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

Views and Opinions

God and the League of Nations

WHEN the League of Nations was formed there were plenty of criticisms—mostly of the wrong sort—levelled against it. Much was said of the iniquity of permitting either Russia or Germany to be members of the League, as though there could possibly be an effective union to stop war, with nearly two hundred and fifty millions of people excluded. There was also much nonsense talked of the indignity of one nation submitting to a judgment passed by other nations. I have no doubt that the Ancient Order of House-breakers also protest against the indignity of having to submit to the decisions of mere judges. The first objection time has removed. Russia has now entered the League, and the League is on its knees begging Germany to come in, and it will be allowed to do pretty much as it wishes with regard to armaments. My own criticism at the time of the formation of the League was against a League being made up of the "old gang," and that its main purpose would probably become that of perpetuating the national boundaries imposed by the victors, and that made plot and counter-plot inevitable, and a perpetuation of the very conditions that brought about the war that had just ended. Perhaps I may be excused quoting from what I wrote in 1919 in these columns:—

If the League is to become a reality, it can only be by every one of its units foregoing the luxury of maintaining an army and a navy large enough to defy the League whenever the decisions of the League displease it. . . . The only effective military and naval force for use as between nations should be under the control of the League itself. If the nations cannot agree among themselves sufficiently for this, then it is idle to talk of a League of Nations. You may have a series of shifting and changing alliances, but you can have nothing else. You will not have removed the danger of war by establishing a League under such conditions. You merely create an elaborate hypocrisy to camouflage its existence. . . . One feels inclined to regret that the word "Nation"

was retained. . . . "Nation" still carries with it the idea of separateness. . . . On the other hand a League of Peoples suggests exactly what it should be the aim of all real reformers to encourage—that is, co-operation between peoples, a real sense of peoples' mutual dependence, the conviction that it is impossible for one nation to realize its fullest life without the co-operation of others. The war has demonstrated the stupidity of conceiving a nation as a self-contained unit. It is nothing of the kind. That is a legacy from the past, as the war was a legacy from the past. It exerts a power to-day because our "statesmen"—save the mark!—are still thinking in terms of the past. They do not realize clearly that nationalism is, at best, an evolutionary phase of the journey to internationalism, just as tribalism was a stage on the journey to nationalism. A League of Nations, if it is to be a vital and healthy force in the world, must become a League of Peoples.

Every criticism offered in that article has been justified to the letter; and to-day, I am proud to think that the *Freethinker* was one of the few papers that said these necessary things, just as it was one of the very few papers that, during the war years, pointed out the dehumanizing character of the war, and the aftermath that was certain to follow.

* * *

A Parson as a Critic

Another criticism of the League has now been made, and a plain statement of the reason for its failure has been given. The Rev. J. J. Armitage, of Liverpool, in the course of a sermon at St. Mildred's Church, London, has placed his finger on the weak spot in the League's procedure. Here it is:—

The League of Nations, as a League, does not recognize God. God is nowhere recorded in its reports. This is not the first time there has been a League of Nations, but when the League leaves out God it is not fitted to solve the problems of mankind.

Mr. Armitage's criticism runs on lines different from our own, but he is a man of God, and we are not. He knows a great deal about God, and we know nothing at all about him. As a clergyman Mr. Armitage wishes to know why the parsons have been left out; we wonder why the deuce they should be put in. No doubt Mr. Armitage would like to see the League meetings opened with prayer, and every document commence with "by the grace of God." It would also have been more satisfactory—to Mr. Armitage—if each of the Churches had been asked to appoint representatives to the League meetings. But we have representatives of one of the Churches in our House of Lords, and it cannot be truly said that they offer an important contribution to either the wisdom or the amity of that institution. In the House of Commons we have a regular chaplain who, day by day, offers special and official prayers to God to endow the members of the house with wisdom and justice. And not

even Christians have had the courage to quote the result as a striking illustration of the power of prayer. Besides, if the League had taken God into account, whose God was it to be? Was it to be the God of the Japanese, the Hindoo, the British, or the German kind? It is tolerably certain that if different religious sects, as such, had been appointed there would have been trouble with them, and what might not have happened if "whatever gods there be" had been publicly praised or blamed in official documents.

* * *

God is a Man of War

Mr. Armitage, however, is not quite fair to the League of Nations, for he closes his eyes to certain weighty considerations. While there has been no official part played by God in the reports of the League, yet there have been special sermons preached by ecclesiastical dignitaries, while the League was sitting, calling God's attention to what the League was doing. And Mr. Macdonald, who since he has been Prime Minister has been on more intimate terms with God than he was before, has publicly asked the Deity to bless the League and its works. Surely God knew what was going on, and could have helped had He wished to do so. It is not a very elevating thing to think of God Almighty refusing to help the League because it does not mention him in its records, much as a soldier might feel annoyed because his name was not mentioned in despatches, or a subscriber to party funds enraged because his name was absent from a New Year's Honours' List. The League, we are told, must fail because it does not publicly invite God to help. Private prayers have been offered, so have public ones, but there have been no official ones, so the Lord will have nothing to do with them; to all intents and purposes he says to the League, "if you will not publicly come to me, go to the devil!"

I do not deny that God has some grounds for being huffish at finding the League ignoring him in its public notices. The war, we know on the authority of our own clergy, was "God's war." It was the Bible—God's own book, from which the Kaiser said he drew "light and strength," and which he always kept at his bedside. And in 1914, when the German Army marched to war, every Church in Germany prayed "Almighty and merciful God, lead us to victory, and give us grace that we may show ourselves to be Christians towards our enemies as well." We also prayed to the same effect. From 1914 to 1918 the Germans prayed to God to blast his enemies, and he blasted *us*. From 1914 to 1918 we prayed to God to blast the Germans, and he blasted *them*. To please the Germans he helped them to kill many millions of the Allies. To please the Allies he helped them to kill about the same number of Germans. And so far as one can judge God has always been more prominent in war than in peace. In times of peace people have had considerable doubts as to whether there is a God or not, or if there is, whether he bothers very much. But when war is raging, or even likely, then God becomes very prominent. The first stage is to bless the departing troops and to hold national services to ask God to give victory. Then when there happens to be a disaster, days of humiliation and more prayers on a nation-wide scale ensue. The greater the disaster the more frenzied the petitions, the more sweeping the victory the more intense the praise to Him that gave it. And the Rev. R. J. Campbell was not alone in saying that never had the tide of spiritual fervour run so high as it did during the war. The *Daily Mail* paused a moment in its manufacturing pictures of Germans boiling down their dead for fat, and little children having both their hands cut off by the invaders of Belgium to say:—

It is their (the German's) God who stood by and smiled when Louvain was burned in ashes; who saw without disapproval, we may suppose, the ruin of Belgium; who whispered in the Kaiser's ear that his cause would be furthered by the sacrifice of children and the murder of non-combatants.

And as there can be, according to the belief of the *Daily Mail* only one God, whatever God there was must have stood by and watched these things without preventing them—just as he must have watched the starvation of German children as a consequence of the blockade of the Allies.

Research shows that the things of which complaint was made follow the rules of war laid down by God in the only book that is attributed to him. Consider this:—

And when the Lord thy God hath delivered (a city) into thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword. But the women, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil, thou shalt take unto thyself, and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the Lord thy God hath given thee.

I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh.

The Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee, and thou shalt destroy with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed.

These divine orders were not fully carried out in the last war, but in this as in many other things, we have strayed from the path marked out by the Lord.

So, after all, Mr. Armitage may be right in what he says. After God has done so much to make rules for war, and has played so great a part in so many wars, it does seem like a public insult for the League of Nations not to mention him in their despatches. Even Gods may be expected to have their feelings.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Courage of Coleridge

"The space around man grows with the strength of his intellectual vision and insight; his world becomes profounder."—*Nietzsche*.

"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in a thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be Atheist." This is an arresting quotation from Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the centenary of whose death is being celebrated this year. It was no ordinary man who said that, but a man with a large heart and a big head. It loses nothing of its force from the fact that Coleridge himself was a Christian, although not a common, or garden, one, for he was a writer of real and unmistakable genius. Always he wore his "rue with a difference." Coleridge had read widely and thought deeply. Some of the best men he knew, such as lovable Charles Lamb, were heterodox. His very close friend, William Wordsworth, was not without a suspicion of Pantheism, and the world at that time was ringing with the challenging Freethought message of the great French Revolution. Coleridge knew the book of the world as well as the world of books. He fully realized that it was not stupidity and heartlessness that made men doubt the existence of gods, but sleepless intellect that would not be lulled by priestly incense, and sympathy that not only saw, but felt, the miseries of man.

Coleridge was as great a talker as old Dr. Sam Johnson, but he had no Boswell at hand to record all of his remarks. His own friend, Robert Southey, said that Coleridge's mouth "seems incapable of being at rest." What a piece of self-criticism! Southey

was very hard to please, for he had the richest talker in all England in the same house with him, and it only made him peevish and perverse. The explanation is that Southey had a commonplace mind, and was the antipodes to a genius like Coleridge. In all Southey's shelf-full of books there is not a single spark of genius, but only evidences of great industry. Charles Lamb, who was himself one of the immortals of literature, had a totally different impression of Coleridge's rich talks. Writing of one of the poet's visits, he said: "I am living in a continual feast. Coleridge has been with me now for nigh-on three weeks." The picture which critical Thomas Carlyle gives of Coleridge at Highgate Hill is exceedingly graphic, and endorses Lamb's view:—

Coleridge sat on the brow of Highgate Hill in those years, looking down on London and its smoke-tumult, like a sage escaped from life's battle; attracting towards him the thoughts of innumerable brave souls still engaged there. He had, especially among young, inquiring men, a higher than literary, a kind of prophetic or magician character. No talk in his century, or in any other, could be more inspiring.

