

The

# FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G. W. FOOTE

VOL. LII.—No. 42

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 1932

PRICE THREEPENCE

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Views and Opinions.

Bishops at Bay.

MR. VICTOR GOLLANZ and MRS. NAOMI MITCHISON have aroused a nice little hornet's nest, the latter as editor and the former as publisher of the book with which we dealt with last week, *An Outline of Knowledge for Boys and Girls and their Parents*. We are not surprised. The custom with publicists and "respectable" publishers has hitherto mainly been to take care that there were sharp limitations to the character of books that were published which directly touched the Christian religion. It was permissible, for instance, to criticize the mythology of Christianity, but care must be taken not to touch the superstition of the excellence of the teaching and character of Jesus Christ. You might deny the supernatural character of the Bible, but something of a saving nature must be said in the shape of "poppycock" about the value of the Bible as literature, and also the source of comfort and inspiration it has been to many generations. Above all, the books had to be issued at a rather high price, and written in a very academic style, so as to leave the reader with the impression that the writer was rather more concerned with the abuses of religion than criticizing religion itself. The *Outline* breaks all these rules. It gives the public 928 pages for 8s. 6d. The writers leave religion alone except so far as they were bound to touch on the beginnings of religious ideas in order to illustrate what is said. And it is written so that an intelligent child can read it with understanding and interest; one of the few books I have come across which while professing to be written for the young does not talk to the child of twelve as though it were about four, and which can interest children of larger growth up to, say, sixty.

Christian Truth.

Last week we dealt with the complaint of Dr. Kimmins, that the book would not have been so objectionable if it had been intended for adults only, but

to put it in the hands of children was to let them grow up feeling that Christianity was not essential to life. That kind of criticism was to be expected, and is a mere illustration of the old policy of keeping the truth away from children in the hope that very few will find it when they grow up. Now Dr. Kimmins's criticism has been followed by a circular letter signed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Durham, the President of the Wesleyan Conference, the Headmaster of Eton, and many others. In it they say (the italics are ours):—

We are compelled to address you because of the concerted attack which is being made upon institutions we hold to be of essential importance in the life of our nation by a group of able, scientific men who have renounced the Christian religion . . . It is necessary that a protest should be recorded by Christian men against the commendation by Christian men of a volume which professes to give an outline of history, and mentions Mohammed, Buddha, and Lenin, but does not mention Christ.

This book further speaks in apparent approval of the destruction of the family by the institution of Soviet Russia, and says that it is the existence of the "Soviet creches and kindergartens and childrens organizations" which "makes it possible to remove the rule that a father and mother must go on living together."

We appeal to those who are teachers of revealed religion to do nothing to assist the wide circulation of works of a distinctly atheistic, and even anti-theistic character.

I think it worth noting the admission that the authors of this terrifying book are a group of able scientific men who have renounced Christianity, because it has for so long been said that the really able scientific men are all on the side of some sort of Christianity. Evidently the hoary lie that it is only the camp followers of science who reject religion has outlived its utility. This may perhaps encourage some of our other scientists to practice a little more candour about religious beliefs.

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For the Glory of God.

On the whole this letter which has been sent out to all newspapers is one of the most contemptible documents I have read for some time, coming from men in a responsible position. It exhibits the clergy in a more despicable character than many of its enemies have drawn them. Neither truth nor justice matters, apparently, when their position is threatened.

Consider the facts. The letter addressed to the papers is more than an appeal to Christians to boycott the *Outline*, because it is an Atheistic work, it is a warning to newspapers and booksellers that if they give undue publicity to it, or in the latter case, any publicity at all, they may expect reprisals. It may even be a warning to other publishers to be careful what they publish. In my own case booksellers have



been threatened who exhibit my books, and in the case of my *Religion and Sex*, one of the oldest publishing firms in London returned the manuscript, and while expressing a very high opinion of the work, confessed they could not publish it for fear of "offending their patrons." Those who think there is complete freedom of publication and expression in this country have a deal to learn. Toleration is wider than it was, but intolerance and practical suppression is still active.

The rest of the citations given are a tissue of deliberate mis-statements. Those who read the volume will see that while the names of Buddha, Lenin and Mohammed are mentioned they are named only casually and in illustration, etc., of the essays in which they appear. Mohammed is named as the leader of Arabian tribes who were set going on their career of conquest and civilization by his influence. Then the essay pursues its way without further reference to him. What else could have been done? And in what parallel sense could the name of Jesus be mentioned? The followers of Mohammed founded a real civilization, and gave to Europe the momentum which lifted it out of the darkness of the Christian period and led to the Renaissance and modern science. And it was the influence of Jesus and Christianity that had to be overcome before modern civilization could develop. I think the *Outline* is merciful to leave Christ and Christianity out of it. So with Lenin. How could one deal with the history of the past thirty years and leave out the Russian Revolution? And how could the Russian Revolution be touched on without mentioning Lenin? But, here, again, the reader of the letter would hardly believe that there are only about three casual references to Lenin. Evidently, the Archbishop and his crew of supporters believe that Lenin should never be mentioned to young readers, just as they believe that the *Freethinker* should never be mentioned, unless it is held up as something to be dreaded and avoided.

\* \* \*

#### Trading in Ignorance.

But the worst part of the letter is that which concerns the Soviet and the family. The readers of the letter who have not read the book, and if they are guided by the letter-writers they will not do so, will imagine that the writer of the particular article is advocating the abolition of the family, and that there is no need for the father and mother to go on living together, and that this is also the aim of the Russian Government. A viler lie was never uttered or implied by even the *Morning Post*, or the lowest type of Christian Evidence lecturer. There is no question of the destruction of the family in either the book or in the Russian Plan. There is only an aim to alter the form of family life, and to rationalize the relations between men and women. It is, of course, open for anyone to say that these alterations will be for the worse, and they will injure both the child and married people. But that is a very different thing from what is said by these clerical guardians of morality and the family.

The chapter from which the citations above given are taken is the one dealing with the history and evolution of the family. The writer does not advocate any form of family life, but he does point out, as he ought to point out, that in the course of social evolution the family takes on various forms. He points out that forms of family life have in common the one feature that married life only begins after a marriage ceremony. Then he says that the one exception to this rule is Soviet Russia, where a marriage may be registered at a Registry Office, but the law does not make this obligatory. (Neither does the Scotch law, we believe.) Responsi-

bility for parentage is fixed by requiring every child to be registered within a few days of birth, with the name of the father. The law then makes that man responsible for the child. The father cannot be compelled to "look after" the child in terms of affection, but he is the child's "financial father." The writer adds that it is the fact that there are in Russia creches and kindergartens which take the place of the father's personal care, and it is the existence of creches and kindergartens which make it possible to remove the rule that a father and mother *must* live together. It is the welfare of the child that is all-important.

Now one may disagree altogether with this plan, one may argue that the Archbishop when he advocates what even Hannen Swaffer well called—when noting this part of the letter—compulsory cohabitation, may be the better form of family life, but a man must be devoid of honour and honesty when he takes this description of one of the various forms of family life as "approving the destruction of the family." There are times when clear plain language is desirable, and for that reason I do not say that the signatories of this letter have misunderstood. I say that they have deliberately lied with all the cant and appeals to righteousness that have usually accompanied religious lying.

\* \* \*

#### A Pleasing Sign.

Christians have had their own way for such a long time that it naturally comes to them with a shock when a book which ignores the belief in Christianity receives a large measure of publicity. They do not mind when men distort history and slander human nature in the name of religion. They applaud when an institution such as the B.B.C. broadcasts caricatures of history in the name of a religious discourse, and applaud when the other side is carefully kept from stating its views. But when a number of "able scientists" sit down to write an outline of knowledge, and do so without any reference whatever to the "saving power of Christ," or without sloppy and unreal sentiments concerning the influence of Jesus and the Bible on life, then they protest in terms of falsehood and slander because these men have ventured so to write history and science that those who read may not perceive the importance of Christianity.

Now I am not at all concerned with whether the particular views of history, or sociology stated in the *Outline* are correct or not. I am only interested in two things. The first is that a number of men and women have set themselves to describe the world of history and the world around us in plain language, and without a slavish reference to religious beliefs. They have carried out their object well, and the work is one that all—even Christians, can read with considerable profit. Second, I am anxious that all points of view—even the Christian—should have an equal hearing, but the concerted efforts of the writers of the letter with which I have been dealing, with its threat of boycott and policy of misrepresentation is one that no people who value real progress should tolerate. These are the reasons why I have written these notes. The appearance of such a book is a welcome sign that there exist writers who will act as the people responsible for the *Outline* have acted. I hope they will have many imitators. Given fair play, and a people brought to know the facts, then Christianity would hardly weather three generations.

As an earnest of good-will the Pioneer Press has arranged to stock the book, and it can be ordered through this office by any of our readers.

CHAPMAN COHEN.



## A Sacred Book of the West.

"The teachers in a school which insists on religion must be either stupid or hypocritical.—*Bertrand Russell.*

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

"Keep your face to the dawn."—*Emerson.*

YEARS ago, one page of *Whitaker's Almanac* was of unusual interest to Freethinkers and the cause of distress to orthodox people. This was the list of registered places of worship in this country. It ranged from Catholics to Christadelphians, from Lutherans to Latter Day Saints, and other quaint religious bodies. This list no longer appears, and the searcher after truth has now to chase through the pages of Bible Societies' Reports to find how the sacred flame is kept from going out by such organizations as Chinese Presbyterians and by means of Pleasant Sunday Afternoons.

To-day, America appears to be boxing the compass in its desire for spiritual sustenance. A glance through the advertising columns of the American periodical and newspaper press is astonishing in its results. There are Churches of Divine Power, of Divine Fire, of the Open Door, of the Blue Flame, of the Four-Square Gospel.

And there are so-called Pillars of Fire, Temples of Light, Chapels of Numerology, Truth Studios, Christian Spiritualists, Theosophical Societies, Occult Circles, Faith Healers, and Christian Scientists. The list might be continued down an entire column of this paper. We may take it that life in some parts of the United States is not passed so gaily but that a little hysterical religion is quite a pleasant distraction.

