

THE
FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. I.V.—No. 38

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1935

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Science and Religion—The Editor</i> - - - - -	593
<i>Bamboozling Believers—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	595
<i>Eating One's God—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	596
<i>The Mediocre Mind—Ignotus</i> - - - - -	597
<i>The World To-day—Robert Harding</i> - - - - -	598
<i>Things Worth Knowing</i> - - - - -	602
<i>Israel's Ancient Cults—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	603
<i>Dr. Inge Praises the Prophets—George Bedborough</i> - - - - -	605
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

Science and Religion

EACH year the meeting of the British Association gives rise to a series of sermons on religion and science. There are quite a number of unofficial sermons preached, and to some of them members of the Association go to be edified, let us hope, by listening to the Bishop of somewhere or other explaining that if scientists follow humbly the line of the unintelligible they may hope to grasp the unreachable. The ground pattern of most of these sermons is quite well-known. Lip homage is paid to the work of science, with due warning that science is quite impotent when it seeks to grasp "Reality" or to handle "fundamental problems." The listening scientists are encouraged to go on with their labours, but are warned not to mix up their job with a search for that which lies beyond the known and the knowable. The Churches alone can give them instruction on anything that lies beyond the grasp of the human mind.

Newspaper articles on the proceedings of the Association offer a slightly different form. They also love to dwell upon the thesis that when science has had its say the "question of questions" remains unanswered, and any admission by a scientist that there are certain things on which no information is available, or that certain theories are discarded, or that some conclusions are disproved by later knowledge, is given prominence—particularly in "small-town" papers where the parsonate is much stronger than in the large centres. This insistence on religion having a knowledge of something to which science cannot aspire, is very, very comforting to the average Methodist dozing after his Sunday dinner. He feels that, after all, these scientists have their limitations, and while they may talk of chemical compounds and biological researches, etc., etc., the great "teruth" and the whole "teruth" is to be found in "our

Chapel." For man is not saved by his knowledge but by his faith, neither is he damned for his ignorance, but only for his want of belief.

* * *

Evolution

I have not yet seen the official report of the Association, so I take with all reservation a remark attributed to Professor McBride, that Natural Selection was a "great fraud." One can hardly believe that a man with any pretensions to education ever could use that expression with the implications the reporters give it. There is positively no question, or room for question, that natural selection exists as a fact in nature. There is clearly a tendency to continuous growth in population right through the animal world, and from this some sort of struggle for existence must ensue, whether that struggle takes the form of a contest between individuals, or between groups, or is expressed in a more subtle manner. But given these two things, growth in numbers and a consequent struggle for the means of subsistence and natural selection is the obvious formula for describing what takes place.

If, on the other hand, Professor McBride meant merely that Natural Selection alone was inadequate to account for the development of species, then he was only saying what many scientific men have been saying for years. The apportionment of the powers of the factors involved in the origin of species, is still a matter of keen dispute, but the factors of evolution are probably all known, and the fact of evolution is not in dispute. Short of the childish belief in a miracle working God, or the quite inconceivable theory of special creation, evolution is the only hypothesis before the world. Between the belief in special creation and the fee-fo-fi-fum of the fairy story only a Church congress can detect any valid distinction.

* * *

The Salvation Army

Some of my readers may remember that when that great showman, General Booth, asked for a large sum of money for his Darkest England Scheme, a great number of people who took the wily old General at his own valuation, expected that it would solve the problem of the "submerged tenth." The money was subscribed, it gave the "Army" a huge "boost," and when a member of the royal family had General Booth presented to him, Mayors and other functionaries tumbled over each other to do the Army honour. Fifty years have passed, the submerged tenth is still with us, prostitution is still with us, and if there have been improvements in housing conditions, education, hours and conditions of labour, etc., the country has not to thank the "Army" for these things. For sheer "bounce" the "Army" has always outbar-named Barnum.

So it happened that the Norwich Local Committee (of the B.A.?) invited Commissioner Lamb of the Salvation Army to address a public meeting. An advance copy of this address was sent me, and apart from some foolish talk of the "Survival of the Fittest," which Mr. Lamb confuses with the ideally preferable, and the weird remark that the nation has been ruined by John Calvin and Charles Darwin, the address contains a sensible statement of the present problems that are troubling us in the social world, problems which the Salvation Army promised to solve, if the money was given them. Commissioner Lamb has no answer to these problems, but he very considerably labels the conditions to which they refer as unchristian, asks science what it is going to do about it, and assumes that Christianity's part in a world in trouble is to do what it can to correct evils that non-Christianity, or anti-Christianity is responsible for.

* * *

Science and Man

This attitude of Commissioner Lamb is worth notice because it is a very common one, and has of late been prominent in discussions. Science has placed in our hands immense powers embodied in the aeroplane, explosives, submarines and so forth, and we turn them into instruments of destruction. All true, but why blame science? It is not the business of science properly to apply its discoveries, and it is no more responsible for their use than the man who makes a good carving knife is for its being used to cut a throat—usually the wrong throat. The application of scientific discoveries and inventions is the business of the public to which they are offered. But the public which receives these scientific discoveries is one that has for fifty generations been more completely under the control of the Christian Church than of anything else. It is a Christian public that can spend millions upon millions on battleships and grudges a tenth of the amount to be spent on housing. It is with this public the first thought, when a new invention comes along, as to whether it can be used for killing or not. It is over an area that under the pagan rule of Rome peace could be maintained with a force of no more than 400,000 men which Christianized, maintains armies running into many millions. In his day, Gibbon said:—

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws.

Of what period of Christian history could one write such words with truth? Can a Europe which contains such threats to common decency as Hitler and Mussolini be compared to the pre-Christian period of which Gibbon writes? And one has to remember that Rome was surrounded by barbarians against whom she had always to stand on guard. We have no such outer ring of barbarians to-day. The barbarians that threaten the peace of the world to-day are within the European borders, bred of fifty generations of Christian influences.

An Evil Heritage

Look at the facts. We have the bars of race, colour and religion, from which the Roman Empire was practically free. We have retained in Europe all the feelings of a narrow nationality with a piratical thirst for more and more extra-national possessions. The nation that is to-day threatening to unloose a world-war is one which is the headquarters of the largest and the oldest of Christian Churches. European peoples have been long trained in Christian belief, and when science offers unbounded food and clothing they do not know how to avail themselves of the offer, but starve in the midst of plenty, and shiver with more than enough clothing to cover their nakedness. It is this same Christianized Europe that for over five hundred years has set an example to the world of unbridled piracy wherever there was land to annex or property to steal. It is this Christian Europe that has taught the non-Christian world that the one thing it respects is power and possessions, and which counts the greatness of nations, not in terms of the type of men and women it produces, but in its cash balance and its proficiency in slaughter; and we are far more cosmopolitan in terms of cash and potential carnage than in terms of human sympathy and intercourse. We can readily admit that it is science that has provided means of destruction, and promises to provide even more deadly methods. But science offered to man power over the forces of nature and methods of controlling his own destiny. The pity of it is that these gifts were to a people who had been trained for generations under Christian influences, and the biblical warning against casting pearls before swine was ignored.

It is useless for some scientists, standing aghast at the use made of scientific appliances and discoveries, talking of science declaring a moratorium until such time as man is more trustworthy than he is at present. Such a thing is impossible. Science cannot stand still. Agreements on that head, even if they were made, would be treated as other agreements between Christian nations—they would be broken so soon as it was thought profitable to break them. It is part of the plea of present-day Christian apologists that science can deal only with things that are weighable, measurable, ponderable, that art, morals, æsthetics lie outside the scope of science. Well, the right use of science depends upon the exercise of artistic, æsthetic and ethical qualities under the guidance of knowledge, and if Christianity had given attention to the genuinely higher aspects of life the abuse of science that has gone on, the existing decivilized state of Europe that now exists, could hardly have been.

The peoples of Europe represent those who have been for centuries under Christian control. Christianity has not civilized them, it has not humanized them. What it has done is to take their primitive passions and anti-social tendencies and "rationalize" them. It has provided excuses for their exercise when it should have aimed at their eradication, or at least at their "sublimation." It has perpetuated narrowness and intolerance, and if it has sought converts abroad it has done so in the spirit that animated those buccaneers who annexed the land of natives in the name of God and the King. Every war that a Christian nation has fought has been a "holy" war, waged in defence of religion and righteousness. Every exhibition of intolerance has been an act of loyalty to God. In Europe we are dealing with a people who have been dominated by the Christian Church, and the result is the world of 1935! That is the final and unanswerable indictment of Christian influence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Bamboozling Believers

"If every man said what he thought, it (the existing religion) could not subsist a day. But all, more or less, subdue themselves to the element that surrounds them, and contribute to the evils they lament by the hypocrisy that springs from them."—*Shelley*.

The clergy seldom admit their fear of Freethought. In public they are as bold as brass, and never tire of the cheeky refrain, "Who's afraid?" Behind the scenes, however, they arrange, as quietly as a moonlight flit, the means of retreat. Fortunately for civilization retreat is the order of the day, and will continue to be so. Since Freethought has been organized, the Black Army of Priests has had little rest. The continued frontal attacks of the Freethinkers are beginning to tell heavily, and the clergy are getting very nervous of the future.

Not long since the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon portions of "God's Holy Word," and to delete from the "Book of Common Prayer" of the Church of England some objectionable features of the Old Testament. This very astute clerical manoeuvre may deceive innocent believers for a time, but it will not save the Christian Religion for long. Hence the priestly perturbation.

The trouble is that the cure is as bad as the disease. To prune the barbarities and brutalities of the "Psalms" may spare the blushes of Christian ladies and of very young clergymen, but it is a very risky and hazardous operation. These "Psalms" are an integral part of the "Holy Bible," and the legendary figure of David, "the man after God's own heart," is far too closely allied with the central figure of Christ to be thus thrown rudely and unceremoniously to the rubbish-heap without disastrous results to Orthodoxy everywhere. It is not only a policy of despair in this particular instance, but a dangerous precedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect on the Christian position.

