murder. It is left for the *Daily Herald* to write of him as it does. Perhaps if all the Freethinking and real Socialist readers of the *Herald* were to enter a protest against such language applied to such men as Ferrer, the Editor might become more cautious.

Mr. G. Whitehead will speak from the Town Hall steps, Bolton, on Saturday evening, May 16, and every evening until May 23, at 7.30 p.m. The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate at all the meetings, and unattached Freethinkers within a reasonable distance are asked to lend their support in making the meetings known, and bringing a few friends along.

One good result of Mr. Whitehead's week at Birkenhead is that the local N.S.S. Branch has decided to follow up the work done, and continue the meetings with local speakers. Details will be found in the "Lecture Notices" column. Another useful point to remember in connexion with Mr. Whitehead's campaign is that he carries a supply of Pioneer Press literature, which may be purchased at any of his meetings. Thus the trouble of sending direct to the Pioneer Press may be avoided.

Will Freethinkers in Nottingham and neighbourhood who would care to take part in open-air Free-thought propaganda during the summer months, please communicate with Mr. T. M. Mosley, 3 Carnarvon Grove, Gedling, Notts?

Premonitions of the Reformation

ROMAN CATHOLIC scribes constantly insinuate if they no longer openly assert that the English Reformation is distinctly traceable to a King's salaciousness. Catholic apologists in the parks and public places still state that Henry VIII.'s alleged adultery was the leading cause of the religious changes in Britain in the sixteenth century.

Despite the fact that John Wycliffe, the leader of the Lollards, lived in Plantagenet times, and that a bitter conflict raged for many generations between Church and State, this mendacious assertion is as popular as ever in Roman circles. As a matter of fact Henry II., the first Angevin King, fought a hard fight with the arrogant and overbearing Becket, while his son John's dominions were placed under Papal interdict, and he himself threatened with the terrors of excommunication. John was ultimately constrained to acknowledge the temporal lordship of the imperious Pope, Innocent III.

When the great schism which separated Protestant Europe from the Roman communion had been accomplished, it grew ever more obvious that the religious transformation was the culmination of forces that had been long in operation. As the eminent constitutional historian, Hallam, put it: "No revolution has ever been more gradually prepared than that which separated almost one half of Europe from the communion of the Roman See; nor were Luther and Zwingli any more than occasional instruments of that change which, had they never existed, would at no great distance of time have been effected under the names of some other reformers. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the learned doubtfully and with caution, the ignorant with zeal and eagerness, were tending to depart from the faith and rites which authority prescribed."

From its earliest days the English Church has been distinguished by peculiar features, and although the spiritual supremacy of the Papacy was freely conceded the heavy tribute exacted by Rome was very generally resented. While William of Normandy was ever solicitous to conciliate the Pope he refused to relinquish the recognized supremacy of the Crown over the National Church. Vexed questions of investitures and priestly immunities troubled the reigns of Henry I. and Henry II., while Papal exactions tended to increase. Under John and his successor, Henry III., the avarice and arrogance of the sacerdotal order reached their climax. For a century and a half after the Norman settlement, the right of nominating archbishops, bishops and mitred abbots was claimed and exercised by the Crown. This right, in the teeth of clerical protests was confirmed by the Constitutions of Clarendon, which also made the revenues of vacant sees the property of the King.

John, in his conflict with Papal aggression, was sadly worsted; was compelled to admit every Roman demand, and even surrender his kingdom with the added humiliation of receiving it again as a humble fief of the Holy Father. The freedom of the Church was slightly restored by the Charter, but every election to clerical office remained subject to the Pope's approval, and Rome's right of veto was claimed even in the case of appointments to parish churches and minor monasteries. "There was thus in the Pope's hand," remarks Froude, "an authority of an indefinite kind, which it was presumed his sacred office would forbid him to abuse, but which, however, if he so unfortunately pleased, he might abuse at his discretion. He had absolute power over every nomination to an English benefice; he might refuse his consent till such adequate reasons, material or spiritual, as he considered sufficient to induce him to acquiesce,

had been submitted to his consideration. In the case of nominations to the religious houses, the superiors of the various orders residing abroad had equal facilities for obstructiveness."

Under Henry III., a weak ruler in conflict with the unruly barons, clerical pretensions greatly increased and the power vested in the Pope and other foreign prelates deteriorated, in the words of Taswell-Langmead in his standard *English Constitutional History*, "into a mere channel for draining money into the Roman exchequer."