Coleridge did other and finer work than talk across a dinner-table. Endowed with an intellect of the first order, and an imagination at once delicate and splendid, he left enough poetry and criticism to place him in the front rank of authors of his century. This is no disparagement of his conversational ability. With the solitary exception of Selden's *Table Talk*, there is hardly so rich a treasure-house of wisdom in the English language as Coleridge's *Table Talk*. It represents the mature thought of a masterly intellect at home in the world and freighted with knowledge. His friends were more fortunate than they knew. They had better entertainment than food and wine, for there have been few such brilliant talkers as Coleridge. The pages of his books show us how an accomplished man, famous for his conversation, entertained his company, a hundred years ago. For, like Lord Mansfield, who, in his youth, "drank champagne with the wits," Coleridge enjoyed the best of good company from first to last.

The contributions which Coleridge made to modern thought, rich, ample, and suggestive as they are, have all the characteristics of his varied and eventful life. In whatever he attempted, he drove the shaft deep, and gave us samples of the wealth of ore lying in its confines. Although he worked those mines only at irregular intervals, and passed from the one to the other, yet, by stimulating others, he caused the ground to be explored as it never was before in England. If it cannot be said that he left a complete system, yet it can be said, with justice, that he made it possible for others to grasp the principles underlying all systems. His contribution to the literature of power is almost unsurpassed by any modern writer.

Yet, great as Coleridge's genius was, he suffered from lack of fibre. He wrote a lot, and the notes he made would have been a task for most men. But he was incapable of continued and concentrated labour. Intellect he had, the frenzy of poetry was in his eyes, but he was indolent. The result was that he illuminated the world, not with a steady radiance like Shakespeare, but in meteoric flashes, which, in Milton's expressive phrase, "made darkness visible."

The living Coleridge was ever his own apology. Men and women, who neither shared nor ignored his shortcomings, not only loved him, but honoured him. His must have been a rich and royal nature to have gathered about him such choice friends as Wordsworth, Scott, Lamb, De Quincey,

Byron, Hazlitt, and Sterling. In fancy we cannot fail to conjure up his placid figure during his later years—the silver hair, pale face, luminous blue eyes; the portly form clothed in black; slow walk, benignant manner, and the inexhaustible talk that was the flow of a golden sea of eloquence and wisdom. A great man and a great poet, the wings of his imagination were easily in the ether of high Olympus.

Yet, for more than thirty years he was the slave of opium. It broke up his home, alienated his wife, ruined his health, made him wretched. Back of all this he was the slave of irresolution, of the enervating dejection of Hamlet. Such was Coleridge's life, the afterglow of which is still in the sky. His hand opened the magic casements on the perilous seas sailed by the Ancient Mariner, and the fairy-lands of Kubla Khan and Christabel. Above all, he applied a stimulus to the British intellect at a time when it was most needed, and when such an effort was almost unknown. In doing these things he made an immortal reputation, and what writer desires more?

MIMNERMUS.

Edward Irving and the Second Adventists

A MYSTICAL preacher of ephemeral popularity sank into silence in December, 1834. Irving was born in 1702, and his schooling commenced in a seminary conducted by a certain "Peggy Paine," a relative of the celebrated author of the *Age of Reason*. At the age of thirteen, Irving entered Edinburgh University, and in 1810 he was appointed head of an academy at Haddington, where he taught Jane Welsh, the future wife of Thomas Carlyle. Although he was already engaged to another lady, Irving fell in love with his pupil, and endeavoured to escape from his earlier engagement, but without success. Still, it came about that in consequence of Irving's introduction, Carlyle made his acquaintance with the woman he married.

After entering the Presbyterian ministry, Irving's pulpit performances were little esteemed by Scottish congregations, but his abilities as a missionary among the poor were evident to all. A man of pre-eminently emotional temperament, he addressed every hovel he visited with the words: "Peace be to this house." This, combined with other touchingly expressed sympathies, endeared him deeply to the suffering poor.

Dr. Chalmers was at that time Scotland's outstanding preacher, and his powerful sermons doubtless diminished Irving's hortatory efforts. But in 1822 the younger minister was called to officiate at the Caledonian Church in Hatton Garden, Holborn, where a pious remnant prayed in true Presbyterian style. The attendance was meagre enough, but Irving's oratory soon filled the conventicle to overflowing. Sir James Mackintosh mentioned an eloquent passage in one of Irving's prayers to George Canning, the statesman, and when in a speech in Parliament, Canning made a reference to the Scottish preacher's oratorical gifts, the world of fashion, led by Lady Jersey, who could be seen sitting on the pulpit stairs, flocked to listen to the northern prodigy.

One of Irving's biographers assures us: "That his commanding stature, the admirable symmetry of his form, and the dark and melancholy beauty of his countenance produced an imposing impression even before his deep and powerful voice had given utterance to its melodious thunders." When Irving's

metropolitan ministrations began, his congregation numbered two score and ten, but when the Church proved incapable of accommodating its audiences a larger building was opened in Regent Square.

So long as the excitement lasted, Irving's fame was in all men's mouths, and as people in all ranks of society crowded to hear Irving preach and pray, the enthusiasts were convinced that a momentous religious revival was imminent, and that Christ's second coming would quickly follow. Indeed, transcendent changes in mundane affairs were confidently awaited as a signal of the Lord's return.

Henry Drummond, a shrewd Scottish banker, was drawn into the vortex, and to his charming residence at Albury in Surrey, he invited several eager Irvingites to discuss the power of prophecy concerning impending spiritual manifestations. People of many persuasions attended, but very few joined the Catholic Apostolic Church, subsequently founded by Drummond and his friends. These last were credulous enough to believe not only that the Millennium was rapidly approaching, but that a grand cycle of 1,260 years commenced in the reign of Justinian, and culminated at the French Revolution, when "the vials of the Apocalypse began to be poured out" in anticipation of the Second Advent.

The gatherings of the faithful coincided with a sudden outburst in Scotland of miraculous cures of ailments and prophetic messages in unknown languages. Cardale, who became the first "apostle" of the new sect, went to the north with other interested parties to study these strange events on the spot. They were satisfied as to their authenticity and, when they returned to London, prayers were persistently offered, both in the church and the homes of the Irvingites, for the appearance of prophets and apostles. As might have been expected, Mrs. Cardale "spoke with great solemnity in 'a tongue' and prophesied." This lady was soon imitated by others, until there was scarcely a service destitute of an irruption of noises, in languages then, as now, unknown to philologists. Irving was greatly embarrassed by these morbid displays. He feared he had activated some mysterious potency entirely beyond his control.

All the world wondered, and crowds congregated to witness these astounding events. But the more thoughtful and observant soon suspected their probability, and when the public realized that the sounds conveyed no meaning the excitement died down.

Inseparably associated with religious revivals in all ages and climes, we find emotional displays of sexual excitement. What were termed "irregularities" occurred in Irving's congregation, which led to considerable scandal. Again, Irving shocked the conventional and orthodox alike by his suggestion that Christ, while on earth, partook of man's sinful nature. Irving's plain speaking on this subject led to an accusation of heresy, and he was charged with this serious offence before the Presbytery in London and found guilty. He was driven from his Church in Regent Square in 1832, and was finally expelled from the ministry in 1833 by the Presbytery in Scotland which had given him his original licence to officiate. Distracted as Irving was by all this turmoil, his speech in his own defence must be held to rank among the masterpieces of modern oratory. His personality proved powerful enough to secure the adherence of the major part of his congregation and, although he died in the following year at the early age of forty-two, a completely shattered man, his supporters slowly developed a novel form of Christianity usually termed Irvingism, but which is known officially as the Catholic Apostolic Church.

Cardale, Drummond and ten others were chosen by the prophets as apostles in 1835, and a meeting was called to ratify their appointment. But one of the twelve apostles failed to appear and the meeting was adjourned. The absent apostle was a deposed Presbyterian minister, whose heresy consisted in his unswerving faith in the genuineness of the unknown tongues. Yet all efforts to restore him to the fold were fruitless, so the faithful found his prototype in Judas Iscariot, and proceeded to nominate two other apostles, one of whom was chosen by the prophets as the twelfth apostle in place of the wretched apostate previously chosen.

It seems curious that Edward Irving, the only man of marked ability in the whole movement, and the one figure generally known to the public at large was never appointed to any position of importance within the new communion. He was an "angel" or bishop, it is true, but members of their episcopacy were strictly subordinate to the prophets and apostles, and there can be little doubt that Irving's death was hastened by disappointment and disillusion.

With Irving's departure, the Catholic Apostolic Church was born. Prophets, apostles and evangelists constructed their system. As Christ was credited with an intention to appoint twenty-four apostles—twelve for the Jews and an equal number for the Gentiles—these the Irvingites selected to await his second coming. What St. Paul and Barnabas failed of old to accomplish would be prepared in readiness for the Lord's approaching advent in the early nineteenth century. For Christ, declared the faithful, had specially appointed Drummond, Cardale and their colleagues for this sacred service.

Wafted on a wave of fervour, the proselytes devised a grandiose system of Church government. The Continent of Europe was mapped out into tribal territories with an apostle in command of each area. Visionary anticipations concerning an immediate manifestation of divine sovereignty were devoutly cherished, and enthusiastic missionaries set forth to evangelize the erring world, only to encounter a scornful and contemptuous indifference. Kings and cardinals were unmoved by the testimonies of the elect. There were a few conversions in France and Switzerland, while in Germany the harvest was slightly better, but in Catholic communities the fields proved utterly barren. The wicked world showed no sign of repentance or regret. Christ delayed his return, and angry dissensions within the Apostolic communion itself led to the cessation of all attempts to enlighten and regenerate humanity.