Of all these strange sects, that of the Latter Day Saints is not only the most interesting, but also the most instructive. To the earnest student of comparative religions their record is highly illuminative, particularly as the creed originated just over a century ago, and the whole series of events can be checked and documented step by step. Religiously, it is a creed like so many others, but it is surrounded by such a picturesque setting that the simple story cannot fail to attract.

The story goes that a divine revelation was vouchsafed to Joseph Smith, a callow youth, at the village of Manchester, Ontario County, New York, in the year 1827. This revelation, said to be on gold plates, was transcribed by him as the *Book of Mormon*, and published to the world in 1830. He was still very young at the time of the publication, for he describes himself as "Joseph Smith, Junior" upon the title page. However youthful he may have been, he founded a church, which to-day numbers over a million adherents, sends missionaries to every European country, and is wealthy "beyond the dreams of avarice."

The infant church first settled at Nauvoo, Illinois, a town of their own founding, but was driven from there by bigotry and the cruellest political persecution, which included arson and even murder. When Joseph Smith was shot, Brigham Young became the leader, and displayed such remarkable qualities in rescuing the persecuted church from its troubles that his name is for ever associated with the pioneer work of the colonization of the West. A born leader of men, Brigham Young had rare gifts of statesmanship, and his best record is the magnificent City of Salt Lake, and the State of Utah, a memorial which Washington himself might have envied.

Utah is the size of Great Britain. In the forties of the last century, it was largely prairie, peopled by Indians, wild dogs, and buffaloes, uncivilized and in-

hospitable. These Mormons, as they were called by their enemies, left Nauvoo and trekked to the West, a distance of thirteen hundred miles across deserts, steep canyons, barren flats. The pilgrims numbered one hundred and forty-three men, three women, and two children, and they travelled in covered wagons, drawn by oxen, and on horseback. A plain stone pillar to-day marks the place where Brigham Young and the pioneers alighted. Out of prairie and sage bush they built a civilization, and the Western sun shimmers now on a gigantic place of worship which holds 10,000 people, and the Mormon sacred book is read in all the languages of Europe.

What a man! Realizing only too well that the infant Church might easily be destroyed by the big battalions of bigotry, he reintroduced the old-world practice of polygamy. It is said that he had nineteen wives, and fifty-six children. His ruse succeeded to the discomfort of his enemies, for the Mormons became too numerous to be murdered off hand. Right along to the "eighties" Brigham Young's work of building and organizing went on until the desert blossomed as the rose. All across Utah towns were built, fruit trees planted, mines sunk, farms cultivated. Tithes were paid to the Church, and the material prosperity of the Mormons became a wonder even in America, that land of wonders. When Richard Burton, that most intrepid of travellers, visited the City of the Saints a generation ago he was more surprised at the beauty of the children and the magnificence of the town planning than at the strange theological ideas that he met with.

The Latter Day Saints had succeeded, but they had to reckon with the bigotry and intolerance of the orthodox Christians, who outnumbered, and even envied, them. With one eye on the property of the Mormons, the United States Government passed a law abolishing polygamy. This was at once challenged by the Latter Day Saints, and the battle was fought through to the Supreme Court, which decided against them. The Mormons, nothing daunted, went to prison in defence of their hearth and homes. So determined was their opposition that even the Federal Government had to effect a compromise. The plural wives of the past were declared legitimate, and polygamy was banned from that time. In common justice it must be admitted that the Latter Day Saints have kept loyally this agreement; but the terrible struggle extending over six years, when their people were imprisoned and their property confiscated, must have left bitter memories.

The history of Mormonism is a very valuable study in religious origins and human hallucination. The story of the revelation written on gold plates in a strange language, and translated by a callow youth, is but a replica of many legendary happenings in other religions. The persecution of the infant church is another familiar feature. Its triumphant success, however, was due to Brigham Young. He it was who sent to England for hundreds of skilled carpenters, builders, and stone masons, in order to make Salt Lake City a town worthy of the name, and not a mere conglomeration of cheap houses. Fanatic he may have been, but he proved himself a leader of which any movement might have been proud. Joe Smith's contribution was not by any means so unique. Its outstanding feature is that, whereas all the other bibles of the world are sacred books of the East, his *Book of Mormon*, the bible of the Latter Day Saints, is the only important sacred book of the West.

MIMNERMUS.

Mechanical aids to knowledge are not sharpeners of wits.—*W. Hazlitt.*



## "The Truth of the Bible."

### III.

(Concluded from page 646.)

DR YAHUDA takes as much pains to show that the story of the Exodus must have been written by a contemporary as he does the story of Joseph. He takes quite a large number of words dealing with Moses, and explains how close they are to Egyptian ideas and customs. The answer is exactly the same that I indicated in the case of Joseph. There is no proof whatever that the story was put into any other Hebrew writing except that which we know as the Massoretic text. It may previously have been in Babylonian Cuneiform or even in Egyptian hieroglyphics or some kind of Aramaic. But no one knows. Every attempt at finding out is baffled in the absence of any documents. But if we take the case of Moses, who is dealt with pretty fully by Dr. Yahuda, we are in a world of pure conjecture and faith. Which part of his supposed life as given in the Pentateuch, the Doctor really believes, I cannot fathom. But one may be surely permitted to state that the biography given in the Pentateuch is as near pure fiction as it is possible to be. Are we to believe Moses conversed with God? Are we to believe the story of the ten plagues or the story of the rod turning into a living serpent? What is the use of Dr. Yahuda insisting on this term or on that, or trying to show that the very *idea* of some of the plagues is purely Egyptian, or explaining away as purely natural an obvious Bible miracle, when it is surely apparent that unless we were actually in the midst of the miraculous, the story of Israel in Egypt with Moses as leader would be worth no more than the story of William of Normandy and the Normans? The whole essence of the Exodus is that it was done with God's help. The plagues came straight from God, so did the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea; so did their living in the wilderness for forty years. God was with the Israelites through everything, and all Dr. Yahuda is concerned with is, does this show an Egyptian idea or that an Egyptian custom? If an Egyptian story in hieroglyphics be translated into the square Hebrew of the Pentateuch it would be bound to have Egyptian characteristics even if the translation did not take place before the year 200 B.C. Why not? There is no proof whatever that the story was put into Old Testament Hebrew in the year 1,400 B.C., and that it never changed in the slightest degree till the Massorites put the vowels into the Hebrew in 600 A.D. And that is Dr. Yahuda's position.

In any case what are we to believe about Moses? The story of his early days is crammed with impossibilities. If Moses was in such danger in his babyhood, how was it Aaron, who was only three years older, managed to escape the massacre of Hebrew boys? Were all Moses' contemporaries killed or did they manage to escape? And as for chronology, it is all in such a hopeless muddle that most apologists have given up with despair any attempt at reconciliation. For example, Judah was forty-two years old when he went with Jacob into Egypt, and the following happened in those forty-two years (I quote and condense Colenso):—

Judah marries at (let us say) twenty, and has three children. The eldest grows up, marries and dies. The second grows up, marries his brother's widow and dies. The third grows up, but will not marry the widow. She then deceives Judah and has twins, Pharez and Zarah by him. One of these twins also grows to maturity and has two sons, Hezron and Hamul, born before Jacob goes into Egypt.

Is this possible? Or take the period elapsing between the entry of Jacob into Egypt and the birth of Moses. Amram, the father of Moses, married Jochebed, his aunt. The Septuagint says she was not his aunt but his cousin. Jochebed was the daughter of Levi, the son of Jacob. Levi was forty-three years old when he went into Egypt and 137 years old when he died. So his daughter (in those days of miraculous virility) may have been born in his last year and thus, as Colenso points out, "may have been an infant ninety-four years after the migration of Jacob and his sons into Egypt. Hence it follows that if the sojourn in Egypt was 430 years, Moses who was eighty years old at the time of the Exodus, must have been born 350 years after the migration into Egypt, when his mother must have been at the very least 256 years old." Will Dr. Yahuda tell us whether such things were usual and typical in Egypt or whether, while everything Egyptian was absolutely accurate, chronology got hopelessly fuddled in the other parts of the Holy Book?

The Hebrew text gives the well-known killing of an Egyptian as an excuse for the flight of Moses from Egypt. Josephus does not seem to know this which surely is astonishing if the narrative had been in existence for over 1,000 years. He says Moses was a victorious Egyptian general who captured Ethiopia and married Tharbis, the daughter of the King. This caused jealousy at the Egyptian court, and Moses had to flee for his life to Midian. Another account (the Sepher Haishar) makes Moses reign forty years in Ethiopia before flying to Midian. No doubt, according to Dr. Yahuda, the account with the best Egyptian words and idioms will be the truest and most reliable one. But for the plain man what is there in all these narratives but uncertain legend and myth?

Then if Moses was the grandson of Levi, the Israelites increased in three generations from seventy souls to 2,500,000 souls including 600,000 "fighting men." And these do not include the thousands who were killed by Pharaoh's cruel order. Is this possible? Or are we to account for this miraculous increase by the direct intervention of God? Or are we once again in the midst of real Egyptian customs and ideas? Prof. Yahuda, dealing with the plagues is delightfully disingenuous. The ten plagues, as described in the Pentateuch are just so much nonsense and could never have happened. But because certain ideas and phrases peculiarly Egyptian occur in the narrative, the Doctor suggests to the reader by implication, the story must be true. For example, the final order regarding the death of the first-born includes the first-born of "the maidservant behind the mill." This last phrase is "genuinely Egyptian." As the lady in question was among the lowest of the low, the order "appeared most humiliating" says Dr. Yahuda. "for the Pharaoh who prided himself upon being the son of Ra. It must have sounded in the ears of an Egyptian much as the phrase 'from the first-born of the King to the first-born of the charwoman of Seven Dials' would sound to a Londoner." So Dr. Yahuda really believed the event actually happened, and all, merely on the strength of the words, "maid behind the mill"! One cannot seriously answer this kind of infantile credulity—or argument. As for the walls of Jericho, either they were blown down as we are told or they were not blown down. There is no point whatever in the story if an earthquake did the trick as Prof. Garstang surmises. I have not read his book and so refrain from criticizing it, but it seems he puts the earthquake episode about the year 1410 B.C. Prof. Yahuda is full of joy at this because he manages to fit in the Exodus at a time when, later, the Israelites attacked Jericho and the walls came down; thus proving (1) that the Israelites must have



left Egypt when he says they did, for the attack on Jericho came forty years later "almost to the year." (2) There really was an Exodus. (3) "The walls of Jericho" is not a phrase but a real event because Prof. Garstang says so. (4) Blowing them down with trumpets is just a "poetic" way of describing an earthquake. (5) It happened "almost to a year," that is just as the Israelites came up, the earthquake took place and there you are!

