

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LV.—No. 42

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1935

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The Church and Slavery—The Editor</i>	657
<i>Fooling the Faithful—Minnermus</i>	659
<i>A Naturalist and Immortality—C-de-B.</i>	660
<i>Ingersoll's "About the Holy Bible"—H. Cutner</i>	661
<i>Things Worth Knowing</i>	666
<i>The Inception of Modern Medical Science—T. F. Palmer</i>	666
<i>Evolution Again—J. Reeves</i>	668
<i>Whose Word For It?—Ignotus</i>	669

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

Views and Opinions

The Church and Slavery

A SCOTTISH reader who has been going through my *Christianity, Slavery and Labour*, writes me that he has frequently seen it stated that from the earliest times the Popes of the Roman Church had protested against the institution of slavery. He also says that a Christian friend has given him an article in which it is stated that slavery was specifically condemned by Pope Gregory the Great. As he finds no mention of this in my book, he asks whether the statement is true. I can only reply, generally, that it is one of those truths which should be described as a Christian truth. I am not aware of any specific condemnation of slavery as an institution by any of the Popes. It is possible to find advice to treat slaves with humanity, but that is quite common among pagan writers, and is to be found at all times wherever slavery has existed. The Roman Church was itself one of the largest of slave-owners, and about the last in Europe to liberate its slaves, and that fact alone is enough to disprove the statement cited by my correspondent. Before Christianity, slavery had already been condemned by some of the pagan writers as being contrary to the law of nature, and Professor Dill in his authoritative works on the *Last Days of the Roman Empire* calls special attention to the many cases of friendly intercourse existing between slaves and their masters.

When this is brought forward Christian apologists are apt to assert that this liberal sentiment was due to the influence of Christian teaching. But, unfortunately for this plea, the growth of humanitarian feeling with regard to slavery was expressed long before any such influence could have manifested itself.

On this head I may cite from Mr. A. M. Duff's *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire*, issued as recently as 1928. He says:—

It may be asked whether Christianity had anything to do with the progress of the humanitarian movement. In legislation it had no influence; to the most enlightened Government of the second century Christians were still an obstinate and traitorous sect that clung to a ridiculous Eastern superstition. Their teaching was not noticed at all; if any conceptions were formed of the Gospel in official circles, they would be that it inculcated cannibalism and immoral rites. Nor can any influence on imperial policy be traced through Stoicism to a Christian source. . . . The truth is that Stoicism and Christianity were parallel and independent revelations. . . . But to the former . . . must be accorded the full credit for the benevolent legislation of the second century.

Many similar opinions—might be cited from other writers.

* * *

Christian Truth

Now let us turn to the case of Pope Gregory the Great; it will probably throw light on other statements that may be made. At all events it should serve to put readers on their guard. First, the passage itself in full. It is a deed setting free Montanus and Thomas, two slaves of the Church, and is cited by Canon Brownlow, of Plymouth, in his *Slavery and Serfdom in Europe*, as evidence that the Church favoured the liberation of the slaves—all slaves:—

Since our Redeemer, the author of all creation, has been graciously pleased to assume our human flesh, in order that he might by the grace of His divinity, break the bonds of servitude in which we were held captive, and restore us to our original liberty, so it is a salutary act when men, whom at birth nature brought forth free, and whom the laws of nations has put under the yoke of servitude, are restored by the beneficence of their liberator to that liberty in which they were born. And, therefore, moved by the instinct of piety, and the consideration of the matter itself, you Montanus and Thomas, slaves of the Holy Roman Church, which by the help of God, we serve, we make you free from this day forward.

There will be noticed in this passage two things. First the men were slaves of the Church, second, it is not an order liberating *all* the slaves of the Church, but two only out of very many thousands that were owned by the Roman Church. But with regard to this particular passage, I prefer to hand over the matter to Dr. G. G. Coulton, whose scholarship and accuracy none can question, and who makes it a habit carefully to examine original documents, to the dismay of Roman Catholic apologists.

The letter of Pope Gregory is dealt with by Dr. Coulton in the thirteenth chapter of his *The Medieval Village*. After pointing out that this is the usual authority given for the statement (but not always with the elaborate falsification of meaning indulged in by Canon Brownlow) he says:—

We have only to go a little beyond this isolated quotation from Gregory's own letters, to realize how little he would have cared to be taken at his word in the sense which these . . . modern authors attribute to him. Not only were there thousands of unfreed slaves in the possession of ecclesiastics even a thousand years after Gregory had published this "death warrant" to servitude, but Gregory in person possessed in person at least hundreds, and perhaps thousands of slaves whom he did not free. Again, as Pope, he was trustee for the possession of thousands more, chattels of the Roman Church; yet he initiated no general papal movement for the liberation of Church serfs. On the contrary, ecclesiastical laws constantly opposed such a policy; wherever we find a general system of emancipation, it does not come from the Roman Court but from French or German rulers of later Middle Ages. We even find Gregory, in a later letter, exerting himself for the arrest of a slave, together with his wife and child and *peculium* (savings,) and for sending them back to their master. Nor had he in this case the excuse of an unwilling trustee for the Roman Church; for the slave in question had escaped from Gregory's own brother, and the great pope was here striving simply for the recovery of a piece of private property in slave-flesh. The Churchman's attitude did not here differ perceptibly from the layman's; for reasons which will presently become clear we possess far more records of layfolk freeing serfs for religious motives than of ecclesiastics; and canon law, no less definitely than civil law, treated the bondman as a chattel. This was the official attitude down to the time of St. Alfonso Liguori in the eighteenth century; moreover, even in the nineteenth century, when the great casuist Gury came to treat of nigger-trade, he could find no officially authoritative Catholic condemnation to quote.

So much for the Catholic evidence as to an official condemnation of slavery by the Church. The alleged specific condemnation of Pope Gregory turns out on examination to be no condemnation of slavery at all, but a mere grant of freedom in two cases, the action having no bearing whatever on the general question. It is no more than an example of what was taking place at all times, when for some reason or other a slave-owner gave a slave here and there his freedom. And the value of the claim made by modern apologists is seen when we find this same Pope exerting himself to secure the return of runaway slaves that had belonged to his brother, and that he himself, as Pope, was the official owner of thousands of slaves.

* * *

Beware of "Christian Truth"

One other consideration is worth bearing in mind. It is sometimes urged as proof of the anxiety of the Church to liberate slaves, that money was specially raised for the purpose of buying the freedom of slaves, and that the Church did in some instances forbid slave-holding. Both statements are true in fact, but completely false in the way they are used. For the only cases, so far as I know, in which the Church forbade slave-holding had reference to forbidding Jews and "Heathen" living in Christian territory holding Christian slaves. It did not refer to Christians holding their brother Christians in slavery. And the money raised for the release of slaves had reference to Christian slaves held by Jews and Mohammedans outside territory controlled by the Church. I advise readers when meeting Christian claims to pay special attention to this point.

Moreover the attitude of the Church as a corporation, was to cling tenaciously to its property in human flesh as it clung to land and other possessions. It cannot even be claimed that the Church was as a whole more kindly to its human chattels than were other slave-owners. The Church showed, as a

matter of fact, a more fanatical devotion to maintaining its rights than private owners did. This is what one would expect, for in spite of theories to the contrary, it remains true that personal economic interests are more likely to be disregarded by an individual in dealing with others, than is the economic interest of corporations and large bodies, where individual responsibility is lost in a collective responsibility, and the individual takes shelter behind the general body of which he is a part. As a matter of common experience it is collective ownership that is usually most oblivious to claims of decency and humanity. On this point it is worth noting the following from Pollock and Maitland's *History of English Law*:—

There is plenty of evidence that of all the landlords, the religious houses were the most severe—not the most oppressive, but the most tenacious of their rights; they were bent on the maintenance of pure villein tenure and personal villeinage. The immortal but soulless corporation with her wealth of accurate records would yield no inch, would enfranchise no serf, would enfranchise no tenement. In practice the secular lord was more humane, because he was more careless, because he would die. Still, it is to the professed in religion that we may look for a high theory of justice; and when we find that it is against them that peasants make their loudest complaints, we may be pretty sure that the religion of the time saw nothing very wrong in the proceedings of a Lord who without any cruelty tried to get the most he could out of his villein tenements.

* * *

The Facts

This claim of present-day Christians that it was Christianity that abolished slavery is, I think, the most impudent of the many impudent claims made by modern Christians. Consider the bald facts.

(1) There is in the Old Testament a clear sanction to the buying and selling of slaves.

(2) There is no condemnation of slavery in the New Testament, but there is a clear command to slaves to render their masters all obedience.

(3) The ethical condemnation of slavery was far more clearly expressed by pagan writers before the rise of the Christian Church, while the recognition of the rights of slaves to legal redress and protection that existed under the later pagan Roman rule received a check under Christianity.

(4) The Church itself was a large holder of slaves, and saw nothing wrong in the practice. It was also the last to liberate its slaves.

(5) The Black slave traffic, instituted at a time when the older slavery had largely disappeared, took its rise among Christians, was created and carried on by Christians, and for downright cruelty outdid all that the world had ever seen.

(6) In the modern movement for the abolition of slavery, until very recent years, the strongest and the bitterest opposition, came from Christian peoples and bodies, and in this the Old and the New Testament, as well as the practice of many generations of Christians, was relied on for support.

Much more could be said, but I think this is enough. Of course, no one would wish to deny that many individual Christian slave-owners acted with kindness towards their slaves, and that many slaves were given their freedom by Christian owners. But this, as I have already said, is true of all times and of all peoples, and these things were certainly not commoner with Christians than with others. And the Christian could and did often bring his religion to his aid in stifling those humane promptings which might have been struggling for expression.