These "Psalms" were written many centuries ago, and have been regarded by believers as the inspired utterances of their God. Now, Psalm 58 is not to be printed in the Prayer Book "as appointed to be read." The Convocation of Canterbury has so decreed by 43 votes to 13, and the superior clergy have dismissed "King David" as though he were a church-cleaner who had dared to suggest a decent wage, or a clergyman who had "made himself a motley to the view" at the seaside.

What is wrong with this fifty-eighth Psalm? It is a comparatively short one, but the clergy say that it is "un-Christian in character," which is an oleaginous way of saying that it is altogether out of harmony with Twentieth Century ideas. This is the sort of thing that the clergy are now very much ashamed of, and that they no longer wish their innocent, half-educated congregations to read:—

The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

The quotation is not pretty, nor edifying, and it is not remarkable for its "spirituality," but the clergy have not selected the worst utterances in this Christian Bible for condemnation. Other portions of "God's Holy Word" are equally open to objection, as, for instance, the unlovely passage in Psalm 109:—

When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Let his children be

fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, let them seek their bread also out of the desolate places.

And, again, in Psalm 137:—

Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

Observe that the priests have themselves started to pull "God's Holy Word" to pieces. They have begun with the "Psalms"; and King David, "the man after God's own heart," thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. This "King David" is now admitted by the clergy themselves to be a savage, and the champions of the Christian Religion are obliged to throw the old Oriental barbarian overboard in order to absolve their own deity from the crimes and vices of his own favourite.

Let there be no mistake concerning this action of the clergy. They are actually in retreat all along the line. Not only the Christian Bible itself, but also the official Prayer Book, according to Bishop Weldon, is out of date. Adopted by both Houses of Parliament, it had never been altered since 1662, and a prayer book dating back 250 years could not be expected to satisfy the present critical age. A good deal of the language used in the liturgy sounded artificially upon the lips of worshippers to-day. Bishop Weldon even said that the plain, unvarnished language of the Marriage Service in this Prayer Book was "painfully distressing." Our forefathers might have tolerated such direct speech, but who would speak so to-day? This prayer book also contained too many prayers for the Royal Family, and there were many invocations out of place to-day. In short, the official Prayer Book of the Church of England is past praying for.

If, however, the higher clergy find grave faults with portions of the "Psalms" and the Prayer Book, what is to be said concerning the other parts of the Holy Bible? The sacred volume is full of ignorance and savagery from cover to cover. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation much of the writing is actually revolting and even nauseating to twentieth century readers. In far too many passages in the Old Testament the pages are filled with the scuffles of savages, whose arrows are "drunk with blood," to adapt its own charming phraseology. There are also many passages which can no longer be read aloud in the presence of a mixed congregation. As for the New Testament, the moral perceptions of our day are shocked beyond expression by the awful doctrine that countless millions of the human race will suffer eternal punishment. The clergy know all these things quite well, and are seeking to camouflage their Prayer Book and their Bible so as to retain the respect of the rising generation; and, incidentally, safeguard their own financial position.

This clerical trick of mutilating the Christian Bible for their own commercial ends is not a paltry matter. This Bible is not an ordinary book. It is stamped as sacred by Act of Parliament. It is forced, including the banned Psalms, and all the many other unlovely and unseemly passages, into the hands of children at schools. It is used as a fetish for swearing upon in Courts of Law. And, now, at long last, these die-hard priests are actually admitting the force and cogency of Freethought criticism. At present, it is true, the clergy are tearing only a few unseemly pages from their sacred book. If the process be continued, however, the Christian Religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. This mutilation of this Bible by the priests themselves is highly significant. It is only a question of time before the clergy will have to consider the whole question of the barbarous ethics

of the Old and New Testaments in relation to modern thought. For this Bible is forced into the hands of children, and parents will not for ever consent to have their little ones' intellects clouded and their characters degraded by such uncivilized teaching, through which an impudent and audacious set of impostors has been gaining an easy livelihood these two thousand years.

MIMNERMUS.

Eating One's God

I.

It is rather strange how Christian apologists shirk defending the practice of eating their God. Get people like Mr. Chesterton or Mr. Belloc on some statement which Protestants may make about Roman Catholicism, as long as it does not deal with the Mass, and they will reply with a crushing plethora of words. They may be right or they may be wrong, but they rarely miss an opportunity to show how glorious is the Catholic Church and how wrong everybody is not to believe in its Divine Mission. But when it comes to defending the Christian habit of God-eating they are mostly as silent as the grave. They object very strongly indeed to having fun poured over the absurd spectacle. Their feelings are terribly outraged if one indulges in hearty laughter when a solemn priest dressed up in savage war-paint, declaims unmitigated nonsense over a little biscuit, insisting afterwards that it changes into a real Jesus and can thus be eaten with beneficial effects both to those who partake of it and Jesus himself.

According to the Gospel story Jesus is responsible for the silly superstition. He had a famous Last Supper, which is visualized very much like the famous picture of Leonardo da Vinci. Jesus is naturally in the centre of the *tableau vivant*—all the lines, so to speak, in the scene, converging to his halo. The other apostles, looking either like old Jews or old tailors—except John—are all excited when Jesus breaks some bread and declares it is his body. The villain, Judas, is easily distinguishable as all villains are. He probably is already counting in his mind the high jinks which will follow getting paid for the Betrayal. Altogether the stage looks almost like the way the old musical comedies used to set the end of their first or second acts, everybody there and the hero bang in the centre.

Mass, or the Eucharist, or Transubstantiation, or whatever the ceremony is called, is no mere symbolism. The bread and wine do *not* symbolize Jesus—they *are* Jesus after the magical words have been pronounced. "The bread and wine cease to exist, and in their place comes the entire Christ," as one writer puts it. The great Thomas Aquinas declares they become "the true body, blood, bones, nerves, soul and divinity"—the actual body which was crucified and buried, rose again and ascended into heaven. The Church of England tries to save its face by saying the ceremony is just symbolism. But this simply will not do. The Church of Christ insists on the magical change really happening, providing, of course, that the priest is in holy orders and uses the correct formula. Moreover, he never loses the power of converting the bread into God. He can become an Atheist, yet Transubstantiation takes place if it is accompanied with the same old rigmarole. This accounts for the stories of Black Mass which elicit such pious horror from Catholics. It is an apostate priest who must conduct the devilish ceremonies for no one else has the power to change the consecrated object.

Of course, the bread and the wine always look like bread and wine—and to the unbeliever continue to act like bread and wine. But many times has the Host been subjected to proof by famous saints. For example, St. Dominique threw it once into a fiery furnace to convince heretics, and in spite of the most furious blaze, it remained unharmed and untouched for three days, when the good man withdrew it. St. Anthony of Padua, also wishing to convince an unbeliever, presented the Host to a mule, which immediately dropped on its knees and bent its head as a sign of intense adoration. Catholic converts repeat these stories as Gospel truth, and most would, naturally, be hanged, drawn and quartered rather than give them up.

You can break a consecrated wafer into little bits, yet each piece contains the entire Christ, each is packed with his whole body. And one must never hurt a believing Catholic by trying to pour ridicule on this kind of—there is no other word for it—bosh. One must respect his feelings. It would be too awful to try to show that the whole ceremony reeks of savage superstition, comes down to us from those remote periods when early man would eat the raw flesh of bloodthirsty animals in the hope of gaining some of their most savage characteristics.

It must not be thought for one moment, that all Catholic theologians accepted meekly the dictum of the Church. They were not all fools. On the contrary, many of them were extremely intelligent and the pity is that they used their great gifts for exposition in defence of such an institution as the Catholic Church and its doctrines. They would have liked to found the doctrine of Transubstantiation on the well-known passages in the Bible, but it was not easy; and in the end, they had to admit that it rested entirely in the dictum of the Church. Duns Scotus "gave it as his opinion that before the Council of Lateran, Transubstantiation was not believed as a point of faith." Gelasius (Bishop of Rome in 492 A.D.), said that "the substance and nature of the bread and wine cease not to exist; and assuredly, the image and similitude of the body and blood of Christ are celebrated in the action of the mysteries." Chrysostom said, "Before the bread is consecrated we call it bread; but when the Grace of God by the priest has consecrated it, it is no longer called bread, but is esteemed worthy to be called the Lord's body although the nature of bread still remains in it." And there are a number of other pious writers who wrote much to the same effect. Most of them take the ceremony as being purely symbolical or mystical—that is, belonging to the "mysteries" which only the Church can interpret.

Religion generally is a savage institution. The customs of primitive peoples are packed with all sorts of religious ceremonies and taboos. Gods and totems abound; mutilations and other sacrifices of the flesh are part and parcel of many savage beliefs which are extraordinarily difficult to eradicate, not only in savage races, but in the educated people of civilized lands. The word of a priest—be he witch-doctor or Cardinal—is swallowed with hardly a protest. And it is because of these things that the ceremony of the Mass is perpetuated, is so implicitly believed in, and treated, not as a huge joke as it should be, but as something "fearful," something wondrously divine.

Primitive man had some excuse, perhaps. Death and danger surrounded him, and could only be avoided, or the gods placated by some sacrifice. To become god-like the god ought to be eaten—for the greatest thing in life was food, though greater by only a little than sex. To become brave and strong one had to eat brave and strong animals; and Frazer, in his classical *Golden Bough*, gives many instances

drawn from Australia, Nigeria, and the North American Indians. Not only the flesh of animals was eaten, but also bread and wine and fruit—the “first-fruits” of Paul.

Eating their god was practised by the Aztecs before the discovery of Mexico. “An image of Vitzliputzli was made of dough,” says Preserved Smith, in his *History of Christian Theophagy*, “and then broken in pieces and solemnly consumed. The people said they ate the flesh and bones of God.” And Frazer, after describing a similar ceremony among the Brahmins of India says, “On the whole it would seem that neither the ancient Hindoos nor the ancient Mexicans had much to learn from the most refined mysteries of Catholic theology.”

