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Views and Opinions

Lord Halifax and the War

I RETURN this week to the question of Lord Halifax's broadcast on Sunday, July 21, noticed very briefly in the last issue of the *Freethinker*, for two reasons. The first is the unblushing use and abuse of a public position by one whose office as Foreign Secretary should have restrained him, even if a sense of self-respect and personal honour were incapable of doing so. The second reason is that in hardly any paper, other than the *Freethinker* is the subject likely to receive the kind of treatment it deserves. We have noticed many times the dishonest use of the war as a means of lauding sectarian teachings and advancing the position of the Christian Churches. Bearing in mind the number of Mohammedan, Hindoo, and other non-Christian bodies within the British Empire, to say nothing of the millions who have deliberately rejected Christianity, it was bad enough to have the constant cry, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down—or up—to the religiously unscrupulous B.B.C., that the present war was a fight for the preservation of Christianity. No greater lie than that could be uttered. No responsible member of the Government would dare to repeat that in India, with 250 million population, only an infinitesimal proportion of which can be called Christian. No responsible person in this country would dare to say it before an audience that was at all critical of the statements made. And in any case it is one of those falsehoods that is permitted currency because a great many do not think it worth while to resent it, and who treat the statement as of the same order as the confession of a man who believes in "lucky days" or in the wearing of a mascot. I think this view wrong because, to the one who is anything of a scientific student of sociology, they are indicative of frames of mind which play their part in social life. It does not follow that because a man is stupid in one direction he will be equally stupid or untruthful in all others, any more than a crack in a cup

proves it incapable of holding water. But it does demonstrate a certain lack of balance, a capacity or likelihood for misjudgment which in a critical situation may be dangerous. And above all a man who cannot distinguish between personal idiosyncracies and public affairs is the last one who should be permitted to hold public office in times that are profoundly critical.

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God Help Us!

Lord Halifax belongs, I believe, to what is known in this country as the High Church party. He has also been associated with a form of Christian propaganda of a not very high intellectual character, and it is noteworthy to a student of frames of mind that the term "high" in connexion with the English Church is associated with beliefs and practices considered by others to be grossly superstitious. So far as that goes he has the same right to be foolish as other people have to be sensible. But he is Britain's Foreign Minister, and, as such, he has no moral right to turn his official position into a platform for the propaganda of his own peculiar religious opinions.

Lord Halifax's broadcast took place on Sunday, July 21, and on July 23 the B.B.C., which will not permit the use of words that have the slightest taint of advertising—except when advertising the *Radio Times* and the *Listener*—announced that Lord Halifax's address would be reprinted in the *Listener*. The B.B.C. also described the speech as "the most important" since the war began. Why? Most of the papers had the good sense to cut out the religious part of the address—which consisted of about one-third of the whole. They showed greater kindness to the Foreign Secretary than he deserved. As to the non-religious part it was a series of what are now common-places. All had been said before scores of times, and much better said. In parts it was hesitating, as though repeating a lesson rather than expressing deeply felt convictions. It lacked the vitality of a Churchill speech, the forthrightness and philosophic quality of a speech by Smuts, and the human, imaginative power of Priestley. In the language of good old English, it lacked "guts"—all except the part that a Foreign Minister with a due sense of responsibility towards the community would have found it impossible to give. The sermon was given with greater vigour and a stronger note of conviction. Respectful in his approach to "Herr Hitler," our Foreign Secretary felt he could be safely and substantially insolent towards millions of his fellow countrymen.

Lord Halifax began the last third of his speech with a sentence from the King's speech of last Christmas—probably written for him—that we must "put our hand in the hand of God," and then asked what could we do? From that point all semblance of a political speech was abandoned. The platform became a pulpit, and Lord Halifax a mere preacher. "God is the



best friend with whom a man can face life or death." Those of us who can do nothing else can pray, which "will be much more powerful than we know." "Soldiers, sailors, men and women and children together" must pray daily, we must form "prayer circles." "We must march together in this crusade for Christianity," "By God's help we shall try to do His service," and so on, and so on, with all the repetitions that characterize religious prayers. Not even a professional parson, since this war began, has ventured on dealing with the war in a speech more completely saturated with sectarianism than this official one of the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Quite respectful to Hitler, it was, knowingly or unknowingly, contemptuous of the opinions of millions throughout the Empire, and well calculated to split the people into factions. If one of the Freethinking members or supporters of the Government had used his position in or out of Parliament to attack religion, to point out that the present state of the world proved the worthlessness of Christianity, there would have been an outcry, and there would have been demands on the Prime Minister to restrain or dismiss such people from office. If these men were as deeply sectarian as is Lord Halifax they would retort in kind, they would ask Mr. Churchill if he would not restrain these indiscreet and fanatical sectarians among his ministers and prevent them abusing their position in the way his Foreign Minister has done.

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#### A Kindly Press

I am not surprised that most of the papers refrained from printing the essay on prayer with which Lord Halifax filled more than a third of his official speech, a speech that was broadcast to the United States as a reply to Hitler. It has been suggested that it was because it was relayed to the U.S.A. that this unprecedented dose of religion was given. I do not believe it. That would transform Lord Halifax into a humbug, and I do not believe he is that. To believe it is to sacrifice character to intelligence. I believe that where his religion is concerned Lord Halifax is honest enough, completely sincere. And I believe it is exactly his religious sincerity that unfits him for the position he occupies. When one of the chief officials of a commonwealth which contains every shade of religion and non-religion, permits himself deliberately to announce that we are engaged in a "crusade for Christianity," he is degrading the office he holds and threatening the unity of the attempt to protect the people of Europe from the German terror. Would Lord Halifax dare to tour India, telling the people there that we are asking them to join in a "crusade for Christianity"? Would he say the same before an audience of Jews, Freethinkers, or other non-Christian bodies? The multitudes who differ vitally from each other in matters of religion have agreed to sink their differences in a common effort against a common enemy. It is left for the Minister for Foreign Affairs to break the truce and to assure them that he is pledging the Empire to pursue a "crusade for Christianity." Surely Lord Halifax's services in his post are not so indispensable that the Prime Minister cannot do what he has done with others, and restrict the Foreign Secretary confining his personal religious convictions with the duties of his high office, and making official speeches that are insulting to millions of earnest-minded men and women.

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#### An Abuse of Office

I have said that many papers were merciful to Lord Halifax, and suppressed what was the only part of his speech with any originality. But one paper—perhaps the poorest of our dailies—the *Daily Sketch*, was so in-

spired by the speech as to write a leading article headed "This is a Holy War." The best reply to this was given by another illustrated daily, the *Mirror*, which suggested that if Lord Halifax is correct then places might be swapped, and the Archbishop of Canterbury might be made Foreign Minister and Lord Halifax be appointed Archbishop. I think that is a good suggestion. The Archbishop has, I think, a better brain than Halifax, although he has greater cunning. The suggestion might be considered by the Cabinet.

Meanwhile I suggest it is time that Freethinkers and non-Christians generally take a hand in this business and write to the Prime Minister protesting against being committed to a Christian Crusade, and asking him to make it clear to the public that we are not fighting a war of this kind for the re-establishment of Christianity; that this war is being fought to give everyone the right to hold whatever religion he pleases, to preach it when he pleases and it is not designed for the purpose of restoring Christianity to a position it is rapidly losing in the intellectual world. The war is a war for the freeing of human life from a threatened intolerable tyranny. It is not for the reinstatement of a superstition which acted as a forerunner of Hitlerism in a period that historians have rightly named the Dark Ages. Lord Halifax has a right to hold whatever religious opinion he pleases, and I should protest against any interference with his right to freedom of thought and speech. But I do not think that in any other capacity than as a politician Lord Halifax would command public attention. As Minister for Foreign Affairs he represents us all, and his duty is to make that representation fair and honest, not use it for the advocacy of opinions which have no connexion with the office that provides him with a public platform.

CHAPMAN COHEN

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## Chesterton the Crusader

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Democracy cannot flourish if free discussion is blanketed.—*Hamilton Fyfe*.

GILBERT K. CHESTERTON was one of the best-known journalists of his generation, and one of the most popular and welcome figures in the literary arena. It was, therefore, a happy idea of Messrs. Dent to include an omnibus volume of Chesterton's best work in their famous *Everyman* series. It may not reveal the famous writer in all his aspects, but it adds a very agreeable touch of modernity to a series that has a world-wide reputation.

It is customary to regard Chesterton as being as up-to-date as Bernard Shaw or Wells. Yet it is as plain as a pikestaff that Chesterton never represented contemporary thought. What he did represent was the exact opposite; a reaction against the views current in the period around the opening of the present century. He attacked Women's Suffrage, he disliked Jewish people; he was never happier than when telling the working-man when and where he was wrong. The truth is that Chesterton was a fox without a tail who found himself at last in the fold of the Roman Catholic Church, and, being in Rome, did as the Romans did. He was never at any time a hard-shell Tory, for his humour was continually coming to his rescue, but he delighted the Tories more than the Intellectuals. His humour, too, was of the Peter Pan brand, that of the schoolboy who never grew up, and the printed page remains to show his freakish, Puck-like prejudices and perversity. Quixote, democrat in



places, poet, Romanist, jester, he was one of the oddest and most lovable human combinations.