Whether the walls of Jericho tumbled down or not is beside the point. What proof is there that the Israelites were on the spot at the time? No proof whatever. It is pure conjecture—unless Prof. Garstang gives irrefutable evidence that the pottery and scarabs found there are purely Hebrew with Hebrew inscriptions describing the attack on Jericho and the entry by Joshua as the victorious general all in the Hebrew language. Do they? I have no recollection that Prof. Garstang claimed any such things. The truth is Dr. Yahuda has proved nothing but was well known before. He certainly has not proved the "truth of the Bible," in spite of the statement by the pious leaderwriter of the *Daily Telegraph*, who says that archæology "has tended to confirm the authority of the Bible." All it has done has been to confirm a few of the *place* names of the *historical* portions of the Bible.

Has archæology confirmed the story, or even found the names of Moses, Joshua, Abraham, Noah, Methuselah or even of David, Saul and Solomon? Has any proof of any kind been discovered confirming a single Bible miracle? I can hardly read with patience the statements made so confidently in our pious daily journals that "never was interest in the pages of the Scriptures deeper than it is to-day." Never, it would be more true to say, has there been such crass ignorance about the Scriptures as there is to-day. From the credulous faith of our Chestertons and Bellocs to the far sillier faith of our Methodists and Salvationists one would search in vain for any real knowledge of the Bible and its origins. The Bible and its contents are almost unknown in these days of economic stress. The "people" have far weightier things to strive for than worrying over Bible heroes, most of whom, from Adam to Jesus, were utter bores.

Dr. Yahuda certainly has not proved the truth of the Bible or even the truth of a single incident he discusses. Neither has he taught us anything about the Hebrew language. Its origin is still "lost in the mists of antiquity." It still may or may not have originated from the Aramaic or Arabic or is simply a mixed dialect "enriched" by other languages. The philological researches of Dr. Yahuda have left us exactly where we were. Perhaps his forthcoming book will deal in detail with all the obscure points, but until its publication and study by me, I must claim that the position I have taken up about the Hebrew language has not been shaken in the least.

Finally, I feel sad to think that the work of so many great Biblical scholars in the past, who set out to rescue what they could from the Bible narratives has been so lightly put aside; and that there are scholars in the year of grace 1932 who are making desperate efforts to make people believe once again in a discredited literature. Does this not prove that the fight for Freethought is still raging, and that success can only result from "eternal vigilance?"

H. CUTNER.

## Celibacy and Buddhism.

UNDER this title D.P.S., in this Journal, responding to my letter referring to a point in Mr. Doane's "Bible Myths," raises questions of great historical interest, and shows that healthy curiosity in the whence and why is rarer than most of us may think. I at once informed the editor I would do my best to reply, if invited. His kind reply reached me to-day. I will be very brief.

It is too easily assumed that India was "always like that." This is just saying that India has no history. D.P.S. asks first "why monasticism increased in India?" with four more questions. It will be noted, he does not begin with "How did monasticism begin in India?" But we can in her early literature trace it emerging, where in the earliest books it is not. Somewhere about the eighth century B.C., the outlook of religious thinkers in India, through the gospel of a forgotten teacher, underwent a tremendous change. This was the change from external to internal or immanent theism. In the books called Upanishads (their contents for centuries handed down by oral teaching only) we find this new teaching being expounded, exploited by many teachers to a world of students. But it was a very stimulating heady idea, and it drove a man here, a man there to go apart and ponder over it. Men who were by nature "lovers of the wild" would be first to go. They kept aloof from men, outside the village clearings, supporting themselves by roots and fruits. They are described in an old phrase, lingering in a changed context, as "who with (or by) the self had become Brahma." (In the Upanishads "self" and "Brahma," a neuter form, both mean God, the Divine nature.) Potentially each man was the Highest, had it in himself to become actually eventually the Highest. And the fellowman too was That, the God within, as Shakespeare has it: "that Deity within my bosom." Here was something capable, if generally accepted, of sweeping away the rite, the sacrifice, the invoking formula. As with Elijah, the "still small voice" within (they called it "He who goes within," *antara-yami*) was man's guide and urge to do better. And whereas the fellowman was also God-in-the-making, his claim as such had to wait. The matter had to be pondered alone.

Slowly this recluse or *shramana* vogue grew. Gradually the man of the woods began to help out the stomach's claims by exploiting that most ancient feature in the ways of early culture: hospitality to the stranger by alms. Men who were less wholeheartedly seeking truth would swell the number: men who were in trouble of some kind, men who sought not solitude, but brethren in solitude, men who shrank from world's work, or from the evil in the world. Among these would be they who saw in "the world," in the "multitude," men as inferior to the world-forsakers. For such to give alms to the latter was a way of benefiting the former, an opportunity to show worthiness. And so we see the idea of "merit accruing" creeping up in Indian literature, just as we see cenobitic life, embraced not, as with the Brahmins, in old age, but at any age, creeping up. And with this cenobitic life went, as an essential feature, celibacy. In India, where the lay celibate was practically unknown, celibacy was perhaps the most impressive feature of the world-forsaker's life. And we get a vogue, which began with a conception of life, as a living in and with the Divine nature (*Brahma-chariya*) emerging as the recluse's celibacy, being called "God-life." Were such notions, asks D.P.S., the teaching of the founder of

The world without God is a scientific or philosophic problem. The world with God is an outrage on decency and common-sense.—*Chapman Cohen.*



Buddhism? Monk-editors of the teaching came to represent him as leaving his home, not to seek knowledge and return a wiser man, but to become a monk and make monks of other men. This is as untrue as to say Jesus left home to become a Levite-by-adoption. But when Gotama's men went afield to help their fellows as missionaries, it was probably imperative, that they should make their appeal as accredited "religious," or friars, with no worldly axes whatever to grind. Hence at some stage, in the little company's life, they decided to become what we call an Order of Friars.

I shall be very glad to consider anything more D.P.S. may wish to lay before us.

C. A. F. RHYS DAVIDS.

## Acid Drops.

In one day three press items catch our eye. One is a picture in the *Daily Herald* showing a little boy, Prince Michael of Roumania, leaving his house. As he is walking down the steps by placing one foot in front of the other, just as a labourer might, we take it that the picture is given to show that Prince Michael is thoroughly democratic in his opinions. Number two is a flaring placard—*The Star*—"Duchess of York's" cousin in an accident. This is evidently the *Star's* way of calling the attention of Providence to the sin of permitting a cousin of a royal Duchess to be injured just as you and I might. Number three is from the *Times Literary Supplement*. In a review of Bertrand Russell's last book, the reviewer says the author places his reviewer in a difficulty by calling himself "Bertrand Russell." But Bertrand Russell has many times expressly requested that he should not be addressed as either Earl or Lord. There should, therefore be no quandary in speaking of a man who having a title thrust upon him declines using it. We quite admit the hardship in the case of the average Briton of being prohibited rolling over in his mouth the succulent morsel of a title, but there are hardships in life that must be faced with what courage one can command.

It is "good" news that all steamship companies are giving, on their pleasure cruises, every facility for passengers to take Holy Communion. It would be better still if they would grant Freethinkers the privilege of addressing an audience every Sunday on the decay of Christianity and other Freethought topics—and we venture to assert a good many of the passengers would rather enjoy the novel proceedings. It would be interesting to see what the United Methodists, the Anglo and Roman Catholics, the Plymouth Brethren, the Salvation Army and all the other three hundred Christian sects would say if our proposal were acceded to. What a holy rumpus there would be!

The Vicar of Bolton, Rev. Spencer H. Elliott, writes a gossip article in a recent issue of the *Bolton Evening News* reviewing the incidents of last year. He notes his re-reading of a report of a debate which is headed "A Futile Debate," and says it would have been better for him to have kept silent. The debate in question was with Mr. Cohen, and it was quite a compliment on the part of the paper to head it "Futile Debate." It is quite certain that if the Freethinker had been crushed the report would have had a different heading. And, unconsciously, the Vicar supports the inference by his regret that he had not remained silent. For our part, we can only say what we have often said, namely, we have more respect for the intelligence of a Christian who remains silent than the one who tries publicly to defend Christianity in an open discussion. For the man who has intelligence enough to put up a case for Christianity knows that there is no case for him to put up—save in a B.B.C. Broadcast, which is fast becoming the "Coward's Castle" of the theologian.

Bertrand Russell is now under distinguished patronage. He has aroused the admiration and secured the gracious approval of Mr. Hannen Swaffer, one of our "fearless" journalists. We are inclined to fancy that the distinguished philosopher will fail to appreciate the compliment. Mr. Swaffer, in an "Open Letter to Earl Russell," says: "I hasten to pay tribute to your courage of mind. Heaven knows we need some of it, in these days." Furthermore:—

You are an Apostle of Liberty . . . you are one of those Atheists whose passion for the betterment of their fellows often shames conventional believers.

But the man who is most needed to-day, my dear Bertie, is a man like myself.

Curiously enough, our journalistic specialists in "fearlessness" never discover the merits of an unpopular thinker until it seems "safe" to do so, and when their patronage and approval can serve no useful purpose, and savours of impertinence.