Just as Catholics used to claim, when urging their mob to kill Jews, that the Host, pierced by a Jewish dagger would spout blood, so the old Aztec priests used to pierce their image of Quetzalcoatl through and through, and claim they were killing it. The heart was cut out, and given to the King, the rest divided among the people, and the entire ceremony was called, “God is eaten.” And Frazer adds that when something nearer to God was needed, they would make a man impersonate the God, and kill and eat him. And there can be little doubt that this cannibalism and similar “heathen” practices are the basis of Christian god-eating to-day. I shall deal more fully with the question in succeeding articles.

H. CUTNER.

The Mediocre Mind

The mediocre mind, whose craving is to be saved from the ordeal of self-exertion, finds a suitable and congenial environment in the Christian Church. And the majority of mediocre minds are to be found in the established or so-called “National” Churches, because these are the most fashionable, the most popular and the most favoured conventionally by direct Royal and Governmental recognition. There are a few religious sects—not important numerically—in which are to be found people who repudiate all this State recognition and protection of religion. But they do not count for much—spectacularly at any rate. And the ordinary observer can only judge by what he hears, sees and reads about the activities of religionists anywhere.

Now, we must always keep in mind, with regard to the big ecclesiastical corporations, that the basic assumption of their existence is that ethical elevation is impossible apart from a clerical system—that is the salvation of man depends primarily and essentially upon the ministrations of a body of priests and parsons set apart—God ordained and God appointed—whose function is to expound the will of God and his intentions for the human race. It is not suggested that other “professional” men such as lawyers, doctors, chartered accountants, stockbrokers, teachers or architects are directly appointed to their various jobs by God Almighty. No, the “reverends” stand in a category all their own; and their claims to be the direct representatives, revealers and expounders of the supernatural are conceded by the secular authorities. They are regarded as the only guides to another life beyond the grave; and all other human beings are enjoined to accept their message as authoritative, and to render them due respect as the servants of Almighty God alone. They describe themselves as workers for the establishment of the Kingdom of God—a “spiritual” realm, the qualification for membership of which is childlike faith in Jesus Christ,

the only begotten Son of God Almighty, who to satisfy his father’s conception of what justice is, was crucified as a propitiation for the “sins” of the world in all time. No question can be admitted as to the propriety, correctness or validity of such a conception of justice, because it is (so his ambassadors on earth assure us) the conception of the infallible Eternal Father himself. No question, similarly, can be admitted as to the soundness of the doctrine of man’s “original sin,” the essential, original depravity of his nature, and his proneness to evil—ineradicable and irremovable except by the intervention of Divine grace as defined and prescribed by the Churches and the priests and parsons thereof.

But a notable point is that in every description of God and the Supernatural, we find simply projections of human beings human experience and human thought. The whole of the spiritual, supernatural other world is in the mass simply a projection of humanity and animalism. Thus we are told of the “Kingdom of God.” Here we have God designed as the greatest and highest kind of human being that man has conceived. To the average Christian believer God is just the most powerful kind of *man* he can imagine. He is “King of Kings” therefore. But we must not exclude the possibility of Republicanism one day prevailing over Royalty in the governance of most of the nations at least. The divine right of Kings has almost wholly gone. The day may arrive when there will be no King on earth; but only Presidents of Republics—or one President of a world-wide republic, such as the poets including Burns and Tennyson dreamed of. Will the Christian God then rule as President of Presidents? The name “King” has a peculiarly subtle influence with the mediocre mind. But the point to be driven home aside from any question of nomenclature—is that in every believer’s mind is a photograph of the Almighty which is neither more nor less than the picture of a “big man” omniscient and omnipotent. It is a compliment to man this—not quite consistent with the doctrine of original sin—but a contorted compliment robbed of any value by that very doctrine. Man never fell; he has always been very gradually rising from a very low condition; and what he has been able, despite powerful ecclesiastical opposition, to accomplish is indicative of his unlimited potentialities while all the time God has merely remained stationary—being the same yesterday, to-day and for ever. Man goes marching on.

The majority of mediocre minds which occupy the pews of the Christian Churches bask in the patronage of “the great,” whose opinions they respectfully accept, and whose demands they submissively satisfy. The best minds are outside the Churches. The highly-placed officers of the secular government, including the King, bow to the ruling of the supernaturalists; and thus retain the allegiance of the great mass of the citizens of the Kingdom of God on Earth—the persons with mediocre minds. The ecclesiastical leaders have always nursed a special hatred against intellectual rebels. So they affect to depreciate intellect; and they damn original and independent thought. They exalt and glorify “simple faith.” The emotion of believing illiterates whose fear equals their ignorance is belauded; while the purely secular achievements of Rationalists are belittled as proofs of intellectual pride!

The essential doctrines of Christianity are not only based on falsehoods, but they are ponderous drags upon human progress and intellectual development. A pious writer bewails the fact that the nations have forgotten God. If it *were* a fact, it would be something for humanity to congratulate itself upon! But the nations with the most pious populations may have

a complaint against God that he has forgotten them! Anyway, there is no instance of his alleged intervention in human affairs which is any credit to him. It is amazing to read of the unsatisfactory state of the world along with orthodox commendations of God for the blessings he has bestowed upon the world! The fact of the matter is that if the tares of religious bitterness and strife had never been sown; and if man had been left to the task of his own emancipation and elevation unfettered by supernatural inhibitions, the world would have been a purer and happier place today. And there would have been many more enriched minds and far fewer impoverished ones. The vague aspiration of the Christian is for life at "a high spiritual level"—an expression that has never been explained. But we know very well what the Free-thinker means when he pleads for life at "a high intellectual level." The only instrument through which we can operate for the good of man is the mind of man; and the better-equipped and the greater it is, the more beneficent will be the results. The Christians' talk about loving or hating with the heart and the spirit is so much blather. We can only love or hate or feel with the mind. No sane person would ever speak of loving or hating with the liver or the kidneys. But 90 per cent of revivalist appeals are to the heart, heart, heart.

That is the great snag that lies in the way of Religion—it cannot be made reasonable; it cannot be made to square with common sense. At the level of intelligence which we have now reached, all extraneous or supernatural myths are subjected to searching tests; and gods, devils and angels—the emanations of the imagination of medieval monks—are now classed with the world's fables. The divine is shown simply to be a projection of the human and the demand now is for things that can be established by ascertained truth. The Rock of Ages is rocking badly. The Lord of Hosts is being shown up for the fraud that he is. Man, informed and unafraid, is shaking himself free of the fetters of antiquity. He is only hampered by the mediocre mind.

IGNORUS.

The World To-day

THE world is a collection of lunatic asylums in which the boards of management, officials and attendants are a little more mad than the patients. Left to themselves the patients *might sometimes* commit acts of injustice towards one another; they might even, at times, use violence. But, as those who are harmless are the more numerous section as well as the more competent and resourceful, the probability is that the dangerous patients would soon be suppressed if their suppression were not prevented. The manner in which their suppression is prevented is as follows. The mad managers collect together patients prone to violence and patients who, being kept very short of rations, are glad to obtain a little extra allowance by agreeing to serve the mad managers' purpose. They then furnish them with slings, spears, arrows, clubs, fire-balls, poison squirts and other implements. The harmless patients have to pay for these. If they were sane they would object to making this payment but, being mad, they raise no objection. They say "a certain number of us are paid for making the spears and clubs and things, those who cannot do this kind of work have to pay; so, you see, spears and arrows and things provide work and wages." They also say "and our managers tell us that a large number of inmates in several other asylums are making spears and clubs and things by instructions from *their* managers, and are only waiting for the opportunity to break in upon us or climb over our wall and do us injury."

If one ask these poor, demented creatures who bids the lunatics in the other asylums provide themselves with the spears and clubs and poison squirts, they have just intelligence enough to answer, "their managers and the few of their patients who profit by making the things or who obtain rations as payment for training themselves in the use of them." If one ask, further "is not, then, the danger of violent attack a something created by the various managers, profiteers and salaried slings, club and spear users fire-ball throwers and poison squirts?" their little bit of sanity is gone; they will stare vacantly and tell you you have a fly on your nose, or that the Duke of Bumbledon is a very fine fellow. Then, at the termination of their training, these patients mingle again with the bulk of the inmates. They have had training in spear thrusting, arrow throwing, bashing with clubs, fire-ball throwing and poison squirting, but none in conciliation, mutual concession, accommodation or compromise. And the other patients are instructed by the officials to honour these violence specialists. Hence, the suppression of violence, instead of being encouraged, is rendered almost impossible.

The asylums are painted in distinctive colours. There is the blue asylum, the green, the red, the yellow, the striped, the spotted and several others. It is a matter of pure chance which asylum a patient belongs to. But the inmates in each asylum think their ruin is being plotted in all the other asylums. The managers and officials make it their special business to impress this on the patients and, being mad, they sometimes believe it themselves. Sometimes the harmless patients are walked out on the common for exercise. On these occasions, if the inmates of another asylum are seen on the common, the managers of the two asylums, assisted by their officials, scatter a very noxious fluid made from rotten porter between the two groups of harmless lunatics. This stinking fluid is called pass-porter, because it is difficult to pass where it is. They also use a particularly odious kind of tar. This is called "if-tar" or, in some languages "tariff" and is used to hinder the patients in one hospital who knit socks from exchanging these for blackberries which the patients in the other asylum gather. From time to time the patients are allowed to elect new managers. Being mad they always vote for the maddest.

That the inmates and officials are mad is their misfortune. But the chairman of the board of directors is specially trained under circumstances and in conditions which insure his being mad. There is a theory that he never interferes in the management, but this is only held by mad people, that is to say, by the bulk of the inmates and officials of all the asylums. There are a few miserable creatures slinking about behind the bushes outside the asylums. They have to be very careful not to upset the lunatics. They are the remnant of a degenerate race called heretics, blasphemers, infidels and sane people.

ROBERT HARDING.

The Reformation did do one thing—it reformed the popes. The papacy after the Reformation may not have been so strong-minded or so strong-armed as before, but the popes themselves were more respectable.

Geo. A. Dorsey.