Although he kept his eyes on the path to Rome, and ensured, by a robustious piety, a hearty welcome in so many sheltered homes and country rectories, Chesterton had so many good points. Compared with so many of his sad-eyed contemporaries, he was a breezy and a jolly companion. He seems always to say with Sir Toby Belch, "Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Obsessed with theology, he displayed more than a passing acquaintance with Freethought, and his writings are often barbed with iconoclastic jests, which must be as disconcerting to Christians as they are divesting to Freethinkers. Here, for example, is a pleasant diversion on the lack of authority in matters of religious belief:—

Of all conceivable forms of enlightenment the worst is what these people call the Inner Light. Anyone who knows anybody knows how it would work, anyone who knows anyone from the Higher Thought centre knows how it does work. That Jones shall worship the God within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones. Let Jones worship the sun or moon, anything rather than the Inner Light; let Jones worship cats or crocodiles, if he can find any in his street, but not the God within.

From his abundant mine of epigram and paradox he shovels out diamonds and rubbish with a good-humoured carelessness. Here are a few of his good things:—

The real poor love nothing so much as to take a cheerful glass and to talk about funerals.

My country, right or wrong, is like saying, my mother, drunk or sober.

Tradition means giving votes to our ancestors. It is the democracy of the dead.

What is the good of words if they are not important to quarrel over? If you called a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word?

Newspapers which announce the giant gooseberry and the raining frogs are the modern representative of the popular tendency which produced the hydra, the were-wolf, and the dog-headed-man.

What have we done, and where have we wandered, we that have produced sages who could have spoken to Socrates, and poets who could walk with Dante, that we should talk as if we had never done anything more intelligent than found colonies and kick niggers?

Creed and credence and credulity are words of the same origin, and can be juggled backwards and forwards to any extent.

A great classic means an author whom one can praise without having read.

Every assertion that man is vicious is a confession that virtue is visionary.

Avarice has no dreams, but only insomnia.

Self-hypnotism of error is a process that can occur not only with individuals, but also with whole societies.

When a gang of Big-Business men got together to sob for Service, it takes no Freudian to surmise that someone is about to be swindled.

Dickens's revolt was not the revolt of the Nonconformist against the Churchman, of the Liberal against the Tory, of the Socialist against the Capitalist. His revolt was simply the eternal revolt of the weak against the strong. He did not dislike this or that argument for oppression; he disliked oppression.

Chesterton was so full of fun that he used to joke about his own obesity. So did other people. One story has it that he was seen one day when riding in a bus to rise and courteously give up his seat to three ladies who had just got into the vehicle.

Chesterton was such a boon companion, so fond of comradeship, so full of laughter, the joy of living and the lust of argument, that the reader, although he may not agree with him, is content. In his writings the cunning monologues are forgiven for the inevitable epigrams. Try as he would, he could not keep humanity out of his books. His big, breezy nature refused to be confined within the very narrow limits of ecclesiasticism.

Too much has been made of Chesterton's supposed likeness to old Doctor Johnson. Thus, when someone said, "You cannot put the clock back," meaning that you cannot put events back, Chesterton answers triumphantly, "The reply is, you can put the clock back." Johnson was fond of verbal victory, but he would have disdained such word juggling as this. The fact was that Chesterton often used his great gifts tyrannously. His sense of humour sometimes slumbers, especially when he elected to ascend the pulpit. "Mythology and newspapers cannot co-exist," would be a lovely and a true epigram, if the press gang were reasonably honest. It never seemed to have occurred to him that in introducing unadulterated Romanism to a mixed audience he had done a rash thing. And if it had, would he have been better pleased at the knowledge that Chesterton in cap and bells, banging a bladder, cut a much braver figure than Chesterton apologizing for superstition in a borrowed cassock? It really was too late for a jocose apologist for medievalism to be regarded too seriously, although he loved:—

To prove his doctrine orthodox  
By apostolic blows and knocks.

Idealist, poet, dreamer, if you will; Chesterton is well worth reading. The style is the man, and we cannot have our Chesterton in any other guise. Instead of grumbling because he wore so curious and unusual a coat, in which some find it hard to embrace him, the best is to be grateful that we had a Chesterton at all. It is true that in his *Victorian Age of Literature*, Chesterton used his strength tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of all the Christian Churches. That such a man should have courted approval as a very modern Saint George attacking the dragon of Freethought proves beyond all cavil and dispute to what desperate shifts the champions of Orthodoxy are reduced. Resplendent in motley, he attracted crowds by his high spirits, jests and mere wilfulness. Yet, underneath the jester there remained always the dreamer. A poet at heart, Chesterton dreamed continually. Listen, for a moment, to these lines on France, written over forty years ago, yet as fresh as if they were written yesterday:—

Bear with us, O our Sister, not in pride,  
Nor any scorn we see thee spoiled of knaves,  
But only shame to hear, where Danton died,  
Thy foul dead Kings all laughing in their graves  
Thou hast a right to rule thyself; to be  
The thing thou wilt; to grin, to fawn, to creep;  
To crown these clumsy liars, aye, and we  
Who knew thee once, we have a right to weep.

MIMNERMUS

The purpose of my writings is to make men anthropologists instead of theologians; man-lovers instead of God-lovers; students of this world instead of candidates for another.—*Ludwig Feuerbach*.

A government founded on impartial liberty, where all have a voice and a vote, irrespective of colour or of sex—what is there to hinder such a government from standing firm?—*Fred Douglass*.



## Failure of the Pope

If ever there was a time when unfortunate Europeans needed the voice of an intellectual leader "to warn, to comfort and commend," this war-time is that time. Perhaps a religious majority of the Occidental races acknowledge allegiance to the head of the Roman Catholic Church; and of those who do not, another large majority of Protestants is prepared, in these days when Christianity is upon the defensive, to welcome Papal leadership.

But where is the voice of the Vicar of Christ to-day? It is silent.

That silence is the more significant since it comes after a period of extreme talkativeness from the chair of Saint Peter. We can all remember the Pope's pre-war allocutions, eagerly seized upon by the newspapers of the world and interpreted to suit their nationalisms. English newspapers served up certain extracts which made "good copy" for English readers with the sauce of tendentious head-lines and explained that the vague and politic phrases about "justice" or "peace" or "righteousness" were covert digs at Hitler or Mussolini or both. The importance of "His Holiness" was stressed so much in the *Times*, *Telegraph* and other English newspapers that one might almost have imagined that England had been re-converted suddenly to Roman Catholicism. Everybody in England at that time was made aware that the new Pope (like the old) was really on the side of the Allies just as everyone in Italy was well aware that he was really on the side of Italy—even if no Italian quite knew at that period what side his country was on.

When war was about to break out between England and Germany I was staying upon the delectable island of Capri, where Count Ciano was having a pleasant new villa built, and where Gracie Fields was then recuperating. For nearly a fortnight I had deliberately ignored news and newspapers—Capri's lovely isle held metal more attractive. But the threatening outlook became insistent and the English colony prepared to leave—for who knew what Italy would do? Each night I went to the house of an Italian noblewoman and listened to her expensive wireless-set giving us English exiles the foreign news. Never shall I forget the scene in her drawing-room when the voice of the Pope was heard on the wireless pleading for peace. Expressions of pious admiration, frequent crossings of the breast punctuated the Papal homily. The Voice of Christ's vicar had spoken for Peace and Goodwill: the statesmen of the world would and must heed. There would be no war, after all.

I had not quite the same confidence as my hostess, her aged mother and her circle. So I left Capri for Naples the next day and found that Miss Gracie Fields (who seemed to have more faith in a telegram of recall than in any Italian protestations) was leaving by the same boat. Our boatload was virtually the last to leave—one courageous and stubborn English lady, long-resident and deeply devoted to the delectable island, refused to go.

Back in England, with war a reality, one heard more Papal allocutions. They read well. The papers featured them. Then Cardinal Hinsley spoke out, like Chapman portrayed by the poet Keats, "loud and bold." No one could doubt which side the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster espoused. His Eminence was not to be outdone in patriotic belligerence by mere heretic Protestant Archbishops like their Graces of Canterbury and York. Zealously our excellent daily Press continued to "feature" the prelates; and soon a suitably impressed Christian Com-

munity learned that on one thing all the shepherds were agreed—namely that we were fighting, not for England against Germany, but for God against the powers of Evil. It was a war for Christianity we were told—which, no doubt, explained why Moslems, Jews and Freethinkers fought in our ranks. Vociferously the Christian prelates urged us to prayer and battle.

When Russia invaded Finland the sympathies of the Pope (and his English Cardinal) became even plainer. The Roman Catholic Church was almost accorded the status of another Ally—as if Britain had not too many already!

Then came a period of doubt. Would Italy join us or would she join Germany? In that period our Press laboured to convince us that although Mussolini might have naughty inclinations, the Pope (like the Italian King) was with us. Had not the organ of the Vatican been burned in the Roman streets by Fascist youth because of some indiscreet insertion of matter favourable to the Allies?

But suddenly the attitude of Italy to the war "crystallized" as Stendhal, that lover of a former Italy, might put it. At once His Holiness the Pope and the Italianate College of Cardinals subsided into a silence—a silence so profound that it was more eloquent of the truth than their speeches had ever been.

Cardinal Hinsley, the head of the Italian Church in England made excuses for the Vicar of Christ's failure to support the British nation in its "fight for Christianity." The Pope, he said, was "in an agonizing position." (Certainly an excessively awkward position!) As an Italian and the head of the Italian national church surrounded by fiercely-patriotic Italian cardinals and priests, the Pope must support Italy. But he dare not alienate British or American Catholics who supply the bulk of the funds of his Italian Church!