It is here, indeed, that the chief count against Christianity comes in. Christianity did not abolish existing evils, whether these were slavery, or war, or

anything else. It accepted them all, and endorsed all, with the single exception that these must not be opposed to the Church. That condition observed, the Church was willing to cover with a rationalistic moral cloak any evil that existed. The Pagans had war, but they did not make it a religious matter. It had slavery, but did not justify it on the ground that it was a result of the curse placed by God upon the children of Ham. The Pagan world had not the religious dope with which to drug men and women and to persuade them that wrong was right. Pagan religion involved wrong, as all religions do; but it was lacking in the moral "dope" that Christianity introduced.

When I was quite a youth I drew from my studies, the conclusion that of all the systems the world has ever known, none had ever been quite so efficient as Christianity in the ability to cast a cloak of morality over some of the vilest propensities of human nature. My more mature studies have done nothing whatever to weaken that conclusion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Fooling the Faithful

"Think not the tyrants will rule for ever,
Or the priests of the bloody faith."—*Shelley*.

"The most pernicious of absurdities is that weak,
blind, stupid faith is better than the constant practice of
every human virtue."—*Landor*.

EDUCATED readers of newspapers must often be surprised at the curious methods of the Press Boycott by which all matters relating to Freethought are either excluded or grossly misrepresented in the interests of their religion. Indeed, in some quarters, this conspiracy of silence against Freethought is passing wonderful. The very name is like that of the god of the Ancient Hebrews, which was never to be spoken. Where the conspiracy of silence is occasionally broken, these Christians display another aspect of their charming attitude towards Freethought, which is then misrepresented and slandered.

This line of conduct seems to be pursued by the vast majority of editors, whether they control the big London dailies with colossal circulations, or provincial sheets with a strictly limited appeal. The journalists sometimes go out of their way to get a cheap laugh at the expense of Freethinkers. Note the following jibe which appeared in a leading article in the *Daily Mirror*, October 3. The subject under discussion was Church and Stage, and the pious scribe broke out as follows:—

Matthew Arnold, who, though a respectable person, was not entirely orthodox, and occasionally quarrelled with bishops, . . .

The leader-writer wishes his innocent readers to believe that Freethinkers are usually disreputable people, and that a "respectable person" might even be guilty of a little mild heresy. And this journalistic silliness is written of the great poet who made the civilized world smile at his description of the Christian Trinity as resembling "three Lord Shaftesburys," and whose satiric pen preserves the memory of some wooden-headed Victorian bishops like flies in amber. Indeed, in such matters there is no limit to the lengths pious editors will go in defence of the Christian Superstition. A short time ago the sedate *News-Chronicle* (London) gave several columns of print to a vindication of the old Biblical legend of Jonah and the Whale, which, although written in all seriousness, ought to have

wrinkled the face of a funeral horse with smiles. Let there be no mistake on one point. Journalists know better than that Freethinkers are weak, foolish, microcephalous idiots, but they wish to curry favour with the many-headed innocent Orthodox, and thus ensure bigger circulations for their newspapers. The imbecilities of the Bishop of London, the sob-stuff of the evangelists, the activities of the non-military, theatrical Salvation Army, are reported continually in the newspapers, but the leaders of Freethought seldom have a line devoted to their work, unless it contains an insult or an innuendo.

So far, the newspaper press. Periodical publications are much the same. From the time when the so-called *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1822, suggested that the poet Shelley ought to have been hanged, until the editor of the *Dublin Review* refused an article by Francis Thompson because it praised a Freethinker, the record of calumny, evasion, and insult is almost unbroken. The bright exception was the latter part of the last century, when John Morley controlled the *Fortnightly Review*, and the pages of the *North American Review* and *Nineteenth Century* published outspoken articles by Professor Huxley, Ingersoll, and other leading Intellectuals. Indeed, at that time there was a breath of real freedom in the very air, and the sedate *Daily Telegraph* actually opened its columns to a prolonged discussion on "Is Christianity a Failure?"

All this is now changed for the worse. Few, however, are fully aware that this peculiar habit of Christian camouflage is not confined to journalism, but is extended to literature itself; and that the campaign of calumny is just as apparent in some books as in newspapers and periodicals. Look, for example, at the works of reference which are to be found in most libraries, and notice how Freethought and Freethinkers are treated in their pages. Sins of omission and commission leap to the eyes of the reader, who may be somewhat ill-prepared for this exhibition in the twentieth century of the fierce flash of the primitive spirit of Christianity. For, nowadays, Christians are no longer able to crush opposition by fire and sword, and they are obliged to answer its arguments or make a show of defending its own doctrines. Feeling that the tendency of the times is against them, and afraid to resist it too openly, they bend before it rather than break.

A popular series is the Home University Library, which includes among its many volumes, a work on the *Victorian Age of Literature*. This particular book was entrusted to the Romish Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton, whose hundred-per-cent piety is notorious. In this so-called reference book, Chesterton uses his talents tyrannously in the service of the most reactionary of all the Christian Churches. He does not dissemble his hate, and has nothing but the crudest insults for the great Intellectuals of the Victorian era. He dubs Thomas Hardy "a sort of village Atheist." Swinburne is accused of composing an indecent parody on the "Blessed Virgin," surely an ironical suggestion in a Protestant country. Emily Bronte, the greatest of women writers, is described as "unsociable." The only Freethinker to whom Chesterton is at all civil is James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, who, he says, pontifically was "democratic in the dark." As Chesterton actually spells the poet's name with a "p," the compliment is a very doubtful one, after all. This same Chesterton is the modest man who continuously challenges the dogmatism of Freethinkers, uses reason to deride reason, and pretends to find liberty in the convents and monasteries of the most hide-bound of the Christian Churches.

Another work of reference, *A Short Biographical Dictionary of English Literature*, by J. W. Cousins, issued in the popular "Everyman's Library," is open to similar objections. James Thomson is re-introduced; this time as an awful warning, for we are told that "his views led to dipsomania." In the case of George Eliot, the information is given that her view of life was "pessimistic," despite the fact that this gifted writer coined the word "meliorism," in order to differentiate her own attitude towards optimism and pessimism. Robert Buchanan's fiery outbursts against Orthodoxy are slurred over by the statement that his poems were directed against "certain aspects of Christianity."

Still another reference-book *Chambers' Encyclopædia*, in an edition issued a few years ago, is full of bias against Freethinkers. Ingersoll is said to have attracted more attention than he deserved. The article on Bradlaugh refers readers for information to the libellous "life" by Mackay, a work which Bradlaugh proceeded against in the Law Courts, and had destroyed. Ouida, once the queen of the circulating libraries, is accused of ignorance and heathenry. And, of course, Thomas Paine comes in for a full-blooded diatribe.

This sort of thing is one of the latest forms of an infamous religious tradition, which may be traced back through the centuries to Lucretius, and even earlier. The fortunes of really great writers, like Shelley, Meredith and Swinburne, have been materially influenced by this frigid and calculated hatred. No enmity is more unscrupulous, more relentless, or more venomous, than religious hatred. This garbage is thrown at Freethinkers of set purpose and cold-blooded design. It is carefully calculated to discredit the character and writings of men and women of genius, who are outside the ring fence of Orthodoxy. Priests will never rebuke their faithful followers for lying for the glory of their god. Formerly, the priests used scaffolds, stakes, prisons, and torture-chambers; now they rely on lies, libels, and scurrilities. Their former methods were those of plain savagery; but the present-day thimble-rigging is simply nauseating. It has an aroma like that of the crowded cabin of a small Channel steamer on a rough day. As Shakespeare says: "An ounce of civet, good apothecary!"

MIMNERMUS.

Capitals

GREAT is the virtue of letters;

When religions go groggy, and dim
The glory of brighters and betterers,
We turn—or we *should* turn—to Him.

Be your creed, brother, kosher or tripha,
It's the Capital Letters that tell;
Great is He, grown to Him from a Cypher;
His Capitals, Heav'n, Earth, Hell.

There's nothing so much in an idol
—small i—but a Capital G
On blasphemy's tongue, puts a bridle;
There's nothing whatever like He.

Should be "Him"? But to Him what is grammar?
Mere vanity, transeience, cod;
So here's to the World's Greatest Crammer;
He, Him, Joss, Jehovah, Jove, God.

BENJIE.

A Naturalist and Immortality

(Continued from page 652)

IN *Nature in Downland*, published 1900, Hudson fills his pages with fresh air and sunshine. Occasionally he is drawn aside by speculative matters chiefly dealing with the past. Hardy, in *Jude the Obscure*, has this quality of visualizing the past and can record it in such a manner that the thoughtful reader comes to venerate his own ancestors. There is ample proof of the past and all that it meant in recorded history; concrete proof of the reality of the past, eloquent though silent, can be found in old farm houses, old cottages, castles, and in tumuli; and above all, there is oral history handed down from one generation to another. This tight grip on man's known past is, in our opinion, the very basis of strength in all writers worthy of study and worthy of the name. A knowledge of mankind's history is, in itself, the final blow to all the whimpering of theological apologists. Man could have been made perfect; trial by error does not fit in with any scheme claiming to be divine. And when this fundamental knowledge is remembered, the creative author is, as in the case of Hudson, chary of acceptance of any theory of future bliss; there may be a belief in it, or a desire for it, but neither is proof of its existence.

Nature in Downland contains a chapter in which Hudson takes a glimpse at the past. The strength of Hudson's love for the earth is recorded with singular uniqueness in this book.² The passage is too long to quote, but it will be found on page 180, and to the thoughtful reader freedom of the mind as illustrated by the author, may become something very real and easy to apprehend. To refer to the benefit of this freedom of the mind he states that "it multiplies our years and makes them so many that it is a practical immortality." It will be carefully noted that immortality is qualified, and this qualification puts Hudson's no higher and no lower than the same opinion on the subject held by Meredith. The chapter we have mentioned has, to us, some indefinable beauty, which may be explained by the fact that the author is fully alive to what may be called the pathos of existence, of civilizations being born and shrinking into oblivion, of fireside pictures depicted with the pen of a genius, and with an eye steadily on beauty in all its manifestations.