The *Church Times* says that Jesus did not personally institute the Church. Well, that relieves him of responsibility for something the world would have been better without. But who did? Says the *Church Times*, it was the work of the Holy Ghost and the Apostles. The Apostles are dead and the Holy Ghost never existed. Quite an interesting way of writing history, and such an easy one.

A few weeks back the Marquess of Donegall in the *Sunday Dispatch* challenged Mr. John Myers, the spirit photographer, to produce a "spirit" photograph on his own plates and developed by himself. We did not expect the challenge to be accepted, but it was and the result has now appeared. Accompanied by his Art Editor and Mr. Will Goldston—who was to see everything was fair and above board—the photos were taken and two out of six plates showed "spirits." One was reproduced in the paper of October 9 last.

It is utterly impossible to say from the description written by the Marquess and the Art Editor exactly what happened. Neither of these two gentlemen obviously have ever taken part in such a test and are—also obviously—quite unaware of the number of methods that exist to assure "spirits" registering themselves on a plate, more or less regardless of "test" conditions. Mr. Goldston, who is an ardent spiritualist and therefore the proper person to see there was no hanky-panky, knows as much as anybody living of these methods, and indeed has actually published them. Moreover, he would not, we are sure, refuse to accept any "test" conditions for some of the illusions and tricks he knows so well, and they would come off every time.

There is one sure test which we have never seen put into practice. If the Marquess cares to communicate with us, we shall be delighted to show that six or twelve or any number of exposures will prove utter "duds." We should even allow Mr. Will Goldston to take the photos, but not to assist in anything else. The medium could sing hymns *ad lib* and could stay in a trance as long as he liked. We would, of course, see to the development ourselves, and we are not afraid of the result.

The Rev. A. D. Belden, of Whitefields, provides an extraordinary illustration of what the writer just quoted calls "the calculating temper" of Christian policy. He actually proposes "a new, though lamentably long overdue, alliance between the Church and the people." How is this to be worked? Nothing could be more simple—or cynical than Mr. Belden's plan. "Let Socialism" (or the Labour Party to which he is attached) "reveal itself as a genuine policy for the equal good of all sections of the community in an ordered and just relationship," and "the youth" of the (Free) Churches "will find the way clear!"



Before any reader dismisses this as incredibly unlikely let him remember that Socialism in this country like Liberalism in this country has been thrown off the straight course of its principles by religious pressure. Both have abandoned the disestablishment of religion. The Labour Party no longer advocates officially secular education, and at the recent Trade Union Congress at Newcastle there was much publicity for a High Mass for the Catholic delegates. The game of mutual back-scratching between the churches and the politicians shows they have one quality in common, the "calculating temper" aforesaid. It is an unpleasant thought that there is only too much reason for doubting whether politicians and parsons in a tight corner may not prove a sinister and by no means insignificant alliance. The lesson of history is that no alliance could be more hostile to liberty of thought and life.

The Maternal Welfare Committee of the League of Nations has, after consultation with experts, issued a humane and admirable proposal that information should be circulated as widely as possible in all countries as to the available means of stopping preventable maternal mortality. A protest against its circulation was made by the Irish Free State delegation at Geneva, and, according to the press report, these delegates were the subject of pressure by the Vatican and by large numbers of Irish Americans. The Committee, we are glad to note, is determined to persist in its good work. It will, however, point out that it is not concerned with the views of Governments or religions, but "only that women physically unfit to bear children shall not be called upon to sacrifice their lives."

It is not without significance that the Vatican, no longer being able to depend on the larger, and formerly equally Catholic, countries of Europe, seeks the help of the Irish delegates to influence international deliberations. This is an ironical circumstance in view of the supposed anti-clerical bias of Sinn Fein—at least in its propagandist days. But, as we have seen in the English Labour Party, views that may be all very well for the hustings get overlooked when their advocates get into office. Mr. De Valera's Government—on the political merits of which we express no opinion—is certainly more ostentatiously Catholic than the old Irish Parliamentary Party which was dubbed the "Pope's Brass Band." As a matter of fact when it acted in that capacity it was generally in the interests of English Catholics and Unionists in regard to education. On Irish national questions the latter were mostly in the same lobby as the Orangemen, while the "Pope's Brass Band" and Radicals and dissenters went together into the other. Both leaders of the Irish Party before Redmond were Protestants—Butt and Parnell—and in Redmond's days there were several Protestant Nationalist M.P.'s, and at least one Freethinker, Dr. Lynch. We believe we are right in saying that neither his Protestant nor Catholic colleagues reckoned him a "good party man." We wish we could see some signs of similar independence in Mr. De Valera's henchmen.

The latest thrill from "Summerland" comes from the spirit of Florence Nightingale. She warns the people of this country that a terrible plague is on its way here, and that death will invade every home—rich and poor will suffer alike everywhere. While there always will be people frightened at bogies of this kind, most of us shrug our shoulders and smile. Science has put out the flames of hell, and reason can just as easily dispose of these jolly prophecies. The heaven of Freethought has worked its way into modern life and with the spread of education, horrible catastrophes whether predicted by Florence Nightingale from "over there," or living mediums here are just—laughed at.

Soldiers are, unhappily an evil and must still be with us. But we should have thought the last thing in the world the United Methodists would have emphasized was any special military display. General Sir Charles Harrington took the salute the other Sunday at Aldershot,

from the steps of the Wesleyan Church "at the first parade service of the troops of the newly United Methodist Church," with band playing, of course. This must have been specially arranged, and so is the best possible proof that the United Methodists are thorough pacifists. A leopard never changes its spots and Christianity (under any name) and militarism simply cannot be divided.

There is no end to the subtlety of contemporary Christian apologetics. All—not excluding the words and works of opponents—all is grist that comes to the antiquated mill. A good example is an article in the *Christian World* by a young writer who is getting noticed just now, Mr. Gwylm Griffith. Its portentous title is "The Decisive Moment and the Undecided World." Its theme, a well worn one, is the lack of agreement between men and nations on the question of authority. Arnold Bennett, H. G. Wells, Bernard Shaw; the League of Nations, the problems of national and international sovereignty, "everyone holding forth in a tabernacle of his own, with abundant manuscript but no Bible," such is the state of what Mr. Griffith calls our "organized confusions."

Description is not diagnosis; and this writer, like so many others, leaves his readers asking the question, "what is the way out?" And implicit in his whole handling of his theme is the suggestion that the answer is—God! As if the very consciousness of the modern world of its problems was not the result of departing from that imaginary "sovereignty" or "standard" which, in the days of its almost unquestioned domination, and all but universal acceptance, made virtues of the elements which are now recognized as the source of poverty, war, and fear. "Back to Methuselah" (which Mr. Griffith calls in evidence) is at least not so wide of the mark as his (unstated) slogan "Back to God."

The reunion of the Methodist Churches was inevitably the occasion for much drivel about the reunion of Christendom in general. The Church or, to put it more inclusively, organized Christianity is engaged in an effort to close the ranks in the face of the enemy. Not evangelism, but self-interest is the motive of all these moves. "The Church," says a thoughtful and pious writer, "is seeking to strengthen and enlarge herself with a minimum of sacrifice. The union she strives for is not the meeting of brothers, in which much is joyfully sacrificed and love the end; it is the amalgamation of rival firms who know themselves too weak to continue rivals." (*Christianity in the New Age*, by E. Herman.)

Dr. I. P. Jacks, in reply to certain criticisms of his recent articles (in the *Observer*) on "Morals and the Crisis," has some hard hits at Christian morality, at least as it has hitherto been held and taught. He wants education to begin by giving "every human being the opportunity to acquire intelligent control of his own body." He quotes a saying that whereas "a few people are turned into saints by the cultivation of their souls, millions are turned into sinners by the neglect of their bodies." Again, with the same use of inappropriate theological jargon, he says: "the guess may be hazarded that when the spiritual values of our various cultural activities come to be added up on the Day of Judgment, that which has concerned itself with the liberal education of the body will be found not far from the top of the list." Was there ever a better example of the useless effort to pour the new wine of scientific knowledge into the old bottles of theological dogma? If we follow the excellent advice of Dr. Jacks and abandon "absurd ideas about the inferiority of the body to the mind," we abandon the very essence of Christianity. Jesus said, "he that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." The very life of what is so often denounced as "materialism" is the repudiation of the cult of the soul at the expense of the body, and of "the life eternal," for that which now is. Dr. Jacks' happy, but hardly convincing, philosophy, has nothing in common with "sanctity"—for which the chief qualification has often been—dirt!



Freethinkers are in no danger of taking a too optimistic view of the many current signs of what Dean Inge calls "the disintegration in Christianity." He warned some ordinands at St. Paul's that "they may live to see the Church plundered and despoiled; for the enemy is already at the gates." We are, we suppose, the enemy and it is news to us that we are so near our destination. The clergy, like the politicians, are professional scaremongers. For a hundred years every timid instalment of reform has been "the beginning of the end" of many long threatened institutions and privileges which still survive—if not without "a certain fearful looking for judgment." More than half a century ago Newman declared that "liberalism in thought was breaking up institutions in Church and State and would not cease from its work until it had destroyed religion." If by religion is meant the State Church it is less vocally threatened now than then, and, by the indifference of the public and the opportunism of politicians, it has been reëntrenched in new privileges while it has been declining in adherents, once all dissenters were for disestablishment. Now all Christians are more concerned with keeping the "national profession of religion" than with real liberty. There is not the least chance of either of the existing political parties "plundering" the Church. The newly ordained parsons need not take Dean Inge too literally. Unlike them he speaks—for publication.

Thomas Upton, aged eighty-four, was congratulated by the Mayor of Wallasey on having driven donkeys at New Brighton for seventy-six years. Doubtless a record—for a layman. The Popes have driven donkeys of all nations for a much longer period, the two-legged variety, being more docile than their four-legged namesakes.

Owing to want of nourishment the mortality amongst newly-born infants in Germany has greatly increased. It is well to know that in these circumstances some religious organizations in Berlin have been seriously discussing whether these unbaptized infants will spend eternity in hell. They have met the situation by authorizing midwives to christen such infants as are not expected to survive. Now it doesn't matter a damn whether they survive or not. Speaking from a Christian point of view we would say it is better they should not survive, because they will be certain of salvation in the one case, and one never can tell what will happen if they grow up.