Hence the Papal Silence!

In Italy to-day Catholics believe the Pope is staunch for the Italian cause; in England Catholics believe he is staunch for the British cause. The Catholic God like the god Janus of Ancient Rome, has two faces—one pro-Axis, one pro-Ally. What humbug it is!

Note that this newly tongue-tied Pope could have stopped Italy entering the war "against Christianity" and England with one word! He had only to proclaim an Interdict and excommunicate such figures as Hitler and Mussolini. The Italian people, religious and superstitious to a degree, once deprived of their Church's rites (as England was in the reign of King John) would never have entered a war proscribed by their Church.

The Pope failed to speak that word. And by that failure, the Pope betrayed the cause for which he and his Church profess to stand—the cause of Peace and Goodwill amongst men; the cause of the Christ he professes. But that betrayal is in the historic Papal tradition for Pope after Pope has initiated, winked at or encouraged war. However not every English Roman Catholic is a besotted fool, and Cardinal Hinsley's apologetics will be severely tasked to explain away such a blatant fact as the Pope's failure to speak out courageously in the hour of Europe's need.

Though it is, of course, execrable bad taste on my part to point out what the Pope could have said (and didn't) the exquisite courtesy of the major part of the English Press in preserving a decent silence upon even the existence of the formerly much-advertised Pope since Italy entered the war, more than atones for my disgusting lapse. Every grateful adherent of the Italian Church in Britain must recognize that.

C. G. L. DU CANN



## Mr. Tennyson on Atheism

(Reprinted from "Freethinker," November 13, 1881)

MR. TENNYSON has written some fine poetry in his old age, and he has also written a good deal of trash. Most of the latter has appeared in the hospitable columns of the *Nineteenth Century*. Mr. James Knowles, the editor of that magazine, is an excellent man of business and knows what takes with the British public. He is fully aware that Mr. Tennyson is the popular poet of the day, and, with commendable sagacity, he not only accepts the poet laureate's verses whenever he can get them, but always prints them in the very largest type. Mr. Tennyson opened the first number of his magazine with a weak sonnet, in which men like Professor Clifford were alluded to as seekers of hope "in sunless gulfs of doubt." That little germ has developed into the longer poem on "Despair" that appears in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*.

The critics have lauded this poem. Nothing else could be expected of them. Mr. Tennyson is the popular poet, the household poet, the Christian poet, and scarcely a critic dares give him aught but unstinted praise. The ordinary gentlemen of the press write to order; they describe Mr. Tennyson's poetry as they describe Mr. Irving's acting; they are fettered by great, and especially by fashionable reputations; and when the public has settled who are its favourites they never resist its verdict, but simply flow with the stream. In the course of time there grows up a sanctified cant of criticism. If you are rash enough to doubt the favourite's greatness, you are looked upon as a common-place person incapable of appreciating genius. If you object to the popular poet's intellectual ideas, you are rebuked for not seeing that he is divinely inspired. Yet it is surely indisputable that ideas are large or small, true or false, whether they are expressed in verse or in prose. When poets condescend to argue they must be held amenable to the laws of reason. The right divine of kings to govern wrong is an exploded idea, and the right divine of poets to reason wrong should share the same fate.

Mr. Tennyson's poem is about Atheism and Despair. The two things of course go together. Yet he is singularly infelicitous in showing their connexion. The hero of his poem gets converted from Calvinism to Atheism and then commits suicide. But to our mind a man who could live for years in the belief that the evils of this life were ordained by God, and were to be followed by eternal hell in the next life, is not likely to destroy himself when he finds that the universe has no jailor and that all the evils of this life end with it. As a matter of fact, Atheists are not particularly prone to suicide. On an average, if we may judge by our own notes during the past six months, one parson cuts his throat, or hangs, or poisons, or drowns himself, every month; while, so far as we know, not a single prominent Freethinker has taken his own life in the whole present generation.

Mr. Tennyson, too, does not play fair. He takes an almost impossible extreme. His Atheist husband loses more than belief in God. His wife suffers from a malady only curable, if at all, by the surgeon's knife. His eldest son has forged his name and ruined him, and another son has sunk to a still worse depth of vice. All this is highly inartistic. An Atheist under such a burden of trouble might commit suicide just as a Christian might. The real question is, "Does Atheism, as such, incline men to self-destruction?" and that is not touched.

Mr. Tennyson's lack of art in this poem goes still further. He makes the Atheist husband and wife

drown themselves theatrically. They walk out into the breakers near a lighthouse. This is mere melodrama. Why did they not take poison and die in each other's arms?

The wife is drowned, but the husband is rescued "by a minister of the sect he had abandoned." He wastes a great deal of denunciation on his rescuer, and vehemently protests his intention to do for himself despite the minister's "lynx-eyes." Why all this pother? Why not hold his tongue and quietly seize the first opportunity? But Mr. Tennyson's heroes are usually infirm of purpose. He can make his characters talk, but he cannot make them act.

Mr. Tennyson's Atheist "leans to the darker side" in everything." This is how he expresses his pessimism:—

And the suns of the limitless Universe sparkled and shone in the sky,  
Flashing with fires as of God, but we knew that their light was a lie—  
Bright as with deathless hope—but, however they sparkled and shone,  
The dark little worlds running round them were worlds of woe like our own—  
No soul in the heaven above, no soul on the earth below,  
A fiery scroll written over with lamentation and woe."

Things are very much mixed in these lines. Why should the stars be "bright as with deathless hope?" All the meaning they have we put into them. To Carlyle they were "a sad sight." Hegel called them "a golden leprosy on the face of heaven." Their significance is all a matter of fancy; and if they do not realize our fancies it is scarcely fair to make Atheism responsible for the failure.

Towards the end of his poem Mr. Tennyson asks:—

Why should we bear with an hour of torture, a moment of pain  
If every man die for ever, if all his griefs are in vain,  
And the homeless planet at length will be wheel'd thro' the silence of space,  
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanishing race.  
When the worm shall have writhed its last, and its last brother-worm will have fled  
From the dead fossil skull that is left in the rocks of an earth that is dead?

Now, sincere pessimists, like Schopenhauer, deprecate suicide. Schopenhauer describes it as an act of cowardice. If here and there a pessimist destroys himself, how does that make things better for the masses who are governed by instinct and not by metaphysics? Mr. Tennyson does not see that the most confirmed pessimist may, like George Eliot, believe in *meliorism*; that is, not in perfection, but in improvement. Nature, we may be sure, will never produce a race of beings with a general taste for suicide; and it is therefore the duty of those who deplore the ineradicable evils of life to stay with their brethren and to do their share towards improving the common lot. If they cannot really make life happier, they may at least make it less miserable.

The Atheist, however, is not necessarily a pessimist. Mr. Tennyson might have seen from Shelley's writings that an Atheist may cherish the noblest dreams of progress without intellectual deception.

As a whole, we think "Despair" a poor achievement. Yet it contains some fine passages. Even when his mind is biassed by vulgar prejudice, Mr. Tennyson cannot write a poem of a hundred and sixteen lines without saying some admirable things. Here is a powerful condemnation of mere Deism:—

He is only a cloud and a smoke who was once a pillar of fire,  
The guess of a worm in the dust and the shadow of its desire—  
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of the weak trodden down by the strong,  
Of a dying worm in a world, all massacre, murder, and wrong.



Calvinism, too, is vigorously denounced.

What! I should call on that Infinite Love that has served us so well?

Infinite wickedness rather that made everlasting Hell,  
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us, and does what he will with his own;

Better our dead brute mother who never has heard us groan!

Hell? if the souls of men were immortal, as men have been told,

The lecher would cleave to his lusts, and the miser would yearn for his gold,

And so there were Hell for ever! but were there a God as you say,

His Love would have power over Hell till it utterly vanish'd away.

Mr. Tennyson deserves our thanks for these lines. But his poem is on the whole a failure. He does not understand Atheism, and he fails to appreciate either its meaning or its hope. We trust that he will afflict us with no more poetical abortions like this, but give us only the proper fruit of his genius, and leave the task of holding up Atheists as a frightful example to the smaller fry of the pulpit and the religious press.

G. W. FOOTE

## Ludwig Feuerbach

THE fulfilment of a prophecy of Mother Shipton's

And to an end the world shall come,  
In eighteen hundred and eighty one.

was looked anxiously forward to by North Country people, in 1881. Even a village schoolmaster (a Durham College man!) told me that, during a heavy thunderstorm, in July that year, he thought this prophecy was being fulfilled.

Fulfilled it certainly was for many! But some of us who escaped, fortunately, lost mental worlds beyond the ken of the prophetess, e.g., that year ended for me the Calvinistic world I had lived in for fifteen years.

A fire-flood (ein Feuerbach) from Germany swept me off my feet. An edition of the *Essence of Religion*, by L. Feuerbach, translated by A. Loos, A.M., and published by Butts & Co., New York, fell into my hands. Following this, came *The Essence of Christianity*, by the same author, translated by Marian Evans (George Eliot). Trübner & Co., 1881.

Scanning these two volumes, recently, I was struck by many of the passages I had marked when reading, e.g.,

In §17 *Essence of Religion* he shows that Trilobites, Encrinites, Ammonites, Pterodactyls, Ichthyosauri, Plesiosauri, Megatheria or Dinotheria, etc., no longer exist.