Birds and Man, published in 1901, is a book written in letters of gold for all disinterested students of bird life. By disinterestedness the present writer means an indifference to genus and species, or their Latin names, but studied solely with the object of finding pleasure in a form of life vastly different from our own. There is little in this book bearing on the subject of our paper, but a passage showing the temper of Hudson's mind will be found which reads as follows: "We are bound as much as ever to facts; we seek for them more and more diligently, knowing that to break from them is to be carried away by vain imaginations. All the same, facts in themselves are nothing to us; they are important only in their relations to other facts and things—to all things, and the essence of things, material and spiritual."³ As we proceed in our examination of the author's other works, this basic attitude to matters is again and again emphasized.

In 1903, *Hampshire Days*, inscribed to Sir Edward and Lady Grey, was published, and a reading of this volume will endear Hudson to the student. His prose rings as clear as a bell, and it is as though a master

² *Nature in Downland*, Chapter II.—Autumn—The Open Air Library, J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.

³ *Birds and Man*, p. 304, Chapter 14.—Selborne.

in the art of painting in water colours had been using a brush to convey myriads of moving pictures. In chapter 2 there is again this curious and penetrating vision into the past, and we shall be forgiven by old readers of Hudson, and also by the youthful student to whom Hudson is a revelation, for the length of the following extract: "There are times and moods in which it is revealed to us, to a few amongst us, that we are a survival of the past, a dying remnant of a vanished people, and are like strangers and captives among those who do not understand us, and have no wish to do so; whose language and customs and thoughts are not ours. That 'world-strangeness,' which William Watson and his fellow-poets prattle in rhyme about, those, at all events, who have what they call the 'note of modernity' in their pipings, is not in me as in them. The blue sky, the brown soil beneath, the grass, the trees, the animals, the wind, and rain, and sun, and stars are never strange to me; for I am in and of and am one with them; and my flesh and the soil are one, and the heat in my blood and in the sunshine are one, and the winds and tempests and my passions are one. I feel the 'strangeness' only with regard to my fellow-men, especially in towns, where they exist in conditions unnatural to me, but congenial to them; where they are seen in numbers and in crowds, in streets and houses, and in all places where they gather together; when I look at them, their pale civilized faces, their clothes, and hear them eagerly talking about things that do not concern me. They are out of my world—the real world. All that they value, and seek and strain after all their lives long, their works and sports and pleasures, are the merest baubles and childish things; and their ideals are all false, and nothing but by-products, or growths, of the artificial life—little funguses cultivated in heated cellars."

A gypsy's idea of future bliss in heaven is to be able to have a plentiful supply of roasted hedgehogs. Following closely on this passage, we have a definite affirmation from our author on the subject of our paper. After descriptions of certain melancholy thoughts he writes, "This miserable sensation soon passed away, and, with quieted heart, I began to grow more and more attracted by the thought of resting on so blessed a spot. To have always about me that wildness which I best loved—the rude incult heath, the beautiful desolation; to have harsh furze and ling and bramble and bracken to grow on me, and only wild creatures for visitors and company. The little stonechat, the tinkling meadow pipit, the excited whitethroat to sing to me in summer; the deep-burrowing rabbit to bring down his warmth and familiar smell among my bones; the heat-loving adder, rich in colour, to find when summer is gone a dry safe shelter and hibernaculum in my empty skull. So beautiful did the thought appear that I could have laid down my life at that moment, in spite of death's bitterness, if by so doing I could have had my desire." It will be noticed that in this longed-for state by Hudson, there is no trace of any residue of superstitious teaching on the subject of immortality; the very modesty of this real man's desire is not complimentary to the current idea of immortality, which is in some ways a reward for living a life of elementary decency, and that the whole question on the theological side is overlaid with unprovable assertions only makes the issue one that appeals more to the feeling than to thought. There is in this volume mental enjoyment and philosophic calm and a friendliness and sympathy of the author with such writers as Thoreau, Traherne, and, of course, Gilbert White.

We have written that this volume was inscribed to Sir Edward and Lady Grey. That

statesman's immortality, we venture to predict, will exist in the hearts of thoughtful men for his interests in bird life, and he will be helped in this by the giant of letters whose works are now under examination. It may be only a vain dream of the future when the ideas of the scholar will fully penetrate the consciousness of a wider circle of human beings. Such men as Hudson emphasize and underline the idea of one world at a time, and in the widest sense possible, by ignoring future unprovable hopes, give noble interpretation to the simple words of "Live and let live."

C-DE-B.

(To be continued)

Ingersoll's "About the Holy Bible"*

OF the many fine essays and lectures which stand to the credit of Robert Ingersoll, I must confess my own favourite is *About the Holy Bible*. His works have been collected and published in twelve handsome volumes, known as the Dresden edition; and they form an imposing monument to Ingersoll's many-sided genius—for a genius he undoubtedly was. To read them is a liberal education, not merely in ideas, but in romance, in poetry, in love of life, in tenderness, and in humanity. He was the greatest of American orators, but he was far more than an eloquent speaker. Love was his great theme, love for woman, for children and animals, for the oppressed and the outcast; and he hated, with all his passionate soul, cruelty and wrong, injustice and persecution. And with it all he preached a mighty tolerance.

In those dozen volumes his marvellous command of language grips the reader. It is difficult to tear oneself away from his fascinating pages. Religion, of course, is not his only theme, for Ingersoll was an able lawyer and politician as well as a literary man who loved prose and poetry and works of art and music, for their own sake.

He loathed the intolerance—I ought to say the savageries—and stupidities of religion. He hated the cant and hypocrisy of Presbyterianism and Catholicism. He brought all the shafts of his irony and his piercing wit with deadly effect against them. He was never so happy as when dealing with the solemn and pompous nonsense of foes like De Witt Talmage. His "interviews" with that pious example of ignorant and revolting orthodoxy are masterpieces of a kind rarely found in Freethought literature.

As a debater, he held his own with the greatest of contemporary champions of the faith; indeed, it was almost impossible to get many to cross swords with him. I trust every reader has got *Rome and Reason*—his reply to Cardinal Manning, a magnificent example of his close and deadly reasoning. And against the Bible itself Ingersoll proved a veritable Hercules.

About the Holy Bible contains the quintessence of his criticism on the great fetish book of Christendom.

How many books have been written about the Bible no man knows. How many against it is very uncertain; but Ingersoll probably had read a good many of them. In his essay, he went his own inimitable way, and the result is—at least, in my opinion—a concise masterpiece of information, criticism, analysis, and commentary. His opening words have a defiant ring about them, a challenge to the world, which give the keynote to the whole:—

* *About the Holy Bible*, by R. G. Ingersoll. Price 3d. The Pioneer Press.

Somebody ought to tell the truth about the Bible. The preachers dare not, because they would be driven from their pulpits. Professors in colleges dare not, because they would lose their salaries. Politicians dare not, they would be defeated. . . .

Ingersoll told them bluntly they were afraid of telling the truth, the truth about the Bible. This meant they did not—in their hearts—believe in it. But they were afraid, so he would have to do it himself.

How admirably he performed the task, those who have not read the essay can find out for a very small sum. I should be sorry indeed for any Freethinker who does not want to possess and treasure a copy for himself.

The Bible is believed by millions—Ingersoll was fond of this number—to be man's "staff and guide, counsellor and consoler, the fountain of law, justice and mercy." They believe that to "its wise and benign teachings, the world is indebted for its liberty, wealth, and civilization"; and that "the book is a revelation from the wisdom and love of God to the brain and heart of man."

They forget its ignorance and savagery, its hatred of liberty, its religious persecution; they remember heaven, but they forget the dungeon of eternal pain. They forget that it imprisons the brain and corrupts the heart. They forget that it is the enemy of intellectual freedom.

"Liberty," cries Ingersoll, "is my religion. Liberty of hand and brain—of thought and labour." And he shows how the word "liberty" is hated by Kings and loathed by Popes. Had he been living now he would have added: And by dictators too:—

It is a word that shatters thrones and altars, that leaves the crowned without subjects, and the outstretched hands of superstition without alms. Liberty is the blossom and fruit of justice, the perfume of mercy. Liberty is the seed and soil, the air and light, the dew and rain of progress, love, and joy.

Ingersoll loved liberty.

He gives a rapid sketch of the origin of the Bible, ridicules its "inspiration," its "worth," and the idea that Jehovah was a God of love. He specially ridicules some of the nonsense of the New Testament; and his scathing criticism of the "devils" of Jesus should be learnt by heart by our hudding Free-thought speakers. His logic is irresistible.

If Christ said and did what the writers of the three Gospels say he said and did, then Christ was mistaken. If he was mistaken, certainly he was not God. And, if he was mistaken, certainly he was not inspired. Is it a fact that the Devil tried to bribe Christ? Is it a fact that the Devil carried Christ to the top of the temple and tried to induce him to leap to the ground? How can these miracles be established? The principals have written nothing, Christ has written nothing, and the Devil has remained silent.

Ingersoll also ridiculed the miracles of the Bible, and pointed out how, if Christ had performed any, "no word would have been uttered, no hand raised, except in praise and honour" for him.

Is it not strange that at the trial of Christ no one was found to say a word in his favour? No man stood forth and said, "I was a leper, and this man cured me with a touch." No woman said, "I am the widow of Nain, and this is my son whom this man raised from the dead."

No man said, "I was blind, and this man gave me sight." All silent.

That "all silent" is as great in its way as the end of Chapter xxxii. of *Vanity Fair*: "Darkness came down on the field and city; and Amelia was praying for George, who was lying on his face, dead, with a bullet through his heart."