We had a good drive to Shechem (much mentioned in the Old Testament)—one of the many places where the body of St. John the Baptist is buried. His head is said to be beneath a shrine (which we saw later) in the centre of the principal Mosque in Damascus; for he is a Moslem as well as a Christian saint. . . . Thence we went on to Nazareth, the Lake of Tiberias and Capernaum. These places are, of course, all in Galilee, which is a much more attractive district than Judea. Nazareth contains a lot of mythical "objects of interest"—the place where the Virgin received the Annunciation and the actual Incarnation began, the carpenter's shop, etc., etc.

II. II. Asquith, "Letters to a Friend" (2nd series).

Acid Drops

It is rather difficult to say just what will happen with regard to Italy, Abyssinia and the League, as we are writing this on September 17, and much may happen within the next week. But one thing we can be sure about. If Italy does go to war the Pope will discover that the cause of Italy is a righteous one. That is part of the bargain Mussolini made with the Pope. In return for making the Pope a secular monarch, even if over a very restricted territory, Mussolini gained the support of the Church in Italy for Fascism. For a time Mussolini hoped to be able to control the education of children, as his brother Hitler does in Germany, and as our British Fascists would like to do here. In this he was compelled to give way, and Catholic religious teaching is the rule in elementary and secondary schools. The Church also received a large sum of money, which it was compelled to invest in Italian securities, so that the Pope was tied, economically, to the present system. Another part of the bargain is that no priest may criticize Mussolini's policy. This makes the Pope's declaration on the situation quite worthless. So from all points of view the Pope will be compelled to re-echo all that Mussolini says. God's chief representative on earth is, to all intents and purposes, a mere fugleman of the Italian Branch of the Fascist movement.

"Ignorance," says the *Church Times*, "is never bliss; man can do nothing with his ignorance, for God, or his neighbour, or for himself." For himself and his neighbour, we agree, but for God? That raises another issue. It is the ignorance of man that called "God" into being and which keeps him in being. Ignorance can keep God alive. That is surely something worth talking about—or is it something that we had better be silent about?

The censorship of the press in this country, which Mr. Macdonald threatened might become official, but which for the present is unofficial, can yet be very effective in its operations. In our Crown Colony of Cyprus, the censorship is open and unashamed. There is a Press Censor, and he has just sent round to all papers a notice that "cutting remarks or sarcastic allusions to disparage or offend the King of Italy, the head of the Italian Government or the Italian nation will not be passed for publication." This puts the newspaper men in a very awkward position. If they say that Mussolini is a bully and the Italian people are in a state of slavery, or that the King of Italy is a figure of impotence, that will certainly not be passed. If, on the other hand, they say that the King is the head of the nation, that Mussolini is a polished gentleman, and the Italian people among the freest in the world, that certainly will come under the head of "sarcastic allusions." The only thing left is for newspaper men to print travel news in Italy. The next step of the censor should be to prevent all English papers entering Cyprus. Until this is done, and wireless sets prohibited, the censorship will prove itself, not merely wrong, but like most censorships, damnably idiotic.

The latest statistics regarding Church schools and their average attendances are quite illuminating as they prove that, during the past thirty years, the Church is steadily fighting a losing battle. In 1902, with a smaller population in Britain, there were 11,714 Church schools with 1,928,099 children. In 1934, the figures are respectively, 9,268 and 1,199,747. During the same period, Roman Catholic schools have risen from 1,043 with 266,084 children, to 1,215 and 356,080 respectively. Council schools have nearly doubled—from 5,902 in 1902, to 10,014 in 1934, with the children from 2,350,632 to 3,460,707. The non-provided-schools have fared very badly—from 1,519 in 1902 they have dropped to 345 in 1934. They have lost even more with the children—from 352,366 to 49,429. The hopeful sign is the rise of the Council schools with religion at a minimum—something too awful for a Churchman to contemplate with equanimity. He will probably find even far more drastic curtailments in the future.

The *Church Times* "laments that owing to the closing of Church schools thirteen hundred children have been permitted to pass out of the influence of definite religious education into that of the negative efficiency of the provided (Council) Schools." The complaint is interesting because it makes the frank admission that the main interest, if not the only interest, the Church has in education is to see that children are branded with a particular church's mark of ownership. It is not claimed, or even pretended, that the education and the general conditions of the provided schools are not better for the children than the Church schools. But they are not getting the proper branding mark, and how are the Churches to get on if they cannot capture human beings while they are very, very young?

Christians continue to air their differences in public—often totally unconscious of the irreconcilable differences which exists between their respective expositions. While the *Christian World* praises highly a new book by a Dr. Horton advocating "more objectivism," "more realism" in theology, the same journal gives its front page to the Modernist, Harry Emerson Fosdick's, ultra-anti-realism. Dr. Fosdick sneers at the "go-getter" who asks (naturally enough we should have thought) "What is the good of religion?" Dr. Fosdick's answer, of course, is: "It is like having rainfall amongst the heights of the interior. It is like a change of climate. It is one of the most tremendous influences. . . . Consider the lilies how they grow." An elastic creed indeed, and "rainfall in the interior" may mean water on the brain.

Dr. Russell Maltby, D.D., in a sermon on "The Light of the World," proclaims that "the birds are fed, the flowers are made beautiful, God knows when a sparrow falls to the ground, the very hairs of your head are all numbered," which sounds as if God is wasting a great deal of valuable time. Does God never read the newspapers? Has he ever heard of the World War? Does He realize that while He is counting the "very hairs" of somebody's head, and aimlessly watching sparrows' antics, 23 persons every hour of the 24 every day are either killed or injured on our roads. Dr. Maltby's sermon is full of poetry, but his God ought to be a little more practical.

In a report of the recent fisticuff bout between two journalists in the senate building sacred to Senators at Washington, U.S.A., "Time" tells us that Bob Allen (one of the "brawlers,") was the Washington correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor*. The *Monitor* learnt that Allen was writing anonymously in the lively *Washington Merry-Go-Round*. For this crime he was instantly dismissed. A writer in a religious journal must not give his soul a holiday, even anonymously, in an irreverent magazine.

The *British Weekly* reprints Cardinal Newman's frank declaration of what the Roman Catholic Church believes about the relative demerits of a "fib" and wholesale murder. Incredible as it may seem to some, Newman and Newman's Church prefer the latter to the former. Here is Newman's statement:—

It is better for the sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions on it to die of starvation in extremist agony, as far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say should be lost, but should . . . tell one wilful untruth.

Such a preference, such an extraordinary lack of moral relativity, marks the difference between sacred and secular ethics. The importance of the declaration is not at all in any lack of human sympathy on the part of John Henry Newman, but his use of the word "temporal." Eighty years' agony on earth can be compensated by an eternity of *post mortem* happiness!

Dr. Reid, the Presbyterian leader, distinguished himself recently by a sermon on The Rainbow. Noah, his flood, and God's rainbow are alike mythical, and Dr. Reid recognizes that "the Bible account of the origin of

the rainbow is not scientific." He remembers Quetta and other fatal floods. But still in some non-scientific and mystic manner "The world is in the control of Almighty Love." For instance, even in the worst deluge of modern times, although, of course, thousands of poor creatures were drowned, "even in the darkness the love of God breaks through." How? Why, you see, "the catastrophe produced a wave of (human) compassion and service . . . people rushed to help and nurse the wounded." It seems to ordinary non-clerical minds that this proves the superiority of human love over the alleged "divine" love. God's apologists appear singularly easily pleased if a "bow in the sky" AFTER a devastation is a sign that "God's in His Heaven. All's right with the world."

We should have more hope for the international relationships to be welded into friendship through the League of Nations, if we had more faith in the boasted "power of the gospel" to unite mankind. "Audion," a regular writer in the *British Weekly*, ends an article in that journal with these characteristically Christian words:—

Paganism makes friendship between two peoples a terribly difficult business. For how can there be real friendship, real trust, real understanding, real peace, unless the words of the New Testament have the same basic value for all of us ordinary people in our everyday lives?

Not only "friendship" and "understanding" are ruled out, but even Peace is impossible unless both nations are believers in the same superstitions.

The *Methodist Recorder* is responsible for the following Tit-bit:—

Can you stay at home next Sunday?

The Rev. John Blank, the greatest preacher in Methodism, will be preaching Anniversary Sermons here at 10.30 and 6.30.

Make a note of it!

The best part of the joke is that the joker who tells the story does not see this part of the fun! Those who stayed at home saw it well enough.

Lest anyone should imagine that the Catholic Church of to-day is any different from that of the darkest ages in medieval Europe, the latest declaration in one of its authoritative journals is worth recording:—

For it is a fixed principle of the Catholic Church that heresy is not to be tolerated, and that he who condones heresy or communicates with the heretic partakes of the heresy. . . . Of course the heresy must be duly proved and be obdurate, and it is the business of authority to see to this and to maintain the purity of the Faith and protect the Faithful.

This "fixed principle" in the past led to the foulest torture, burnings, and persecution generally, history has ever known. In a modern Catholic State, it is obvious that something similar would take place, if possible. It is up to all who love liberty and progress to see there never will again be a Catholic State with such "fixed principles."

As an example of how these work out in practice now, take the case of the famous play *The Silver Tassie*, recently produced in Dublin. A howl immediately went up because the author (an Irishman, and quite possibly still a Catholic) infringed "the canons of Christian reverence or human decency, and injured the nation's prestige at home and abroad." All this means that the play has some outspoken comments on both Christianity and Ireland which are so true that they hurt. At all events, a large meeting in Galway took place, supported, of course, by the clergy, the protests at which resulted in the play being withdrawn at the end of the week. Had the comments been against the "Saxons" or the Jews, or the Protestants, the author would probably have been made a national hero. But in attacking the stupidities rampant in both Catholicism and in the "ould cuntry," it is evident he narrowly escaped being lynched.