Why? "Because the conditions of their existence no longer exist." The end of any life, therefore, coinciding with the end of its conditions, the beginning, the origin of life must co-incide with the origin of its conditions.

And he ends this section by saying—"If, therefore, the earth, by virtue of its own nature, has in the course of time developed and cultivated itself to such a degree that it adopted a character agreeable to the existence of man and suitable to man's nature, or so to say a *human* character then it could produce man also by its own power."

To avoid duplication, the following quotations are all taken from *The Essence of Christianity*.

In the Preface of the Revisers of the *Old Testament*, we are informed that "In some words of very frequent occurrence, the A.V. being either inadequate or inconsistent, and sometimes misleading, changes

have been introduced with as much uniformity as appeared practicable or desirable." And later on we are told how alterations in the text had been determined by voting." Should God's word have been left in such a deplorable state?

Feuerbach pertinently asks:—

"If God numbers the hairs on the head of a man, if no sparrow falls to the ground without his will, how could he leave to the stupidity and caprice of scribes his Word—that Word on which depends the everlasting salvation of man? Why should he not dictate his thoughts to their pen in order to guard them from the possibility of disfiguration?" (p. 210).

Sheer neglect on God's part! What other conclusion can we arrive at?

\* \* \*

Love, wisdom, justice are more characteristic of unbelievers than they are of believers who think that belief emancipates them from the observance of such paltry things! Believers are, in fact, the true Atheists!

"He alone is the true Atheist to whom the predicates of the Divine Being—for example, love, wisdom, justice—are nothing; not he to whom merely the subject of these predicates is nothing." (p. 21.)

The following explains why many would listen rather to a lecturer than read for themselves.

When writing, the help of one's ears is indispensable. The prose of some great writers, when audibly read, rolls along like the harmonious sound of an organ, consonantal chords, vowel sounds, etc., all in perfect order, with accidentals, of course; its symphonic development complete!

"The common people, i.e., people in whom power of abstraction has not been developed, are still incapable of understanding what is written if they do not read it audibly, if they do not pronounce what they read. In this point of view Hobbes correctly enough derives the understanding of man from his ears!" (pp. 83-84.)

There is rather a lengthy passage contrasting St. Anthony's literal interpretation of—"Sell all that thou hast and give to the poor," etc., (Matt. xix. 21), with that of the modern Christian interpretation—"according to which the Lord has required only a spiritual freedom, i.e., a freedom which demands no sacrifice, no energy—an illusory, self-deceptive freedom from earthly good, which consists in its possession and enjoyment! For certainly the Lord said "My yoke is easy." How harsh, how unreasonable would Christianity be if it exacted from man the renunciation of earthly riches! . . . Christianity is in the highest degree practical and judicious!" (pp. 163-4.)

Questioning the being of God he says—"The reality of a personal being is sustained only on empirical grounds—what sort of form God has—where he exists—and lastly, of what sex he is." (p. 93.)

Then follows a few remarkable pieces of which the following brevities bear witness:—

"The divine being is the pure subjectivity of man, freed from all else, from everything objective, having relation only to itself, enjoying only itself—his most subjective, his inmost self." (p. 98.)

"In general the need of a personal God has its foundation in this, that only in the attribute of personality does the personal man meet with himself, find himself." (p. 99.)

\* \* \*

Faith in God is only faith in the abstract nature of man. Faith in the heavenly life is only faith in the abstract earthly life." (p. 184.)



In conclusion: the following aphorisms, 3,000 years ago, would have been graced with the prefix

Thus Saith the Lord:—

"Darkness is the mother of religion." (p. 193.)

"Religion explains everything miraculously." (p. 194.)

"The religious mind does not distinguish between subjective and objective." (p. 204.)

GEORGE WALLACE

## Acid Drops

Now that the Government has called to book a number of petty magistrates for the manner in which they have treated men in administering the perfectly ridiculous regulations set going by Mr. Duff Cooper who, if he was ever fit for the job, ought now to get out of it, we suggest that steps be taken to "advise" all petty magistrates that the law does not exist for them to display their unfitness for the job, but to apply the law and have done with it. Some of the sentences are little more than an expression of personal prejudice, and others are impudent comments concerning the opinions of those who are brought before them. No judge in the higher courts of justice would be so impertinent to one who was before him for trial. We have often called attention to such cases. The occasion seems a good one for retiring some of these men and cautioning those who need it.

Apropos of our "Views and Opinions," the *Church Times* says, "It is a matter for deep thankfulness that Lord Halifax never lets the Statesman hide the Christian." We are not surprised, for the elaborated type of crass superstition in which Lord Halifax delights is of the kind favoured by the *Church Times*. But the fact remains that Lord Halifax was not appointed to his post because of his religious opinions but to serve the State in a purely secular capacity. And when a man is appointed for one purpose and uses his appointment for another in anything but Christianity it would be considered a breach of trust. The *Church Times* supplies convincing evidence that Christianity is admirably designed to confuse a man's sense of moral values. The plain fact is that in justice to the British public Lord Halifax ought either to cease using his position for advertising his religious creed or resign office. We should like to see some Member of Parliament put a very plain question to the Prime Minister as a protest against this Christian conduct.

That the *Church Times'* praise of Lord Halifax rests on the narrowest of religion bases is quite clear from its comment on the proceedings of a not overwise movement "The World Congress of Faiths," and led, we believe, by Sir Francis Younghusband. The *Church Times* in its issue for July 26, fears that "the indiscriminate appeal to all the gods of Theism and Pantheism" is of little or no value. In fact that makes "the work of the Congress entirely mischievous." That seems to remove all doubt as to why the *Church Times* so warmly endorses the abuse by Lord Halifax of the office he holds. He believes in the kind of adulterated Roman Catholicism in which the *Church Times* delights. When they speak of God, they mean the Christian God. No other God is worth bothering about.

The *Daily Telegraph* Sunday sermon is now written by the Rev. L. B. Ashby. Here is a specimen that is truly Christian, from the issue for July 27:—

The whole point of having a religion is that it is a restraint on our conduct.

That is the most Christian sentence that has been published for some time, although we doubt whether Mr. Ashby see its full implications—to a non-Christian. Put the same thing in another way:—

The whole point of having a police force is that it is a restraint on conduct

In the second sentence there is ninety-five per cent of truth. In the first there is ninety-five per cent of falsehood, and the remaining five per cent is only true so far as Christianity is stated as being what it is, a purely criminal code.

And that expresses the true spirit of Christianity. The doctrine that man, since the fall, is essentially "sinful," that he cannot, unaided by a supernatural power, be anything else but a criminal, and that he cannot be decent without belief in Jesus Christ, is the oldest and the most firmly rooted of all Christian doctrines. It is present to-day in the preaching of the lower order of Christian evangelists ("lower" because their speech is plainer and their mentality more honest than that of the sophisticated preacher) and in the sermonizing of men such as the present Dean of St. Paul's and many others. Every attempt to prove that morals must have a religious basis rests upon this belief that man is naturally a criminal, and needs a police force—heavenly or earthly—to maintain a decent measure of conduct. We have said many times that our earliest impression of Christianity was that it was one of the fundamentally lowest creeds that ever darkened the human horizon. After-years has done nothing but confirm that impression.

Consider that sinister word "restraint" used by the Christian in relation to conduct. The Christian, as Mr. Ashby suggests, feels that his religion puts a restraint on his conduct. I do not believe that the Christian is really such an incurably bad lot as he would have us believe he is. But if we are to take him at his own valuation, when he does not steal it is because his religion "restrains" him! if he does not lie habitually it is because of the "restraint" his religion places upon him. But the Atheist has not a religion to "restrain" him, yet there are not more liars or thieves or rogues among Atheists than there are among Christians. So I do not believe that Christians are such essentially poor specimens of humanity as the Rev. Ashby would have us believe. Perhaps his experience among his brother Christians has been unfortunate. Perhaps his congregation has given him a very bad experience, and he really feels that only "restraints" placed upon them by God or the police—or God and the police—keep them within the bounds of a formal decency. But apart from these circumstances I do not believe that Christians are of necessity so much worse than Atheists. I believe, as I have so often said, that Christians may be as good as Atheists, if they will only try. So let them take heart and cease either blackguarding themselves or encouraging their ministers to do so.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Swiss Army proclaimed, the other day, that it is God who has spared Switzerland. If Hitler or Mussolini attacks it, and annexes it, then the Swiss will have been punished for their want of faith, as was Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, France, and Poland. If Hitler fails in his onslaught on England, then naturally God has been with us. If he succeeds, then it is God's punishment for our "sins." You can always trust a good Christian to tell you not only whose side God is on, but also why God has deserted somebody or other. This particular Commander-in-Chief is quite certain that "a greater value is attached to spiritual preparedness than to material and moral." What a pity we are spending so many millions every day when a few prayers will stop Hitler so easily.

We see from the *Tablet* that the Archbishop of Toulouse and the Archbishop of Bordeaux have issued to their people a warning that France experienced defeat because the Church had been disestablished, and had despoiled the Church, desecrated the Sunday, and so on and so forth. All the things they say might be true, and we have no doubt but Lord Halifax would in general terms agree with them. But *all* the people of France did not do these things. And what is one to make of a God who,



because certain people have offended him, or "neglected" him—that is did kow-tow sufficiently to him—lets loose Hitler and his followers, punishing all, from the baby in its mother's arms to the old person tottering on the brink of the grave? We can think of many things that are bad, but we can think of none more degrading than the worship of a God who could act in the way these Archbishops suggest he acts. It would be the infamy of infamy. But we admit it is essential Christianity.