Ingersoll had no difficulty in showing that the "philosophy" of Christ was for the most part, nonsense. He laughed at the idea that Christ was "our example"—Christ who never said a word for education, or in favour of industry or economy. "He was," said Ingersoll, "the enemy of the successful, the wealthy. He cared nothing for painting, sculpture, music—nothing for any art."

Was he kinder, more forgiving, more self-sacrificing than Buddha? Was he wiser, did he meet death with more perfect calmness, than Socrates? Was he more patient, more charitable, than Epictetus? Was he a greater philosopher, a deeper thinker, than Epicurus? In what respect was he the superior of Zoroaster? Was he gentler than Laotze, more universal than Confucius? Were his ideas of human rights and duties superior to those of Zeno? Did he express grander truths than Cicero? Was his mind subtler than Spinoza's? Was his brain equal to Kepler's or Newton's? Was he grander in death, a sublimer martyr than Bruno? Was he in intelligence, in the force and beauty of expression, in breadth and scope of thought, in wealth of illustration, in aptness of comparison, in knowledge of the human brain and heart, of all passions, and hopes, and fears, the equal of Shakespeare, the greatest of the human race?

Ingersoll rarely surpassed that passage; he painted the great thinkers and writers he names with a word or an epigram. And he would have been overjoyed had it sent his hearers or listeners to the works of the men he so praises, to find out for themselves how right he was.

There are, however, a number of other unforgettable passages in this essay which should be treasured by all who read them. To have merely transcribed them would have been a joy; but I want the reader to find them out for himself. He will, indeed, be enthralled by the eloquence of the great American Freethinker, and agree with him that "the treasures of the heart and brain, these are the sacred Scriptures of the human race."

H. CUTNER.

God Help the B.B.C

(Special prayers were recently offered for the B.B.C.)

Oh God, our ills in ages past, with love You oft have tended.
For this we thank You speedily . . . least said is soonest mended.
And now we come with cries of woe, gone is our happy glee,
To beg a boon of Thee, oh Lord. God help the B.B.C.!

God help the Staff from roof to floor, from Typist to Director,
Porter, Announcer, Auntie Lou and every Inspector.
Try to forgive their many sins, as it's the Jubilee.
They know not what they do, oh Lord. God help the B.B.C.!

And as our Generals, one by one, begin to feel the strain
Of Tattoos down at Aldershot, take them to that domain
So like the "United Services," where men who sail the sea
May gather 'neath Thy wing, oh Lord. God help the B.B.C.!

And let them all wear uniforms, parade in Portland Place,
And let the Radio Army be a credit to the race.
So now, oh Lord, yet once again we put our trust in Thee,
God help the B.B.C.!

Oh Lord, God, help the B.B.C.!

W.W.D.

Acid Drops

The present state of the world ought to do something to weaken the force of the foolish remark that France says this, or England says that, or Germany says something else. At the best it can only mean that the officials of each country say something, but behind them there is the vast mass of the people with whom, so far as they think at all, must represent all shades of differing opinions and sentiment. It is a foolish way of looking at affairs when we are dealing with a country in which free speech, theoretically at least exists. But it is idiotic to find papers speaking of Italian opinion in the present state of affairs. There is no such thing. There is a dictated statement which every Italian, if he speaks at all must endorse, under penalty of the usual Fascist treatment of ill-usage or death. As we said the other week, opinion can only exist where there is a permitted difference. In its absence there is no more of opinion existing than there is in a gramophone record.

The Italian-Abyssinian War is pursuing its path with the brutal ferocity that is inevitable in modern war. The gallant Italian airmen—Mussolini's own sons are confined, apparently to what, in existing circumstances, is the safest and actually the most cowardly branch of the service—are scattering poison gas and poison powder on men who are without any means of either retaliation or defence. But there is one bright spot on the horizon. The Duchess of Kent has a baby; and according to paragraphs in some of the papers, the whole of the Empire is thrilled with joy over this event. The birth took place at just after two o'clock a.m. We were fast asleep at that time, otherwise we gather that we might have seen citizens running round informing each other of an event of such supreme importance to the civilized world. At all events here is another opportunity for some one to write to the papers pointing out the fact that the Royal Family gets its babies just as do ordinary people, and thus binds the recipient of the "dole" and the reigning house more firmly together.

The *Star* published the important news, from "authoritative" sources, that the new baby's hair is of the same colour as that of its father. We hope that a record will be made of the first "gu-gu" uttered by the new arrival. We are quite sure it would sell by the thousand.

One of the critics of Mr. A. Richardson's *The Redemption of Modernism*, points out that the author is quite right when he says that "the naturalistic religion of Liberal Protestantism is as dead as the naturalistic science of the 'nineties." We are not quite certain what "naturalistic science" is, but we quite agree that "Liberal Protestantism"—whatever that is—is dead; it is just as dead as most of genuine Christianity is dead. It seems also that the Liberal Protestants invented "a Liberal Protestant Christ," and this Christ is now found out to be "a fictitious figure invented in its own likeness by the imagination of the later nineteenth century." They also, among other awful heresies, "minimize the need of divine grace," "evacuated the meaning of the Atonement," and "undermined the deity of Christ"—which "in the result, was a denial of historic Christianity." All this really means that Anglo-Catholics do not like Protestants.

What the Anglos and Mr. Richardson want "is a return to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, true God and true Man," with "parishes made the centre of live religious education." Well, why don't they get on with the job instead of talking so much about it? Thousands and thousands of books have been turned out full of the same advice, but somehow fewer and fewer people believe the fairy stories of Christianity. Even Jesus is becoming less and less a God, and more and more a man with many of man's failings. And directly Christians emphasize the "man" at the expense of the "God," it really is "a denial of historic Christianity." In other words, Christianity is "on the run."

Another pious writer discussing "The Ideal of a Christian State," asks, "Has a Christian State ever existed in this world?" His answer is, "The attempt to make one has been made repeatedly; but that, at the best, only a partial, and in some ways, only a temporary success has been obtained." And this, after centuries of the almost complete domination of Christian Churches! He adds that, "it cannot be said that Great Britain is in any sense a Christian State." Of course, such a downright statement depends on a particular definition of the words, "Christian State"; but it must be, anyway, a bitter pill to swallow for most Christians, to learn that it is now seriously questioned whether England is "in any sense," a Christian State.

The same writer finally discusses the question as to whether a Christian State is possible these days and comes to a negative conclusion. "In a word," he says, brokenheartedly; "the country is rapidly drifting into Secularism." We are delighted to hear it, and only wish more of his fellow-Christians were in full agreement with him. The way to stop the "drifting" is "to obtain for the Church real freedom to direct the people in the way of faith." But this is really too much. Does the writer mean the Church has *not* got this freedom? The real truth is, of course, the Church and the Churches have all done their best to direct the people; but as they mostly contradict each other as to what "the way of faith" is, and as the teaching is 1900 years too old, and too hopelessly confused, it seems that, after all, there is little likelihood of our ever obtaining a "Christian" State.

We are now told that "safety measures are to be put into effect at Lourdes to protect the health of visitors, following the outbreak of typhoid fever which claimed twelve fatalities." What we are not told is why any such "safety measures" are needed, seeing that just one simple weeny miracle would do the trick far more successfully than mere hum-drum sanitation imposed by prosaic science. There seems to be a row as to which town is blamed, or what actually caused the typhoid responsible for the deaths, but the manager of the Scottish pilgrims says it is Lourdes and the Lourdes water. It would have been a miracle if Lourdes had not been responsible as it was the only town visited by them.

It seems also that nobody knows the source of the Lourdes Grotto water, which is a pity as another miracle could easily have solved the problem; but that a heavy rainstorm on July 14 "emphasizes the possibility that disease germs were carried in dry matter borne down by the rain." This is all very well; but why were the typhoid victims taken back home and not treated by the usual methods so successful in so many incurable cases? Why are the defenders of Lourdes miracles so shy in coming forward and answering a few plain questions about their utter failure to account for the deaths? However, miracles or no miracles, stringent scientific measures with the water supply and many other possible sources of infection will, in the future, be rigorously imposed. And the "faith that moves mountains" will feel now a little safer.

Our contemporary *John Bull*, has headed an article "Bishops on the War Path," by a "modern Churchman." It seems that the "bishops will confront at the Sixty-Fifth Church Congress the chaos of modern world politics and try to hammer out some ideas by which Christian people may guide themselves." The notion that bishops generally have "ideas" of any earthly use is funny enough in all conscience; in fact, the "Modern Churchman" asks us "not to smile at this!" And he admits that "many parsons are utterly out of touch with life," and that "the bishops with their aprons and their gaiters, are the butt of plenty of good natural fun." In fact he goes further, and says that "to many of us the Church seems the last place from which to expect sound sense about Fascism, Communism, the League of Nations, Sanctions, or world economics." It is not a

question of "seems"; the Church is the last place to expect sound common sense views on almost anything worth while.

There will be many discussions on the most vital problems of the day, such as "Christian Liberty versus Dictatorship," and "Liberty and Pacifism," and "Marxian Communism: A Rival Religion," and other similar questions; but it is not difficult to prognosticate the Bishop's solution "Get back to Our Lord, Christ Jesus." That, for the Christian, is the only solution, though what it exactly means, the Lord only knows. At all events, the "Modern Churchman," claims it "is the sign of a new revival in the Church of England, not just an emotional soul-saving, but of sober intention to get in touch with the problems of the modern world and help to find their solution." How this delusion, that Christianity can help, persists!

In a police-court case recently, a policeman gave evidence, which he thought proved that the accused possessed "an elaborate confidence trick outfit." When asked by the magistrate what he "meant by that," the policeman gave a list of the details comprising the alleged "outfit." It included "a photograph of the Pope." We know nothing of the case referred to, but it almost looks as if Collectors for Lourdes and similar "charities" will have to be careful about their "outfit" in future.