Adversity brings strange bedfellows. For many years, both here and in the United States, appeals for funds have been made by the Missionary Societies to fight the "menace" of Islam in Africa and elsewhere. The future of civilization was said to depend upon the money given and the missionaries sent out. Now the American Board of Missions in its latest report advises that Christian missions combine with Mohammedans in order to fight Atheism in Africa, China, and other places. The Commission that was sent out to study the situation was impressed by the growing hostility to all religion, and says:—

What becomes of the issues between the merits of one sacred text and another when the sacredness of all texts is being denied?

So the Commission advises co-operation, and the teaching will probably take the form of "Any God you please, so long as it is a God of some sort." And just when the revival of religion was due!

We are not surprised. For long two things have been evident to anyone who took an intelligent view of the situation. The one is that the only way to stop the progress of Freethought is to adopt a policy—the genuine Christian policy—of rigorous suppression of everything against Christianity and develop a moronic population that cannot rise higher than Christianity. The other is that the ultimate fight is not between, this and that creed, not between theism and some half-and-half thing such as a reverent Agnosticism, or a sentimental ethic-ism, but between Theism and Atheism. There is no

logical halting place between the two, and when the real fight takes place all twilight terms and timid compromises are brushed on one side.

The *Church Times* thinks "Hinduism is a revolting religion." Some of us feel the same about Christianity, and if the history of both religions were compared, we doubt if there is much to choose between them. The caste Hindu revolts still at the "untouchables," but it is not so very long ago that the average Christian revolted at the "heretic." We have forced the Christian to recognize that actually the heretic is as good as, and in most cases better than, the Christian, and we have forced the latter to recognize that Humanism is a greater and finer gospel than anything he can offer. Any modern Christian would a thousand times more talk about "love" in this world than about "hell" or "damnation" in the next, and that is all to the good.

From "The Human Machine" article in *John Bull*, we take the following statement:—

The world, in two thousand years, has not advanced very far; but it has, at least, evolved one virtue that mankind is slowly learning to practise—that virtue is tolerance.

More accurately, it may be said that tolerance is the virtue which the pagans of pre-Christian days evolved and were beginning to practice, but which the Christian religion and Christian Church buried for nineteen-hundred years. One advantage of the modern world having "gone pagan" is that mankind is re-discovering and practising some of the splendid virtues of the ancient, or pagan, world. That is mentally a wholesome change, and so one naturally expects it to be detested by Christian priests and parsons.

The latest outbreak of Ronald Knoxism, an attack on Julian Huxley, Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells, and science in general seems to have stung even the most placid reviewers into protest. A typical rebuke comes from the *Observer*: "If other branches of human thought were as ready to discard their failures as science is, it would be a cleaner and sounder world."

The late Canon Duncan Travers, for thirty-six years Secretary of the Universities Mission in Central Africa, left behind him, when he ascended to a more-or-less Better Land, the tidy sum of £41,825. It would seem that the Canon objected to taking seriously his Divine Master's remarks concerning the blessedness of poverty and the sinfulness of hoarding up treasure on earth.

## Fifty Years Ago.

THERE is scarcely a more melancholy spectacle on earth than a Church Congress. We do not degrade its dignity when we call it the parsons' palaver. It deliberations never lead to anything. The clergy are tied hand and foot by laws which they cannot break. Yet they meet year by year, according to the modern fashion, and deluge the town in which they assemble with "words, words, words." They are fast losing their hold on the popular mind, and having no power to adapt themselves or their religion to the altered circumstances of the age, they simply meet and chatter over their misfortunes. They recall Carlyle's picture of the Dead Sea apes, grinning and shivering round a dying fire, which they have not the sense to replenish. Dead ashes and smouldering embers are all that is left, and there they sit squeaking and gibbering, in the hope that the fire will flame up again as of old. Vain hope! For the traveller who kindled that fire on his passage through the desert has gone and will never return. The human mind has passed on to fresh scenes. It has reached the verge of the fruitful land of reason, and left the priests of all the creeds to crouch round the dwindling fires in the great desert of faith.



## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. E. GARRAT.—Thanks for syllabus. Contents noted.

J. K. C. STRAIN.—We do not appear to have any ground in common in the discussion of the questions raised in your letter.

RAYARD SIMMONS.—Received with thanks. Hope you are keeping well.

C. SCANLON.—The copy of the paper did not come from this office. It must have been sent to you by some friend who wished to draw your attention to it. Anyway, we are pleased to hear from you, and flattered to learn that you consider our *Freewill and Determinism* as the "most lucid exposition" of the subject you have met. We fancy its lucidity consists in not cluttering the subject with so much irrelevant matter. Most subjects would be equally lucid if they were treated in a similar manner.

G.D.A.—Thanks for cuttings. As you say, the "stunt" press has had a good week.

J. MACKINNON.—Not quite a case of "The fool and his money are soon parted," for this particular religious one appears to have hung on to his money until he could hang no longer.

C. THOMAS.—We are very pleased to hear from you. If our writings have been of assistance to you we are repaid. Our compliments to your wife. Tell her we approve her choice of books.

J. G. BARRAM.—Received. We will bear your suggestion in mind, but to carry it out fully would take up a great deal of space, with not very interesting reading.

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

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

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

Letters for the Editor of the "*Freethinker*" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

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

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

The "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

To-day (October 16) Mr. Cohen will lecture at 3 and 6.30 in the Chorlton Town Hall, Manchester. Tea will be provided for those coming from a distance.

This may be in time for the event, but it should have reached us a week ago. The Manchester Branch is holding a Whist Drive and Dance in the Engineers' Hall, Rusholme Road, on Saturday (October 15), at 7.0. The charge for admission is 1s. 6d.

On Tuesday next (October 18) a debate will be held in the Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, between Mr. Arnold Lunn and Mr. Chapman Cohen, on the subject "That Materialism Involves the Suicide of Thought." The discussion will be opened by Mr. Lunn, and the chair will be taken at 7 o'clock. Red Lion Square can be reached by trams or 'busses, either from Theobald's Road, or from Holborn. Admission will be free, and we advise all who wish to hear the discussion to be in good time.

Sunday evening last did not offer the best of weather, but Woolwich Town Hall was comfortably filled to listen to Mr. Cohen. This was the first indoor meeting that had been held in Woolwich for many years, and it augurs well for the future. Mr. Corrigan took the

chair, and filled that position with his usual ability. There was, we understand, a very good sale of literature, which may be taken as a symptom of the interest excited. If that promised revival of religion doesn't hurry it looks like being a bit late.

We deal in "Views and Opinions" with the threatened boycott of the *Outline of Knowledge*, by the Archbishop of Canterbury and other Christian leaders. We imagine it will take the form of the boycott which is used against the *Freethinker*, a protest against its being shown by booksellers, with a threat of not dealing from individual customers. This is also the policy adopted by the Christian Scientists against any book which exposes its foolish pretences. The whole crime of the book is that it is frankly Atheistic in its outlook. That is, it leaves religion out altogether. It is as Atheistic as science, and Christian leaders, do not like it. They have been so used to tame scientists and half-baked unbelievers paying lip-homage to their creed, that they resent anything different. As a "gesture" we have arranged for a supply to be kept at this office. The price of the work is 8s. 6d., postage will be sixpence extra.

Next Sunday (October 23) Mr. C. Cohen will speak twice, 3.0 and 7.0 p.m., for the Stockport Labour Fellowship, in the Central Hall, Hillgate, Stockport. His subjects will be "The Present Position of Religion and Science," and "The Making of Mass Opinion." Admission is free, and seats will be reserved if an early application is made enclosing stamp. Following the afternoon lecture Tea will be provided, and to prevent disappointment, will those intending to stay also make arrangement with Mr. G. Burgess, 98 Athens Street, Stockport.

The ignorance and bigotry of petty magistrates where the taking of an affirmation is concerned almost passes belief. So is the fact that men who exhibit such gross ignorance can still be left in a position of authority. The latest case comes from Chesterfield. The offenders are Sir Ernest Shentall, Chairman at the Chesterfield Police Court, and a solicitor, Mr. G. H. Okell. A man came before the court who declined to take the oath because he believed the New Testament forbade it. Whereupon the court ruled that Christians must take the oath. It was explained that the court could accommodate anyone who took an alternative form of oath, such as is taken by Jews or Chinamen, but only Atheists and unbelievers, according to the wisacres in this could affirm. The Chairman said only unbelievers could affirm, and the man's own solicitor was stupid enough to tell him that he ought to take the oath if he was a Christian. The man's evidence was declined.

Now it is simply monstrous that these men who are concerned with the administration of the law should be ignorant of the fact that the man had actually complied with the Affirmation Act in saying that an Oath was contrary to his religious belief. It was then the magistrate's business to see that the affirmation was taken without further delay. One does not expect men in the position of Sir Ernest Shentall to know much about the law, but the elementary procedure involved in taking evidence ought to be within his grasp. If it is not he should be removed to some post where his want of knowledge does not matter. As for the man's solicitor, he ought to retire and study the subject. It was his plain business to advise both his client and the magistrate as to the law.

The Liverpool Branch will have for its lecturer to-day (October 16), Mr. Frederick Hall, for whom we bespeak a sympathetic welcome from Freethinkers. Mr. Hall is minister at the Mottram Unitarian Church, and is a man of wide culture and genuine ability. He has the great disadvantage of having lost his sight, but that detracts nothing from his courage in facing the world. He is one of the minority who will say what he thinks careless of



whose favour is gained or lost. The subject of his address is "What the World is Seeking," and the place of meeting is the Transport Hall, Islington. Admission is free.

The National Secular Society's Executive at its last meeting admitted forty-seven new members and authorized the formation of two new Branches. Perhaps this was due to the revival in religion taking the wrong turning.