When the Adventist movement became an obvious failure, recrimination was followed by secession. Some leaders retired, never to return. Drummond lost all interest in his earlier mission, entered Parliament, and was engaged in politics for the last twelve years of his life. Another apostle, Dalton, made his peace with the Anglican Church. Membership dwindled considerably, but some were steadfast in their adherence to the cause.

The ceremonies and tenets of this body have been modified as occasion served. When the stern facts of life declined to conform to their original doctrines these changes became necessary. All their first apostles are now no more, but the few faithful that remain still await their Lord's return to earth.

Had their original teachings been authentic the Saviour would have reappeared in 1855, and all the early apostles should have been alive to greet him, but the fates otherwise decided, and the Catholic and Apostolic Church is almost unknown to-day. All those activities that characterize the more powerful Churches are completely absent from this small com-

munion. Yet, deluded as they undoubtedly are, the so-called Irvingites are quite harmless and inoffensive, and there are still men and women among them who are capable of rendering far higher service to society than by devoting their lives to a slavish prostration before a long-since discredited superstition.

T. F. PALMER.

"Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought"

A REVIEW

BECAUSE this is a book of Mr. Cohen's ripest thought it is of special interest to us. Those who have been acquainted with the trend of his thinking during the last decade will not be surprised by its contents, but it is gratifying and illuminating to have his philosophy summarized, if only briefly, in a single volume. The very individual character of the work has the necessary consequence that there is likely to be more disagreement between reader and author than in the case of previous writings; but that is the inevitable result of independent thinking in all of us, and will, I feel sure, be expected and even welcomed by the author. An identity of general outlook in a number of people does not, and indeed should not, imply a corresponding identity in the particulars of their philosophy; and this principle is likely to show itself more in the Freethinking public than elsewhere.

The work which is the subject of the present review is built up from recent articles in the *Freethinker*, but a good deal of amplification has been done. The strictly philosophic portion comes towards the end, being preceded by a few able essays that prepare the ground for the more substantial matter. If philosophizing requires any defence we are provided with it in the first essay entitled "Splitting Hairs." Then under the heading, "What is Religion?" the quibbles of the religious apologist are trenchantly exposed, and we are left in no doubt as to the boundary between religion and quasi-philosophies that attempt to pass themselves off as religion. Following this we come upon an essay under the title "Why Agnosticism?" By that time we are getting warm, and before the end of this essay we have a thoroughly clear idea of just where religion ends and philosophy begins, or vice versa. Then we break upon chapter four, "The Ghost of a God," and we immediately sense that the "meat" has arrived. Mr. Cohen certainly knows how to prepare the dish, for, even if it does not altogether suit every palate, we have to admit that it is first class fare. Sometimes perhaps we may feel that it would have been better had the author divided this section into two subsections, expository and critical, because the occasional digressions of a critical nature require us to pick up the threads of the main philosophic thesis at intervals. But the whole essay is surprisingly brief, and we soon get used to the informal tone adopted by the writer. Mr. Cohen always writes as he speaks, and an almost conversational atmosphere pervades even his most profound sallies.

If we are prompted to criticize his work, it is because his great lucidity so clearly lays open his meaning. Mr. Cohen is a very sincere thinker, and never tries to conceal under a cloak of verbiage any dubious portions of his philosophy. He is downright to the finish.

It might appear to some that Mr. Cohen has attempted to solve the age-long epistemological problem in a finally satisfactory manner; but I do not

quite get this impression. I think rather that he has clearly in mind that at best philosophy consists of an opinion legitimately grounded, which should exhibit reasoning the most exact, and common sense the most robust applied to the best authenticated facts. Out of this will arise what the philosopher would call a "position," and that he would be said to "adopt." This, I think, is as far as Mr. Cohen intends to go. Actually his "position" seems to me rather to render a service to terminology than to solve problems. His way of looking at philosophy, while it does not appear to surmount certain ancient epistemological difficulties, at least places them in the most favourable condition for future victories. The harshest critic might say that he has evaded them, but it is equally possible to say that he has re-arranged them for the better.

The central theme of Mr. Cohen's philosophy seems to me to consist in the conception of experience as absolutely fundamental. While he admits that it must be thought of as a relationship, he rejects any discussion of its component parts that would involve us in ultra-experiential factors. The older terminologies including such labels as "subjective" and "objective," "Thing-in-itself," "Substance," "Mind," "Matter," he deals with very ably, and shows how they pre-suppose ultra-experiential factors every time they are used, and how the epistemological question is vitiated by a "petitio principii" when these terms are employed to ask it. With a graceful acknowledgment to P. H. Bradley, he attacks the problem of knowledge by dividing experience into "public" and "private," and urges that "all these terminological absurdities are cleared out of the way when we are content to rest on the solid foundation of experience, to face the world as we know it, and to confine ourselves to intelligible statements," and later that "the man who talks of some-thing beyond experience has made 'thing' unintelligible."

By this reasoning Mr. Cohen places us in the following predicament: On the one hand we are bound to admit that all he is urging on us is that we cannot think about something which cannot be thought about. There is no gainsaying that. But, on the other hand, if we are to accept the inferences from the very "experience" he is talking about, we are driven to suppose that this same "experience" is a relatively late arrival in the Universe! More than this, we are driven equally to suppose that it will not be the last existent therein. Were we to reject these two inferences, it could only be by supposing eternal consciousness. What are we to do about it? We cannot stop thinking at will, and we are driven to think about that.

It is perhaps to be regretted that Mr. Cohen does not deal with this aspect of the matter, beyond implying that it leads nowhere. I fear we are only partially consoled. Was it Carveth Read who said that if a man once starts really thinking about philosophy, he is bound to land himself in problems of metaphysics?

That is why I say that Mr. Cohen has perhaps performed his chief service to terminology without having entirely disposed of problems that have troubled philosophers of all time. But, after all, could the major triumph be expected of anyone? Not while, as Bertrand Russell tells us, philosophy is a progressive entity. Final solutions must be left to the dogmatic confidence of theologians.

The last section of this interesting little book deals with the question "Are Miracles Impossible?" This chapter is done in the author's best style, and one is struck by its lucidity, even in a book where lucidity is a feature throughout. Mr. Cohen's aim is to put forward a view of causation that disposes of miracles

once and for all, thrusting them back from the already lowly status of infinitely high improbability to that of sheer logical impossibility. He submits Hume to a severe examination, and finds that Hume's main weakness lay in a faulty conception of causation, by which an effect was regarded as *following* its cause with no more intrinsic necessity than was assumed from our repeated experience of the sequence. Substituting a conception attributed to Lewes, namely, that the difference between cause and effect is the difference between analysis and synthesis, Mr. Cohen proceeds to argue that the effect actually *is* the cause at the moment of occurrence, the cause being viewed as factors in combination. Thus, to say that a cause might, by a miracle, be made to produce some other effect than its own would be equivalent to saying that a thing might conceivably not be itself. That would clearly relegate the miracle to a logical impossibility, the terms of which, as Mr. Cohen puts it, "cannot be brought together in consciousness." If this view of causation were exhaustive and wholly satisfactory, then indeed no more would remain to be said. But there appears to me to be one grave defect in it. Mr. Cohen himself, a confessed emergent evolutionist, would be the first to admit that where we speak of emergence in causation the effect is not evident in the analysis of the cause. Indeed, Mr. Cohen, in approaching this very matter, says that "by no sort of examination, by no sort of consideration of the properties" of the causal factors can those of the emergent effect be deduced. This seems to me to imply that we cannot discern either a physical or a logical necessity that the cause should constitute the effect until in fact it has done so, and the doing so is only established by the repeated experience of the observer. It would appear, therefore, that to formulate a theory of emergent causation which inferred that this novel effect, repeatedly observed, owed its invariable character to the fact that it was only the cause in synthesis, would be to commit a logical "non sequitur." All that we can say from our experience of the matter is that the effect is seen, and invariably seen. But that is all Hume said, at least in substance. Thus emergence, treated without any gratuitous assumption, would seem to thrust us back on the bulwark of invariability. Furthermore, the difficulty of a time factor in Mr. Cohen's exposition of causation would seem to me very serious indeed. It is easy to see that there is no interval of time between the full assemblage of the causal factors and the occurrence of the effect. Both can be thought of, as Mr. Cohen says, as one and the same fact. But if one does not assume a time element to provide for the *process of assembling*, it seems to me that we have conceived what I should call an "instantaneous universe"; for each so-called stage in the development of the effect must itself be explained, step by step, in terms of causation; and since it is quite impossible to conceive of causation occurring in a series of instantaneous and isolated events, not themselves causally related to other events, we would have no option but to think of the whole as bound together in one timeless fact. But that would preclude the very separation of events which is not only the first condition of thinking about anything, but is actually the intrinsic nature of thought itself.

But the deep interest of this book may be judged from the irresistible temptation it offers to the present reviewer to argue about it. Philosophy that provokes no discussion is either superficial or incomprehensible, and Mr. Cohen's is neither. It goes down to bedrock in the clearest language, and will set in motion the intellect of any with the slightest bent for reflection. Mr. Cohen's method of approaching a subject is in the highest degree instructive, and I must repeat what has

been said about the great service he has rendered to the development of a clearer terminology, and therefore of a swifter and more accurate approach to questions of perennial interest.

Some might imagine that this book is only for those interested in philosophy, but I can assure them that it will actually create this interest in those who had none before. And through every page, no matter what the subject, we see the sturdy Freethinker, fearless and uncompromising on every intellectual issue. Mr. Cohen has not changed, and we cannot refrain from wishing him very many years of his present undiminished vigour.

MEDICUS.