The Holy See will, we are informed by Bishop Lyons of Kilmore, make Bl. Oliver Plunket a "Saint" if clear proof can be obtained of "two miracles" through his intercession "enacted after the date of his beatification." That is all—just "clear proof" of a couple of paltry miracles which the Church in Ireland ought to obtain as easily as it gets money for Masses. Bishop Lyons says plenty of prayer would help, but surely the Church ought to manage the miracles, prayer or no prayer? We suggest Mr. Belloc and Fr. Knox should be sent to Ireland to speed things up a bit. Miracles ought to be child's play to them.

Why Hitler and Mussolini have not yet been excommunicated is disturbing the equanimity of many fervent Catholics who, contrary to Canon Law, mistakingly put England before the Pope. The Church's pet theologians are having a trying time to explain to their sheep why the Pope is lying low and doing nothing. One of them is doing his best to show that the Pope cannot act in this way "until Christianity unity is restored." This means that if the whole world should become Catholic, and meekly submit to the Pope, he would be able to excommunicate offenders. But excommunication is still powerful with all who believe in it, and was never more than that. And the Church does excommunicate when it wants to—witness the way in which Loisy was treated. There is too much in common between Roman Catholicism and Fascism for the Pope to excommunicate either Mussolini or Hitler.

Mr. Collie Knox, one of the most trenchant critics of the B.B.C., now puts in a vigorous plea to "scrap its present Charter and turn out the 'passengers.'" In the past (though religious himself) he has strongly opposed the Sunday religious programme—and this in such a pious journal as the *Daily Mail*. It is good, therefore, to find one voice protesting at the way in which "favoritism, safe job limpets, and men with incipient beards" are running the powerful propagandist machine of our wireless service in a way to sicken any intelligent person. The childish religious services are an insult—and they appear to be increasing. "I would burn the Charter in the market place," cries Mr. Knox, "and let men of Action and Sense march into Broadcasting House and take over." Hear, hear.

The New York *Truthseeker* is responsible for the following:—

An eccentric woman in Cherokee County, N.S., bequeathed a part of her estate to God. In an endeavour to settle the case according to legal requirements, the usual suit, naming God a party thereto, was filed. The sheriff returned the summons with the notation, "After due and diligent search, God cannot be found in Cherokee County."

But this incident offers a good chance for some parson, who has been called by God to be where he is, to substantiate his claims.

Dear, dear—so Milton, long considered England's supreme Christian poet, has been very energetically forced off his perch by Lord David Cecil, who has edited an anthology of Christian verse for the Oxford Press. Lord Cecil says that "Milton was not essentially a religious poet," that "he did not live by faith," and that "he scorned hope, and was indisposed to charity; while pride, so far from being the vice which Christianity considers it, was to Milton the mark of a superior nature." Milton's

imagination "was unlit by heavenly gleams," and he considered theology merely a branch of political science. But in revenge, if Milton was not a great Christian poet, he was the greatest of English poets "who have made religion their subject"—which is some consolation for the loss Christianity has again sustained in her list of great men. Shakespeare, and now Milton—and there are dozens of others.

The B.B.C. has got rid of the nit-wit who gave us the seven-fifty-five religious address every morning, with the obvious intention of proving that there are worse things in the world than war. The new one has a different voice, but he possesses the same kind of substitute for a brain. Here is a sample. On July 27 we were in time to catch the following gem. Explaining why God permitted difficulties to exist, the speaker showed that if difficulties were not there we would never develop the qualities necessary to overcome them. So God kindly provides or permits difficulties in order that we develop the qualities to overcome them. But if the difficulties were not there we shouldn't need the power to overcome them. Even the B.B.C. Religious Committee ought to have enough intelligence to see this. God provides difficulties and then wishes us to praise him because he has helped us out of a situation he created. Admitting that Munich was the last stroke that made the war certain, we ought to thank the Munichers for providing the occasion that made war certain, so that, in turn, we might, after a disastrous war, achieve victory. We think we ought to congratulate the B.B.C. on being so thoughtful in always having in hand a stock of preachers who prove so interesting a study in stupidity.

The heart of the Vicar of Greasebrough is nearly broken. As reported in the *Sheffield Telegraph* of July 17, he can see a time when his parish church will "be removed by corporation workmen, owing to its having fallen into decay through disuse by the parishioners." The poor man says this decline has been going on during the whole of his 27 years of ministry. "Every year fewer worshippers, fewer helpers, fewer Sunday School scholars, yes, every year the tide of ungodliness rises." It almost makes one weep. But there is one grain of hope left. There will, unto the end, be the B.B.C. as a refuge for the artful preachers of an outworn creed. And there will always be the shoals of grateful letters which the B.B.C. announces as being received, but which no one outside is permitted to inspect or count.

We may be of good cheer! Through the mouth of its President, Professor Ambrose Fleming, The Council of the Victoria Institute has expressed its "firm belief" that "in the present struggle with a destructive Nazism the issues rest entirely in the power of Almighty God." That should help us considerably. There is no need to bother about further supplies of aeroplanes, or the support of Allies, or getting more ships. All our business contracts with the U.S.A. may be cancelled. The issue rests entirely with God. Or does Professor Fleming mean with God—and other things? We wonder.

The *British Australian and New Zealander* (published in London) admits that the speech of Lord Halifax displeased many "because they considered it too much diffused with religious profession and does not appear to be a suitable pronouncement on political policy and the conduct of the war." That was very good ground on which to object. Any man who can use his political position for the purpose of thrusting his own personal religious convictions in the name of governmental policy labels himself as unfitted for the post he holds. One has only to consider what would happen if another Minister rose and said, what some of them certainly believe, that Christianity has been little short of a world disaster, to realize the unfitness of that large portion of his speech. The feeling against that religious outburst, we have reason for believing, is very wide spread. If only this feeling against using the war for sectarian purposes found greater expression the Government might get a shock.

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# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

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J. H. BOWLES.—We should like to see a Branch of the N.S.S. in Norwich. Any help we can give will be given.

F. S. VINEY.—Books, with copies of *Freethinker*, have been sent.

W. SAWYER.—We are very pleased to find you have so much enjoyed the *Freethinker*. If we could only "land" ten per cent of the probable readers in this country, part of our troubles would be at an end.

JOHN A. LODGE, J. W. BRAY.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

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## Sugar Plums

We continue to receive reports from men entering the forces that the (usually) non-commissioned officer refuses to register them as Freethinker, Atheist, etc. The latest communication we have had is from one entering the air-force. He was told bluntly that he could not be registered as an Atheist in the air-force. That is a lie, both of theory and practice. Many are registered as non-religious in the air-force, and officers have no legal right of refusal. Whenever this right is refused information should be sent to the N.S.S. and the complainant should ask for an interview with superiors. It is ill-doing to rob a soldier of his legal rights who is entering an army which we are officially assured is fighting a war for liberty. Some of these petty officers have no better conception of personal honour than has Lord Halifax. And when a leading Cabinet Minister uses his office to advertise his religious opinions one cannot be surprised if petty army officers use theirs to display their ignorance or bigotry, or both.

We are very pleased to record that the attempt of Mr. Duff Cooper, Mr. Harold Nicholson, together with many of the Special Broadcasters of the B.B.C. to convert the British Public into a collection of silent imbeciles has been squashed by public opinion and by the Prime Mini-

## SPECIAL

WITH a view to meeting circumstances that may arise with a prolongation of the war, we should be greatly helped if each subscriber to the *Freethinker* would be good enough to send us his, or her, name and address. We refer only to those who procure their copies through newsagents. Those who order direct from the office have their addresses already on our books.

The circumstances we have in view may never arise, but it is well to be prepared for all kinds of difficulties. We have, so well as we can, guarded the future of the paper in many directions, and this suggestion represents the last contingency of which we can think—at the moment.

All that is required is just a name and an address on a postcard or in a letter. We shall know to what it refers. Our readers have assisted us so willingly, and in so many directions, that we do not hesitate to ask this further help.

CHAPMAN COHEN

ster, who has been simply bombarded by protests from all quarters. We hope that this attempt to out-Hitler Hitler will not again be attempted. If the British public is made of such poor stuff that it cannot stand against someone whispering that he doubts whether we shall win the war or not, it is about time that we gave way to others of sterner stuff. We suppose that at the root of this lies the desire of some of the army of officials we have to raise themselves into a position of importance—in their own estimation. And what can do that better, so far as a particular type of mind is concerned, than to feel that one may issue a ukase preventing this, that or the other.

The Irish labourer who was delighted with a rise that gave him more hours of harder work, and a trifle less pay, but did put another man beneath him, stands for a type of official who can only feel his own greatness so long as he can issue orders to others.

After all, Nazism, minus the extreme brutality of the German variety, is a very common expression of human nature when it takes an official form. The commonest form of this disease is the placing in the hands of one man the ordering about of others. They very seldom learn the lesson that the quickest way to weaken a people is to act as the B.B.C. Broadcasters have been acting ever since the commencement of the war. When nothing but official talk is heard, and no official statement is questioned, the conclusion of the sensible person is that official news must be largely poppycock.

One would like to know how many thousands of the posters with the three-way picture of the girl who will listen to nothing, say nothing, and see nothing result in people who know nothing and are incapable of useful thought about anything. Much money and much paper that might have been used to a better purpose have gone in this almost criminal venture.