Edward I. was one of our ablest Kings, and, on his accession, he clearly reasserted the freedom both of Church and State from the thralldom of Rome. To the insolent claims of Boniface VIII., the English Parliament returned a very emphatic refusal when that Pope attempted to interfere in temporal affairs. "The Kings of England," Parliament asserted, "have never pleaded or been bound to plead, respecting their temporal rights, before any judge, ecclesiastical or secular. . . . It is therefore, and by the Grace of God shall always be . . . that our aforesaid lord the King shall not plead before you, nor submit in any manner to your judgment, nor suffer his rights to be brought in question by any inquiry, nor send agents or procurators for that purpose to your court."

A series of statutes was then passed into law to curtail the powers of the Pope and his satellites resident in England and abroad. Taxes levied on religious houses for the benefit of foreign prelates were declared illegal. This statute was confirmed under Edward III., and in 1351 the Statute of Provisors strictly forbade Papal nominations to English benefices with the resultant transmission of first-fruits and other revenues to alien Cardinals and other prelates who basked in the smiles of the Curia.

So widespread was the scandal and so great the public indignation that "penalties of imprisonment, forfeiture or outlawry, according to the degree of the offence, were enacted against all 'provisors' who should obtain benefices from Rome by purchase or otherwise." Moreover, as Gneist points out in his famous work, *Constitutional History*: "We must remember that . . . the question lay in the background, whether the King and nation should accept at the Pope's dictation, the nomination of so large a portion of the House of Lords as the bishops really formed which would have placed the decision of national policy in foreign hands."

Three years later, further legislation was deemed imperative to check citations to the Papal Court. Superstition was extensively utilized to divert treasure into Roman coffers, and legal penalties proved unavailing. The law was openly flouted with priestly connivance and encouragement.

In the Reign of Richard II. it was feared that the Holy Father would endeavour to enforce his unconscionable claims by the dreaded device of excommunication. Parliament therefore enacted severe penalties against aiders and abettors of Papal encroachments. Special provisions against excommunication appear in 13 Ric. II., 1389, where it is enacted that "if any man bring or send within the realm . . . any summons, sentences or excommunications against any person" because of his assent to or to the enforcement of the Statute of Provisors, he shall become liable to loss of life or member with forfeiture of land or chattels, while any prelate who executed sentences of excommunication shall be deprived of all his temporal revenues and emoluments.

Then Boniface IX. audaciously pronounced the English statutes null and void, and even granted to an Italian priest a prebendal stall at Wells which the Crown had already presented.

Litigation resulted and, as the King's claims were

maintained in the English Court and the national clergy decided to support the Crown, the latter were promptly excommunicated by the Pope.

The Lords Spiritual and Temporal as well as the Commons indignantly resented this Papal action. A declaration and petition of the three estates were incorporated in the Statute of *Premunire* and under this enactment anyone who presumed to obtain bulls or other illegal processes from Rome would be placed outside the King's protection and "their lands and tenements, goods and chattels, forfeit to our Lord the King."

The general firmness thus displayed induced the dictatorial Pope to give way and the Papacy never recovered its earlier ascendancy. Also, the ferment invaded the ranks of the common people, who began to complain of the avarice and corruption of the national clergy. "This form of discontent," writes Froude, "found its exponent in John Wycliffe, the great forerunner of the Reformation. . . . The burden of Wycliffe's teaching was the exposure of the indolent fictions which passed under the name of religion in the established theory of the Church." Wycliffe's followers disregarded the authority of the bishops and ignored their threats. As Froude conjectures, "perhaps, if Edward III. had been succeeded by a prince less miserably incapable than his grandson Richard, Wycliffe might have made good his ground; the movement of the Parliament against the Pope might have united in a common stream with the spiritual move against the Church at home, and the Reformation might have been antedated a century." (*Hist. Eng.*, II., 12-15).

But the peasants' revolt supervened, and was, of course, overthrown, and the consequent reaction under the Lancastrian Kings suppressed an incipient Freethought, severely persecuted all forms of heresy, and in large measure restored the rapacity and tyranny of the sacerdotal caste.