Acid Drops

We learn, on the authority of the *British Weekly* that General Eva Booth "has brought over from America her favourite horse, and expects to enjoy many a gallop on Wimbledon Common and in Richmond Park." Spurgeon was noted for his magnificent equipage. His carriage and pair caused many an "unholy wish" from his congregation, some of whom had tramped miles to attend his services. Spurgeon answered the Sabbatarian protests by explaining that his coachman was a Jew. If Eva allows the wealthier officers of the Army to "collect" on the Salvation Army "Self-Denial Days," we may expect to hear references to "Beggars on Horseback." In New York the motor-cars of Salvation Army Officers are equal to those of any millionaire.

Dr. Sidney Berry, addressing a Bournemouth School on Prize-Giving Day, assured the boys that he had only had one single prize awarded to him when at school, and that was a copy of *Dante's Vision of Hell*. He suggestively added: "I hope that as a parson, I haven't done too much to pass the vision on to others."

Professor J. Alexander Findlay tries, like many Christian preachers to-day, to give an international touch to utterances of Christ which would astonish nobody more than the Divine Author Himself. But it surely is hitting below the belt when the Professor misquotes well-known gospel stories in order to pretend that when Christ said one very local thing He meant another and an international thing. Findlay quotes Christ as saying, "My House shall be called a House of Prayer FOR ALL NATIONS." Of course, what Christ said was, "Shall be called of ALL NATIONS," and this only one gospel mentions (Mark xi. 17). The other gospels say nothing at all about any "Nation."

What funny "morals" the preachers draw from most elementary material. The story of Abraham's "Adventure" for instance is obviously the tale of a primitive savage who absolutely believed in human sacrifice, and was actually making all his arrangements for the murder of his son Isaac. That the sacrifice was a reluctant one owing to Isaac being his own child makes the story all the more clear as regards Abraham's readiness to commit the unnatural act. In the *British Weekly*, the Rev. A. D. Belden actually describes the Patriarch as animated by "the rise within himself of a new conscience against human sacrifice." Of this there is about as much evidence as we have that Al Capone was an assassin inspired by conscientious scruples against taking life.

Mrs. Arthur Stannard has written a book called *His Star* (London, Elliot Stock). She praises the very thing which makes religion the foe to humanity. She "sets her affections on things above," while the whole earth cries aloud for human effort to save it from war, disease and poverty. To her "other-worldliness," the only thing of importance is that some day those who believe in religious "dope" will have a right royal time—after

death! "Surely," she says, "when you have once had a glimpse of God's wonder, earth seems a trivial thing compared to the marvels which await those who believe."

"To sleep in Church," says the *British Weekly*, "is an act for which a grown-up person should be ashamed." Well—in ancient days the verger, with those long sticks now kept only for ornament, used to see that the preacher was listened to, whether he deserved it or not. Nowadays even "Movies" cannot always rely upon keeping people awake, and so long as an audience either pays its entrance fee or contributes to the collection, we must put up with it if we cannot make our proceedings more interesting than the usual dope or sedative of a religious service is in this age of unbelief.

"Life is not a baffling enigma any more," says Dr. James Reid in a Christmas Sermon. Life, he adds, is now "a trysting place where we can meet with God." But then Dr. Reid admits that "Our wisest thoughts are but guesswork." It looks as if Dr. Reid's guesses are wrong guesses. We once heard a German girl complaining to her lover, "I met you last night, but you did not meet me." A Trysting Place is a place where we go to meet somebody—it is not always a place where we meet them.

A writer in the *Methodist Recorder* heads his article: "About Angels: Conditions under which they may be met." We imagine the accent is on the word MAY. We find plenty of "conditions." For instance, "we shall have to be stripped of much that civilization stands for." If material wealth is meant, there are plenty of poverty-stricken homes where people have been "stripped" all right, but we have not heard of supernatural "angels" visiting them. If the intellectual characteristics of civilization are referred to, most of our Churches would be crowded out with these Cherubim and Seraphim.

The Rev. Wilfred Hannam makes a commonsense protest against the once popular Christian institution, the "Promise Box." We have seen many of these queer "boxes" in our youth. It was kept as Mr. Hannam says, on a beautiful table cloth, mixed up with raspberry tarts or some equally "delectable sweetmeats." It was more useful than a Bible because a Bible contains things calculated to induce pessimism instead of hope. The Promise Box was a collection of "God's Sure Promises to Believers." Mr. Hannam gives as an illustration: "A seasonable New Year text, to be found, I doubt not, on many a motto-card for 1935, namely, 'But He knoweth the way that I take.'" As Mr. Hannam truly says, "What a lovely thought," but the context "puts a very different complexion on it. So far from being a promise, it is a confession of bitter disappointment wrung from the lips of a righteous man, who confesses himself utterly baffled to understand the ways of God with one who has trusted Him."

The Friend suggests that "the only credible religion is one that staggers the imagination." By this test the Christian Religion is perfectly "credible." We wonder if it adds to its credibility that it "staggers" also our sense of justice, decency and morality. Ingersoll used to say that Hell could not possibly be true because it staggered the moral ideas of a child. We prefer Ingersoll's criterion.

A well-known "Stores" includes in its Wine List, "A delicate wine of outstanding quality," called "Enfant Jesus." It is said to "show no sign of dryness," so we gather it has little in common with the Babe of Bethlehem, except perhaps that the cost of it is exceptionally high, and that it is said to resemble "Graves."

The Bishop of Chelmsford says that if he were given £50,000 for church work, he would be able to make the gates of Hell tremble. Exactly what this means is not

particularly clear; possibly the Bishop wants to convey that he would advance the cause of Christianity. In any case he seems to be unduly optimistic. Money certainly can do wonders, but how much would be required to make a sceptic *sincerely* believe in such stories as the Fall of Man, the Virgin Birth, the devils Jesus was constantly meeting and interfering with, the raising of the dead, the Resurrection, not only of Jesus, but of a host of Jewish saints, and other New Testament tit-bits? Would the Bishop get these absurdities "over" with £5,000,000? The Church has spent considerably more than this sum in the past fifty years, and can the Bishop seriously claim it has advanced its cause? Do not the heads of nearly all the Christian sects admit their task is more difficult than ever?

Miss Marie Tempest said the other day, apropos of the Bishop of London's attack on the scanty dresses worn by some actresses and chorus girls on the stage, that his ideas on sex are silly. She may, one day, find out that this remark need not be confined merely to his ideas on sex. For somehow—even when he has the chance of being right—the Bishop has the happy knack of saying the wrong thing or saying the right thing wrongly, or generally saying—as Miss Tempest puts it—something quite silly. We think he should confine himself to the exposition of the Bible—though here, perhaps, we are afraid his fellow-Bishops will not agree with us.

Abbot Vonier has written an article in the *Clergy Review*, in which he points out many things in which "the Catholic Church has achieved the impossible." For example, he asks, "How is it that the Catholic people can understand easily what is meant by the Incarnation? How is it that the Virgin Birth, about which learned men outside the Church blunder so grossly, is for Catholics a dogma easily acceptable?" We don't doubt for a moment that Catholics swallow the Incarnation and the Virgin Birth as well as thousands of equally absurd stories which belong to myth and legend when they are not downright lies. Why do they? The answer is not easy, and would take more space than it is worth to detail; but one of the principle reasons is enshrined in the word *fear*. More than anything else, the Roman Catholic Church teaches *fear*. Believe or you will be damned.

The Parliamentary Secretary of the Board of Education, Mr. H. Ramsbotham, replying to Dr. W. J. O'Donovan, on the question of the "unfair treatment" of Catholic schools, said: "The Board have been accused of depriving Roman Catholics of their 'right' to new schools. Neither the Roman Catholics nor any other body have a legal right to a school." Mr. Ramsbotham pointed out that "since April, 1932, 53 proposals have been received from Catholics for the provision of entirely new schools. Of these 36 obtained the Board's unqualified approval, and only 12 were disallowed altogether on grounds of finance and existing educational efficiency." And yet Catholics go about whining because State money is not handed over to them altogether to teach their absurd doctrines, history and science. Does anybody believe that if Catholics were in power in this country they would hand state funds over to Jews and Protestants to establish schools in which Catholic teaching would be naturally ignored?

Amid all the tributes to the late Cardinal Bourne—which no doubt were deserved—the *Church Times* points out one forgotten fact: "There was nothing of the characteristic Irish pugnacity about Dr. Bourne. He was a fervent patriot—a circumstance which made him at times *persona ingrata* at Rome, while in Ireland he was angrily spoken of as the 'Black and Tan Cardinal.'" Thus even Roman Catholicism has never been able to curb the hatred of England by the Irish in Ireland. It would be interesting to know what the Cardinal thought of his "brethren in Christ" there.

Mr. Maurice Leahy claims, in an article in the *Irish Independent*, that King Edward VII. died a Catholic—a silly story put forward years ago, and one very difficult

—as are all Christian lies—to catch up with. It is said that the King read from a Catholic Prayer Book before he died (which is not true) and a “Catholic crucifix lay on the breast of Queen Alexandra when she died.” The real truth is, that while it is impossible at the moment to know what really happened on the question of King Edward and religion, one thing is definitely known. He never was “converted.” In fact it is very doubtful if he had any “real” religion whatever—apart from that which all Kings of England are supposed to have.

The Archbishop of York thinks the way to bring people to Christ is to “turn our congregations into bands of evangelists.” He adds that “we must proclaim the Gospel to the people where they are . . . to convert the man-in-the-street you must go into the street . . . the laity must do most of it. What a pity the “laity” simply *won't* do it. Like the clergy they shirk converting some men-in-the-street—say, some of those who read this journal. The Archbishop declares he doesn't mind a “little” heresy so long as the heretic “shows and imparts a love for the Lord Jesus.” We feel that this kind of “heretic” ought to go right over to Roman Catholicism in double quick time. Why stop at the Archbishop's half-way house?