"A.G.G." is highly indignant because Mr. J. B. Priestley, in a reference to the early days of the industrial age in England, spoke of it as "the period of big profits and little Bethels." "A.G.G.," while objecting to Mr. Priestley's expressions, and claiming that he is "off the track," is bound to admit that "possibly some of the little Bethels were built by the makers of big profits as 'dope for the proletariat,' 'conscience money' or 'fire insurance.'" Mr. Priestley's critic says nothing about the immense endowments which are such a scandal, particularly bearing in mind that the old hell-fire dogmas which mainly inspired such endowments, are either definitely dropped to-day or are politely referred to as "the shadow of God's disapproval." Even in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, once the seat of opposition to "down-grade" theology, Hell, Eternal Fire, and even the Devil are strangers to the pulpit. But the endowments for preaching these horrors are still enjoyed by the "infidel" legatees.

There are plenty of enemies of human happiness. Perhaps the Christian is the worst, because he has made himself believe that in some dreadful way man is a better fellow when he is miserable than when he is happy—a most obviously untruthful philosophy. Dr. James Reid preached recently on this topic. His utterances included the words: "A good meal and a soft bed would have left him unsaved and harder than before." Poverty, destitution, unemployment, bad housing, can all be excused, nay, justified by such atrocious sentiments as these.

The B.B.C., in the *Listener*, announces a series of "Talks" for Scottish listeners only, during the coming Sundays. "A number of anonymous speakers," it says, "drawn from most of the Christian denominations, will tell listeners just what they have felt, and how they sought and found the way to God." As the Speakers are to be anonymous we are at the mercy of the B.B.C., who may, for all we know, engage professional parsons to earn a trifle by working after church hours. They may even order their regular announcers to do the talking. No listener will be told anything about those who "sought" God and found He was a myth. Even these B.B.C. "witnesses" do not apparently testify that they actually found any God anywhere. Sky-pilots are paid to write sign-posts. Some of these "speakers" may just have been a sign-post and then hurried off to impart the "news" to the Simple Simons of the B.B.C.—if there are any there.

The Rev. A. E. Whitham is quite justified in drawing attention to what he calls "The Present Dilemma." He contrasts the straightforward uncompromising nature of the Pope's condemnation of Modernism and Modernists, and His Holiness's present attitude towards Italy's threats of war. What Mr. Whitham and his church cannot or will not see is that the whole attitude of religion towards social problems is analagous to the Pope's views on heresy and the real evils of to-day. We recently reprinted Cardinal Newman's curious indifference to human life as compared with his terrible concern about a childish "fib." A holocaust of a few millions on earth must seem trifling indeed to those who believe in an eternity of hell-fire for the majority of the human race.

Rival Picture-papers provide their readers with almost identical pictures of Italian and Abyssinian priests performing at Mass, or merely blessing the rival claimants to the help of God in their murderous intentions. As the great but Christian poet Wordsworth reminded us (and God):—

"Thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent
Is man arrayed for mutual slaughter—
Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter."

Mr. Heywood Broun, a keen and able supporter of the American League of Civil Liberty has said some interesting things about the churches' demand for "purity" on the stage and film. He gravely suggests "that the District Attorney take immediate action to end the wave of immorality which is gripping our churches. Immorality may be defined as instigation to anti-social conduct. By this standard the churches in New York are far and away more flagrant offenders than any current playwright or novelist." After referring to the "galantry" of Margaret Sanger, and Mary Ware Dennett (both Freethinkers and Birth Control Pioneers) he finishes sarcastically: "There is a considerable public for a clean and healthy church."

Of all the excuses for the present war, we must award the biscuit to a writer whose jejune nonsense occupied the place of distincton, we will not say of honour, in the *News-Chronicle* one day last week. A young woman journalist, born in 1915, writes as if she alone objects to the present ghastly state of the Christian world. She concludes her well-meant protest with the absurd untruth: "We have no God." The Editor prefaces her article with a picture of a War Cemetery in which hundreds of Christian Crosses appropriately mark the graves of victims of the Christian war-spirit. If we could take this writer seriously we would ask her why she thinks Italy (or Abyssinia for that matter) has suddenly turned Atheist?

The "New Thought Movement" is now well established at a smart address in London. Its "thought" is summarized in a book recently published called: *The Sermon on the Mount*, by Ennot Fox (Harpers). He scandalizes the Modernists and all those interpreters who pretend that Christian teaching only applies to the "spiritual" side of prayer. Mr. Fox says that it applies just as much to your banking account as to your nice feeling of spiritual blessing. For example, suppose your bank "busts" one fine morning:—

The proper thing to do, according to Jesus, is immediately to turn to God, to refuse to accept the suggestion of trouble, and literally to drive the thought of loss and danger out. If he does this, he will presently find himself safely out of his difficulty. In some way or other the trouble will disappear, and his fortunes will be restored. Either the bank will speedily recover itself, or, if this for any reason be not possible, he will find that a sum of money equal to or greater than the one he lost in the bank will come to him from some other and probably quite unexpected direction.

If this were only true, it is the kind of thing most Christians are looking for.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTER,

EDITORIAL:

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

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. Lane, £1.

A. MAGGS.—Thanks, but regret inability to use your communication.

C. LUFFNESS.—Reports of such warnings of approaching events are very common, but examination nearly always proves that the misses are not counted, and the balance is given a definite shape after the event, not before.

S. GRIFFIN.—We have read your communication with interest, because it is written with evident honesty, and so affords a document for anyone interested in the kind of mentality on which religion lives.

W.M.—You are quite at liberty to reprint for general circulation our last week's notes on Civil War. All we stipulate is that the source of the article shall be acknowledged. We take this opportunity of thanking those who have expressed their appreciation for our having "cleared up the situation."

H. McIVOR.—Your authority is quite wrong. "Emergence" so far from being a theistic explanation of nature is distinctly Atheistic and Materialistic. It originated with George Henry Lewes, one of the clearest thinkers of the nineteenth century. "Emergence" does no more than insist on the inevitable and essential difference between a fact and its factors. We will, in the course of a week or so, publish in the "Things Worth Knowing" series a scientific explanation of the theory of emergence. Meanwhile you will find a very plain statement of what the theory means in *The Emergence of Novelty*, by C. Lloyd Morgan, but we do not endorse all his conclusions.

T. RICHARDS.—Of course we are not blind to the motives which have animated English politicians to oppose Italy, while remaining passive with regard to Japan. We said as much in what we wrote. But anything which makes it a little more difficult to practice the piratical methods by which "great" nations have built up their "greatness" is to be encouraged. It makes it a little more difficult to play again the old game.

C. E. COOTE.—Obliged for newspaper cutting.

ANON.—You have a very queer idea of the character of this journal to imagine that we have to agree with everything that appears in it. It is probably a religious training that leads you to conclude that we would only print things with which we were in complete agreement—which in practice means, suppressing everything with which we disagree.

T. SNAITH.—Pleased to get your letter, which we have read with great interest.

MR. E. SWALE writes: "Please accept my personal thanks for your clear and straightforward analysis of the real implications of the war, in this week's issue." We are pleased our notes were helpful.

A. J. HENDERSON.—No man is justified in calling himself uneducated who has thirty-five years of good reading behind him, and who has also evidently a good working within him. An expensive course of instruction in the best school in the country, can only produce a trained jackass, unless there is the thirst for knowledge, the industry to it and the intelligence to understand it. The world is full of "educated" ignoranuses in all departments of life.

C. A. E. GREEN.—We did not assert that Christianity was the cause of war. But it is a plain fact that it has done nothing to prevent it, also that where religion is concerned war is aggravated, and likewise that the Christian Church, more than any other single force, has moralized warfare. Even in the case of the present conflict the largest Christian Church remains ineffective to restrain the brigandage of the Italian campaign.

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

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

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

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (October 20) Mr. Cohen will speak in the Picture House, Market Street, Manchester, at 7.0. On his last visit many had to be refused admittance. We hope those coming from a distance will make it a point of being early. In the afternoon, at 3.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt will lecture in the same building.

On Monday evening (October 21) Mr. Cohen will lecture in "The Public Halls," Blackburn, on "Do the Dead Live?" We understand that many Freethinkers from the surrounding district are expected.

The Leicester Secular Society had a good start for its 1935-6 season on Sunday last. The hall was well-filled, and Mr. Cohen's address was followed with very obvious interest throughout. There was also a good sale of the *Freethinker*, and, in spite of an extra supply being sent down, the bookstall was sold out. Mr. Hassall occupied the chair with his usual ability and made a very strong appeal for support, which we hope will bear good results.

We have received many letters concerning the "Views and Opinions" of last week, which we do not print, because they are all complimentary. This must be taken as an acknowledgment. But there is one point in that article which we must emphasize. The sanctions and threats of the League, will be all "poppycock" unless it is made clear that whatever may be Mussolini's gains during the existence of hostilities they will not be allowed to continue when the fighting is over. It is the acquisition of territory by armed force that must be ended. When that form of acquisition is banned, with regards to every country, ourselves included, we shall have taken a great step towards ending war. But to permit Italy, when it has gone as far as it can, to sit down and digest what it has taken by the wholesale murder of women and children, is to make the League of Nations an accomplice.

If the League is in earnest, it ought also to do more than lift the embargo on Arms to Abyssinia—an embargo that did nothing but hold down the Abyssinians while Italy was making preparations—it should be the business of the League powers to see that the Abyssinians are properly armed so that it may offer effective resistance. This should be done at once, even though neither Britain nor France wishes to see an Abyssinia fitted out with modern arms. That might threaten their interests. But one must run risks in honesty as well as in dishonesty, although most people seem to want absolute security before they will commit themselves to the first course.

Things Worth Knowing*

IX.