In spite of everything the Roman Church is doing. their Parliamentary Champion, Dr. O'Donovan, is obliged to admit that "the sterilization business is going ahead." They are doing their best to stop Birth-Control also, but everybody knows how they have failed in that. The point at issue is simply whether lunatics and imbeciles of both sexes, habitual drunkards and criminals, deaf, dumb and blind people with hereditary taints should be allowed to breed at will. This question must be faced as well as other questions like it; and they can only be solved by patient, careful, and scientific work. The world already has all the lunatics, imbeciles, etc., it has room for. And no protest from Catholics ought to have the slightest effect.

In case it is noted that two of Rome's greatest men, St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bernard, both denied the "Immaculate Conception," the advisor of spiritual difficulties in a Catholic journal has discovered an easy way out. How comes it that this dogma, denied by so many eminent Catholics, has been accepted by the Church? Quite easy. What St. Thomas and St. Bernard denied was the "active" conception. What the Church accepts is the "passive" conception. This is now so beautifully clear that any Catholic who still has some qualms about the Immaculate Conception should be excommunicated forthwith. And it is good for him that, in this country at least, that is all the Church can do.

Mumbling and gabbling by priests in Church is still being attacked by churchgoers though one of them points out that "there is something to be said between mumbling and the use of different tones." He continues:—

On the Altar of the Cross our great High Priest used three voices, (1) the loud voice audible at some distance off, (2) the humble voice, audible only close at hand, and (3) the secret voice audible to Himself alone.

This proves that though the hearer may think the priest is mumbling, it may be that he is only doing what "Our Lord" did. But, in spite of that, "to devout Catholics, it is very distressing to hear the words of the Mass, unctuously recited in a loud voice." We give these opinions to show the kind of clotted nonsense that is served up to "devout" Catholics. Some of them actually can read this kind of thing without tittering.

The question as to whether there is an "historical element" in Christianity is dealt with by Prof. Clement Webb in his latest book. One critic commenting upon some of his statements says:—

It is true that, apart from the Christian belief about Jesus, the kind of life depicted in the Gospels would still have value; yet a Christian who should say, for that reason, that it does not matter whether Jesus really lived that life or uttered that teaching would give up something essential to Christianity.

We should think so indeed! One gets a little tired of people calling themselves Christians who, at the same time, insist that the gospels are merely a conglomeration of Pagan myths and legends interspersed with some "moral" teaching which is as old as the hills.

Prof. Webb tries his best to justify the nonsense of the Virgin Birth by saying "that the belief of the early Christian community did not depend on the story of the supernatural birth of Jesus." But how does he know that? The belief was part and parcel of Paganism, anyway. As for the Resurrection, he considers the belief essential to Christianity, but "this does not necessarily imply the disappearance of the body from the tomb." "What this implies," adds the critic, "is a genuine experience of intercourse with a living person victorious over death, and the continuous imparting by Jesus of his own higher life to those in communion with him throughout the ages." As an explanation of the Resurrection this is an example of the extraordinary lengths to which a modern professor must go to find an "historical element" in Christian mythology.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE.

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

H. MURPHY & C. NORLEY.—Obligated for cuttings. Always useful.

H. MARTINS.—In a civilized country religious sects are apt to offer a curious jumble of folly and knavery. This certainly applies to Christian Science.

W.R.T.—It is very good of you to tell us that you have given yourself "completely to Jesus." Let us hope that he fully appreciates the value of the gift. For ourselves, we much prefer being damned standing up to being saved kneeling down.

W. COLE.—Pleased to welcome you as a member of the N.S.S., also to know that the *Freethinker* is so highly appreciated by yourself and some of your friends.

R. E. ROSSLER.—The essay on "Life" has been reprinted many times, and is published at the end of Mr. Cohen's biographical sketches in *Bradlaugh and Ingersoll*. Thanks for sending all the same.

H. WEBB.—The Apocrypha was issued with the Authorized Version of the Bible up till about a century ago. Since then it has to be purchased separately. It can be had in a Revised Version.

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.

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

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.

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

To-day (September 22) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Town Hall, Birmingham, at 7.0, on "The Savageries of Civilization." The lecturer has no lack of material for such a subject; the savagery of to-day is more than latent, it is very, very active. We hope to be able to report that the large Town Hall was well filled. Admission is free.

Under the auspices of the Glasgow Branch of the N.S.S., Mr. R. B. Kerr will lecture to-day (September 22) in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, on "Mussolini, Abyssinia, and Birth-Control." We fancy this is Mr. Kerr's first lecture in Glasgow for the local Branch, and we hope friends will do what they can to see the hall filled. Mr. Kerr is a specialist on his subject. The lecture will commence at 7 o'clock.

Plymouth saints are informed that Mr. G. Whitehead will be in that district for a week, commencing to-day (September 22), and lectures will be held every evening, details will be found in the Lecture Notices column. The local N.S.S. Branch will co-operate at all meetings, and particulars concerning membership, etc., may be obtained from the officials present. Pioneer Press literature will be on sale, which is a convenient way of obtaining the latest publications.

There are some queer people on the Risca (Mon.) Council. This in itself would not qualify Risca Council for special and dishonourable mention, but the fact remains. It seems there were boats running on Sundays on the canal that passes through Risca. No ordinary member of the community complained of this, but a local Baptist parson wrote complaining of a "desecration of the Sabbath." The proposal that the Council should do something to protect the Lord from this insult was defeated because the Canal belonged to the railway, but on the question being put, whether it was worse to run boats on Sunday than to make colliers work on Sunday, the answer was given that if a man did not believe in God he was not fit to be on earth. The same Councillor who asked the question about Sunday labour, also gave notice of motion that the swimming baths be opened on Sunday mornings. This was lost by three votes. So the same people who do not object to men working in the mines on Sunday, do object to people riding on boats or washing themselves in public baths on that day. Perhaps the root objection is to water—a kind of spiritual hydrophobia. Anyway, now readers will understand why we say there are some queer people on the Risca Council—sort of survivals of the Stone Age.

The *Irish Times* takes the death of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner as the occasion for giving an account of Charles Bradlaugh's association with Ireland, and his work for the Irish people. It is very well, and very sympathetic—done. The date of the paper is September 11.

Common sense crops up in the most unexpected places, and with most unlikely persons. On September 10 the Roman Catholics asked District Justice MacCabe to impose restrictions on Sunday dancing, etc. The application was made on behalf of the Bishop of Waterford and Lismore. Justice MacCabe refused the application. "Dancing," he said, "is lawful enjoyment. If it is not wrong on week-days it cannot be wrong on Sundays."

From the point of view of ordinary common sense this judgment appears impeccable. But is it not a begging of the question? The essence of the Christian position is that things that are right on week-days are wrong on Sunday. Sunday is a taboo day, it belongs to the same group of superstitions as taboos on food, the taboo of approaching a king's person as one would approach an ordinary body, or the taboo which makes some books and buildings "sacred." Besides if Sunday dancing is encouraged, how can one expect young people to go to Church with desirable regularity? Justice MacCabe has overlooked the very pertinent fact that things which are wrong with religion are very often quite good outside of religion.

Something appears to be happening in England, or there is one man who will be getting into difficulties with his superiors. Canon F. J. Shirley is the new headmaster of King's School, Canterbury, and in the course of a sermon preached by him in Canterbury Cathedral, on September 8, he told his congregation that we had "something to learn from Atheistic Russia." He said that "in England less than one-tenth of the youth (14-18) receives secondary education. In Russia the position is exactly the reverse. The English penal system is still primitive—her criminal is not reclaimed. He serves his five years and carries his stigma for ever. Russia is reclaiming the criminals. The system is redemptive, and men are restored to good, moral life, assets once more to the community." That is really not the way for a Canon of the Church to talk about a country that has dethroned Christianity. Probably he will receive a very severe cautioning, as others have received who hold responsible positions in this country.

The Secretary of the Dean of St. Paul's writes that we spelled the Dean's name wrongly. It should be Matthew's, not "Mathews" as printed. We apologize for the error; but we also note that this is the only point in the two articles which the Dean feels he can safely criticize. We admire his discretion.

Things Worth Knowing*

THE ARABS IN SPAIN

ARABIAN knowledge began at an early date to percolate into Christian Europe. . . . Under absolute religious tolerance, Christians enjoyed complete freedom in the Spanish Khalifate; they had their own bishops; several monasteries existed in the outskirts of the capital which served as hostels for travellers, and monks were commonly seen in the streets of Cordova. From all parts of Europe numerous students betook themselves to the great Arab seats of learning in search of the light which only there was to be found. Alvaro, a Christian Bishop, writes in the ninth century, "All the young Christians who distinguish themselves by their talent, know the language and literature of the Arabs, read and study passionately the Arab books, gather at great expense great libraries of these, and everywhere proclaim with a loud voice how admirable is that literature." The famous Gerbert of Aurillac brought from Spain some rudiments of astronomy and mathematics, and taught his astonished pupils from terrestrial and celestial globes. . . .

During the next two centuries the process of diffusion assumed an extensive scale. An African monk, Constantine, who had acted as secretary to Robert Guiscard, devoted himself with enthusiasm to the translation of Arab text-books and to introducing the new learning into the mother house of the Benedictines at Monreale, whence the path lay open for its transmission to the far-flung houses of the order. Another Benedictine, Adelhard of Bath, brought with him from Cordova a large collection of books and much doctrine, which he and his nephew actively spread abroad in France and England. From his copy of Euclid all subsequent editions down to 1533 have been published. Daniel de Morlay likewise proceeded to Cordova to learn mathematics and astronomy, published the fruits of his studies and lectured at Oxford. Plato of Tivoli translated Al-Batani's astronomy and other mathematical works. At the end of the twelfth century a young Pisan merchant, Leonardo Fibonacci, while travelling in Spain, became aware of the new mathematical sciences of the Arabs, and after several new journeys issued a translation of Al-Khwarizmi's great work on algebra. He definitely popularized the perfected decimal notation, which became known, with the perfected arithmetic from it as *algorism*, from the Arabian writer's name. Fibonacci, whose work had a wide influence, must be accounted the founder of modern mathematics in Christian Europe and the first of the long line of Italian mathematicians. Gerard of Cremona was the most industrious among the popularizers of Arab literature; he spent fifty years in the Khalifate of Cordova and brought forth no less than sixty translations, among which were the *Almagest* and the *Astronomy* of Al-Haitham. Michael Scot repeatedly visited Cordova for the purpose of obtaining manuscripts and making translations. The influx of students into Spain and the activity of translators went on until the last days of the Khalifate. Arnold of Villeneuve and Raymond Lully, the friend of Bacon, studied in Spain and taught at Montpellier, Campanus of Novara studied mathematics at Cordova and taught in Vienna, and systematic schools for the translation of Arab text-books were established in Toledo by Alfonso the Sage.