T. F. PALMER.

Eddington and his Theories

WHILE Jeans has relaxed his advocacy of indeterminism, Eddington's, on the other hand, has strengthened. He still remains impervious to the verdicts of other departments of research, and in his *New Paths in Science*, even uses free will as an argument for the breakdown of causality.

His admission that he cannot replace determinism is repeated in an article in *Philosophy*, in which he says, "as an indeterminist I do not put forward any rival hypothesis." In the same journal Eddington has been most severely criticized by Dr. Norman Campbell in an article, *The Errors of Sir Arthur Eddington*. In an aggressive polemic the writer protests that Eddington's influence on the layman is the result of discreetly omitting, for the sake of simplicity, important facts, by pretending that electrons bear valid analogy to ordinary material bodies, and by a marked confusion of laws with theories. Actually, there is no difficulty in determining both the position and the velocity of any body accessible to experiment.

This, however, does not apply to electrons. The idea that small-scale phenomena are much less susceptible to accurate treatment commends itself to common sense, and need not upset the most rigid determinist. In any case, it has been explained by Heisenberg, who, against the tacit assumption that errors in determining the course of nature's minutest particles could, by an advance in experimental technique, be overcome, insisted that there is a limit to the accuracy of measurement necessitated by the activity of the observing instrument.

J. B. Haldane¹ quotes a hypothetical instance. To predict the path of, say, an electron, we must know its position and velocity at a certain time. We might take two consecutive photographs through a microscope with very rapid flashes of light. The snag is, that the wave length of the light sets a limit to the accuracy of such observation. A particle which stops any kind of radiation is deflected out of its path in the process, and the shorter the wave the greater the deflection. Therefore it is only possible to measure the position accurately at the price of vagueness about the speed, and conversely. It is as though the speedometer and mileometer of a car were so far apart as to render us unable to look at both at the same time.

Such difficulties, of course, apply only to human prediction, and even then it does not follow they will never be surmounted.

* * *

Is an electron a real thing or only a mental conception? Let us take Eddington's own answer. "An electron," he says, "is no more, and no less, hypothetical than a star."² What does this mean? The reply depends on whether or not you happen to be an Idealist. If you are, then electrons, stars, bricks and all the other material things which exist will depend for their existence on mind in some form. If not, then an electron will be in the same class as chairs and tables. That is, they occupy a bit of space-time and have weight. This is not denied by Eddington, who says atoms and electrons are real enough, "not hallucinations or fictitious hypotheses—at least I am convinced they are not."³

Eddington has given a new fillip to Idealism by drawing attention to the point at which physical analysis stops. Presented in physical terminology, his idealism is nevertheless open to the usual objections. On modern standards he must be considered an ultra-idealist, as must anyone who starts with the Cartesian *cogito*. At the limit of analysis "Mr. X" is invoked to afford existence and meaning to the given matter. Take his illustration, matter—taken from stress—related to the potential—derived from the interval—measured by the scale—made from matter—known by Mr. X.

It is precisely at this point, "known by Mr. X," that Eddington's system fails completely. Matter is not necessarily known by Mr. X. It existed before Mr. X was born, or Mr. X would not have been born, for, as Eddington himself notes, Mr. X evolved as a late product, inhabiting a structure slowly built by nature. Eddington, then, is quite in order in speaking of the conceptual activity of Mr. X's mind in framing thoughts about the activity in the physical world, and the behaviour of its particles. This does nothing whatever to show that things would behave differently or even cease to behave at all, if Mr. X had never made his appearance on this planet. All that Mr. X has done has been to frame symbols, make measuring instruments, and select the scale, etc. Further, the material on which Mr. X works cannot on the score of its behaviour rank as "mind-stuff," unless we make the latter mean simply that the evolution of mind is potential in the conditioning which goes on in physical nature, the materialistic position of Clifford and Tyndall.

We may conclude that with the polemic of Russell, Levy, Planck, Einstein, Campbell and others ranged against him, and the retreat of Jeans, Eddington's theory has few friends of any value, save for half-hearted imitators like Sir W. Bragg (*The Universe of Light*).

G. H. TAYLOR.

¹ *Fact and Faith*.

² *Philosophy*, January, 1934.

³ *Philosophy*, January, 1933.