ORPHEUS AND CHRIST

IN the latter half of the first century before Christ, Judea was surrounded by Dionysiac religion. Phœnician coins of Sidon, Berytus and Orthosia show a divine figure like the Phœnician god Ismun represented as Dionysus. The Nabateans, whose dominions stretched from Arabia to Damascus, worshipped a god named Dusares, who for many reasons which I cannot explain now seems to have been the Orphic Dionysus. In the age of Jesus, Asia Minor was filled with Orphic brotherhoods named *speirai*. Tarsus was very well acquainted with Orphic myths and creeds, and worshipped Sandan, a dying and resurrected god who bore some resemblance to the Orphic Dionysus. On the whole, Judea was, as I have said, surrounded in the last century before Christ by a Dionysiac and Orphic girdle. . . .

The whole problem of the relation between Orphism and Paulism is surprisingly simple, notwithstanding its theological and confessional ramifications; it consists chiefly in a comparison between the Orphic Zagreus and the Pauline Christ. The points in the myth which must be taken into consideration here are the following: (1) Zagreus is the son of Zeus, (2) The Titans kill him, (3) Zeus calls him back to life, (4) He takes him into heaven, (5) He gives him the kingdom. No one would deny that these points agree perfectly with the Pauline Christ, the Son of God, who was killed, resurrected, ascended to heaven, and received the kingdom. The only point of difference is that Zagreus was torn to pieces and Christ was crucified.

Surprisingly enough, the Christians of the first century were perfectly aware of the existence of striking similarities between Zagreus and Christ, without, of course, being able to explain them in a scientific way. For Justin Martyr it seemed convenient not to pass over in silence a fact which might deeply affect the faith of Christians, and he therefore explained the points of connexion between Zagreus and Christ by supposing that the commentators of ancient poets, having known through prophets the future advent of the Saviour, invented the myth of Zagreus in order to make people consider the Saviour himself a mythical person. And struck by the fact that a well-known prophecy of *Genesis*, referred by Christians to the Saviour contains some elements which undoubtedly might be connected with Dionysus, he explains this agreement (by saying) that demons had invented the passion of Dionysus according to this prophecy in order to bring Christians to doubt the Saviour. And he adds that the demons did not dare to take over the one thing different in the story of Christ and the myth of Dionysus, that is, the crucifixion. In other words, Justin Martyr gives evidence that the Christians of the first century were perfectly aware of a fact which modern scholars are accustomed to deny; I mean the agreement between the myth of Dionysus and the story of Christ. . . .

Now let us try to approach the mystical side of the problem. The Orphic communion with God includes the following elements. (1) The human soul suffers from the sin inherited from the Titans, which dwells in the body. (2) It delivers itself from the original sin by getting rid of the bodily prison and attaining divine life. (3) This new birth is achieved by means

* 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.

of communion with Dionysus, that is, by dying with him and coming back to life with him. This process is considered a real happening. The communion with Zagreus becomes a real event in human life; mystic death and resurrection are considered as real as actual death. At the bottom of the whole process lies the belief that the death and resurrection of Dionysus were historical facts; to speak properly, that Dionysus himself was an historical person. This is a point of primary importance for anyone who wishes to understand the origin of the Orphic communion. And there is no reason for doubting that the Greeks ever considered Dionysus' death as a myth. At Delphi the tomb was shown where his body was buried. From a mythological point of view the believers in Dionysus can be aptly compared with Christian believers who consider the death of Christ to be an historical event. . . .

Taking for granted that the history of Zagreus' death was for the Orphic as certain as Jesus' death for Christians, we must see the similarity between the Orphic and the Christian communion. Both assumed that man suffered from original inherited sin; both asserted that the original sin can be blotted out by dying and being resurrected in communion with a divine being who dies and comes to life again. In both cases an historical event, which in the opinion of believers really happened, becomes a spiritual event for every man at all times. . . . According to St. Paul, deliverance from the flesh can be attained during life by means of baptism and in the after life by means of death. The Orphic is born again through communion with Zagreus; The Christian believer is born again through communion with Christ. . . . Through the mystery, men turn from the Titanic to the Dionysiac nature; through baptism men turn from the physical to the spiritual.

The Titanic inheritance is, like the Adamic sin, not the consequence of an individual fault, but a permanent weakness in the body, connected with the very nature of man. For Orphism, as for Paulinism, the aim of the spiritual experience is to deliver souls from the burden of the flesh and bring them into contact with God.

From *Orpheus to Paul* (1930)
by VICTOR MACCHIORO, pp. 187-194.

The Inception of Modern Medical Science

IN the opening years of the eighteenth century medical practitioners had scarcely shaken themselves free from the shackles of tradition. With its close the teachings of Harvey and Sydenham had triumphed, and medicine and surgery were firmly established on a rational basis. In the reign of Anne, Dr. Johnson, as a child, was touched by the Queen for King's Evil on the recommendation of a titled physician, but when the famous lexicographer died in 1784, our leading doctors had completely discarded all belief in the efficacy of this ancient treatment.

The repulsive plague that periodically ravaged the community no longer returned, and the virulence of other dread diseases had declined. The merely lettered physician was superseded by the clinical practitioner, whose scientific attainments proved far more important than the literary acquisitions of his predecessor. The advances made in medicine in the Netherlands and Germany were of distinct advantage, for many of the younger and more enterprising physicians and surgeons were the pupils of Boerhaave and Haller. The former was an ideal teacher, while the latter's powers of exposition, united with an unswerving fidelity to truth, endeared him to his stu-

dents. Indeed, Haller, who died in 1778, is acclaimed by Garrison in his *History of Medicine*, as "the greatest systematist after Galen, and one of the most imposing figures in all medical history."

At this time surgery and midwifery progressed even more rapidly than medicine. As Sir D'Arcy Power intimates in his splendid essay on *Medicine*, in the second volume of *Johnson's England*: "Old beliefs were swept away and methods were adopted which could not be improved upon until chemistry, physics, and optics enlarged their bounds." There arose a desire for a clearer understanding of natural phenomena, and students and practitioners attended classes where practical lessons were given.

The methods then employed in medical training appear very primitive now. The average practitioner was subjected to little or no training as examinations were long voluntary. Doctors who served in London and the larger provincial cities, or those who officiated in the Army or Navy obtained licenses from a Barber's Guild or Company. It appears that "from 1540 to 1745 the licensing of those who intended to practice surgery in London or its immediate neighbourhood, that is to say, within seven miles of the City, had been in the hands of the United Company of Barbers and Surgeons." The teaching provided by the Company was, however, as good as the circumstances of the time allowed, and its lecturers were usually men of capacity.

But the necessity of observation and experiment, in addition to information supplied by lecturers, became plainly apparent. It was also deemed advisable to separate the surgeon's profession from the trade of the barber. A more modern procedure on the Continent is suggested by the fact that English surgeons who fell into the enemy's hands during the naval warfare of 1744, complained of the indignities they experienced when their captors ignored their rank as commissioned officers, and treated them as mere barbers.

Schools of Anatomy, which became completely independent of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons, were instituted. In these, students were able to study the bony framework for themselves. As this reform gained ground, the old Company protested against a serious infringement of its monopoly, and that progressive spirit, William Cheselden, was accused of improperly procuring the corpses of criminals for purposes of dissection, not only in his own dwelling-place, but during the delivery of the Company's lectures. As a member of the Company, Cheselden was called upon to explain his unseemly conduct, but as he agreed to amend his ways he was cautioned and excused.

Cheselden, who was a surgeon of the highest humanity, became the leading operator of his generation and his dexterity greatly lessened the pains of his patients. That he was very sensitive to suffering is shown by his saying: "If I have any reputation I have earned it dearly, for none ever endured more anxiety before an operation." In the old days, before the use of anesthetics, operations were rarely undertaken, save in cases of extreme urgency. Yet the dangerous nature of the earlier operations may have been exaggerated, as so many proved successful.

The Company of Barber Surgeons came to an end in 1745, and the Surgeon's Company was founded. Now appeared two celebrated anatomists from Scotland whose labours led to outstanding results. After studying in the French Anatomy Schools in 1743, William Hunter announced a forthcoming series of lectures on anatomy, to which "would be added the operations of surgery, with the application of bandages." This innovation signaled the beginning of English surgical science as, until the time of the

Hunters, surgery was chiefly French, and its best schools were in Paris. At last, Hunter's students were compelled to dissect as part of their surgical training. Instead of depending upon the statements of lecturers or the pictorial representations of organic structures, they examined these for themselves.

The success of William Hunter's enterprize induced his brother John to join him in his labours in London. John Hunter's name is revered among morphologists as that of an immortal who "converted surgery from a trade into a science." A splendid collection of specimens, manuscripts, coins and publications which illustrates the elder Hunter's research is stored in Glasgow University, while the memorials of the younger brother, John, are treasured in the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. This fine collection illustrates the science of life in several departments, and is therefore of high educational value.

At this period the apothecaries enjoyed a large amount of practice among paying patients, but the superior standing of the physicians permitted them to enter apothecaries' establishments once a year, and to destroy any drugs they considered of inferior excellence. Moreover, the physicians founded dispensaries similar to present-day out-patient departments so as to secure a share in the lucrative practices of the apothecaries. This departure met with much resentment, but the apothecaries soon turned to the profitable plan of supplying their patients with medicines for money payments.

That midwifery was very backward in England is indicated by a prodigy that occasioned widespread controversy in 1726, "when even the educated public discussed the burning question whether a poor woman, Mary Tofts by name, living at Godalming, was not delivered of rabbits, some alive and others dead. It was a clear case of imposture, but feeling ran so high that Caroline of Anspach, then Princess of Wales, ordered Sir Richard Mannington (one of the pioneers in the scientific treatment of pregnant women) to inquire into the truth of the matter." Yet, a story not entirely dissimilar was very widely entertained in London and elsewhere during the later decades of the nineteenth century.