A pious Christian writing about Jerusalem on Christmas Day, is very sad. Though some English banks and offices were shut, he found the work of the city carrying on as usual, few people caring tuppence about the birth of the Saviour of the World. This particular Christian complains how the Holy Land is being modernized and commercialized. In fact he shows a glimmer of understanding, for he recognizes how impossible the beautiful old story must be “to put across” a country which is doing its utmost to take advantage of modern science, discovery, and business. Even Jericho, which not long ago was a ruin, now has grown prosperous through banana growing. It is typical of what is happening in other holy places; as for example, the Lido which is being built on the Dead Sea. There are no unemployed in Palestine and no beggars; and the town is becoming prosperous. What more could Christianity do?

More charming manners of the clergy. A correspondent writes to the Editor of the *British Weekly*:—

A noted minister and a D.D. in Glasgow came to preach in a large industrial town not a hundred miles from your own native town. When this man confronted the congregation who had assembled to hear him, he refused to preach because the numbers were not to his anticipation, and so he went back to the city, I suppose with his message in his pocket.

A pity the name is not given of this “humble and contrite heart.”

The Rev. A. E. Gould, of Ramsgate, preached recently (according to the *British Weekly*) from the text “He hath despised the day of small things.” That the text is misquoted, no doubt, constitutes one of these “small things.” Mr. Gould was surely preaching to the converted when he urged his congregation “to concentrate more on the power of littleness.” But then the parsons have strange ideas about what are trifles. One clergyman told us during the war that “this war, vast as it is, is only an episode, only an incident.”

The Adventures of a Bishop is the title of an autobiography by the Primate of Ireland, Archbishop C. F. D'Arcy. We used to be told that an archdeacon was “one who performed archidiaconal functions,” but an archbishop has no such limitations. Instead, we are assured, in a review in the *British Weekly*, that: “the Archbishop takes his place with the religious teachers of modern times, who have sought refreshment in the noblest of sports.” The picture of a bishop “seeking refreshment,” makes him almost human, but the “place” that he “takes” seems to be as far away from humanity as possible, for this is what Dr. D'Arcy describes as his “ecstatic moment”:—

To sit aloft in some cleft of a great precipice, while the mists coiled and uncoiled about us, and the splash of a

waterfall sounded near, and sometimes a high point of rock became visible . . . and to know that not a habitation of man, or even mountain road was anywhere near—this was sheer delight.

In Mr. Cohen's *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought* a reference is made to the mental gymnastics of Bishop Barnes, who “applies his destructive criticism to physical miracles only, as though the reign of law was less certain in the mental than it is in the material sphere.” The Rev. John Bevan supplies yet another phase of this sort of confusion. He “cannot accept as usual facts those miracles, so-called, where Our Lord had no living person, but only inanimate Nature to deal with, e.g., turning water into wine, stilling the tempest, etc.” He adds, “the miracles of healing. I can and do accept,” but even in regard to human beings, he draws the line at raising the dead. “I cannot believe that any living body,” he says, “has ever been brought back to life again.”

A writer in the *British Weekly*, admits that some Church-goers are so snobbish that “it means a clear £100 extra profit to get a lord to open your bazaar.” He even suggests that he “would like to see a more generous distribution of fine-sounding titles amongst the literary, artistic and learned classes.” Why not let ill alone? The “beverage” would no doubt patronizingly welcome the presence of a percentage of intelligence in the “gilded chamber,” believing that paste is improved by a setting of eighteen carat gold.

“God can be as small and helpless as a child,” says Professor J. A. Findlay, of Didsbury College, who believes that God, being “unlimited,” can, if He chooses, “limit Himself without ceasing to be God.” Dr. Findlay thinks that God did so limit Himself. If this is a fact, then, presumably, God could, if He chose, also cease to be God! Who knows, perhaps God did abdicate, long ago. Many Christians, bleeding, torn, dying in the torture chambers of their fellow-Christians in the Ages of Faith, believed that God was dead and that Christ and His Saints slept. Of course, if anything happened to the alleged “God” to-day, it is difficult to see how any of us could know about it. Not one of our News Agencies would allow us to get the news. Sir John Reith *would* certainly *never* broadcast such “blasphemy.”

The Rev. Leslie D. Weatherhead says, “I sometimes think that God's sense of humour expresses itself in the way He shows us how insignificant a detail can be. I think He teases us and laughs with us.” Mr. Weatherhead is not the first pious writer to note God's peculiar sense of humour. In the Second Psalm, for example, we find God, sitting in Heaven, laughing with derision because, like His Holy Inquisitors, He is going to “break” His enemies “with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” And what “detail” aroused this wrath? According to verse three these “heathen” wanted freedom—the vilest of crimes to all dictators (divine or devilish).

The Archbishop of Canterbury broadcasts a sermon on “Recovery of Soul,” from Canterbury Cathedral on December 30. He regarded the most vital need of the day to be “to make time to recover the soul.” We have no conception of what these words mean, except that they clearly have no bearing on any human social problem. As defined by the Archbishop, it means “to be still and know God.” He believes that “we must call in the spiritual world to redress the balance of the material world.” Again we are in the dark as to what, if any, meaning this makes. The Primate made a ghastly mistake in 1914, in mistaking God for the Devil as the author of the war. “No man can doubt,” says the Archbishop now, “that if what we call the Christian spirit prevailed, the world would be changed.” Certainly we Freethinkers do not doubt it. For over a thousand years that spirit really prevailed—those years are called the “Dark Ages.” In 1914 the “Christian spirit” was all on the side of war, and it prevailed. Let us get rid of it and let humanity get an innings.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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TO CORRESPONDENTS.

TO DISTRIBUTING THE "FREETHINKER."—H. Holt, is. 9d.

R. YOUNG.—Papers acknowledged with thanks.

C. E. CORNETT.—The paper came to hand quite safely, but to have dealt with the matter at all would have required more space and time than we were able to give it. And there is always in the background those who will write very long letters on the slightest provocation.

THE SECRETARY of the Public Hall and Institute Brynamman, Glam., thanks us for the copies of the *Freethinker* sent to the above-named Institution.

A. CAYFORD.—Thanks for good wishes. Have placed your cheque for 10s. to the credit of the Fund for distributing the *Freethinker*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9. All Cheques and Postal Orders should be made payable to "The Pioneer Press," and crossed "Midland Bank, Ltd., Clerkenwell Branch."

Sugar Plums

There is just time to remind London readers who have tickets for the N.S.S. Annual Dinner, that dinner will be served at 7 o'clock sharp. The reception will be at 6.30. May we impress upon visitors the need for being present in time. Late-comers impose a tax upon those on whose shoulders the arrangements rest.

To-day (January 20) Mr. Cohen will lecture at Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees. At the first place he will speak in the Eckert Assembly Rooms, Albert Road, at 2.30. In the evening, at 7.0, he will speak in the Jubilee Hall, Stockton-on-Tees. Good meetings are anticipated at both places.

A new edition of Colonel Ingersoll's *Rome or Reason* is in the press, and will be soon published. This is beyond question the best reply to Roman Catholic claims published. It has sold in large numbers, and bearing in mind the growing menace of the Roman Church, we hope that the new edition will be distributed as widely as possible. We should like to see either Mr. Belloc or Mr. G. K. Chesterton attempt a reply to this essay—when they are done with the comparatively safe task of replying to those who, because of their own religious beliefs, are prevented from fully exposing the Roman Catholic case.

Our readers will regret to hear that our contributor, Mr. W. Mann, recently met with, what is at his time of life, a rather serious accident. He was knocked down by a motor-cycle, which had skidded on a wet road. Mr. Mann was taken to Sidecup Hospital, where his wounds received attention. But he has suffered a rather severe shock, and must go slowly for a time. An unfortunate feature of the accident is that the cyclist was insured with one of those small companies that make it a rule to fight every claim. As that means expensive litigation, Mr. Mann has not even that form of recompense for his injury and out of pocket expenses.

On Monday evening, January 21, at 8.0, Mrs. M. Whitefield, of Glasgow, will speak, under the auspices of the Birkenhead Branch of the N.S.S. in the Boiler-makers' Hall, Argyll Street, Birkenhead. This is Mrs. Whitefield's first appearance on the Merseyside, and we hope to hear of a successful gathering.

The *New Statesman* publishes a full column review approving of Mr. Bedborough's *Arms and the Clergy*. It says that for the reason that modern war means not only physical torture and death, but mass-hysteria and endemic imbecility, *Arms and the Clergy* is "a most commendable book." A few telling quotations are given, but the writer of the review confesses the "richness is such as to make selection difficult." With that we, of course, agree. Mr. Bedborough's book could hardly have been better, although it might have been much larger, and a full account of the attitude of the clergy during the war, their ferocity, and readiness to encourage all sorts of wild slanders against anyone to whom the Allies were opposed would make a very bulky volume indeed. As it is, and in view of the clerical denunciations of war—now that conditions have changed—*Arms and the Clergy* becomes a very useful and a very important document.

But there is one point in the reviewer's notice of the book calls for comment. He asks, "If Christians were eager to claim God as their ally, were Rationalists less eager to claim reason in the same capacity? . . . I do not remember that the Conscientious Objector received much support from the Rationalist Council." We are not quite certain who is meant by the "Rationalist Council," but so far as this journal is concerned we can safely plead not guilty. During the war we constantly called attention to the absurdities of the Conscription Act, and the iniquities of its administration. We said, as anyone may verify who appeals to the columns of the *Freethinker* during the war years, that Conscription should either be for all or none. To conscript every able-bodied man, and to permit those who had a conscientious objection to stand out, was in the highest degree absurd. But first of all to permit a man to refuse service on the ground of a conscientious objection, and then to imprison him for having done so, and brutally to ill-treat men when they were imprisoned, was both idiotic and criminal. To punish him by excluding him from occupations when the war was ended, and to penalize him for years after, only added to the criminality of the business. We said these things over and over again, and, looking at the state of the general press, we were not altogether surprised, although we were very pleased, to get a great many letters from the fighting fronts to say that the *Freethinker* was about the only sane paper they received from home.

