

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN

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

## Views and Opinions

### The Great and the Small

We live in an age that might well be described as one of big things and small men. If that is not absolutely the case, it is at least relatively true. We, that is the world, aim at building the biggest ships ever, the biggest buildings ever, making the biggest fortunes ever, and we certainly perpetrate the biggest blunders ever. All these big things are the outcome of man's knowledge, of his skill, of his power over natural forces. And yet the security of civilized life has seldom been less assured than it is at the moment, when we are hearing on every hand that at any moment the world may witness an outbreak that may destroy the small degree of civilization we have attained. And the very people who proclaim the danger are those whose plans may realize the prophecy. They lack the courage to do what is right, and for fear of risks go on doing what is plainly wrong. The rulers of the nations have no higher ideal than that of the schoolmaster who cannot see how a school can be run without the use of the stick, or at least a constant reminder that the stick is there. We have, of course, some standard of values in operation, but it is sadly out of date. Our leaders live in the present and think in the past. They aim at big things when they should achieve great ones. And even when the great things arrive they do not know how to make the best use of them. They aim at living up to the past, when they ought to be striving to live beyond it.

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### A Question of Values

Looking through my batch of newspaper cuttings I came across some curious comments by Mr. Justice Swift, made in the course of a trial in which a yacht, *Vanity*, was concerned. Addressing the Counsel the Judge said:—

We have had talk about the crew of the *Vanity* as one talks about the crew of the *Queen Mary*.

And later, as though stating something absurd, and which was received with the usual "laughter in court,"

Engine-drivers get fond of their engines, and I believe tram-drivers get fond of their trams.

Now here are two rather great considerations touched on by the judge, but which, unless I have seriously misunderstood him, he has very much undervalued because they were not large, they were only great. And I would point out to him that if either body of men—three in the one case and hundreds in the other—were warranted in smiling because the other lot was called a "crew," it was the men of the "*Vanity*." The crew of a yacht may come to love every plank of the boat on which they stand, and every inch of the sail they furl or spread. Affection, real affection, requires intimacy. It is there on a small boat, and the men of the "*Vanity*" might acquire that sense of oneness with a vessel that man has who is rowing a boat in a choppy sea. The boat becomes a part of the rower, the yachtsman becomes a part of his yacht.

What kind of an intimacy exists between the crew of the *Queen Mary* and the vessel? The men in the stoke-hole are not driving a ship, they are merely manipulating engines. The cooks are not part of the ship, they are just cooks in a floating kitchen, and behave as cooks would in any hotel. The crew of several hundreds are all engaged in different tasks, few of which have any necessary relations to the ship. Why, the crew cannot even see their ship as a whole unless they get on shore to have a look. I think the right of objection to the use of a common term lies with the crew of the *Vanity*. Its crew belongs to the boat, the crew of the *Queen Mary* are just cooks, and stokers, and engineers, and waiters, and attendants who have taken their occupation to sea. They are on the *Queen Mary*, but they are not of it. A man may love a home, he can only become accustomed to an hotel.

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### The Great War

Twenty-two years ago the world decided—no, that is too lofty a term for so unintelligent a thing—the world *fell* into war; that is a more exact phrase. The world went through the war in a frenzy of folly, and then in an aftermath of stupidity commenced to lay the foundations of future folly. But that war involved the death of millions of men, and the wounding of other millions. Never were so many killed, never was so much money spent. So it was acclaimed the *great* war, greater above all other wars, and they who have taken part in it have been glorified (in a cheap and economical way), as none who took part in other wars have ever been. We have even inaugurated a day of grief on the anniversary of the date the war ended, not an anniversary of the date at which the war commenced (that might have taken as a *mea*

*culpa* on the part of the nation) and we end the day with balls and other jollifications.

But in every war there have been the same griefs, the same shattering of homes, the same list of the wounded, the same tale of the dead. But the other wars were little wars, this was a *great* one. In this war the millions of dead and wounded, served as a dish to the sadistic conscience of Christian Europe, nurtured and developed by centuries of the teaching of eternal damnation, and the picturing of men and women burning forever in the fires of hell. All these were formally and enjoyably shocked. They would not have been shocked had the war resulted in a few hundred only being killed and wounded. The duldards, whether they be in general's uniform or in the rags of the homeless, whether in the palace or the cottage, the university or the gutter, require size before they can be aroused.