A distinguished obstetrician, Dr. William Smellie (1697-1763) adopted a system of midwifery, which was so successful that it soon superseded the traditional treatment of the ancient midwives. He, and others introduced and utilized forceps in their demonstrations. Male midwives had previously been ridiculed, but their standing was now secure. Smellie and Dr. Burton ignored carping criticism and persevered in the evolution of midwifery on modern lines. William Hunter went further, and elaborated these reforms on philosophical principles, and his published plates disclosed to the medical profession "the true anatomy of pregnancy."

Maternity hospitals were established in rapid succession, and William Hunter was appointed physician-acoucheur to the Middlesex Hospital in 1748. Then, states Sir D'Arcy Power, "The British Lying-in-Hospital was opened in 1749; the City of London Lying-In-Hospital in 1750; Queen Charlotte's in 1752; and the Royal Maternity Charity for delivering poor married women at their own habitations in 1757. The newly-established county hospitals and infirmaries set apart special beds for maternity purposes."

Nevertheless, in this distinctly transitional time many irregular practitioners flourished. But while some were mere charlatans, there existed in the ranks of the "quacks," men of considerable ability. Women also enjoyed an ephemeral reputation for their supposed cures. Even Parliament was per-

suaded to grant Joanna Stevens the sum of £5,000 in return for the disclosure of "a secret remedy for the cure of stone."

The squalor and dirt of the urban poor in the eighteenth century appear appalling. London grew rapidly at this period, and the necessity of light and ventilation was entirely disregarded when new houses were crowded together on every available site. Then the window-tax was increased in 1746, with the inevitable consequence that the countless inmates of cellars and other windowless tenements languished in darkness and contaminated air. Skylights were taxed out of existence; the water supply was frequently foul, and to add to these slum amenities, we read that: "The common privy was placed over an open cesspool at the foot of the basement stairs; the cesspool was often damaged, leaking, and overfull, for there was no system of emptying it. . . . Personal cleanliness was unknown. When it was urged against Kit Smart, the poet, that he was no lover of clean linen, Dr. Johnson confessed that he had no passion for it himself."

There is a bath at Hampton Court which dates back to the reign of William and Mary, and one or two others are recorded elsewhere. Apart from these, baths appear to have been unknown even in the palaces of the great. But unspeakably insanitary as streets and dwellings were, especially where poverty abounded, the dawn of a brighter day was near. That grand physician, Richard Mead, who was joined by Pringle and Ward led the advance guard of sanitary science. Typhus and enteric were shown to arise from insanitary surroundings. The civil population and the men in the Army, the Navy, and Mercantile Marine, all benefited from the new science. Captain Cook to his eternal honour insisted on cleanliness in the vessels he commanded, and he provided fruit and fresh water whenever these were obtainable, and thus reduced the toll of disease and death among the men who served under him in long sea voyages.

Various other improvements were initiated in the eighteenth century, and progress has been maintained ever since. Organized medical schools have replaced the old haphazard methods of teaching. The public health became a matter of vital moment. The old ever-recurrent epidemics disappeared, but an outbreak of cholera warned the authorities that sanitary safeguards were still incomplete. Now, that dread scourge has vanished, let us trust, never to return.

T. F. PALMER.

Evolution Again

THE reported preparations for celebrating "ten years of no evolution" in "monkey town" (Dayton, Tennessee) has reminded us of the rather widespread opposition to the principle, at least so far as regards mankind, in this country. We must therefore fight the movement, and this for several reasons. The principle is the greatest of all correlators and interpreters of organic phenomena; it makes for natural, rational thinking; in conjunction with history (in the widest sense of the word) it illuminates social phenomena; it usefully stresses the idea of progress in human life; and it is one of the chief weapons in the armoury of the Freethinker in his efforts to release the mind from belief in ancient legends, from bibliolatry, and from much other socially, intellectually and ethically harmful superstition.

Added to the efforts of Sir Ambrose Fleming and those (mainly clericals, it appears) who support him, we meet with the constant attempts of Hilaire Belloc, Father Ronald Knox, Arnold Lunn and a few others

to discredit the principle. Lately, too, a salvationist has entered the lists! In a sermon at Norwich during the meeting of the British Association, Commissioner David Lamb gave us the information—reported in the Press and of course disseminated by the B.B.C.—that ". . . and Darwin have destroyed us." Of course the devotees of the "Army," one that a reviewer in the *New Statesman* recently called (twice) a "religion of savages," are Fundamentalists, though probably most of them have never heard of biological evolution, except perhaps as a wicked notion held by irreligious scientists and other infidels.

We may say of all the persons above-named, as Sir Arthur Keith does of Arnold Lunn, that they deliver their views "with the dogmatism of ignorance," for "a company of readers who must be as destitute of biological knowledge as Mr. Lunn himself." They play for safety in confining themselves almost solely to mere general negation—the supposed absence of enough "missing links," references to the "unknown past of man," and the like.

While listening to a lecture on Whales at the Natural History Museum, the other day, the first sentence caused me to wish that the whole company of creationists had been present. It was "The Whale is a good example of evolution." And then, again, when the lecturer described the more notable features of these animals, which, formerly land animals, took to the sea about 15,000,000 years ago: the fundamental similarity of the bony structure of the fore-limb though now a paddle, to the arm of other vertebrates, including man; the bones of the hind-limbs, reduced to remnants a few inches in length, which never appear outside the body; the teeth of some whales, present only in the young, which never get through the gum. There are also the following facts for the consideration of creationists; the killer whales, a comparatively small kind, have teeth when adult, and feed on the larger whales; but doubtless finding they cannot do much damage by biting the body of the victim, on account of the thick covering of blubber, attack in numbers, hang on to the victim's mouth until this opens sufficiently to admit one of the killers; he then devours or at least tears the tongue, and so the unfortunate animal bleeds to death.

It would be well also if the creationists would read an article on the malaria-producing mosquito which has lately appeared in the *Scientific American*, and compare the facts with their theological beliefs. The more striking features are that the insect has a very effective little armoury for use in its (to us) nefarious practice, and also a case in which to keep them. The weapons include (1) a pair of feelers (antennæ) by means of which a suitable spot on the body of the victim is located; (2) a hollow dagger which is then thrust into the flesh; but as this is connected with the salivary glands it does not take in the blood from the wound, but ejects into it saliva—and disease germs—which keeps the blood from coagulating; (3) when (2) has been withdrawn another hollow dagger is inserted, one connected with the digestive organs, and through this the blood is absorbed. When so gorged that it is hardly able to fly away, the insect encases its weapons and departs to assimilate its meal.

It is rather unfortunate that one leading professional biologist in this country made a statement at the meeting of the British Association (as reported in a newspaper, though I have not seen it mentioned elsewhere) which is calculated to give spurious support to Fundamentalism, viz., that "Darwinism is a fraud." Of course he is, like all other leading biologists, an evolutionist, and he referred to factors of evolution such as natural selection. In this, as the next speaker said, the Professor differs from practically all other biologists of the world. We may, how-

ever, confidently look for many reproductions of the statement.

Some explanation of what must be regarded as a vagary of the professor may perhaps lie in his known bent towards religion (though probably not any of the orthodox varieties). The same penchant is shown by Osborne, the American, who is well known to be a complete evolutionist, but is not infrequently cited by Fundamentalists as a great biologist who does not believe in the principle.

J. REEVES.

Whose Word For It?

PONDERING over the general acceptance of and belief in what is called Divine Revelation, I am looking at a magnificent plane tree, on top of which a lovely thrush is in the habit of pouring out its glorious vesperine melody. Now I need no one to reassure me on the fact of the existence of that plane tree or of that thrush. I see them and apprehend them as living things. But I cannot see, cannot apprehend the fact of the existence of a mighty tree of Heaven with its huge trunk of gold as described in the Koran. And all the emphatic assurances from believers in its existence cannot induce my belief in its existence. And so with all the other things which any supernatural faith declares to exist, but which have never been apprehended by my senses. So far as I am concerned they do not exist.

Now, as Thomas Paine so lucidly stated, a revelation is only a revelation to the person to whom it is revealed. I may be told by that person of what has been revealed to him, but the fact of his telling me cannot induce my belief in it. The revelation can only be a true and real thing to me when it is made to myself. Until it is directly made to me by supernatural agency, it is for me no revelation at all.

Therefore, those who have had no direct revelation themselves are thrown back upon the testimony of human beings, who say that they have had a revelation or revelations and who describe it or them. Those who believe such testimony are influenced by their good opinion of the givers of the testimony. But it is possible for a person who declares he has had a revelation to be mistaken. It is possible for him to believe to be reality what he believed he saw or heard or felt during sleep in a dream. Psychologists have found numerous cases of self-deception among highly educated and intelligent people. So that it is not conclusive proof of the truth of any declared revelation that the greatest man who ever lived should testify that it was communicated to him.

But however widely and emphatically this may be proclaimed and urged, it is apparently impossible to silence the forecasters and fortune-tellers of superstition. You get them in the Orthodox Churches; amongst the Spiritualists and also in that egregious body which claims to be propagating a new faith and calls itself "The Oxford Group." The assurance of these people is as obtrusively impudent as it is blessed. But that it is a profitable and money-making concern cannot be doubted. Its God provides the manna, or sends the Ravens with food, for its prophets. So that Buchman and his underlings have a quite happy time of it. But when one reads their effusions one is at a loss to understand why they should claim anything in the nature of *novelty* for their faith. This is the sort of answer a correspondent gets from one of the members: "We are not an

organization. Joining the Oxford Group merely means a complete surrender to God—putting yourself entirely in his hands. *Whatever your needs are He will provide. We have proved it.*" (The italics are ours).

Whatever your needs are—*Wh?* What else is this but a catchpenny bait for people comfortably well off but unoccupied in body and mind, and probably disturbed by cravings in the latter for *something* to exercise its faculties on? They are promised the assurance of the satisfaction of these cravings by surrendering themselves to God. There is nothing new in that. The Churches have been preaching that for hundreds of years. "God shall supply all your needs" is a well-known scriptural promise. The claim to novelty therefore falls having no support.