"The Essence of Revelation"

THE *Modern Churchman* proves to its own satisfaction that "Christology in the Twentieth Century differs in some important respects from the Christology of a century ago." Here is a summary of these "important" advances:—

- (1) "Emergent Evolution" . . . "has replaced the irruptive creative method of traditional theology."
- (2) The "Virgin Birth" is declared to be "a religious myth."
- (3) "Our Lord's consciousness and activity were subject to human limitations . . . the old beliefs in the omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence of Jesus Christ cannot be maintained."
- (4) "In degree but not in kind, the Divine Sonship of Jesus is unique."

To the Freethinker, the second of these categories is the only one where a straightforward advance is clearly defined, although there seems to linger a plea for what is described as "RELIGIOUS myth," as being something far superior to any other invention. It is not a myth; it is a religious myth.

"Emergent evolution" has no relation whatever to the religious conception of "Creator" or "creation." In science it means no more than the emergence of a quality due to the combination of certain factors, which quality was not present in the factors considered separately. We see this in wetness from H₂O., and it is manifested in every act of "causation." Either in ignorance, or through downright deception religious writers are now using this term as they once argued that evolution implied involution, and therefore a God was necessary to "put in" what evolution "brought out."

As to the precise ingredients, and proportions of them, required to make a "Divine Sonship," all the ages of Christianity have disputed. The *Modern Churchman* is bound to admit (or boast) that there is no need for "the surrender of nor departure from the essential positions achieved by Christian orthodoxy." In other words the doctrine of the Incarnation remains what it has always been since the Council of Nice in A.D. 325.

Mr. Hope Urwin discusses another phase of Modernist "advance." He sets out to "throw light on the nature of the relations between the Natural and the Supernatural, by discovering the essence of revelation." In the *Modern Churchman*, he undertakes to explain How (not Why, When or Where) God speaks to man. He is not concerned to establish God's existence or to prove the genuineness of any revelation. His consideration is limited to (a) Whether Revelation is entirely supernatural; or (b) If Revelation covers every aspect of what the writer calls man's "knowledge" of God.

Mr. Urwin comments on the curious claims of the "Supernaturalist" school who logically—from their premises—believe that man has only to open his ears and close his eyes (and brains) and let God do all the talking. Prebendary Phillips, for instance, does not believe that man seeks God or would score a win if he did. He says: "It is as much out of our power to procure a revelation as it is for a blind man to appreciate a sunset."

This may not explain why God troubled to talk four times (i.e., to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John). It does explain why there are no gospels of St. Andrew, St. Philip, St. Bartholomew, St. Thaddeus and Christ's other observant but silent disciples. God simply didn't talk to everybody!

It is difficult to follow Mr. Urwin's *ipse dixit* that "St. John was INSPIRED to write his gospel, but it was not REVEALED to him." The distinction evades us. Surely he must mean that St. John and others had the revelation all right, but that only four gospels were inspired to write gospels. The distinction, otherwise, is about as valid as the difference between "a spoken word" and "a word which has been spoken." Revelation is something which is inspired or revealed. What is inspired is a revelation. It cannot be revealed by a God or person inspiring nobody.

Colloquially no doubt, a revelation is used mainly

with reference to events, occurrences, and facts, while we use the word "inspiration" to indicate a revelation of the will, desire, command or intention of the inspirer. Both words indicate inspiration, and both words imply a revealing of something. A Dictator may *reveal* his will and thus *inspire* action. It is another way of saying he inspires his slaves to obedience by revealing the probable fate of those who disobey.

The Oxford Dictionary describes "Revelation" and "Revealed Religion" as "made known by inspiration or supernatural means (opp. natural)." The difference between the two might be this: a wise man who kept to himself silly "revelations" is not "inspired." A less wise man would be "inspired" to make himself ridiculous by "telling the tale."

"Revelation," says Mr. Urwin, "differs from 'discovery,' in that it is not due to man's effort." This rules out Praying Wheels, Ouija Boards, and every other method of "Calling spirits from the vasty deep." It rules out prayer and every kind of religious exercise—if Modernists are logical.

Harnack called the deity a "God of Arbitrariness," and we may express our entire agreement with the epithet when we study the stubbornness of the Divine character in refusing to be "drawn" any more, after giving us the unsatisfactory and fragmentary "revelation" or "inspiration" which begins and ends in the Bible.

We note Mr. Urwin's admission that "revelation" differs from reason." We are aware that the Gospels are unreasonable. We flatter God by imagining that He would be more reasonable than men, and we find in the unreasonableness of the gospels the evidence of their human origin. Mr. Urwin seems to think our conclusion faulty.