Mr. Clayton Dove's scholarly articles in these columns have made him many appreciative readers, and these will the more eagerly take advantage of obtaining a copy of one of the best of his works. *Paul of Tarsus* is a very elaborate study of the life and teachings of Paul, based on original research, and it is now being offered by the Publishers, Messrs. Watts & Co., at 1s. 6d. The original price was 7s. 6d. We recommended this book when it first appeared, and we have pleasure in recommending it again.

Protestantism and Fascism in Germany

(Concluded from page 27)

WE summarize the following as the principal lines of attack which were made. Public meetings and press facilities were used by Mueller and his German Christian followers to denounce the Old Testament as a creation of Judaism. A revision of the New Testament was called for, only those parts being declared worthy of survival which are compatible with National Socialism. In Church organization essential changes were made. At the beginning of 1933 there existed in Germany 28 autonomous Protestant Churches, which were quite independent of each other in their management. The need for a unification of the German people behind the "Leader" awakened the need for a unification inside the Protestant Church. The segregated Churches responded by delegating representatives to draw up a new Church constitution to regulate the unified "Evangelical Church of the Reich." Up to this juncture, therefore, they acted completely in accordance with the wishes of the Nazi Government. But what they failed to do was to elect the right man (for the Fascists) as Primate of the new Reichskirche. They elected Herr Bodelschwingh, who later "laid down" his appointment when the State (which had declared its neutrality in inner Church affairs) intervened by placing a Nazi State Commissioner above him. In an atmosphere of Nazi pressure the Church constitution was again revised, finally laying it down that the heads of the previously autonomous Churches should present the nominations for the head of the Protestant Reichskirche, the final "calling" to take place at the National Synod of the Church. The leaders of these Churches were also granted the right to make nominations for the "Ecclesiastical Ministry" which was to assist the Reichprimate, but the eventual choice was left in the hands of the Primate himself. It was then a relatively easy matter to secure the Primacy for Fascism. A Church election under pressure of Nazi propaganda, during which Herr Hitler gave a broadcast speech in favour of the German Christians, secured the necessary majority for Herr Mueller, the choice of the Nazis, who thus became Primate of the unified Protestant Church. His Ecclesiastical Ministry was dominated by men of his own calibre. Then Naziism crept into Church affairs. The Synod of the Old Prussian Union Church, by far the most influential section of Protestantism in Germany, passed a law providing for the dismissal of all pastors and Church officials if they, or their wives, had Jewish blood in the family within the past two generations. At a tremendous meeting of the German Christians in the Sportpalast in Berlin, it was declared that the application of the Aryan clause to the Church must be carried through ruthlessly, and that Church members of Jewish, "or other foreign racial descent," should be segregated in special religious communities.

It was encroachments such as these which the Opposition Movement sought to challenge. The Pastor's Emergency League was formed, later to be assisted by the Bishops of certain State Churches. At one period they succeeded in getting the above law revoked, but they did not succeed in removing Mueller from office, and he used the full privilege of his office, backed up by Nazi hooliganism and Nazi law (which forbade the discussion of Church affairs by written word or word of mouth to all except the German Christians), to break the resistance of his opponents. And he succeeded in calling together a National Synod which sanctioned all he had done, reinstated the Aryan clause, and determined the relationship between Pro-

testant Christianity and political Fascism to be that:—

The State has not only the Right, but the duty to formulate certain general directives concerning the exterior organization of the Church communal life, and to insist that only men whom it can trust unconditionally and absolutely completely occupy the position of officials in leading positions in the Church.

The practical application of this principle was the passing of a Church law, which stipulated that "no person may be delegated or summoned to the National Synod who does not at all times give unreserved support not only to the German Evangelical Church, but also to the National Socialist State."

The recent "voluntary resignation" of Herr Jaeger, Mueller's right-hand man and legal adviser, and the re-institution of certain pastors and bishops, following upon the heels of Hitler's interview with representatives of the Opposition, was looked upon as a great victory for the opposition clergy, and a turning point in the struggle in their favour. And Hitler's accompanying refusal to make any decision in favour of either side, but to leave the Church to settle its own dissensions, has been celebrated by both parties as their respective victory. At all events, the opposition is precipitate in celebrating victory. For Herr Jaeger's resignation seems to be in the nature of a mere sop to avert an acute crisis. Herr Mueller has not been removed. His Church laws have not been repealed. And, as far as one can judge from press reports in this country, his policy "to give every pulpit a German Christian pastor, and to fill every pew with German Christians" remains unaltered. It is difficult to prophesy the outcome of the struggle. In any case, in order to obtain a clear picture of the forces at play on both sides, it is necessary to consider a striking problem which the history of the dispute presents. Why do the agents of the Nazi State persist in interfering in the internal affairs of the Protestant Church in spite of the considerable opposition their action has caused? The support of the entire Church for Hitler's destruction of civil liberty has already been stressed. Even the persecuted non-Aryan Christians give him their support, as is shown by the following statement made by the President of the Defence League, which was called into being to protect them:—

We are Germans and Christians, and there is not one person among us who does not support the Government's fight against all that is non-German, against extreme intellectualism, pacifism and Communism. We do not question the Government's merits of having preserved Germany from Bolshevism.

It is thus clear that the entire Protestant Church supports Fascism, and would take the side of the Government in any future conflict between Fascism and Socialism. It is a historical fact that the Protestant Church has never failed to recruit for Capitalism's army during times of war. If therefore in the essentials of his home and foreign policy Hitler is assured of the support of the Church, why does he allow Herr Mueller and his clique to persist in their struggle for domination despite its troublesome effects?

The first and most obvious answer to this question is that Hitler cannot afford to offend all his previous friends who supported his coming to power in the expectation of sharing in the fruits of office, in the form of wealth and power. It is easier to give position to a man like Mueller than to take it away. But the case of Roehm reminds us that Hitler does not allow old friendships and a few killings to stop him from removing troublesome people. It is not Nazi place-seekers who are his main source of worry.

To understand his dilemma it is essential to know that the struggle which superficially rages only on the question of faith and Church organization serves as a cover for a conflict of quite a different nature. For behind the Opposition pastors stand Conservative sections of the Reichswehr, wealthy bureaucrats, junkers and other groups representing powerful economic interests, sections of the capitalist class who are awaiting a suitable occasion to mould the dictatorship into forms which will give them decisive power. These are the Conservative circles which wielded great power in State and Church both during the Monarchy and the Republic; they seek to regain their lost power. The fact that the Protestant Church dispute is carried on publicly as a conflict of beliefs is explained by the fact that this religious garb is advantageous to the forces concerned. Neither of the conflicting parties desires to proclaim to the mass of their Church followers that it is a mere battle for power in which they are engaged. Further, all action against the Nazi State is illegal. Thus the Conservative forces acting through the Opposition Movement welcome this opportunity to carry forward their struggle for power under legal conditions, which is theirs to the extent that Hitler upholds his declared principle of State neutrality in Church affairs.

German Protestantism is thus revealed as a pale reflection of that powerful moral force with which our Christian friends endow it. The Church as a whole as a prop of Fascism is despicable enough. What honour exists goes to those individual men and women who, in the mistaken belief that they are serving an ideal, are defending one set of superstitions against another, in the interests of those who will exploit either superstition to establish or consolidate their power.

X.

Heaven in the New Testament

(Concluded from page 22)

It is somewhat difficult to ascertain the views of the New Testament writers concerning the nature of clouds, for where they chiefly display their thoughts on this matter, namely, in the remarkable passages about people going to and from heaven, three different prepositions (a) en, (b) epi, and (c) meta, occur relatively to one and the same thing, and each of these has two or more meanings when governing the case actually employed. Here are the texts. We give the Revised Version, and put in brackets the places where the old one differs from it with respect to the prepositions above-mentioned. (a) "The Son of Man coming in clouds" (Mark xvi. 26). "The Son of Man coming in a cloud" (Luke xxi. 27.) "Caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thes. iv. 17.) "They went up to heaven in the cloud" (Rev. xi. 32.) (b) "The Son of Man coming on (in) the clouds of heaven." (Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64.) "Behold a white cloud, and on (upon) the cloud one sitting like a Son of Man" (Rev. xiv. 14.) (c) "The Son of Man . . . coming with (in) the clouds of heaven." (Mark xiv. 62.) "Behold he cometh with clouds" (Rev. i. 7.)

The original translators, as will have been noticed, render by the word "in" all the three different prepositions used with regard to the cloud at the coming of the Son of Man, their purpose being an harmonizing attempt which the Revisers justly discarded. According to (a) the Son of Man will come "in a cloud," and surviving believers will ascend "in the clouds" to meet their coming Lord. Are the people in question conceived as being simply enveloped by

the clouds during their flight or are they conceived as being carried up or down inside the clouds after the manner of a balloon? The preposition en sometimes means "with" or "by." Thus we read about "smiting with the sword" (Luke xxi. 49); and about entering "into the holy place by the blood of Jesus." (Hebrews x. 19.) Has it this meaning in the texts anent the clouds? According to (b) the Son of Man will come "on the clouds." "On" or "upon" is what epi usually means when employed as in the present case to govern the genitive. But it has, nevertheless, sometimes the meaning of "in" or "at." The translators took it as "in," but the Revisers take it as "on." Of course, "on the clouds" is not the same as "in the clouds"; and, moreover, it signifies that they are something capable of bearing a weight, in the case before us the weight of a body, yea, the body of a surviving believer. If the translators were right and the Revisers are wrong, then there is no contradiction between (a) and (b); but the latter have all the probabilities in their favour.