Many people have grumbled because it is difficult to find a place in the war machine for their own particular qualifications. Our attention has been drawn to an organization which seems likely to solve these peoples' difficulties. Called "*Civil Liaison*," it was originally started by Mr. A. B. Cox ("*Francis Isles*," the novelist), and it already has a large number of members in many districts. It has formed a group of scientists and engineers, a group of writers and journalists, and other groups of people with special qualifications, and has evolved a scheme for setting up in every street a "*Liaison House*," which will act as a kind of centre for neighbourly co-operation. This is a real example of democracy in action, and it should have its appeal for many people. If any of our readers feel interested to learn more about the



scheme, and feel that they are qualified to fill some part in the organization, they can hear all about it by writing, enclosing a stamped envelope for reply, to Mr. A. B. Cox, 86 Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.8.

Our old friend, Mr. J. Hammond, formerly of Liverpool, now of Teignmouth, writes:—

I take this opportunity to record my enjoyment of your *Almost an Autobiography*, but I think that *Very Much an Autobiography* would have been a better title. Many autobiographies contain a lot of information about people the writer has met, and about his favourite meals, etc. This you avoid but you do give us a great deal of what you think, and this is what really matters.

We appreciate Mr. Hammond's opinion. The book is selling well, and has brought many letters of high appreciation, some from, to us, quite strangers. We take this opportunity of reminding readers that there will presently be a twelve and a half per cent tax placed on this book. "Your reading will cost you more."

The following excellent letter appears in the *Stockport Express*:—

#### PARSONS AND EXEMPTION

Sir,—I am not impressed at the contributions by the two ministers of religion in your last issue. It is no argument for exemption to assess or compare the duties and responsibilities of engineers in aircraft and munition works with those of the stay-at-home parson; also to suggest that being a member of the Chaplains' Corps is doing "one's bit," is beside the point.

The nation is facing probably the greatest battle in history—a battle for our homes, lives, freedom and democracy. Every man and woman mentally and physically fit must be ready and on their toes; we cannot afford to tolerate slackers and slinkers. The people behind the fighting men are the second line; there must be no third line of talkers and spouters.

In a previous letter I condemned compulsory church parades. These are out of tune in a modern world. Our soldiers, sailors and airmen have no right to be treated like children; further, the parades are made compulsory in order to find the chaplains something to do. The officer-parson is out of place and would be doing his profession more good if he was dressed in the battle dress of a private and preached to the men at voluntary services. It is a poor religion that has to depend on compulsion to get a congregation—it is bad for the men, the Army and Christianity. We don't compel the Hindoo and Mohammedan soldiers to attend their religious practices.

G.B.

We should like to see many more such letters appearing in the press.

From the New York *Truthseeker*:—

Through a national radio hook-up on "The Calvacade of America" programme, emanating from station WJZ, in New York City, Thomas Paine, to whom the broadcast was devoted, received more recognition in the brief period of half an hour on the evening of April 30, than in any of the years since he rendered his invaluable services to the Revolutionary cause. Under the able and conscientious direction of Dr. Frank Monaghan of Yale University, who is in charge of this Du Pont sponsored programme, Paine came vividly to life to millions of listeners not only as the foremost contributor to American independence, but as a heroic champion of liberty wherever it was absent. The high spots of his Revolutionary activities, in dramatic dress, were presented honestly, scholarly and inspiringly.

Each generation for over 150 years has had small groups of liberty-loving men and women who proclaimed Paine's merits and kept his memory alive. The results of their labours are beginning to bear fruit in a more widespread recognition of his greatness, of which this broadcast is undoubtedly the most noted and effective example.

## Visual Propaganda

WHETHER we like to concede the fact or not, we must admit that the Germans under Hitler have shown remarkable mastery of the art of propaganda. It is not, of course, *fair* propaganda. It is the absolute limit of baseness, but it has succeeded so well that half Europe is under the domination of Germany, and not altogether through military prowess.

Hitler made it quite clear in his book *Mein Kampf* that there were no limits whatever to his propaganda. His weapons were based on lying to the utmost, on brute force, on fear, on cupidity, credulity, and what he called working from within. They were not original ideas, but had all been put into practice for centuries by the Christian Church with astounding success. People are now finding out, for example, how very difficult it is to catch up with a German lie—the kind so assiduously propagated by the Christian and Fascist gentleman called Lord Haw-Haw. People in this country have listened to his flawless English and confident tones, and have despairingly asked themselves whether there may not be something in it? The bigger the lie, the more they have inclined to belief.

We know how difficult it is to catch up with a Christian lie, and therefore we know to what place we can assign Lord Haw-Haw. But we need not be surprised at the success of the Hitler-Goebbels lie factory when we consider how the nations have been fooled by almost precisely similar kinds of lying in Christianity. One need go no further than to consider visual propaganda.

However much the spoken and written word can be successful, there is an irresistible appeal about pictures. A detailed description of an aeroplane covering many pages is never so clear as one good photograph. There is always something more fascinating about a well-illustrated book than one which is all print. When we think of Dickens' most famous characters, we visualize the creations of Phiz or Cruikshank, who so graphically translated their author's conceptions with the etching needle. Few greater descriptive writers than Dickens have ever lived, but Micawber and Fagin, Mrs. Gamp and Mr. Pickwick, have been immortalized by the artists quite as much as by the writer.

Hitler was soon to be aware of the tremendous importance of pictures. His anti-Semitic campaign was helped by the gross caricatures of Jews, with which he filled the pages of his journals, contrasting these vile travesties with the "Aryan" blondes so typical, he asserted, of the true German. When Jews therefore are considered by most Germans at all, they think only of the caricatures; and if a Jew was found totally unlike them, the true German managed to see this caricature in spite of the palpable absurdity. Contrast, for example, some of those tragic photographs of Jewish lawyers and doctors in refuse carts surrounded by "Aryans." They are as unlike the beastly drawings of Jews as can possibly be imagined. But the average German will not now believe the evidence of his own eyes. Nothing has contributed more to the success of anti-Semitism in Germany than the lying caricatures of Jews found almost everywhere—in books, journals, and posters.

So also in working up a hatred of the English people. A "Hymn of Hate" lustily sung is good propaganda, but let anyone look at the way in which England was treated in France during the Boer War. The French resented our championship of Dreyfus, and in a journal like *L'Assiette au Beurre*, which had very little letterpress, French artists vied with each other in disgusting caricatures. Many of them

The doctrine of the atonement is calculated to annihilate every spark of dignity and justice in man's nature and utterly to demoralize him.—Dr. Hardwick,



were re-discovered and reproduced in Italy, when that country was attacking us over our attitude on Abyssinia, and must have helped no end among the Fascists to inculcate and work up a similar hatred for England. Hitler is quite right when he says that constant repetition of a lie will at last induce many people to believe it; but back up that lie with clever if beastly caricatures or carefully chosen photographs and it will be believed in much more thoroughly.

To work upon the impressionable mind of German children they have pictures and diagrams forced upon them at every conceivable moment. As an "ideal," they are shown the German soldier marching or drilling or "goose-stepping." To us he looks more and more like a horrible "blonde beast," as, I think, Nietzsche called him, but certainly not so to the unlucky German children. How successful has been this propaganda can be seen in the way the young German is ready to sacrifice his life gladly for the "Fuehrer." It is useless disguising this fact, for it is palpable to all who saw the way in which hordes of German infantry would hurl themselves to certain death when told to do so by their leaders.

But there is nothing new in Hitler's visual propaganda. It was the method adopted by the Christian Church as soon as it saw how effective it was with the masses of people who could neither read nor write.

The Pagans found also that their temples, sculptures, and bas-reliefs perpetuated their religions far more than the incantations of their priests. Phallic worship would perhaps have never been thought of if it had not been for physical representations which formed the necessary objects for adoration. And it goes without saying that almost all savage beliefs depend upon objects such as totems and similar idols. Always we have visual representations.

The churches and chapels set up wherever Christians congregated formed a method of propaganda almost impossible to resist. The stained-glass windows depicting scenes from the Bible or the lives of the "saints," together with all the other paraphernalia on altars and tables constantly carry the message in unmistakable terms. Surrounded in this way by so much that is "sacred" and "holy," is it a wonder that religion survives?

As soon as the Church discovered what visual propaganda could do, it turned to the great painters and sculptors and became their greatest patrons. The pictures of Mary and Jesus did more to impress the faithful with the truth of the Virgin Birth than hundreds of Bibles and sermons. The crucifix with its figure of an emaciated Jesus became the ideal of Christians, and must have contributed tremendously to perpetuate the completely mythical story of the crucifixion. While the large number of paintings commissioned by the Church depicting Biblical scenes, and in particular showing Judas or some other Jews as responsible for the death of Jesus, or for his scourging, or for other attacks upon him, all kept alive the "tragedy" of Jesus by working upon the pity which is such a valuable human trait, or the blame which can be so subtly evoked. Centuries of mere writing against the Church do not seem to have undone all this visual propaganda.

This picture business has helped the Church and it has helped Hitler. In fact Christian propaganda altogether has been followed in the main by Germany; and it would not be unfair to say that it is Hitler who has faithfully followed the Church's direction in this way.