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

The Jews shared under the complete tolerance of Moorish rule in the cultural evolution of the Khalifate; and as they scattered over Europe . . . became the carriers of that culture to the remotest barbaric lands. . . . They established numerous schools, such as that of the Kimbis and of Ben Ezra at Narbonne, where Arabian science was popularized and Arabic books translated. Numerous Jews followed William of Normandy to England and enjoyed his protection, building there the first stone burgher houses which may still be seen at Lincoln and St. Edmundsbury; and establishing a school of science at Oxford. It was under their successors at that Oxford school that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic science. Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any right to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Moslim science and method to Christian Europe . . . and he never wearied of declaring that a knowledge of Arabic and of Arabian science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. . . . In the hands of Jewish doctors trained in Arab schools, where medical art had been carried far beyond that of the ancients, the practice and teaching of medicine remained during the Middle Ages. The pharmacopœia created by the Arabs is virtually that which, but for the recent synthetic and organotherapeutic preparations, is in use at the present day. The medical school of Montpellier was founded on the pattern of that of Cordova under Jewish doctors. . . . Down to the fifteenth century whatever scientific activity existed in Europe was engaged in assimilating Arab learning without greatly adding to it. Prince Henry of Portugal established Arab and Jewish teachers at his great nautical academy at Cape St. Vincent, which prepared the way for Vasco da Gama, and for the expansion of Europe to the uttermost ends of the earth. The first mathematical treatise printed in Europe (1494) is but a paraphrase, and in part a transcription, of Leonardo Fibonacci's translations by Luca Pacioli, the friend of another Leonardo—Leonardo da Vinci. It was from Al-Batani's tables that Regiomontanus constructed the *Ephemerides* which made the voyage of Columbus possible; Kepler carried out his work by means of the Hakemite tables of Ibn Yunis; Vesalius translated Al-Razi. Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world.

The Arabs opened up the land-routes to India, to China, Malacca, and Timbuctoo, the emporium of the central African trade; and sent their caravans to the rich lands beyond the Sahara long before the Portuguese doubled Cape Verde. They held the monopoly of the sea-routes to India, and the Emporiums founded along the eastern coast of Africa a line of trading colonies from the Soudan coast and Socotra to Mombaza, Mozambique, Zanzibar and Madagascar.

They improved the art of ship-building, taught Mediterranean seamen to construct lighter sailing ships or caravels, to caulk their boats with tar . . . to handle sails and cables. Moorish merchants established their *fundaks* in the Christian ports, plied between the great sea-ports of Provence and the South of France, brought their wares to the markets of Montpellier and Narbonne. . . . They introduced the system of bills of exchange, and the commerce of the Mediterranean was regulated by the institution of sea-consuls first adopted at Barcelona.

The fine linens, the cottons, the silks, the delicate and gorgeous fabrics of the Saracenic world, satins and sarcenets, Persian taffetas, Damasks from Damascus, Baudekin from Bagdhad, Muslin from Mosul,

Grenadines from Granada . . . created a demand for fine raiment among the coarsely-clad populations of Europe. . . . The looms of Syria and Spain, of which sixteen thousand were at work in Seville alone, and where a hundred and thirty thousand silk-workers were employed at Cordova, wove the materials for the garments of nobles and the sacramental vestments of Christian prelates; and it was not an uncommon spectacle to see a bishop celebrating mass with an *ayal* of the Kuran elegantly embroidered on his chasuble. The women of Europe learnt to wear an Arab *Kamis* (chemise) and *jubba* (jupe, jupon). The warriors were eager to wield blades forged in Damascus, Almeria or Toledo, and to ride in Cordovan saddles. The sugar-cane was introduced, and Europeans first tasted confectionaries, sweetmeats, and sorbets. By and by the manufacturers of the East were introduced and imitated in Christian Europe. Silk looms were established in Norman Sicily. Venice copied with the aid of native craftsmen the glassware of Antioch; Lyons the damasks, Paris the "tapis sarasins," and Rheims the looms of Syria. The rich dyes of the East were brought to Bruges, where they were used to prepare English wool for the market. The wares of Spain and Majorca led to the establishment of Italian factories for the manufacture of majolica. Sugar factories were transferred from Sicily to Italy, from Spain to the South of France.

The Arabs introduced three inventions into Europe, each of which was to bring about a world-transforming revolution; the mariner's compass which was to expand Europe to the ends of the earth; gunpowder which was to bring to an end the supremacy of the armoured knight; and paper which prepared the way for the printing press. The revolution brought about by the introduction of paper was scarcely less important than that brought about by printing. The extreme scarcity of books was in a large measure due to the scarcity of parchment; we know how the texts of ancient manuscripts were erased again and again to supply materials for writing missals and legends of saints, so that scarcely a manuscript older than the eleventh century survives to-day. The price of books was consequently prohibitive . . . the Arabs first adopted the manufacture of paper from silk as practiced in China, and silk paper was manufactured at Samarakand and Bokhara; for silk they at first substituted cotton, Damasc paper and later linen. The linen paper industry was long a monopoly of Xativa, near Valencia, whence it was introduced into Catalonia and Provence, and later to Trevisa and Padua.

The first parts of Europe to emerge from barbarism were those directly under the influence of Moorish culture; the Spanish Marches of Catalonia, Provence and Sicily.

"The Making of Humanity," by Robert Briffault, pp. 198-202 and 204-7.

I am afraid that the objections to demoniacal possession involve in germ the rejection of all belief in the supernatural.—Gladstone.

Disputes are multiplied, as if everything was uncertain, and these disputes are managed with the greatest warmth, as if everything was certain. Amidst all this bustle 'tis not reason which gains the prize, but eloquence; and no man need ever despair of gaining proselytes to the most extravagant hypothesis, who has art enough to represent it in favourable colours. The victory is not gained by the men at arms, who manage the pike and sword; but by the trumpeters, drummers, and musicians of the army.—Hume.

Israel's Ancient Cults

WHEN Edward Gibbon, in his immortal history, reviewed the rise and progress of the Christian creed as a purely natural product, orthodox souls were scandalized by his audacity. But to-day, the science of comparative religion is regarded as a legitimate and indeed indispensable study, by all save benighted obscurantists.

The Old Testament is almost our sole authority on the evolution of the Hebrew faith. The Bible is not a book but a collection of miscellaneous writings of unknown authorship, which has been justly compared with "a selection of works from English literature between the times of Bede and those of Milton which contain the stratified deposits (often confused and even with their natural order inverted) left by the stream of the intellectual and moral life of Israel during many centuries."

Imbedded in these strata are various fragmentary remains which, despite their many glosses and obscurities, are of inestimable value to the hierologist. Frazer's *Folk Lore in the Old Testament* provides a signal illustration of this truth, for this great work clearly shows that the customs and beliefs of the ancient Jews were precisely those of contemporary barbarous and savage communities.

Invaluable are the Books of Genesis, Samuel, and Judges to the anthropologist, as they are the repositories of a long past age. Most of these writings are comparatively free from the interpolations and priestly revisions which are so abundant in other parts of the Scriptures. Despite editorial tampering with their exploits, men such as Samson, Gideon and Jephthah still stand revealed as typical representatives of a fierce and warlike time.

Some assume that the men of Israel's heroic age as depicted in the Bible are mere products of myth and legend. Yet it seems scarcely credible that there arose so much smoke without some fire. Saul's secret visit to the witch of Endor has been contemptuously dismissed as entirely fictitious. Yet that fearless investigator, the great Thomas Henry Huxley, considered the story in question to have been well within the range of historical probability.

The narrative, which has many counterparts in uncivilized communities, is a very suggestive one. Much as Michael Henchard in Hardy's *Mayor of Casterbridge* consulted the rural conjuror in a time of uncertainty, so Saul is alleged (1 Sam. xxviii.), when deeply alarmed by the might of the enemy host arrayed against him, to have sought the assistance of Jahveh, the Chief of the Jewish gods. "But Jahveh answered him not, neither by dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets." As Israel's deity turned a deaf ear to his entreaties, Saul in desperation was driven to consult "those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards." These weird people he had previously "put out of the land." Still, they seem to have retreated into secluded places and evidently remained known to the countryside. For when the King requested his servants to seek out a woman possessed of a familiar spirit they, without hesitation or alarm, answered that: "Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor." To this wise woman Saul immediately repairs in disguise, and when she is assured that her life is safe inquires: "Whom shall I bring up to thee?" Saul answers, "Bring me up Samuel." The witch then calls up a spirit from the ground, which becomes visible to her. Saul, however, sees nothing and demands, "What seest thou?" And the woman replies, "I see Elohim (a god) coming up out of the earth." Saul then says, "What form is he of?" "An old man cometh up

and he is covered with a rope," is the answer. To the King the apparition is so far invisible, and he is entirely dependent on the testimony of the woman, whose mediumistic powers have brought forth the dead.

Then we learn that "Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed his face to the ground and did obeisance. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed: for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me and answereth me no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams; therefore I have called thee to make known to me what I shall do." The testy old prophet then asks why he should be disquieted by Saul now that Jahveh had discarded him and become his adversary. Jahveh, the spirit said, had acted as he, Samuel, had foretold and rent the kingdom from Saul's hand and given it to David. And the spirit continued, "thou obeyedst not the voice of David and did not execute his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore hath Jahveh done this thing unto thee this day. Moreover, Jahveh will deliver Israel also with thee into the hands of the Philistines; and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me. Then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth and was sore afraid because of the words of Samuel."