Again, if en in (a) signify "with" or "by" and not "in," then it agrees with epi, translated "on" in (b). For "coming by the clouds," and "coming on the clouds," both mean the same thing, namely, that the clouds are instrumental to the coming. According to (c) the Son of Man will come "with the clouds." Meta when used as here to govern the genitive, signifies usually, "in the midst of," "among," "with," "together with"; and also sometimes "by aid of," as for instance, "He found no place of repentance though he sought it diligently with tears." (Hebrews xii. 17), where the weeping is evidently conceived to have been used as a means of supplication. If meta have this sense in the passage about the coming of the Son of Man, it agrees with en rendered "by" and the two agree with epi rendered "on." Upon the other hand, if taken to mean "in the midst of," or "among," it agrees with en and with epi, when both are rendered "in."

The passage about the person seated "on" the white cloud is certainly an instance of clouds being regarded as solid; and it tends to justify the Revisers for rendering epi by "on" in the other two cases. Revelation (x. 1) speaks of a certain angel as cloud-dressed, which indicates a conception of clouds as supple and enswathing.

Perhaps the New Testament writers thought that clouds differ in their nature as to solidity; or perhaps they themselves differ from one another in their views about the density of clouds. We know only of two other texts capable of throwing any light upon the matter. Luke in his Gospel declares that at the transfiguration of Jesus before Peter, James, and John, "there came a cloud and overshadowed them and they feared as they entered into the cloud." (ix. 34, 35.) "Acts" which is attributed to the same author, says that after Jesus had addressed his disciples at the approach of his departure from earth, "he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight." (i. 9.)

If the meaning here be that he vanished into the cloud, then this passage also, like the preceding one, exhibits a correct view of nebulous formations. Still, as all the evangelists hold Jesus for the Son of Man, and as this personage, according to the statement in Matthew, is to arrive upon a cloud, it is just possible that Luke may have thought that Jesus departed in the manner in which he would return. If so, the text means that after being taken up he was placed upon a cloud, and carried away by it.

The former interpretation, however, is the more probable, especially as Luke uses "in" and not "on" with respect to the Son of Man and the cloud, which shows that he differed from Matthew, unless, of

course, "in" have an instrumental sense as was before suggested.

4. *The Higher Heaven.* It is remarkable how little the New Testament has to tell us about this place. We know from various passages previously quoted that God is there upon his throne with the risen Jesus either sitting or standing at his right hand.

One who is evidently Jesus himself dictates in "The Revelation" a letter ending, "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne as I also overcame and sat down with my Father in his throne." (iii. 21.) Angels are often referred to as inhabiting heaven. Those who guard children are especially noticed.

Speaking of his little friends, Jesus says, "in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. xviii. 10.) The prophet of "The Revelation" declares that he saw a great multitude out of all tribes and peoples standing before the throne of God, whither they had arrived by washing their robes in the blood of the Lamb." (vii. 9-15.) These facts might seem to show that the entry of heaven is a privilege reserved only for the good.

Nevertheless, according to Luke (x. 18) Jesus once said to his disciples, "I beheld Satan falling as lightning from heaven," and if this statement were historic and not prophetic, Satan must have gone back again to the place whence he fell. For "The Revelation," a work subsequent to the death of Jesus relates as a coeval event that after the devil had been in the habit of accusing the brethren night and day before God, he and his angels were overcome by Michael and his angels, and then cast down from heaven to earth. (xii. 7-10.) The Apostle in his letter to the Ephesians (vi. 12) says "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." If this epistle be genuine, it was, of course, written before "The Revelation," and might therefore be supposed to mean by the above description nothing more than the state of affairs existing until the celestial war related in the latter work; but it is much likelier that the author sets forth what he thinks will be the condition of things right up to the end of time.

The presence of wicked spirits in the regions inhabited by saints and angels, by Jesus and his Father, is one of the most difficult problems which the New Testament writers have bequeathed to us. The apostle Paul, and he alone, seems to have felt the inconvenience of such a propinquity, at any rate in the case of Jesus and God; for in the very same epistle in which he refers to our wrestling with principalities, and powers, and world-rulers, and with "hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places," he also refers to God having put Jesus "at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Eph. i. 21.) Hence, according to this author, Jesus and God dwell together in heavenly places which are higher up than the heavenly places where "the spiritual hosts of wickedness" are permitted to be. After all, the problem here in question is not greater than the one presented by the theory that God is ubiquitous, for on this hypothesis, he has every evil being in the universe in his immediate presence.

As to the nature and circumstance of the divine abode "The Revelation" is almost the only work which gives us any details. It mentions "the Temple of God which is in heaven, and . . . the ark of his

Covenant," (ii. 19); "the golden altar . . . before the throne"; "a golden censer," filled with fire and incense (viii. 3, 5); "trumpets" (viii. 2); "harps" (xv. 7); and "a glassy sea mingled with fire" (xv. 2.) It describes four living creatures of singular appearance, and four and twenty elders, all in attendance at the throne of God. The former of these "have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, the Almighty"; whereupon the others prostrate themselves before the throne, and laying aside their crowns, intone a chant of praise. (iv. 6-11.) All this closely resembles what the Jews thought religious ceremonies should be like; but then the writer of "Hebrews" says that earthly sacrifices are "the copies of things in the heavens." (ix. 22), and everyone knows that the Jewish system of Worship is proposed as a communication from God to the prophet Moses.

C. CLAYTON DOVE.

Apostacy From Freethought

It is interesting and perhaps useful to think over the relapse from Freethought of some few people who were formerly partially or wholly emancipated from superstition. During the last two or three decades we have noted, for example, that a clergyman (Nonconformist, I think), wrote a heterodox book, left his pastorate, but has since become something of a pillar of the Anglican Church; that a famous political writer wrote a similar book, but is now, I hear, a Spiritualist; and—to our deep chagrin—that one of the foremost champions and able propagandists of Secularism deserted the cause and became a Theosophist.

Casting about for an explanation of this curious phenomenon, we think first of the training in superstition to which most young people have so far been subjected. The intense effect of this is proverbial; and it is powerfully reinforced by the flood of religious propaganda in which older people, willy-nilly, are constantly immersed. For those who never go to church cannot avoid the flood of religious suggestion in novels, newspapers, on the wireless and elsewhere.

As regards the influence of the predominant mode of thought and belief of the time, there is an interesting passage in Buckle's *History of Civilization in England* (dated about 1633). In a reference to Sir Thomas Browne, we are reminded that, in *Religio Medici*, this famous scholar announced his belief in witchcraft, and says that those who do not believe in it are not only infidels but Atheists; in spirits, tutelary angels, and in palmistry; that he reckoned his nativity from his baptism, for before he was baptized he could not be said to exist; that the more improbable any proposition is the greater his willingness to assent to it, but when a thing is actually impossible he is on that very account prepared to believe it. (This is, of course, an echo of an amazing position of some "Christian Fathers"—"*Credo quia impossibile*"—I believe it because it is impossible.)

Buckle then goes on to say that in the later well-known work of Browne's, *Inquiries into Vulgar Errors*, the writer is so much more rational that "if it were not for the most decisive evidence, we could hardly believe it to have been written by the same man." The explanation given of the change of view is that "during the twelve years that elapsed between the two works there was completed that vast social and intellectual revolution, of which the overthrow of the Church (Roman Catholic) and the execution of the King (Charles I.) were but minor incidents."

Of course some individuals are more strongly affected than others by the influences cited; and where mental independence is weak—the "herd instinct" stronger—the effect is commonly life-long. Both influences have undoubtedly been increased by the Great War, which we may hold responsible for a large increase of emotion and sentimentality, and a corresponding decrease and denigration of intellect, the latter extending in some

quarters to the view that reason as an instrument for reaching correct conclusions is fallible, if not futile.

In a Rationalist publication of a few years ago a writer, after enumerating some grosser superstitions, said among other things, "Reason is the only remedy." Now we may take it for granted that those who have not been trained in Christianity, provided they were tolerably intelligent and generally informed, would by the application of simple reasoning or common sense inevitably reject most, if not all, Christian dogma. But we have to deal with those who *have* been so trained. And as a considerable number of adult believers are educated, in the ordinary sense of the word, it is clear that a certain amount of mental training, plus some knowledge (which may be very considerable in, say, the literary, classical and other non-scientific fields) is powerless to overcome entrenched superstition, however absurd its tenets.

We have therefore to supplement reason by something else. And I suggest, in the first place, that the need is for the spread of scientific knowledge. Science is a new subject; it had barely started in schools a generation ago, and therefore the great majority of people who are middle-aged are probably quite ignorant of it. We may well suppose that they are in the same mental stage as the Bishop of London, who has failed to grasp the simple distinction between natural knowledge (which is wholly based on observation) and supernatural ideas (which can have no observational basis). In a recent diocesan letter he is reported to have suggested to his flock that they might expect miracles. He cited his recent wireless talk to America, which he said was "a miracle worked by a law they did not know twenty-five years ago." One wonders whether he also supposes that the printing press, the steam engine, the aeroplane, the coal he puts on his fire, and the oxygen which causes it to burn were miracles before they were discovered or invented? He then (pointing the moral) suggested that the wireless "miracle" renders more easy of belief the greater miracles of the Incarnation, the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection.

Thus far physical science. But still more important from the Secularist point of view is the biological and anthropological group, including the geological history of organisms, including man, and the history of occult ideas and practices. These render absurd the Bishop of London's Christian "miracles," and most, if not all, transcendental ideas, from magic and spiritism to astrology. (Some few persons still advocate the inclusion of the last in the school curriculum!)