"Oh but," says the Buchmanite, "we make no social or class distinctions—the chimney-sweep and scullery-maid sit in equality before God, beside the Duke and the Duchess." And do not the Churches proclaim the equality of *all* in the presence of God in his House? Though the proclamation may not always fit the practice, that is the doctrinal position of the Churches generally on this matter. The casuistry and cunning of the Buchman propaganda lie in the very affectation of simplicity and equality; but for the *novelty*? No, it will not do. Even in the Salvation Army there is not to be found this affectation. The very grades and divisions in the Army, copied from the real Army are inconsistent with such an attitude. Buchman and his immediate colleagues know very well that social distinctions cannot be rubbed out as the Group professes they can. The Salvation Army is in this respect more honest-rival business as it is—because the Army professes to recruit its ranks from the dregs of society.

But leaving aside the lazy butterfly lives for which the Oxford Group has the most attraction, and taking the asseveration of Christians generally that by leaving one's self entirely in God's hands he will provide all the believer's needs, we are prepared to adduce adverse witnesses who cannot be shaken; who have gone through the *sturm und drang* of harassed lives; who in early years surrendered themselves to God, leaving themselves entirely in his hands; who gave the best of their manhood and the best of their years and substance to his service, and who in return for that have experienced nothing but hardships; tragic bereavements; untold suffering, utter failure and almost despair. To them the God of the Churches and of the Buchman Group, who was also *then* their God, turned a deaf ear. In isolated misery and distress of mind they prayed and prayed and prayed, but there was no relief. What purpose in relying further upon a covenant-breaking God? These witnesses found another and a better way. They shook the dust of the Christian Temple from off their feet, and took the wide open and sunlit highway of Freethought, and *there* found peace and the *altruistic* impulse to join with like fellow-sufferers in the glorious task of aiding man to his own emancipation.

It was no revelation from Heaven or Purgatory or Hell or any place outside the world that led these witnesses to a place of enduring peace in Freethought; but the lessons of their own experience and the futility of serving an imaginary supernatural being whose ineptitude and blundering are manifest in the many catastrophes that have befallen poor depressed humanity collectively and individually. On the eve of death, poor old Sir John Falstaff one moment babbled o' green fields—and once or twice cried "God, God, God!" *Whose* word are we to take for the existence of the supernatural? *Whose?*

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

CHRISTIANITY AND DIVORCE

SIR,—At the recent Conference of the Modern Churchmen's Union at Cambridge, there was a keen discussion on Divorce, which Dr. D. Y. M. Creed said, "if not carefully handled, may become a danger to the Constitution and disturb the relations between Church and State. The question is whether those Churchmen, who hold that the marriage bond is in all circumstances indissoluble, are to be allowed to impose their views on their fellow-Churchmen who dissent from their position." Though unauthorized, I warmly protest, on Orthodox Churchmen's behalf, against Dr. Creed's palpably unjust accusation. Clearly the purpose of the faithful brethren is to impose the views of Jesus on their fellow-churchmen; for it is He who gave the command recorded in Matthew xix. 6. But a dispute between Loyalists and Defyists is decidedly one of "danger," unless "carefully handled." I therefore offer, through your columns, my services as mediator between God and Modern Churchmen, if only to abbreviate the riotous fun callous worldlings will derive sitting round the ring watching a clerical free-fight. My suggestion to the disputants is that they "reinterpret the text," by a mere fraction, making the word "man" read "layman." Then, magic-presto, the "problem" is solved, the "danger" o'ercome. It is so logical too. "God having joined together man and wife by His ordained man, let no layman put asunder." Just by that tiny twist the State is divinely placed in its subordinate position to the Church, clerical black-eyes are obviated, and a sanctified escape is provided from homes that are hells. I claim a mitre! But—by the way—how comes it that orthodox churchmen are present at a Conference of Modern Churchmen?

A. J. LEVETT.

WHAT FREETHOUGHT SAYS TO THE CHURCHES

SIR,—Theism and Atheism are equally of human origin. Freethought in religion is freedom from letters forged in the ages of faith when supernaturalism (magic) was generally accepted, as it still is by backward races, as an active agency in everyday life, and miracles as common occurrences.

Humanity, enlightened by methods of scientific accuracy, is shaking off fetters on thought which as history shows have often been imposed for the retention of power and the restraint of liberty. The modern conscience is becoming more and more disposed to let progress stand on its own merits, and to leave causes to make their own appeal, freed from superhuman assumptions which have proved such dangerous and misleading weapons in the hands of mankind.

This is an answer to those Churches, whose attitude towards the great Freethought movement is one of pity, if not contempt, to say nothing of the social ostracism which still persists in spite of what has been accomplished by Bradlaugh and many others in the interests of the liberty loved by Englishmen.

Apart from this aspect of the subject Freethought on its side admits, or should admit that, considered psychologically, religious conviction and experience though essentially subjective is untouchable, as it consists of an emotional state which frees it from the trammels of dogma and from the Modernist's struggle to fit these into facts.

MAUD SIMON.

Adversity tests, it does not nourish us.—*Meredith.*

For one word a man is often deemed to be wise, and for one word he is often deemed to be foolish. We ought to be careful indeed what we say.—*Confucius.*

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

OUTDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Sunday, October 20, Mr. Tuson. Highbury Corner: 7.30, Mr. Gee. South Hill Park, Hampstead, 8.0, Monday, October 21, Mr. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Gee, Wood, Bryant and Tuson. Current *Freethinkers* on sale.

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Gauden Hotel, Gauden Road, Clapham, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. R. B. Kerr, Editor *The New Generation*—"Abyssinia, Mussolini and Birth-Control"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Prof. F. Aveling, D.Sc.—"The Solidarity of Science."

STUDY CIRCLE (68 Farringdon Street, E.C.4): 8.0, Monday, October 21, Mr. A. D. McLaren—"Schopenhauer, the Philosopher of Pessimism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N.S.S. (The Labour Rooms, 70 Grange Park Road, Leyton, E.10): 7.30, Mr. E. C. Saphin—"Christianity its own Condemnation."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mr. G. Bedborough—"Morality and the Christian Model."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

GATESHEAD (Warwick Street): 8.0, Tuesday, October 22, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N.S.S. (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, October 18, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEE SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Stockton): 7.0, Sunday, October 20, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR

IRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beecheroff Settlement, Whetstone Lane, Birkenhead): 7.0, Mr. G. Whitehead (London)—"The Roots of Society."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street): 7.30, Mr. H. W. Cottingham will lecture on "Hypnotism" with demonstrations.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (The Public Halls, Northgate, Blackburn): 7.30, Monday, October 21, Chapman Cohen—"Do the Dead Live?" Reserved seats 6d. each.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Tavern Hotel, Godwin Street, Bradford): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Some Humours of Freethought Propaganda."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"What is the Value of Our Freethought?"

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street): 7.0, T. I. McDonald, B.Sc., F.R.A.S., F.R.S.E.—"Astronomy." (Lantern Lecture).

HETTON (Workmens' Club Hall): 8.0, Wednesday, October 23, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, The Right Hon. Lord Snell, C.B.E. (Chairman of the London County Council)—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Cooper's Hall, 12 Shaw Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Mr. F. C. Moore, M.A.—"Fascism and Freethought."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Picture House, Market Street): 3.0, J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"Christ and Cripples." 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"Some Savageries of Civilization." Reserved Seats 6d. and 1s.

PLYMOUTH BRANCH N.S.S. (Plymouth Chambers, Room 5, 2nd Floor, Drake Circus): 8.0, Mr. E. Lynden—"Spiritualism." With Demonstration.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.0, Mr. Flanders, A Lecture.

SOME CHRISTIAN TYPES

by
CRITICUS

Price 4d. By post 5d.

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

BUDDHA The Atheist

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

Price ONE SHILLING. Postage 1d.

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

**History of the Conflict Between
Religion and Science**

BY
Prof. J. W. DRAPER

Price 2s. Postage 4½d.

Christianity, Slavery and Labour

BY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

SEX and RELIGION

BY
GEORGE WHITEHEAD
(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

Price - 9d. Postage 1d.

ACADEMY CINEMA,

Oxford Street. Ger. 2981

Something New From Russia!

A Riot of Fun that has set all Europe laughing!

ALEXANDROV'S "JAZZ COMEDY" (U)

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 COHEN.**

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 affirms that this life is the only one of which we have any knowledge, and that human effort should be wholly directed towards its improvement: it asserts that supernaturalism is based upon ignorance, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism affirms that progress is only possible on the basis of equal freedom of speech and publication; it affirms that liberty belongs of right to all, and that the free criticism of institutions and ideas is essential to a civilized State.

Secularism affirms that morality is social in origin and application, and aims at promoting the happiness and well-being of mankind.

Secularism demands the complete secularization of the State, and the abolition of all privileges granted to religious organizations; it seeks to spread education, to promote the fraternity of peoples as a means of advancing international peace, to further common cultural interests, and to develop the freedom and dignity of man.

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

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus

BY

W. A. CAMPBELL

Cloth 2s.

Postage 2d.

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

BY

G. W. FOOTE

Price 6d.

Postage 1d.

THE MIRACLES OF ST. MARTIN

BY

C. CLAYTON DOVE

Price post free

7d.

Infidel Death-Beds

BY

G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren

Price 2s.

Postage 3d.

NOW READY

ABOUT THE HOLY BIBLE

By

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

Price 3d.

Postage 1d.

A list of Ingersoll's pamphlets published by
The Pioneer Press

Rome or Reason? - - - 3d.

What is Religion? - - - 1d.

What is it Worth? - - - 1d.

Household of Faith - - - 1d.

Mistakes of Moses - - - 2d.

THE ABOVE WILL BE SENT POST FREE FOR 1s.

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