Lying has been a favourite weapon of both. The Church has earned for this its famous description as the "great lying Church." Hitler will go down to history as its great rival in this. He has made mur-

der and torture two of his principal weapons—the history of the Church can show how faithfully he has copied it. Hitler wants everybody to tremble at his name as the greater number of Popes with their threat of excommunication have always frightened their credulous followers as they do even at this day. And in the pictorial campaign now in evidence in the "conquered" countries as well as in Germany, Hitler is only again following the Christian organization.

Needless to say the greater number of Christians in this country will not agree with me.

H. CUTNER

## Hymnomania

(Concluded from page 461)

HARVEST hymns contain quaint notions. No. 385 gives God the Father credit for flowers and fruit, God the Son credit for maturing them, and God the Holy Spirit credit for watering them. "God the . . . Word! the Sun maturing with his blessed ray the corn," however, comes nearer nature. "Sun" here stands unchanged into "Son," not the only hymn which may be translated into solar terms on far better grounds than the postulation of the second person of the Trinity. For example: "Holy Saviour, calm our fears When earth's brightness disappears" is the primitive cry, let theologians substitute "Son" or anything else they care to bring forward. 476 might almost serve as a secularist song; "time . . . steals away The life which nature gave," etc.

What proportion of any congregation is entitled to sing hymn 234 ("O Paradise") is no idle question, because the singer "greatly longs to see The special place my dearest Lord In Love prepares for me," and many religious sects hold that all the "special" seats were reserved long, long ago. The I.D.O.S. should lay claim to hymn 235: it promises "endless Sabbaths." Hymn 313 (for "Holy Communion") reminds us that "Victims were offered by the law of old," and that now real flesh and blood are replaced by nobs of bread and grocers' port. (Where's the difference in *mentality*?) 317 in the same section takes a pathetic view of the "Lord's table," asking: "Why are its dainties (!) all in vain Before unwilling hearts displayed?" Dear, dear! No rush for the "dainties!"

An enormous magnification of St. Vitus' Dance is to be the lot of ordinary Christians in heaven to judge from hymn 479; the landlord is so terrifying that "Before (his) throne. . . Thy sinless angels trembling bow." Heaven alone knows what Christians deem to be joy! No. 376 has a topical touch: "None ever called on thee in vain; Give peace, O God, give peace again." Evidence all around us proves how true that is; *as true as the penury of the prelacy*. Religious truth comes up again in No. 395 (Dedication of a Church): "Against this holy home, Rude tempests harmless beat." (O now, don't recall the many churches struck by lightning and other "acts of God"). In hymn 394 (Laying the foundation stone of a church) the author plainly overlooked the death-watch beetle. "Endue the creatures with thy grace, That shall adorn thy dwelling place," he (or she) wrote. Yet this may be a mis-construction; the creature's work may be all in accordance with God's "grace"—for it remains an altogether unknown quantity.

With what satisfaction the clergy may turn to No. 397—for "The Restoration of a Church." God



"Look'd on his decayed abode," heard the prayers for its repair, and "*Bless'd the silver and the gold*" that came rolling in. Incidentally, he is beseeched to "Guide its Choir to reverence true," and so add more boredom for the bad lads who suck toffee or play the giddy ass whenever musical interludes allow.

The sweet and thoughtful nature of gentle Jesus appears in that all our trials, sorrows, and temptations are but "His jewels Of right celestial worth." "Celestial worth" is right, for they are of *no earthly use* to those who have to bear them. It's a great pity the Lord is not content with the usual products of the jeweller's art instead of manufacturing synthetic gems from our miseries.

"For the world's love we live not, Its hate we defy" is a sentiment flaunted by thousands of Christians in the face of people who are perfectly indifferent to the vicious challenge—except to pity the bearers of it. (We have men and women so disgruntled by "conversion" that they strive their utmost to "pass the buck" on). Artfulness goes to the composition of hymn 366, a catalogue of simple human duties put forward as essentially priestly labours! "What, Lord, we lend to thee, Repaid a thousandfold will be" is, of course, an "Almsgiving" promise. In spite of it, no dividends have ever been declared, though the clergy still have a "capital" opinion about it.

Distinctions in clerical degrees are amusingly shown in hymn 354, "wisdom with grace" being requested for bishops, "truth" for priests, "zeal" for deacons, and for their flock a lousy—sorry, "a lowly mind To hear and obey." Poor, silly sheep!

"Approach, my soul, the mercy-seat, Where Jesus answers prayer" (626) may hold the clue to the failure of recent mass praying. Can it be that the "mercy-seat" has been taken away for patching or has been mislaid? But maybe it is just another name for the "bench of bishops." Well we know how deaf they are to any worthy appeal. "Working Men" are given a hymn (584) all to themselves, and beautifully "classy" it is! "Sons of labour. . . . To your homes and work again; Go with brave hearts *back to duty*, Face the peril, bear the pain. *Be your dwellings ne'er so lowly*. Yet remember by your bed, That the Son of God most holy Had not where to lay his head." ("Beau-u-tiful, Bill!—Can you lend us a bob for the tallyman till my first pay-day?—Then the missus can get the bedding out o' pawn, and the kid'll buck up—though the blasted house is enough to give my pick the 'screws.'") Isn't *parsonic* resignation noble?

Some parsons consider the opening lines of hymn 256 too sacred for laic utterance, and render a solo of "Come unto me, ye weary, And I will give you rest." Then the congregation can join in with "O blessed voice of Jesus," whatever the vocal quality of the soloist may be.

The writer makes no claim to have influenced the rumoured withdrawal of "The rich man in his castle, The poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly, And ordered their estate" from the hymn-book, but when farm labourers were despoiled of their share of war profits after 1918 he posted on his cottage window the following parody: "The rich man in his castle, The toady at his gate, The farmer and the parson,—*They've got your wages, mate.*"

However, to wind up these examples of Hymnomania. Addled brains, lip-service, and vested interests each have a part in the compilation of a hymnal. Its main conceptions are palpable denials of the living world; its vulgarities a reproach to all sense of refinement. Only sub-normal minds could concoct such trash as the litanies, glory in blood-washings, linger on the agonies and bloody details of

a crucifixion, and make the incision of a babe's organ an occasion for peons of joy like these; "O blessed day, when first was poured The Blood of our redeeming Lord"; and "His infant blood began to flow." (Circumcision).

Lots of religious mush is merely slop for sex-starved spinsters, and how any man who *lives* on such can hold up his head before his fellow-men, as the parson does, is a question becoming vital for the preservation of civilization.

Another aspect of hymnology (already referred to) is its "blasphemy." Christians "worship" a "Creator" for all his works, the while calling upon him to *make them good*. They ascribe to him qualities which decent human-beings would indignantly disclaim. They put on him actions which monstrous villains would repudiate. They allow him wits that would shame an imbecile. ("Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face," pictures a grinning idiot laughing at the mischief he has perpetrated). The tragedy is that, by the abrogation of all reason, emotions are stirred that are human and real, and these emotions are played upon by a scoundrel priestcraft. *One figure, one "sacrifice"* obscured by the mists of two-thousand years, is permanently enshrined in a sort of Newgate criminal's "Last Words." And its "Life" is set as a model for people to *centre their whole lives upon*. Yet we are conscious of vastly more sorrow and agony in the world to-day than the sufferings of ONE individual. We witness all too frequently the *deliberate sacrifice* of a man's (or a woman's) life for the sake of *one only* other individual. Whereas Christ was supposed to have had the *incredible glory* of SAVING A WORLD BY NO GREATER SACRIFICE!!! There are thousands of men and women in every age who would pay the price of such a consummation.

A. G. DUNK

## Faith

And they said, Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father we know? How is it then that he saith I came down from Heaven? (John vi. 42).

A VERY proper question, the answer to which Jesus seems to have been at some trouble to evade—see the remainder of John vi. I have often wondered whether the boasted faith of many modern Christians would have stood the same test.

What is this much-extolled thing called Faith? The dictionary definition of the word is—"Belief or trust in the statement of another such as we accept or act upon with full assurance." So far so good; but, unfortunately, the word has also a religious or theological sense of which the following are a few examples. "Faith," we are told (Bp. Pearson, *Expos. of Creed*), "is an assent unto truths credited upon the testimony of God delivered unto us in the writings of the apostles and prophets." According to a very eminent ecclesiastical authority, the Vatican Council, "Faith is a supernatural virtue by which we with the inspiration and assistance of God's grace believe those things to be true which He has revealed." Of these two definitions I think it necessary only to say that they contain—each in its own way—more flimsy falsehood and unwarranted assumption than could be expressed within an equal space on any other subject; and so, pass on to another—a classic. "Faith in the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. x. 1). I have come across many persons who profess to understand this, but they have never been able to demonstrate the fact to my satisfaction. The text seems to have a fascination for pious Christians. They quote it with particular unction as though it conveyed some wonderful spirit-



ual illumination; but, if pulled up, and asked what it means, they instantly involve themselves in a welter of confusion trying to explain the inexplicable. When superficially viewed it *appears* to mean something, and its obscurity only aids the illusion, but a moment's consideration of the use here made of the words "substance" and "evidence" as equivalents and synonyms of "faith" reveals its absurdity.

My next specimen is somewhat similar in character—it is curious, and not a little significant, how these definitions of religious faith tend to ambiguity.

Some pundit has somewhere declared that "Faith begins with an experiment and ends with an experience."