"Modern thought does not like a clear-cut differentiation between natural and supernatural," says Mr. Urwin. If there is no difference (the adjectives "sharp" and "clear-cut" are irrelevant) we might as well say at once that we have no right to call anything supernatural. If anything exists or happens it cannot be other than natural. If we called everything "supernatural," we are merely using the wrong label—but it remains natural all the same.

This is only Mr. Urwin's process of reaching the conclusion (if Modernists ever reach so definite a goal as a conclusion) that "Revelation is both natural and supernatural." But this is no brilliant paradox or clever Modernist novelty. It is merely a repetition of a dogma of the oldest of Old Theologians. The old theologians taught that it was "natural" that God should be "supernatural." Tertullian is the only "old" theologian who—in a "wisecrack" as it were—declared that he believed in things which were naturally impossible. But Tertullian too regarded God as of a different nature from the natural and the human, without therefore imagining that God could not do all that the natural and human could do.

The Freethinker denies the existence of the supernatural. We cannot imagine even a Fundamentalist Christian denying the existence of the natural. Christians may rely upon Revelation for proof of their God's existence; but the words "Natural theology" imply a very "clear-cut" distinction between natural and supernatural.

The supernatural is the miraculous. Modernism can only justify its fine title by discarding Miracle. If it does so, it necessarily throws overboard everything supernatural. What is left of religion if supernaturalism is gone? At least those who call themselves Modernist CHURCHMEN imply that they retain a belief in some kind of supernaturalism, miracle, and even theology.

Modernism in essence seems to consist of a belief that God, Revelation, and theology were all right—at the time they were generally believed in. But "other times other manners." If Moses was good enough for the ancient Jews, Jesus was wanted to direct the destinies of the ancient Britons, and that Dean Inge is good enough for the ancient "Modernists." It looks as if in the course of time the modern Modernists—say a thousand years hence—will find in the humanism which is Atheism the final goal to which all their "progressive revelations" have led.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Primitives in the United States in 1936

We quote the following in full from the *Milwaukee Sentinel* of April 10, 1936:—

Strong young men, solemn in agony, staggered beneath the weight of rough-hewn crosses to-night, as the penitentes of the South-west re-enacted in dreadful detail, the ordeal of Christ's march to Calvary.

Their muscular backs were caked with the gore of repeated lashings. Their heads were bowed under crowns of cactus thorns. The bitter cold of high mountain fastnesses quickly congealed the blood which dripped from their stone-lacerated bare feet.

But they made no outcry, and struggled against any sign of weakness. By reaching the summit of El Calvario, they would prove themselves worthy of the highest honour their cult can bestow—worthily "Cristos" of the Brothers of the Blood of Christ.

Behind them trailed a strange procession, the rank and file members of Los Hermanos de Sangre Cristo. Some of these were flagellants, scourging themselves with thorn-studded whips until their blood flecked the late spring snow for yards around.

Others came, piping an eerie accompaniment on their "Piteros." Bringing up the rear were the women and children, moaning, moved by a strange fanaticism they could not understand.

In lonely mountain valleys of Southern Colorado, and in secret foothill hideaways of New Mexico these ceremonies were performed.

Sharp-eyed lookouts, armed with rifles, were on guard so that the sacredness of these rites would not be witnessed by the uninitiate.

Probably their vigilance was not needed. "Penitente hunting" has become an unpopular sport since would-be on-lookers returned from places of ritual in years past to tell of fleeing, while bullets whistled past their ears.

Awful as to-night's rites were, they were but a preparation for the climax to-morrow, when the "Cristos" will submit themselves, in some cases, to a crucifixion which will stop short only of the actual nailing to the Cross.

The "Cristo" is lashed with tightly-drawn rope or raw-hide to his cross and "crucified" until his endurance can stand no more.

Then he is taken down, perhaps at the point of death, carried to the Morada, or house of worship, and heaped with honours.