It is not to be supposed that at the present stage the knowledge referred to will in every case make supernatural belief impossible, or the relapse to it after emancipation. But I only know of one case in which an eminent man, who has shown in his writings that he has a tolerable equipment in the directions mentioned, has gone back even so far as to an attenuated deism, viz., H. G. Wells. Readers of his autobiography will have noted that, according to the heading of a chapter as the work appeared in the *Daily Herald*, Wells "found God with Mr. Britling." The lapse, however, was only temporary. He tells us plainly that he has since recanted and fully apologized for his backsliding, and that in his writings of the last ten years he has returned to the "sturdy Atheism" of his youthful days. This then, for our comfort and reassurance, may be set against more permanent apostasy, and I suggest that it points, among other things, to the efficacy of knowledge of the kinds here specifically mentioned.

It may be added that Wells clearly states the meaning of relapse, such as his own: "What we have here is really a falling back of the mind towards immaturity under the stress of dismay and anxiety. . . . Everywhere in the first years of disaster (the Great War) men were looking for some loadstone for their loyalty. I thought it was pitiful that they should pin their minds to 'King and Country,' and such like claptrap." And so, in short, he tried to "personify and animate a greater, remoter objective." The result of his deistic thinking and writing was also fully recognized: it "introduced," he says, "a barren detour into my research for an effective direction of human affairs."

J. REEVES.

The Book Shop

THOSE readers who remember Mr. Thornton Wilder's high seriousness in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, and *The Woman of Andros*, will now have a chance of seeing the author in a different vein in *Heaven is My Destination* (Longmans, Green & Co., Ltd., 7s. 6d. net). It is a record of a young American, George Brush, a Methodist, who tries to put his theological logic into practice. His efforts land him frequently in gaol, but Mr. Wilder has some fine wisdom to record from his characters, both inside and outside the house of correction. The author, like Matthew Arnold, is deadly with a smile, amidst the fun, vulgarity and squalor of American life based on the dollar, and shabby religion. He has also a close insight into the human heart's goodness, and the central character of his novel may be compared in many ways with Don Quixote, whom we first begin to laugh at, then pity, and finally love, and regret our parting with the knight of the doleful countenance. The novel abounds in sidelights on American culture, American Banks, American second-hand religions, and the vocabulary of the speakers, for those who like it, will be found to be amusing, and what is better, provide a good laugh in a world that is in danger of losing its sense of humour. The hero, towards the end of the book, is very ill, and he is visited by a Dr. Bowie, a minister at the First Methodist, who worries the patient with questions about his immortal welfare. George Brush, at this point, gets really roused, and delivers himself to the minister as follows "But it doesn't get you anywhere. Look at me. The more I asked the worse I got. Everything I did was wrong. Everybody I knew got to hate me—so that proves it. When you were young I guess you asked to be all those things; and yet look at you: you're pretty stupid, if I must say so; and dry and . . . I'll bet you even believe in war." ". . . The second thing that shows there is no God is that He allows such foolish people to be ministers. I've secretly thought that for a long time, and now I'm glad to be able to say it. All ministers are stupid—do you hear me?—all . . . I mean: all except one." This one is a Father Pasziewski, whom the author keeps in the background throughout the narrative. It is a rough and tumble story written when Mr. Wilder's classical taste took a holiday, but it shows a steady grip on the facts of life, and the interested reader will not quarrel with the manner in which the writer has used the facts.

Mr. Geoffrey West, who knows the significant discipline of writing for *The Times Literary Supplement*, and in addition to having many orthodox books to his credit, has in his latest book made a break with idol worshiping, and has set to in earnest in idol-smashing. His work, *Calling all Countries—a Post-War Credo* (Routledge, 6s. net), is a well-written volume of confessions and affirmations. It can be termed real Free-thought in all spheres of life, and this is the only kind of Free-thought worth cultivation. Mr. West was eighteen years of age at the Armistice, and we hopefully follow him in his narrative, and are not disappointed at his uncommon way of looking at common things. He regards the chaos following the War as a problem for every right-thinking individual to attack, and although he does not appear to have heard of Social Credit, he stresses the importance of individual thought. Very clearly, in the following words, he shows the difference between a leader and a dictator. "To inspire was good; it was creative action, spontaneous, positive; to compel was evil, negative, destructive. The leader appealed to a man's selfishness; the dictator, if at all, to his self-interest." Neatly summarizing the cataract of opinions on the present dispensation, he describes it as "ours had become an age of experts—contradicting each other." If for no other reason, his book should live for a description of an English Egyptian plague. "The popular newspapers are the blowflies of modern civilization. There was no topic they could not almost instantaneously corrupt with their appeal to men's worst instincts—prejudice, self-interest, and snobbery." Honourable exceptions are made of the *Times*, *Manchester Guardian* and *Yorkshire Post*. Students who have spent half their lives in hope and action, and having experience of

societies, groups and movements, will find a summary of their disillusion in Mr. West's diagnosis. Referring to these, he writes of individuals that "they lacked in the truest deepest sense a real integrity. They set out to reform the world when they had yet to reform themselves." With these quotations we must conclude our notice of a young man's credo, which should have been dedicated to Youth. Readers who know that a synthesis of realism and idealism is possible, will welcome this very helpful contribution to modern thought. The volume should be in the hands of all young men who have said good-bye to the monstrous claims and baleful deeds of primitive religions such as Christianity, and as it contains some shattering ideas and demolition of nonsense, it will run the usual course of abuse, misunderstanding and deliberate perversion by all the blind readers of the blind. To those whose characters resist such environment, it will be a guide, trustworthy, illuminating, and helpful to any young man who ultimately finds himself.

Readers with discrimination always give a welcome to writers who do not "fit in." By this it is meant those individuals who have something better to offer in man's Odyssey than a mere scramble through existence. Not "Who is he?" but "What has he done?" is usually the critical question. For W. H. Hudson those readers will have an affinity which will be justified after a careful reading of *A Hind in Richmond Park*. First editions are scarce, but other editions are available, and the subject matter is well within the comprehension of any who are content to live in the atmosphere of commonsense. There is an intense feeling of individualism throughout this book; the author relies on his own observation of phenomena instead of accepting book authorities, and this, like a breath of mountain air, permeates the whole work.

C-DE-B.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

A NORMAN CHURCH

SIR,—The restoration of the 800-year-old Norman Church of Dalmeny, near Edinburgh, has now been completed, towards the expense of which the Pilgrim Trust of New York allocated a grant of £250. The material required for the restoration came from the demolished Calton Jail, Edinburgh, which was built over a century ago, and where many executions took place.

Won't these transferred stones be flabbergasted when reference is made to "those hallowed walls," and "the house of God," of which they form a part (for it is said "Walls have ears")? Let them not, however, become too conceited, as they are still in the preventative business. Formerly they helped to confine the bodies of men, but now it is the minds of men they see confined.

Promotion, for these stones, certainly, in a way—mind being the nobler part.

J. MACKINNON.

A CORRECTION

SIR,—I note what you say in your last issue, but I cannot regard it as a fair deal. I shall be content if you will print the following in your next issue.

The article stated that I said that "Hell is a house with a tiled roof."

What I said was that "the family name Hellier means a tiler who covers a house with a roof."

The article stated that I said that "Hell NEVER carries with it the meaning of retribution."

What I said was that the Hebrew word *Sheol* "never carries with it the meaning of retribution."

I ask you frankly—is your statement in either case a fair reproduction, or even a fair interpretation, of what I really said? Being a man of intelligence you must know that it is not.

HENRY BETT.

[We can only refer to our notes in last week's issue, in which we cited Dr. Bett's words. The reader must judge whether we have seriously misrepresented what was there said.—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD JANUARY 11, 1935

OWING to the sudden burst of bad weather the attendance was small, the following being present: The President, Mr. C. Cohen in the chair, Messrs. Clifton, Ebury, Preece, McLaren, Mrs. Grant, and the Secretary.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and accepted. The monthly financial statement presented. New members were admitted to West London, Swansea, Glasgow, Birkenhead, Ashington, Bradford, Newcastle, Seaham, Tees-Side, Liverpool, Plymouth, and the Parent Society. Progress was reported in the arrangements for special meetings at Finchley, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Edinburgh and Liverpool. Correspondence was dealt with from Swansea, West London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Birmingham, International Federation of Freethinkers, League of Nations' Union, Messrs. Brighton and Clayton. Replies received in connexion with the proposed revision of the Principles and Objects of the N.S.S. were noted. In due course the replies will be examined by a committee. Details concerning the Annual Dinner were discussed, and the Secretary instructed. The first notice for the Conference of 1935 was ordered to be sent out to Branches early in February.

The meeting then closed.

The next meeting of the Executive will be held on February 22, 1935.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

OUTDOOR

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 12.30, Sunday, Messrs. W. B. Collins and E. Gee. 3.30, Messrs. Wood, Bryant, Collins, Gee and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale outside Park gates, and literature to order.

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (New Morris Hall, Hall No. 5, 79 Bedford Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mrs. E. Reid (R.A.C.S. Education Dept.)—"Co-operation."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Oliver Goldsmith School, Peckham, S.E.): 7.0, Harold J. Blackham, B.A.—"Judging Others."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. T. Aveling, D.Lit.—"Mind in Nature."

STUDY CIRCLE (63 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, January 21, Mr. F. P. Corrigan—"Superstition Today."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Debate—"Free Will v. Determinism." *Affir.*: Father Vincent McNabb, O.P. *Neg.*: A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, opposite Scala Cinema, entrance in Lorn Street): 7.0, Walter Fletcher (Birkenhead), President Birkenhead (Wirral) Branch—"Are We Rational Beings?"

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Boilermakers' Hall, Argyle Street, Birkenhead, opposite Scala Cinema, entrance in Lorn Street): 8.0, Monday, January 21, Mrs. Whitefield (Glasgow)—"Birth Control."

BRADFORD SECULAR SOCIETY (Godwin Commercial Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. S. H. Baron—"Chauvinism."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Morals in the Making."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, M'Lellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, G. W. Tyrell, D.Sc., F.G.S., F.R.S.E.—"The Age of the Earth."

(Continued on page 47)

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(Continued from page 46)

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