The other day Mr. J. B. Priestley was announced to broadcast a talk, "To an Unknown Listener." When the time arrived the B.B.C. had mislaid the MSS., which had been submitted to them for censorship. So no broadcast took place. We wonder when public men will develop enough self-respect to decline to submit what they are about to say to the censorship of the B.B.C.? Why, even the Roman Church would always permit anyone to speak if what he was going to say met with its approval. It is surprising that men in position submit to the censorship set up by Sir John Reith & Co.

One person who deserves mention in these columns is Dr. Grace Pailthorpe, who is responsible for Special Report No. 170 (price 2s.) issued by the Medical Research Council. This report deals with the poor results obtained by the treatment of women and girls in preventive and rescue homes. Dr. Pailthorpe declares that the present penal system seems to act as a "university training in crime," and attributes much of its failure to the religious attitude which appears to rule in both prisons and preventive homes.

*The Commonwealth* reprints our comment on the *Daily Herald*, which published a picture purporting to be Mr. Clynes buying a copy of the *Herald*, but which was actually a picture of Mr. Clynes buying a copy of the *Freethinker*. We note that the *Herald* has neither explained its blunder nor apologised for making it. We know that it cannot plead non-discovery of the blunder—that is, if it was a blunder.

The course of lectures by the West Ham Branch N.S.S. at the Public Assistance Station, West Ham Lane, Stratford, London, E., will be brought to a close to-day (Sunday), by Mr. R. H. Rosetti, who will speak on "Spiritualism v. Commonsense," at 7.30 p.m. As questions and discussion are invited there should be a big muster of local Spiritualists.

Where suitable halls are available, Messrs. Brighton and Clayton will give occasional indoor lectures during the winter. The object is to maintain the interest aroused during the open-air season, when much good and useful work was done. The Executive of the N.S.S. is responsible for the arrangement.

### The Moorland Glen of Ashentree South Ayrshire.

I WILL arise and go now, and go to Ashentree,  
And a small stream I'll find there,  
A lichened alder glade;  
An hour or two I'll spend there in a muse of reverie,  
And list again to an old tune played.  
And I shall know great peace there,  
Peace that comes dropping slow,  
Dropping from the vales of memory of old remembered things,  
Peace even for the sinner or righteous man of woe,  
Where the lone and hermit streamlet sings.  
I will arise and go now, for oft by night and day  
I hear low waters lapping 'neath the lichened alders  
hoar;  
And ev'n as hope turns haggard, and I feel old and grey,  
It rouses in the deep heart's core!

ANDREW MILLAR.

## The Ages of Faith.

THE Middle Ages, comprises the period that extends between the fall of the Roman Empire, until the Renaissance in Europe. It is generally held to be the period of a thousand years from the Fourth Century to Fourteenth. They are also known as the Ages of Faith, and The Dark Ages.

Canon MacCulloch, in the preface to his recently published book *Medieval Faith and Fable* (Harrap, 15s.) dates the period "from the sixth to the fifteenth century," and declares that: "The old idea that the Middle Ages were the Dark Ages has been long discredited." It may have been by ecclesiastical historians, especially of the Catholic variety, but it certainly has not been exploded for secular historians, or those unbiassed by religion. The canon does not prove his case by pointing out that: "the early Celtic Church was distinguished for its spirituality and culture. The seventh century and the first third of the eighth century have been called the Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon England." (p. 5.) What has the early Celtic Church, and a hundred and thirty years of Anglo-Saxon England, to do with the state of Europe, or of the world at large? Still more futile is it to cite the court of Charlemagne, for, as Hallam pointed out, Charlemagne himself was unable to write, and the eighth century was one of the darkest and cruellest of the dark ages. What the Canon calls spirituality, we should describe as superstition. He himself admits that: "their intense love of religion, justified the title, the Age of Faith, given to this period." (p. 6.) That was just the trouble, the intense preoccupation with religion, paralysed the secular forces which make for progress and civilization.

After reading so far, we were prepared for the usual laboured clerical defence of the Middle Ages. We were agreeably surprised, no such attempt is made. If the work had been published anonymously, no one would have suspected that the author was a clergyman, still less a Canon. He describes his book as follows:—

It is not a history of the Middle Ages, but it tries to show what men thought or believed or said or did regarding many things which, if not wholly medieval, are yet characteristic of the period. Now we traverse the great highways of thought and belief, considering matters important to every man in those days. Again we wander down byways, where we discover the ideas or superstitions of a lesser number, and these are just as interesting and arresting as the others. By citing many of the stories told about these beliefs and superstitions the writer has illustrated the mental attitude of many medieval folk. (p. 7.)

The terrible subject of medieval witchcraft is barely touched upon, but, as the author remarks; that would require a volume to itself. Neither is the dreadful state into which society, especially among the lower classes, relapsed dwelt upon, except for the following passage in the preface, where it is fully acknowledged:—

Revolting cruelty was common enough, as well as callousness in regard to suffering, especially that inflicted on enemies or evildoers. Among the serfs and peasants, and the miserable beggars who herded in cities and clamoured on the highways, hunger and disease and cold were too well known. Famine and plague, with their train of death, often swept across wide areas, and there were physical epidemics no less terrible in their results. If men's bodies suffered much from disease, their minds were darkened by superstitions, among which the widespread belief in demons of all kinds was one



of the most terrifying. (MacCulloch: *Medieval Faith and Fable*. p. 6.)

There are seventeen chapters in the book, and all of them are interesting. Canon MacCulloch has that indefinable quality known as style; which Dr. Coulton's works, so unfortunately lack. This is no disparagement to Dr. Coulton, any more than saying that Huxley's style was far more brilliant than Darwin's; although Darwin was by far the greater genius. No amount of training, or study, will turn a dull writer into a brilliant one; or brilliant writers would be as common as blackberries, and Shakespeares would be found in every street.

Moreover, the Canon is a fine scholar. There is a list of the books most frequently cited, given at the end of the book, consisting of over one hundred and fifty titles; most of them in Latin, German, or French, to which frequent reference is made in the text.

The first chapter is entitled "Survivals of Paganism." Although Christianity was proclaimed the religion of the State in A.D. 313, says our author: "Not till the first quarter of the fifth century could it be said that paganism was officially dead." (p. 11.) And we may add, that it existed underground, and in many out of the way districts, for centuries after that. Folklorists find many traces of it remaining even today in rural districts: "All medieval folk-dances were survivals of pagan ritual dances," says the Canon, and sacrifices of cattle were made, during the cattle plague, at Kirkcudbright, in the twelfth century. "Even more curious was a recrudescence of the cult of Priapus, or Father Liber, at Fenton, in East Lothian, and at Inverkeithing in 1268 and 1282 respectively." (p. 26.) Where the old pagan survivals could not be uprooted they were taken bodily over by the Church: "The myths of the old gods and the ritual of their cult were transferred to saints . . . On the whole, the old pagan survivals remained, side by side with Christianity, practised by those who called themselves Christians." (p. 27.) Legends told how the mournful cries of the older divinities could be heard, in wooded hollows, and secluded valleys, bewailing their lost dominion, but: "Their power, if limited, was not annihilated, and the secrecy in which the old cults were often practised gave them a darker colour. These cults were identified with the works of the Devil, and the spirits of paganism with dark and grisly demons."

As we have stated before, the early Christians never disputed, or denied, that the pagan gods really existed. They declared that they were Devils, or evil spirits. Many of the pagan Temples were turned into Christian Churches, and where this was done, says Canon MacCulloch: "On such churches inscriptions were placed stating that the dwelling of demons (the gods) had been changed into a house of God." (p. 11.) In the chapter on "Demons," our author, after noting that St. Augustine held that: "the pagan gods were demons," and that "They were present in images and spoke in oracles," goes on to observe:—

In popular and theological belief demons were everywhere ready to attack the souls and bodies of the unwary, to deceive and trick even the most saintly. The least divagation from the right path or from faithful thoughts gave an opening to their craft. Such a belief was bound to affect all medieval life and thought, and to add terror to all mental conceptions. (p. 64.)

These Devils could assume an infinity of shapes, sometimes hideous, sometimes seductive, as in the shape of a beautiful woman to ensnare the hermit or the monk. They could assume the form of an animal, or wild beast, and even that of angelic forms and holy men. They were ceaselessly active.

There is a chapter devoted to the Virgin, in which we see that the Cult of the Virgin was the most popular, as it still is to-day in the Catholic Church. It was the popular belief that if you were constant in devotion to the Virgin, you could not be lost whatever sins you had committed. In fact, it came to such a pass that the devils complained to God that they were unfairly robbed of their labours:—

Little wonder that the Demon complained, when St. James appealed to the Virgin to save one of his pilgrims who had died in mortal sin, that she was continually occupied in seeking means of frustrating him. If she were permitted she would not leave a soul in Hell. A man had only to salute her image and he was saved. "I complain daily to God of these injustices . . . He is deaf where His Mother is concerned and leaves her lady and mistress of Paradise." In other *fabliaux* (tales) when the Lord refuses her request, because daily she demands so much that justice cannot be done, she recalls to Him His own approval of the precept, "Honour thy father and thy mother," and He at once grants her wish. (p. 117.)

To this degradation had the intellect descended under the gospel of "Glad tidings of great joy."

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

## Punishment or Restraint?

AN INSURGENT ESSAY.

"The wherefore for right conduct is not to be found in nature, who, of herself, is indifferent, ignoring evil as well as good. Human laws are founded on utility, and that can be but apparent and illusive utility, for one does not know instinctively what is of use to man, or what really benefits him. Upheld by the threat of punishment, human laws may be eluded by ruse and dissimulation. Every man capable of thought is above them. They are, in fact, but snares for the foolish."

THE above words express the opinion of the learned Abbe Jerome Coignard, a man full of wisdom and piety, as those of us who admire that great master of delicate irony and satire, known to the world as Anatole France, will admit, and it is due to the influence of the mocking philosophy expressed in his novel *At the Sign of the Reine Pedauque*, that I am moved to this soliloquy.

It has been asserted that the aim of legislation is to make man good, but it is asserted with equal force that he cannot be made so by Act of Parliament. From these premises I propose to develop the theme from what appears to me to be a rational point of view.