There appears little in the original to indicate that Saul either really saw or spoke to Samuel. The woman seemingly served, like a modern medium, as the sole source of communication, and in the Septuagint version she is referred to as a ventriloquist. According to Huxley's interpretation, which coincides with that of leading critics: "It is most probable that, in accordance with the general theory of spiritual influences which obtained among the old Israelites, the spirit of Samuel was conceived to pass into the body of the wise woman, and to use her vocal organs to speak in his own name—for I cannot discover that they drew any clear distinction between possession and inspiration."

The hypothesis that primitive Israel entertained no belief in a future state derives no support from this and many other passages in the older parts of the Bible. For these traditions date from days long antecedent to the Captivity. Sheol was the ancient Hebrew underworld to which the dead departed, and earthly loves and hatreds and even the clothing of the living persisted in the grave.

The monotheism of historical times was evolved in Israel from an earlier polytheism. It is noteworthy that the name *Elohim* is given to the ghost conjured by the witch of Endor from the spirit land. This word is rendered "god" or "gods," and according to Reuss, expresses "something divine, that is to say, superhuman, commanding respect and terror." Other eminent scholars concur, and the term is not applied only to the disembodied spirit, but serves to designate the gods of the heathen. For a close kinship existed between every variety of *Elohim*, and supreme divinities such as Dagon, Chemosh and Jahveh bore unmistakable marks of their ghostly origin.

In the older Scriptures, Jahveh is frequently depicted as a vain and irritable old man with other human failings. He created man in his own image much as Adam begat Seth "in his own likeness, after his image." Again, Jahveh strolls in the garden in the cool evening hours, and our first parents endeavour to screen themselves from his sight in the shadow of the trees. To behold Jahveh was a capital offence as a rule, but we are distinctly told that "Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel" saw the Jewish God. (Exod. xxiv. 9-11). Moses on another occasion viewed his

back parts. The deity dines with Abraham beneath the sacred oaks at Mamre. He is pleased with the sweet savour of Noah's offering and the sacrifices are said to serve as his food. Hosts of cattle, sheep and goats were slaughtered for his benefit, while Jahveh's human character is shown in his puerile jealousy of rival divinities, his appeasement and repentance, while his highly vindictive temper is displayed in his conduct towards Saul when that monarch failed to fulfil a command of savage ferocity. Obviously, then, although "immeasurably more powerful for good and evil" than other anthropomorphic existences, still Jahveh was conceived as shapen in human form.

Much as Anglican and Roman priests survey with disdain the ministrations and appeals of ranting preachers, so the priests and prophets of Israel looked down on ordinary necromancers, diviners and wizards. Yet there was no real cleavage between the upper and lower representatives of the spiritual fraternity, as the seers occupied an intermediate position between them and then, as now, money payments were required for their services.

The arts of divination and necromancy were the avocations of a special cult from the earliest times, but converse with the spirits was not restricted to a sacerdotal order. This was a product of later evolution. Under the monarchy, the Kings still performed the leading religious rites. Saul conferred with Jahveh in person, and on one occasion seems to have conducted the divining ceremonies while the priest looked on, and David officiated in the same way.

The dead reappear in dreams, and during these visions the spectral beings were supposed to be actually present. The *Elohim* also enter and inspire the living against their will, and when under the influence of the ghosts men rave or prophecy, while displaying the symptoms we now associate with insanity or religious revivalism.

The Teraphim, obscurely mentioned in the Bible, indicate image-worship and an ancestral cult. The teraphim were the family gods, and their images were apparently those of dead ancestors. In the strange story of Jacob's flight from Laban when his mendacious wife, Rachel, stole her father's gods, she evidently regarded them as sacred. Jacob appears entirely indifferent to Rachel's idolatry, and he kept these gods until he hid or erected them under an oak tree. Huxley doubted whether Jacob parted with the idols even then, "for the subsequent history of Israel renders it more than doubtful whether the teraphim were regarded as 'strange gods' even as late as the eighth century B.C." (*The Evolution of Theology*).

Saul's daughter Michal, again, who was one of David's wives, when her father's messengers were sent to David, placed her gods in his bed so as to simulate him in a state of sickness. Moreover, that popular symbol, the brazen serpent preserved in the temple remained there till the reign of Hezekiah. The Commandments, as we have them, sternly discountenance polytheism and idolatry. Yet, as Dean Farrar conceded, "the whole history of Israel shows how utterly and how early the law must have fallen into desuetude. The worship of the golden calf and the calves at Dan and Bethel, against which, so far as we know, neither Elijah nor Elisha said a single word; the tolerance of high places . . . the occasional glimpses of the most startling irregularities sanctioned even in the temple worship itself, prove most decisively that a pure monotheism and an independence of symbols was the result of a slow and painful course . . . and not, as is constantly and erroneously urged, the instinct of the whole Semitic race."

The researches of Tylor, Frazer, Spencer and others, demonstrate that misconceptions such as those of ancient Israel are universal in barbarous and savage communities. The Hebrew Scriptures prove that the early Jews regarded the soul or ghost as an entity that departed from the body at death, and then proceeded to Sheol, the realm of the shades. There the spirits preserved in ghostlike guise their living appearance, even to their clothing, while exercising greater powers for good and evil. Thus they formed a group of spectral creatures termed Elohim, of whom Jahveh ultimately became an outstanding representative who developed into the national divinity. But there is not the faintest suggestion of future rewards, or punishments for non-observance of ritual, and other religious shortcomings were subjected to penalties in this mundane sphere alone.

T. F. PALMER.

Dr. Inge Praises the Prophets

DR. INGE's last Presidential Address to the Modern Churchman's Union is now available in a volume called *The Bible and the Modern Man*.

Dr. Inge spoke on "The Use and Misuse of the Bible." He did not say much about the "Misuse," but at least acknowledged that the Bible's "influence on European law has not been wholly salutary." He sees clearly that Witchcraft, Slavery, Marriage and Sabbatarian laws have owed their origin to Bible texts, which he describes as "unfortunate."

"The value of the Psalms is incomparable," is Dr. Inge's careless tribute to a very mixed bag. But one passage in his appreciation might easily be added to our *Arms and the Clergy* selections:—

I can never forget the debate in Convocation about leaving-out the Cursing Psalms. One well-known member of the Lower House defended them on the ground that they expressed our justifiable feelings towards the Germans.

It is as usual difficult for an outsider to understand the attitude of Modernists towards the Old Testament. One might however say the same about Christ's own dubious attitude. But at least Christ (according to the Gospels) believed in the Old Testament miracles. His language is inconsistent when He refers to the laws of Moses which He "came to fulfil," but which He in some cases makes more severe, and of which in other cases He teaches the exact opposite.

Dr. Inge endeavours unsuccessfully to "explain" Christ's views on the Old Testament by saying that although "He regarded the Book as sacred and divinely inspired," Christ probably merely "followed the then prevalent interpretation of inspiration." This would seem to give divine sanction to the Vicars of Bray in all ages.

In this Presidential Address, Dr. Inge pokes fun at fundamentalists, but recalls that he himself was brought up in exactly the same creed as Mr. W. J. Bryan and the prosecutors of Scopes, the young Dayton school-teacher.

Dr. Inge does not deny that the Old Testament contains "much which is by no means wholesome reading," and agrees that "Extracts from it are better than the whole book." If the atrocities are omitted the books would be better, no doubt, but would be robbed of their characteristic messages. As will be seen, we distrust Dr. Inge's selectivity.

The Old Testament, as a whole, is dismissed finally as "the poetry-book of the Hebrews." Of course there is bad as well as good poetry. Rudyard Kipling is the living embodiment of much of this "Hebrew Poetry-book."

But Dr. Inge reserves his most eloquent eulogies for "The Prophets." This panegyric is as lavish as it is unqualified. "They are of immense value, and quite (sic) unique." Dr. Inge forgets his customary literary delicacy and adds obscurity to absurdity when he tells

us that "their insight takes the form of foresight," that "they were not afraid to throw their ideals into the future," and "foreshortened their visions of things to come." Most of this is meaningless verbiage.

Dr. Inge pays his highest homage to Isaiah and Jeremiah. For what? Dr. Inge discovers a hitherto unsuspected secret about this precious pair of prophets. Isaiah, we learn, changed the old tribal idea of a Jewish Jehovah into some kind of beneficent deity anxious to broadcast benevolence to the entire universe. This "bolder vision" came to "Jeremiah, one of the greatest of the sons of Israel." And "in Isaiah Chapter Two, Jehovah, it is predicted, shall be acknowledged as the Lord of the whole earth, not of the Chosen People only."

This is one of the most impudent claims ever made. It takes one's breath away. It is as if one believed that Napoleon simply carried friendly gifts to Moscow; as if Lord Cecil was animated by kindest motives in blockading Germany after the war was over; as if Mussolini seeks only the salvation of Abyssinia.

This was no "discovery" by major, minor, or modernist prophet! It was Moses who said that God was a jealous God who objected to people worshipping His rivals.

Examining this wonderful message of Isaiah, we find it embedded in the usual denunciation of those who fail to "fear" Jehovah or decline the invitation of the God who is Love:—

They shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth for fear of the Lord and for the glory of His Majesty when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. (Isaiah ii, 19.)

Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. (Isaiah iii. 17.)

It may well be that the ravings of Lunatic Isaiah indicated that even the Chosen People themselves were getting sick of their discourteous deity and his preposterous prophets. Possibly Isaiah and Jeremiah looked with interested eyes upon the wealthy estates of the "Heathen" round about them. But the "Chosen People" remained "Chosen." Isaiah's Chapter Four is just a glorification of the old Zion: "When the Lord hath washed away the filth . . . and purged the blood of Jerusalem," "the branch of the Lord" is again "beautiful and glorious . . . for them that have escaped of Israel."

As for the Gentile nations, has Dr. Inge ever read the 34th Chapter of Isaiah? Does he really think that Isaiah's dream of Jehovah's domination was a friendly one?