Correspondence

AS OTHERS SEE US

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I am glad that "Medicus" is generous enough to grant a background of truth in the matter I put forward in my original letter. "Medicus" will appreciate too that my text had been pruned editorially, so that the fact that my comments were directed to Medical Officialdom (State and municipal medicine) can only be guessed from the remaining part. The pseudonym adopted by your contributor suggests that he is likely to be in a better position than a layman to assess correctly how far the growing Medical tyranny is, as Mr. Cohen said in the article of November 3, that prompted my letter, "of the same frame of mind that once functioned on behalf of an avowedly religious control of the social structure . . ."

That there is a parallel between the methods used to maintain control by an established religious dominance, and that of the growing medical hierarchy hardly needs re-stating. Both gain support by appealing to mob fears. But I admit that my futile attempts to advise 60,000 parents in Leeds last year, not to allow their 30,000 children to receive injections of Horse serum, led me into an admitted vehemence of opposition, which shows in the letter under discussion.

I confess that I cannot remain tranquil, but explore every avenue of surmise to account for such indifference or approval, extended as it is to injustices (to me intolerable) such as those I cited where a boy was kept immured for 24 weeks in hospital, and a poor Cattleman was similarly treated for a lesser period quite close to London.

I am proud to think that I was in some measure instrumental in the latter case in having the matter re-opened in Parliament, and though, of course, the M.O.H. was supported, still the man was liberated forthwith.

It should be appreciated that the safeguards against arrest and imprisonment that have been secured by agitating, and become traditional in cases of suspected social and political crimes, do not operate when a person is alleged to be a "Germ-carrier." From the pronouncements of the Medical Officer concerned, backed up by Pathological Laboratory findings there is no effective machinery of appeal, nor is there likely to be any, since society's safety is said to be at stake. This position is on all fours with the suppression of Heresy, tolerated lest the threatened anger of the Lord should be visited on all.

Mr. Cohen says in the article already referred to, "We should recognize that the present does grow out of the past, and that in physical structure, our habits, our ideas, and our institutions the process is one of continuous adaptation of inherited structures and forms of thought to changing conditions."

I probably cast the net too wide—I tend to exaggerate—but I reserve the right to be critical and sceptical of the good intent of any organization which operates to abrogate liberty by using suspect devices, since they bear a family resemblance at least to those of a passed or departing tyranny.

Before closing my remarks, I should like to add a few words to those of Dr. English. It is a fact, as he says, that it is no part of the policy of our paper or our Society, to attack vivisection or vaccination, etc., just as it is no part of the policy to refrain from such attacks. The great value of this paper lies in the fact that personal opinions extended in a suitable way are sure of equal treatment.

The majority of Atheists reflect the rest of the community, in that they are prepared, failing personal investigation, to be guided by the authorities. Though I hardly think that an extract from an Encyclopedia would satisfy if any serious misgivings arose as to the necessity for obedience to the State enactments.

I conclude by saying that it is the essence of the Free-thinker that he should take nothing on trust when certain groups seek to restrict or control his conduct or his liberty. Let Dr. English and also "Medicus" reflect that a complete Free-thinker can never be a tyrant, nor in any way try to restrict criticisms properly expressed even though directed at institutions that he reverences.

I must leave "Medicus'" allegation that the Profession does not advertise, to his own (dare I say) conscience. Mr. Cohen dealt with missionaries who did not advertise for funds, and his exposure ought to have been sufficiently instructive to warn "Medicus" against his attempt to use a half truth.

DON FISHER.

The whole of the reign of Louis XIV. was marked by a great depravity of manners, and this depravity was found quite compatible with an ostentatious and possibly sincere attachment to religion. The King, in spite of the gross immorality of his private life, was a bigot in matters of faith, and he was not an ungraceful or inadequate representative of the people who looked up to him as an almost supernatural being. No stress need be laid on the laxity of the gay lords and ladies who filled the brilliant court, although if a firm belief in Christianity were the safeguard of pure morals, their lives present an unaccountable anomaly.

Cotter Morison in "The Service of Man."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Lecture notices must reach 6r Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 by the first post on Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, S. K. Ratcliffe—"Man the Unknown."

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand) : 6.30, Mr. H. S. Wishart—"Religion and Mental Prostitution."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead) : 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, Mr. C. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park) : 6.30, Mr. L. Ebury. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, May 19, Mrs. E. Grout. Cock Pond, Clapham Old Town, 8.0, Friday, May 22, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of Deanery Road, Water Lane, Stratford, E.) : 7.0, Mr. C. Tuson.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Wood, Evans and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Bryant, Wood Evans and Tuson. Wednesday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Wood and Tuson. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. E. Saphin. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. Ramble. Meet Woodside 9.55 a.m. Liverpool members welcome. Bring own food.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Well Lane) : 8.0, Tuesday, May 19, Mr. D. Robinson.

BOLTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Town Hall Steps, Bolton) : 7.30, Saturday, May 16 and all the following week, Mr. George Whitehead.

BURNLEY MARKET : 3.15, Sunday, May 17, Mr. J. Clayton.

BURNLEY MARKET : 7.30, Tuesday, May 19, Mr. J. Clayton. COLNE (North Valley Road) : 7.30, Sunday, May 17, Mr. J. Clayton.

EASINGTON (Lane) : 8.0, Tuesday, May 19, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HETTON : 8.0, Wednesday, May 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton. NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market) : 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

READ : 7.30, Monday, May 18, Mr. J. Clayton. SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street) : 8.0, Saturday, May 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue) : 7.0, Mr. Dalkin.

TRAWDEN, 7.45, Friday May 15, Mr. J. Clayton.

Conway Memorial Lecture

PROFESSOR LANCELOT HOBGEN will deliver the Twenty-Seventh Lecture entitled "The Retreat from Reason," at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1, on Wednesday, May 20. Chair to be taken by Mr. JULIAN HUXLEY, at 7 p.m. Admission free. Reserved seats, 1s. Tickets to be obtained from Conway Hall.

IN MEMORIAM.—In memory of our only child VALERIE BRADLAUGH TRASK. Died May 18, 1935, aged 6 months. "Long night succeeds thy little day."

Paganism in Christian Festivals

BY

J. M. WHEELER

Price 1s.

Postage 1½d.

PRIMITIVE SURVIVALS IN MODERN THOUGHT

By
CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth, gilt, 2s. 6d. Postage 2d. Stiff paper
1s. 6d. Postage 2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS,
61 Farringdon St., London,
E.C.4.

ARMS AND THE CLERGY

BY
GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Price 1s. By post 1s. 2d. Cloth, gilt, by post 2s. 3d.

The Pioneer Press,
61 Farringdon Street, London,
E.C.4

BUDDHA The Atheist

By "UPASAKA"
(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

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

ACADEMY CINEMA,

Oxford Street. Ger. 2981

The gayest film of the season!

MARTA EGGERTH in "LIBESMLODIE" (A)

Music by FRANZ LEHAR

Also "BUDAPEST SPA" and "NIGHT MAIL" (U)

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no
UNWANTED Children.

An Abridged List (16 pages) of Birth Control Requisites
and Books sent post free for a 1½d. stamp.

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

ESTABLISHED NEARLY HALF A CENTURY

The Secular Society Ltd.,

CHAIRMAN: CHAPMAN COHEN

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office: 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4
Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is advisable, but not necessary, that the Secretary should be formally notified of such bequests, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid. A form of membership, with full particulars, will be sent on application to the Secretary, R. H. ROSETTI, 68 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Christianity, Slavery and Labour

BY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

Infidel Death-Beds

BY
G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren

Price 2s. Postage 3d.

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY
G. W. FOOTE

Price 6d. Postage 1d.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

A Public Demonstration

IN THE

CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, HOLBORN, W.C.1

Whit-Sunday, May 31st, 1936

Chairman: CHAPMAN COHEN

(President N.S.S.)

SPEAKERS:

Dr. C. H. R. Carmichael, J. T. Brighton, E. C. Saphin,
G. Bedborough, L. Ebury, J. Clayton, R. H. Rosetti,
and Others

ADMISSION FREE
Doors Open 6.30 p.m.

Reserved Seats One Shilling each
Commence 7.0 p.m.

HISTORICAL JESUS AND THE MYTHICAL CHRIST

NEW EDITION

GERALD MASSEY

Price 6d. Postage 1d.

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited, by
the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., E.C.4

HUMANITY AND WAR

By

CHAPMAN COHEN

Forty pages, with cover. THREEPENCE,
postage 1d. extra. This is a Freethinker's
view of the whole subject of war, fearlessly
and simply expressed. In order to assist
in its circulation eight copies will be sent
for Two Shillings postage paid. Terms
for larger quantities on application.

Send at once for a Supply

Issued for the Secular Society, Limited, by
the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., E.C.4
LONDON