Legislation, from the dawn of history to the present time, has had for its fundamental aim the protection of man from man, and the greatest good for the greatest number. Throughout life the law regulates the most trivial and the most weighty actions of the individual, and yet he is scarcely conscious of it. He learns that he may with impunity do certain things, and yet may not do others. Once the individual oversteps the barrier dividing right from wrong as defined by law, that law will surely thrust him back within the boundary: rebellion against the law is futile, and will inevitably react upon him, and yet one asks What is the law?

It is but a collection of rules made by men for men, having as their object the well-being of the community as a whole, and it finds its greatest source in the dictates of custom. Custom is unwritten, unsanctioned law, and in the course of time is embodied in the accepted code of law, and given the authority of the State.

Whether a strict adherence to the codified law as established by the State tends to make mankind either good or moral is a debatable point, but the strict adherence to the law of the community in which he lives does not, *per se* indicate either goodness or morality in the individual. The influence of heredity and environment is a far more potent factor in the determination of the moral character of man than are laws made by man having as their object the compulsory acquisition of subjective qualities.



Human law, like divine law, is based on the false idea that man knows instinctively what is right and what is wrong, and has power to choose: in other words, man-made law is based on the doctrine of the freedom of the will.

Such an assumption will find little support among criminologists and men of science. Human law, like divine law, classifies men as good and bad, and punishes them for wrong-doing, but it is not logical to classify men as good and bad: rather should they be classified as fortunate and unfortunate, as weak and strong. The most humane, most just course is to regard all wrong-doers, all transgressors of the law, as we regard the ignorant, the insane and the diseased, and they should be helped, not punished. Many law-breakers are ignorant, diseased or mentally defective: It is, therefore, to be seriously maintained that punishment, as such, will alter the nature of these unfortunates? A study of the works of Lombroso, Mercier, Havelock Ellis and many other writers on the subject will surely help to modify such inhuman views.

In dealing with the criminal, that is, in law-making for the protection of society, we should be guided to a large extent by the experience of the past. Looking back to the middle ages and even later, we find that lunacy was regarded as a crime, and the insane were punished for their affliction, ecclesiastical law-aiding and abetting the civil law in this form of piety; the records of Bethlem Hospital provide food for reflection on this aspect of man's inhumanity to man. This treatment of the insane went hand in hand with the belief in the efficacy of fire as a cure for what our pious ancestors termed witchcraft, and it is apposite to the subject to remark that so late as 1782, a woman was burned for this crime, with full judicial sanction, in Switzerland, and even so near in time as 1877, five women were burned alive by order of the authorities at San Jacobo, Mexico, their offence being described as witchcraft. From the foregoing statements it would appear that law, both human and divine, is not perfect! We have, happily, become more humane in our treatment of the insane and the criminal nowadays, having profited by the experiences of the past, but it is reasonable to assume that finality has not yet been reached in the profitable art of law-making.

The are law-breakers and wrong-doers who are base and savage by nature, due to heredity or environment, or both: these men should be regarded as we regard wild and savage animals, as creatures of a lower order than the majority of their fellows, and as such, deserving neither blame nor hatred, for these unhappy beings are nearer our savage ancestors in the scale of evolution than are normal human beings.

Man is, despite the assertions of religious dogmatists, the product of heredity and environment, and every man is that which his individual heredity and environment have made him. His character depends partly on his descent and partly on his surroundings, and to blame or punish a man for characteristics due to these causes is as illogical as it would be to make malaria or cancer a criminal offence, and punish the sufferer from these diseases, as was the custom in the fabled land of "Erewhon."

The murderer, the burglar, the wife-beater and all those unfortunates whom we, in our arrogance of favourable heredity and environment are pleased to term the criminal classes, are people to be avoided and placed under restraint, in the same manner that we place the insane under restraint, but they should not be punished in the ordinary acceptance of that term. Are these unfortunates likely to be cured of their habits by punishment? Do not the statistics of crime prove that punishment is not a deterrent? Does capital punishment act as a deterrent to murder? To these questions the reply is an emphatic negative, as a study of the subject will prove; to quote authorities for this statement is beyond the scope of this essay, but he who runs may read, and to those sufficiently interested in the subject, authoritative literature should not be difficult of access.

In the treatment of lawbreakers, their opportunities for doing evil should be restricted: they should be kept in confinement, but their environment should

be such that it will have a beneficial effect upon their warped natures, and perhaps transform them, or some of them, into useful citizens. Those who failed to respond to the change of environment would inevitably find their way back to the reformatory, and would have to be classified as Recidivists. Such hopeless creatures are beyond human redemption, and are to be regarded as living examples of atavism, or a revision to a savage animal type, and punishment, as such, could have no effect upon them. Knowing the awful slums in which many of them have their origin, knowing the poverty and crime with which they are surrounded in their most impressionable years: knowing these things, can we in justice, in mercy, punish them because they transgress the laws which a benevolent and perspicacious government has enacted in order to make them good and moral?

During the Middle Ages man resorted to every form of cruelty and refined torture in order to make his fellow men good and moral: regarding impassively the state of our present civilization, it is reasonable to assert that the aims and objects of those medieval lawmakers have lamentably failed to achieve their high purpose. At the commencement of the nineteenth century there were more than two hundred offences on the statute book which were punishable with death; according to our premises, the aim of legislation is to make men good, yet despite the drastic laws having as their object that purpose, it is obvious to the most casual observer that the object has not been achieved.

The indeterminate sentence which is in operation in some parts of the British Empire, is to be regarded with favour. Its operation tends to the welfare of the community as a whole by placing under restraint those offenders whose careers and crimes indicate them to be beyond self-control and devoid of moral sense, but even here there is much room for improvement, especially in young countries, which are in a position to profit by the mistakes and experiences of older civilizations.

Would it not be an excellent experiment to erect in a suitable part of this country, some institution, prison, reformatory, house of detention, or what ever name you may be pleased to give it, which would be, in the true sense, reformatory? Such an institution would be used for prisoners from all over the country, and could be conducted on similar lines to the reformatory at Elmira, New York State, U.S.A., which is acknowledged to be one of the best institutions of its kind in the world, and is not only a reformatory in name, but in results. With such an institution criminals could be dealt with in a humane manner, and with suitable legislation, much good might be achieved. Here could be brought all transgressors of the law: they would be subject to a strict discipline and instructed in useful trades: the proceeds from their labour could be utilized by the State as a contribution towards the cost of their maintenance, and their liberty would be restored to them subject to their conduct and progress in their appointed trade being satisfactory. With such a change of environment it is to be assumed that many of the prisoners would leave the institution fitted to live respectable lives and become law-abiding members of the community.

Much remains to be written of the aims and object of legislation, but from the foregoing it will be generally admitted that the ideal aim of all legislation is to secure the greatest good for the greatest number, with no shadow of injustice; that being the ideal, are we justified in assuming that finality has been reached in the matter of law giving, on the principle that what was good for our forefathers should be good for us, or shall we, by the power of speech and the art of writing, endeavour to make further progress?

F. G. COOPER.

"Every hour of the day the trains vomit their herds. . . They are not a lovely herd, these holiday-makers. . . But most of all I wonder why? Why such masses of humanity are so necessary to the Divine scheme in relationship to humanity? And all the masses who have gone before—masses and masses and masses of them!"

Writer in the "Tatler."



## A Note on Heresy.

INFIDELITY, heresy and apostasy are, according to Roman Catholic theology, "the chief sins against faith." There are three sorts of infidelity, positive, primitive, and negative. Positive infidelity is the deliberate (*i.e.*, "wilful" or intelligent) rejection of Christianity; primitive infidelity is that of those who (a) have opportunity, and (b) recognize the obligation to enquire into religion and neglect to do so; negative infidelity is that of the innocent or ignorant who have no chance of enquiring. There is less lenience in these definitions than might seem to be the case. "If the Gospel is not preached to every man, not God, but men are to be blamed for it," so that, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, if a man is faithful to the light he has in natural reason God would take care he should have an opportunity of knowing the faith even if it were necessary to send a special messenger or an "angel from heaven" to him. This appears to be another form of a Protestant tenet by no means accepted by Roman theologians, *i.e.*, he that doeth the will of God shall know of the doctrine"; but while the liberal Protestant takes this to mean that practise is, in the last analysis, more important than precept, the Catholic view is that as no man can do the will of God who is not in a state of grace, works without faith are no avail unless by some such miraculous intervention as above-mentioned. Yet, if the latter dictum means anything, it means that nobody dies in mortal sin for whose death in that condition, and consequent damnation, God is not responsible.

Heresy is defined as the rejection by a Christian of some portion of revealed truth proposed by the Church for belief; things "revealed by God in a private revelation," can be rejected without heresy, but it is "sinful," nevertheless, to reject them. It is not heresy but "disobedience" to reject the infallible authority of the Church in matters "which form no part of divine revelation." Wilful doubt, like wilful rejection, is "formal heresy." Negative doubt, by which assent to a revealed truth is withheld or suspended, and voluntary ignorance of the true Church or other necessary truths of faith, do not constitute formal heresy. Persons baptized by schismatical or heretical ministers or clergy are "material," but not "formal" heretics. But if and when "they begin to doubt about their positions if they do not make inquiries, "they sin against the faith more or less grievously according to their negligence if they remain as they are."

Heresy is punished, but it must be formal and external heresy, "for the Church in her external form does not take cognisance of sins of thought"—a pretty subtlety. Practical examples of heresy are "the reception [*i.e.*, by a Catholic] of the sacrament in an Anglican Church, being married in a non-Catholic place of worship or by a non-Catholic minister. These dreadful offences are punishable by excommunication. Heresy, bad as it is, is not so bad as apostasy. The "apostate" not only rejects special dogmas (like the heretic) but wholly abandons the Catholic faith and becomes "a Freethinker, Atheist, Materialist, Mahomedan, Buddhist," etc. Apostasy involves major excommunication, and that involves eternal damnation, and, if this were the fifteenth and not the twentieth century, would almost certainly involve death by boiling, burning, or whatever was the executorial fashion of local or national piety.