The indignation of the Lord is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies. He hath utterly destroyed them. . . . The mountains shall be melted with their blood. . . . My sword shall be bathed in heaven.

It is one of the bloodiest chapters in all the Holy Bible. It was a favourite magazine, during the Great War, for parsons in search of suitable texts. And the upshot of it was that God's Chosen People would be victorious and "return to Zion with songs and everlasting joy."

As for Jeremiah, he had perhaps less sanctimonious cant than Isaiah, but he was at least equally bloodthirsty in spirit as well as slavishly narrow in his concept of a Jewish God for a Jewish People.

Preachers often attempt to justify the vileness of the Bible by claiming it to be a colourless history of what sins are committed by wicked men. Dr. Inge's appreciation of Jeremiah must be reconciled with that prophet's personal wishes and his individual ideas of what he asked Jehovah to do to people he disliked. He asked this tribal god to

Deliver up their children to the famine, and let their wives be bereaved of their children, and let their young men be slain by the sword. (Jer. xviii. 21.)

Is it conceivable that a cultured civilized man of the twentieth century, of kindly disposition, peaceable and completely tolerant to those who differ from him, would

go out of his way to praise "prophets" of the calibre of Isaiah and Jeremiah, unless religious vestiges obscured his vision? Suppose, shall we say, these "prophets" were known only to the aborigines of Angola? Would the ex-Dean choose their murderous sentiments for effusive encomium?

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Dictators

ADOLF the Bold rides galumphant,
His rowels in Germany's neck;
Benito the Brave is triumphant,
For Freedom in Rome is a wreck.

Oswald, our own, is aspirant
To raise our green land from the mire;
But he's only a twopenny tyrant,
And it does him no harm to aspire.

The House-painter's fingers look bloody,
But it isn't red paint any more;
The ex-democrat's thoughts are grown ruddy,
But he dreams not of sunrise, but gore.

And it seems to the modest spectator
That our Oswald's in luck, if he knew it;
For he's only an air-ball-inflator,
Who in strife would be first to go through it.

BENJIE.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

HEGELIAN MATERIALISM

SIR,—I should not have made the mistake of planting Athoso Zenoo upon the same pinnacle as Chapman Cohen. Mr. Cohen has the ability to make his meaning clear. All that I have been able to extract from the splashes of Zenoovian gibberish at the end of the *Freethinker* is that, for reasons not explained, Communists are regarded as Hegelian Materialists. And Hegelian Materialists (philosophers) are regarded as being identical with Hegelian Monists (theologists).

I wish to goodness Mr. Zenoo could be less ecclesiastical in his verbal meanderings, even at the cost of giving Vanoc II. something to bite upon. Journalistic virtues may include faith in oneself and hope for others—but the greatest of these is clarity.

ERIC F. RUSSELL.

Obituary

MR. J. G. DOBSON

WE regret to record the death of Mr. J. G. Dobson, a well known figure to Northern Freethinkers. He had been engaged actively in Freethought propaganda for well over fifty years, first on Tyneside, then at Middlesbrough, later in Cumberland, and for some years in Birmingham. Wherever he went he carried on the self-imposed work of distributing literature, lending books to all who would read them, and in every way doing what he could to serve the Cause.

He died at the age of 84, and had splendid health until almost the end. But of late he suffered from loss of memory, and a few months ago was found in Gateshead, the place of his birth, although he was not able to account for his getting there. From that time he was never permitted, very much to his disgust, to go out alone. On September 9 he was in his room putting on his boots preparatory to going out. When his daughter went to him she found him dead in his chair.

Mr. Dobson was cremated at Perry Bar Crematorium, on September 12. There were many friends present, together with his relatives, and representatives of the Birmingham Branch of the N.S.S. A Secular Service was conducted by Mr. R. H. Rosetti.

Mr. Dobson was a member of the N.S.S. Executive. The movement has lost a devoted worker and a very loyal friend.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH DISCUSSION SOCIETY (375 Cambridge Road, E.2, opposite Museum Cinema): 8.0, Monday, September 23, Mr. J. Marchi.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. H. Levy—"Is Reason Enough?"

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, September 22, Mr. Tuson. Highbury Corner, 7.30, Mr. Goldman. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, September 23, Mr. Tuson.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.0, Sunday, September 22, Mr. C. Tuson. Rushcroft Road, Brixton, 8.0, Tuesday, September 24, Mr. F. P. Corrigan. Manor Street, Clapham, 8.0, Friday, September 27, Mr. P. Goldman.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. 6.30, Messrs. Saphin, Wood and Bryant. 7.30, Wednesdays, Messrs. Evans and J. Darby. Thursdays, 7.30, Messrs. Saphin and Gee. Fridays, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant and Connell. Current *Freethinkers* on sale at The Kiosk.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Birmingham Town Hall): 7.0, Mr. Chapman Cohen—"The Savageries of Civilization."

NEW SEAHAM (7 School Street): 2.30. Northern Federation Meeting.

OUTDOOR

ACCRRINGTON MARKET: 7.30, Wednesday, September 25, Mr. J. Clayton.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (The Market): 3.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"Science and Religion." 7.0, "Free thought."

GATESHEAD (Warwick Street): 8.0, Wednesday, September 25, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

HETTON: 8.0, Tuesday, September 24, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths): 8.0, Sunday, September 22, Mr. A. Jackson. Corner of High Park Street and Park Road, 8.0, Thursday, September 26, Mr. A. Jackson.

MORPETH (Market Place): 7.0, Saturday, September 27, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, September 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Market): Sunday, September 22 to Friday, September 27, Mr. G. Whitehead will speak each evening.

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.15 and 7.0, Sunday, September 22, Mr. J. Clayton.

READ: 7.30, Monday, September 23, Mr. J. Clayton.

SEAHAM HARBOUR (Church Street): 7.0, A Demonstration. Speakers—Messrs. Brighton, Flanders and others.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, Wednesday, September 25, Mr. A. Flanders.

Christianity, Slavery and Labour

BY

CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth 2s. 6d.

Postage 3d.

BRAIN and MIND

— BY —

Dr. ARTHUR LYNCH.

This is an introduction to a scientific psychology along lines on which Dr. Lynch is entitled to speak as an authority. It is a pamphlet which all should read.

Price - 6d. By post - 7d.

Footsteps of the Past

BY

J. M. WHEELER

Price 3s. 6d. Postage 3d.

Christianity & Civilization

A Chapter from "The History of the Intellectual Development of Europe."

By Prof. J. W. DRAPER.

Price - TWOPENCE. Postage ½d

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

SOME CHRISTIAN TYPES

by

CRITICUS

Price 4d. By post 5d.

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

ACADEMY CINEMA,

Oxford Street. Ger. 2981

Elisabeth Bergner in

"DER TRAUMENDE MUND" (A) and Raimu in

"CES MESSIEURS DE LA SANTE" (A)

UNWANTED CHILDREN

In a Civilized Community there should be no UNWANTED Children.

An Illustrated Descriptive List (68 pages) of Birth Control Requisites and Books sent post free for a 1½d. stamp

N.B.—PRICES ARE NOW LOWER.

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

ESTABLISHED NEARLY HALF A CENTURY

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President - - - CHAPMAN COHEK.

General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

68 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

THE National Secular Society was founded in 1866 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

The N.S.S. is the only organization of militant Freethinkers in this country. It aims to bring into one body all those who believe the religions of the world to be based on error, and to be a source of injury to the best interests of Society. It claims that all political laws and moral rules should be based upon purely secular considerations. It is without sectarian aims or party affiliations.

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

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalize morality; to promote peace; to dignify labour; to extend material well-being; and to realize the self-government of the people.

The Funds of the National Secular Society are legally secured by Trust Deed. The trustees are the President, Treasurer and Secretary of the Society, with two others appointed by the Executive. There is thus the fullest possible guarantee for the proper expenditure of whatever funds the Society has at its disposal.

The following is a quite sufficient form for anyone who desires to benefit the Society by legacy:—

I hereby give and bequeath (*Here insert particulars of legacy*), free of all death duties, to the Trustees of the National Secular Society for all or any of the purposes of the Trust Deed of the said Society.

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects.

Name

Address

Occupation

Dated this.....day of.....19...

This declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Reading for To-day

Arms & The Clergy

By

George Bedborough

The War Years are now 17 years behind us and a new generation has arisen that is not familiar with the attitude of the clergy during the strenuous period of 1914-1918. To-day their talk is of peace and the barbarisms of war. Then there were no greater cultivators of the war-spirit than the clergy. Mr. Bedborough has in *Arms and the Clergy* produced with marked success a handy and effective piece of work. This is a book that everyone interested in the question of peace and war should possess.

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

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

LETTERS TO THE LORD

By

Chapman Cohen

This work shows Mr. Cohen at his best and his wittiest. There is a smile on every page and a laugh on most. Even those who are criticized can hardly avoid being interested and amused. It should serve as an armoury for Freethinkers and an eye-opener to Christians.

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

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

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY

Appeal for Help

The Leicester Secular Society is one of the oldest Freethought Societies in the World. It dates back to 1852, and is still very much alive.

The Leicester Secular Hall was built in 1881. There is a debt of £2,000 on the Hall, and the Society has liabilities of about £500.

Since 1923 the Society has subscribed over £2,000 to maintain and improve the fabric of the Hall.

The efforts of the Society are now sadly crippled by financial needs, and it asks outside friends to come to its help.

There is a promise of £300 when £2,000 is subscribed.

Further particulars sent on request.

Will You Please Help Us?

Subscriptions should be kindly sent to—

H. E. ANDERSON,
SECULAR HALL, HUMBERSTONE GATE,
LEICESTER

The Christian Sunday : Its History and Its Fruits

By A. D. McLAREN

Price 2d. _____ Postage ½d.

BUDDHA The Atheist

By "UPASAKA"

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price ONE SHILLING. _____ Postage 1d.

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

A Grammar of Freethought.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Cloth Bound 5s. _____ Postage 3d

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