This is one of ex-Dean Inge's favourites—at least he quotes it often enough. But in spite of this recommendation, I must own that I cannot discover what connexion there is between faith and experiment. Faith is surely belief without experiment! as soon as it is put to any rational *test* there is an end of it. Is this what the author meant? It looks as though he designed an equivoke. Here is another from the same source—the ex-Dean seems partial to sententious inanities of this kind. "Faith is the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis." I feel no hesitation in saying that it is nothing of the sort. The man whose acceptance of any religious doctrine is merely hypothetical can scarcely be reckoned among the faithful. He is too critical for a place among that indiscriminating crowd. Faith is unconditional belief, not calm contingent supposition. Besides, the whole thing involves a contradiction in terms. That which is admittedly regarded as an hypothesis—whether the noblest or not—cannot be the object of *faith*. As he quotes the saying with approval, we might infer that Dr. Inge's own "faith" is of the balanced hypothetical sort; but the fact rests on other and better ground than inference.

Such are a few of the definitions of faith. There are countless others, for scarcely another word in the language has exercised to such an extent the explicatory powers of Christians, and incidently, given occasion for the utterance of so much nonsense. One is led to wonder to what purpose man has developed the faculty of reason that he should labour to frustrate it in this fashion.

There can be no question that, in the common intercourse of man with man, some degree of faith or trust is indispensable. Social life with its interfusion of interests and reciprocal dependence would be impossible without it. Faith, therefore, is an essential part of our moral environment operating more or less as a stimulus to rectitude of conduct. For, in whomsoever faith or trust induces a responsive fidelity, it has to that extent the force of a moral obligation. But all rational faith must be founded on some degree of probability. To rely on the statement of another without regard to the likelihood of the statement itself, or the character of the person making it, is mere credulity which is a crime against reason.

It is in the sphere of religion that faith finds its most congenial quarters. In that misty region of myth and miracle it may wander free from all restraint of reason or experience. The guide of probability by which we regulate our belief in secular affairs must here be discarded, for we are now dealing with matters beyond the range of experience, and to which no rational test may be applied. Faith is a necessity of religion which could not exist without; and it is valued accordingly, for faith supplies the place of the one thing that religion is deficient in—evidence. The lack of evidence has ever been the chief though secret grievance of all advocates and apologists of religion, and the main reason of their excessive laudation of faith. Not one of them that ever stultified

himself in the attempt to reconcile with common-sense the manifold absurdities of Christian doctrine, but would have gladly bartered a "mountain" of faith for a "mustard-seed" of evidence. But if evidence cannot be had, belief must be had without it. That is what the theologians really mean when they talk of the "necessity of faith." And they have made a virtue of this necessity by investing faith with a mysterious merit, and boldly claiming for it an assurance beyond anything that reason or the evidence of the senses can give. "We ought not to see in order to believe," says St. Augustine, "but ought to believe in order to see," which is a reversal of the rational order suggested doubtless by the peculiar nature of religious belief, and adopted with a view to its special requirements. But, it might be asked, If one can believe without seeing, what more is wanted? So far as the main object, faith, is concerned "seeing" is quite superfluous—that is to say, the real existence or possibility of the thing believed becomes unnecessary for it is already accepted. This fact is the bulwark of faith, for when proof or probability ceases to be a condition of belief, the impossible is no longer a bar to credulity. The Saints' patristic predecessor, Tertullian, hit the nail on the head when he declared "Certum est quia impossibile est"—(It is true because it is impossible), which seems to me to be as good a reason for Christian Faith as could be given. But why some particular "truths" must necessarily be contrary to reason is a question that has yet to be answered. If reason be the faculty by which we arrive at truth, why are we to believe that which contradicts it? That three distinct persons are yet only one person, and that a certain human being was born of a virgin, and that he rose from the dead are things that can only be accepted as true for Tertullian's reason. But what particular virtue or advantage there is in believing them remains one of the "mysteries of faith."

But what of the opposite quality, Distrust? Has it no place among the virtues? None, certainly, among the religious ones; and yet it has played an important part in human development. Without distrust and its offspring, Caution, what chance would man in his pristine ignorance have had against the hidden forces of Nature? His progress in knowledge has been made, step by step in the dark. Everywhere he has been beset by unknown perils, and distrust has often been his only safeguard against the fatal consequences of mistaking what *seems* for what is. He is so conscious of what he owes to this quality that most of his maxims are characterized by it, and enjoin caution rather than confidence. But, strange to say, though experience has shown man how little reliance is to be placed on faith in this world, he is ever ready to put trust in some other of which he has no experience at all. Where his rational knowledge ends, his irrational credulity begins. Thus, the Christian keeps all his distrust for this world, and all his faith for what he calls the "next." His whole conduct may be expressed by the formula. "Trust the Lord, but watch your neighbour." Of the Lord he knows nothing but what he has been told by others as ignorant as himself; but he does know something of his neighbour—hence his attitude to each. The only explanation of the anomaly that occurs to me is this: To take things for granted in this world is to court disaster. Even "good Christian men" know that faith without facts won't do *here*. But in the case of the next world, things are different. *There*, faith is attended by no such risks. They may believe anything they like about it without fear of correction or penalty, for the all-sufficient reason that what doesn't exist has neither laws to break nor penalties to inflict.



## Symbolism in the Bible

THE development of the hypothesis that the Bible is symbolic, and not literal, paves the way for a more rational understanding of apparently illogical statements. International scholars have drawn attention to the fact that when the cult of Christianity first made its appearance, a re-action had already set in against established traditions of the early civilization, which the later philosophies of Greece and Rome were endeavouring to supplant. The statement reputed to Aristippus, that the wise must not give up their liberty to the State—and Zeno's repudiation of the regimentation of the State—and the conception (amongst others) of Aristotle, of a mind unaffected by impulse, tend to show that conscious thought was rebelling against the influence of priestly dogma. The aim of all Freethinkers, from the dawn of civilization has been to uncover the naked truths of creation, and to determine the functions of those immutable laws which have been, and will be, until the final revelation. There has existed, throughout history, two distinct classes of active thought—the one concerned with a static system of society, of which the "church" is the most illuminating example, and the other, of a progressively evolutionary change, consistent with the discovery of those empirical laws which have destroyed the suppositions of supernatural benevolence or malevolence.

It has already been shown how the cult of Christianity, by the parable of the destruction of the fig tree, endeavoured to correct the falsity of the practice of concealing the truth, as symbolically shown by the adoption of fig leaves by Adam and Eve, to cover the truth of natural creation. In the same manner, the building of the tower of Babel, and its destruction by the "gods," which resulted in the dispersal of the builders and the confusion due to the development of different languages, can be interpreted symbolically.

The ruling class of the early civilization had, through the original ignorance of the masses, governed those masses by means of their own credulity, and had endeavoured to maintain the regimentation of thought to a static system of credulous superstitious ignorance. The extension of this civilization would naturally attract both protagonists and antagonists—and the building of the tower is symbolical of the co-operative efforts of all thought to the attainment of a common Utopia. This would have re-acted detrimentally to the interests of the hereditary ruling classes, and so the gods—in the persons of their human creators—applied the closure. The co-operative efforts were frustrated and the different schools of thought pursued their own multiple lines of reasoning, towards an assumed common goal, without a common idea of what that ultimate goal was to be. Hence the multiplicity of tongues, or ideas. With the advent of Christianity, this diversity of opinion was to be co-ordinated, so we have the mythological descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost—enabling its recipients to talk with other tongues. Pure REASON, symbolized by the Holy Ghost, enables mankind to dispense with the worn out shibboleths of a static dogmatism and to intelligently pursue, and amalgamate, the various theories in accordance with proved laws, for a higher civilization. In every age, despite the persecutions of the dogmatists and the ridicule of the ignorant, mortals have discovered, and made known, various truths—but no revelation is final. As the human race progresses, so these revelations are seen in a true perspective, as stepping stones towards a fuller measure of that many-sided jewel called TRUTH.

In this connexion, history teaches how the exponents of a static dogmatism have cunningly kept the masses of common people ignorant of their natural rights and privileges, by superstitious teachings in which REASON has been abolished—and have zealously persecuted all those who have endeavoured to advance the science of civilization. The Church, whether divinely appointed, as the Church of Rome, or State-supported, as the various national churches, stands convicted on its own professed teachings, and in their white robes approximate to the epithet of their reputed founder—whited sepulchres. Whilst the exponents of REASON are, in the words of that selfsame Freethinker, who described himself symbolically as the Truth—persecuted for Truth's sake.

As Thomas Paine wrote *These are the times that try men's souls* and, just as civilization has emerged phoenix like from previous catastrophes, so will it rise again. Pioneers of the Freethought movement have left their accumulated efforts for our inheritance, and on their foundations we can surely build that perfect superstructure, ruled by REASON alone.

"ISHMAELITE"

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FREETHINKERS liable for services in H.M. Forces should clearly understand their rights with regard to religion.

They should insist upon their own statement of Atheist, Agnostic, Rationalist, or non-religious being accepted, without modification, and duly recorded on the official papers.

If the person recording—usually an N.C.O. is not aware of the recruit's rights and refuses to accept the recruit's own statement, he should insist upon the matter being referred to the officer in charge. If the recruit's legal right is not then admitted, information should be sent to the General Secretary N.S.S. without delay. In all cases hitherto reported by the Society to the Army, Navy and Air Force authorities a satisfactory reply has been received.

Finally, a man serving in any of the Forces has the right at any time to have the description of himself with regard to religion altered should any change of opinion on his part have taken place.

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