ALAN HANDSACRE.

We have little interest in unalterable felicity, nor can we join with heart and soul in the endless symphonies and exulting hallelujahs of the spirits of the blest. The remorse of a fallen spirit, or "tears such as angels shed" touch us more nearly.—*W. Hazlitt.*

Once admit that an honest man is as fit for any other world as he is for this one, and creeds become, not only superfluous, but impertinent.—*G. W. Foote.*

## The "Persecution" of Religion in Russia.

(Being extracts from the official refutation published 1930).

BEGINNING with the November of 1929, first in England and then in many other European countries, a great agitation was commenced against the Soviet Union, under the device of "in defence of religion," which was, according to reports, being persecuted by the Bolsheviks. In the English Parliament both Conservatives and religious representatives flooded the Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Henderson) with questions, asking what he intended to do to "defend religion, which was being oppressed by the Bolsheviks." The "Protest Committee" started by the Conservatives spread its meetings through all England achieving some success with its crowded anti-Soviet propaganda, and passing resolutions against the Soviet Union's "persecution." In this attack the representatives of the various religions were pathetically united—Anglican, Catholic, Evangelic, Jewish, Baptist, and others. Also the White Russian emigrants including Kerensky, Milukov and well-known Russian religious officials, such as the well-known pogromist Eulogio, Antonio Hrapovitski and others were concerned in the affair. The agitation was spread far and wide by the help of the press, who flocked to defend religion, and printed almost every day new pictures and descriptions, and invented acts of persecution against religion, holding their readers in an excited frame of mind, in order to bring them round to an hatred of the Soviet Republic. Especially active were the English *Morning Post* and the *Daily Mail*.

The anti-Soviet agitation rapidly spread in all countries. The first public declaration against the Soviet Union was made by the chief of the Catholic Church, Pope Pius XI. In 1929 the Pope, as is well known, concluded a "Concordat" with the Fascist regime of Mussolini, already bloodily suppressing the Italian workers. The Pope, however, did not perceive that twenty millions of unemployed were dying in capitalist countries, but he did notice persecutions in the U.S.S.R., and took part as leader in a Crusade against this country.

The agitation spread through Rumania, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Greece, France, America, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Bessarabia and Rumania, and many other countries. In February, 1930, a meeting was arranged to protest against the religious persecutions in Soviet Russia. During the time this agitation was proceeding, there was being carried out through the whole of Bessarabia, under the guidance of the priests and Metropolitan Curio, and also students from the theological seminary in the town (Kishinev), pogroms against the Jews. The Rumanian priests shed tears and protested loudly against the so-called religious persecutions in Soviet Russia, but during the same time they were actually engaged in pogroms against the Jews! Most wonderful to relate, neither section of those engaged in howling about "religious persecution" in England, France, Germany and other countries had a word to say against the proved national and religious persecutions taking place in Rumania.

Is it not clear from this one fact that the "persecution" is the subject of a Crusade which has for its aim not the defence of religion but some other aim?

In the London *Times* for January 31, 1930, there appeared two photographs of the destruction of Simonov Monastery in Moscow. Simonov is the workers' district of the Capital. The title of the pictures is "Soviet Vandalism." But the *Times* did not state that it took the workers three years to effect the removal of this building to make way for a Workers' Palace of Culture. In this work the labourers of the largest works in Simonov district took part; "Amo," "Dianne," "Parostroy," and other works were concerned in the affair. The monastery is situated in the centre of the suburb Simonov, and under the Czarist regime was the only "Palace of Culture" which was allowed the workers! This particular site was the only one suitable for the needs of a workers' club and the people were busy for three years



in efforts to persuade the Soviet Government to abolish the Monastery, which was for a long time previous closed owing to lack of worshippers and had been used as a museum. Only when a special delegation visited the Government to make representations to this effect, was permission given for the change to take place. By the method of voluntary Sunday labour the building was broken up, some 110,000 persons offering their services, workers from the Moscow factories, but only 10,000 were permitted to take part, as the organization of the others on this job was impossible. In its place, a Workers' Palace of Culture was erected. And this in the purely working class district. The example indicates the cautious attitude of the Government towards issuing permission for what is now generally called "liquidating" religious institutions. Where liquidation is possible it is the result of the wish of the majority of inhabitants that it be so.

The following figures indicate the use made of the religious houses closed since the revolution; 41 sanatoriums were established, 168 institutions for social welfare (convalescent homes, Old Folks' Homes, etc.), 197 schools, 349 medical homes, 2 maternity homes for poor mothers. The churches closed were re-arranged for the purposes of clubs, reading-rooms, museums, libraries, sports clubs, etc., and it is clear that if the Government does not fulfil the demands of the workers for these things, it is breaking the "freedom of belief" law, by forcing upon them that which they do not desire.

The calumnies began by the English Conservatives were continued by the capitalists and priests of other countries. Everywhere one could find Joynson-Hicks and Baldwins choking with hate against the Soviet Union. With them stood the priests and clergy of all sects. The Romish Pope and the Archbishop of Canterbury, apart from the general dislike for socialism had their special hate. Metropolitan Sergio, chief of the Orthodox Church remarked on the 15th of February, 1929, that "the Pope appears to have an old dream of making our Church Catholic." Thus the activity of the Pope is enlightened. It would be very agreeable for him to pose as the defender of the Orthodox Church while occupied in embracing it into his realm. Even as early as 1923, the Patriarch Tikhon wrote that "the Romish Pope is endeavouring by all means to plant Catholicism in the Orthodox Church."

Everywhere the Church will use all means to gain its ends, and the cry of "Down with the Soviet Union" and "Defend religion against persecution" was taken up and the anti-Soviet orgy sanctified in the name of God.

During the first years of the Soviet Union every vile defamatory story was used to discredit her just as at present the religious cry is being used. Remember the fable of women being made public property. Who spread this story? The same people who now howl about persecution of religion. This story was exploded by the secret report to his Government made by Bullitt, the U.S.A. official mission in 1919.

And the whole essence of the noise initiated by these people lies not so much in the hatred of religious persecution as that, under the form of religion and its defence, new wars are being instigated.

What are then the actual laws concerning religion in the Soviet Union? And for what does the State still punish religious believers? We will briefly outline these in another article.

Englished by L. CORINNA.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, Near Clapham North Station): 7.30, Mr. F. P. Corrigan (President South London Branch)—"Society and Superstition."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham Road): 7.0, Sunday, October 16, R. Dimsdale Stocker—"John Galsworthy—His Poetry."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 11.0, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., D.Lit.—"Obsolete Education."

STUDY CIRCLE (N.S.S. Office, 61 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 17, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Some Common Fallacies."

THE CONWAY DISCUSSION CIRCLE (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.): 7.0, Tuesday, October 18, Debate—"That Materialism Involves the Suicide of Thought." *Affir.*: Arnold Lunn. *Neg.*: Chapman Cohen.

THE METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (City of London Hotel, 107 York Road Camden Road, N.): 7.0, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Young England and the Freethought Movement."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Public Assistance Station, West Ham Lane, Stratford, E.15): 7.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. R. H. Rosetti (Gen. Sec. N.S.S.)—"Spiritualism v. Common Sense."

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("Queen's Arms," Lecture Hall, Burrage Road, Woolwich): 7.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. R. B. Kerr.

#### OUTDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Monday, October 17, South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury. Thursday, October 20, Leighton Road, Kentish Town, 8.0, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.0, Sunday, October 16, Mr. B. A. Le Maine. 3.30, Messrs. Bryant and A. D. Howell-Smith, B.A. 6.30, Messrs. Bryant, Tuson and Le Maine. Every Wednesday at 7.30, Messrs. Tuson and Le Maine. Every Friday, at 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Le Maine. The *Freethinker* and other Pioneer Literature can be bought during and after our meetings of Mr. Dunn outside the Park in Bayswater Road.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Ship," Plumstead Common): 8.0, Friday, October 14, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Bereford Square, 11.0, Sunday, October 16, Mr. G. Mead. Lake-dale Road, 8.0, Monday, October 17, Mr. J. Read. "The Ship," Plumstead Common, 8.0, Wednesday, October 19, Mr. G. Mead. Current *Freethinkers* and Literature on sale at all meetings.

#### COUNTRY.

##### INDOOR.

ASHINGTON (Princess Ballroom): 7.0, Sunday, October 16, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Godwin Cafe, Godwin Street): 7.30, Mr. L. Corina (Halifax)—"Fascism and Papacy."

COLNE (The Labour Church, North Valley Road): 2.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Birth of the Soul."

CHESTER-LE-STREET BRANCH N.S.S. (New Rooms): 7.0, Sunday, October 16, Mr. W. Raine, A Lecture.

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. J. T. Eastwood of Nelson—"Astronomy." Questions. Discussion. All welcome.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (City Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room): 6.30, Mr. J. Hunter—"Electricity in the Service of Man." Questions and Discussion. Silver collection.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Sunday, October 16, Mr. Joseph McCabe—"What's Wrong with the World?"

LIVERPOOL (Merseyside) BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Sunday, October 16, Frederick Hall (The Blind Minister), Mottram Unitarian Church, Manchester—"What all the World is Seeking." *Freethinkers* on sale.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Chorlton Town Hall, All Saints, Manchester): 3.0, Chapman Cohen (President National Secular Society and Editor of the *Freethinker*)—"The Folly of a Future Life." 6.30, "The Psychology of Belief."

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Hall No. 5, Plymouth Chambers, Drake Circus): 7.0, Sunday, October 16, Mr. J. Matthews—"Spiritualism—Is it an Illusion?"

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Buildings, Green Street): 7.30, Sunday, October 16, A lecture.

#### OUTDOOR.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 7.15, Sunday, October 16, Mr. R. Atkinson. Literature on Sale.

NORTH SHIELDS (Harbour View): 7.0, Tuesday, October 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Market Place): 7.0, Wednesday, October 19, Mr. J. T. Brighton.



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CHAPMAN COHEN

With a Reply by Professor A. S. Eddington

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