The European conflict was not a *great* war. It was merely a large one. Its record is a monotonous repetition of substantially similar incidents, a compilation of customary atrocities, an exhibition of individual acts of courage or devotion. There was not more pain because a million mothers lost a million sons. The pain in each case is individual, and you cannot reckon pain as you count cocoa nuts. There was as much pain in any other war; the numbers have nothing whatever to do with it. When a mother loses her son or a wife her husband, it is *her* husband that is lost, *her* son that is gone. You cannot suffer by proxy. There is not more pain in the extraction of a thousand teeth than there is in the drawing of a single tooth. There are merely more teeth aching in the one case than there are in the other.

When men talked of the European War as being a *great* war, when they paid more public honour to the dead in that war than they have done in other wars, they were announcing to the psychologist the fact that the war had provided them with a greater feast of horrors than other wars, and they returned thanks by calling it *the great war*. It was Colonel Blimp saying, "By gad, sir, the men were splendid! A whole regiment mowed down in a few minutes!" It was the numerous family of Blimps who made a great war out of a large one, and in the contemplation of the imaginary arithmetical increase of suffering with each death, felt they were adding to the suffering by increasing the number of the sufferers.

Numbers play strange tricks. Tell John, husband of Mary, that he must take train and ship, and that when he gets to the end of his journey he must kill Heinrich, the husband of Gretchen, and John and Mary would both demand to know why? But tell a thousand Johns, the husbands of a thousand Marys, that they must take train and ship and kill a thousand Heinrichs, the husbands of a thousand Gretchens, and they will dumbly go, and each of the Marys will wish them luck, without any of them realizing that the second order demands just as much explanation as the first one.

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#### A Sense of Proportion

There are many other directions in which size upsets the balance of judgment. We are being constantly dazzled with the huge fortunes of certain men at home and abroad. But when has a man a large sum of money? It seems rather a foolish enquiry to ask whether Lord Nuffield really has twenty-four million pounds, but, has he? The answer depends upon whether he can use it or not. Has a man at any time more money than he spends? No matter whether the spending is lavish or penurious, wise or foolish, the question remains. If any reader wishes to test it, let him take his bank book and write down

a credit balance of twenty millions. The bank will not seriously object, so long as no cheques are drawn, and he will be as rich as any other man who has more than he can spend. Or imagine anyone to have all the gold at present in the Bank of England in his own cellar. Still he will have, as money, only that which he spends or is capable of spending. Money, as money, is mere cumbersome metal; it is only in the act of spending that it becomes money. Lord Nuffield has amassed in business twenty-four millions; but another with as much business ability as Lord Nuffield, and whose efforts are of as much value to the community, may never have more than three or four thousand in hand, but providing he is spending what he wishes to spend, he has as much money as the other one. The man who "owns" millions is on a level with the man who owns thousands, each has what he spends. The man with millions loses even the capacity for giving, for giving to him is no more than altering the figures on his balance sheet.

Take a final example. The plodding and unimaginative minds of those who dwell in the outer courts of science, but who in the mind of the general public, and in their own opinion, deserve to dwell within the inner circle, delight in dilating upon the distance of the stars from ourselves, of the weight of some of the planets, of the time it takes for a ray of light to reach us from Sirius. But the creative imagination of a Newton sees the identity of the motion of a planet with the falling of a stone; a Darwin sees the whole of living beings as essentially one, and properly counts numbers and size of relative unimportance, and the imaginative quality of a Santayana finds mere bulk of no value whatever to his philosophy. Mere size offers material for fools, who will treat an insect as a mere curiosity, and stand in awe before the bulk of an elephant.

What the world most needs is a sense of proportion in every direction. We do not need a life that offers less risks, but one that enables us to discriminate between what risks are worth while and what are not. We study with all our might and main the art of war, or the art of making money. We count no risk too great in war, save the risk that we should run if we really tried to stop war altogether, and as a result we have the picture of a League of Nations afraid to say that war shall stop, lest that may cause one or two nations to take up arms, with the practical certainty that unless this risk is run our whole civilization is likely to disappear. We pile up wealth individually and collectively, and devote ourselves so heartily to the task that we run the risk of forgetting how to spend it wisely and well. We study all arts, save that of how to live.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

#### Dragons' Teeth

WHILE exiled rulers and their sycophants  
Scheme to return to reign through civil strife;  
While Churches and their trains of mendicants  
On lies still batten,—calling "dead bones" LIFE;  
While journalists and publicists still pen  
Their scripts envenomed with false pride of "race";  
While "parties" rule the destinies of men,  
And *merit* is deprived of power and place;  
While "honours" may be won on bloody field  
With greater ease than honest workers find;  
While TRUTH is by hypocrisy concealed,  
Lest she reveal the "blind led by the blind";  
Wars shall be waged with ever-growing terrors,—  
To hide the consequences of Man's errors.

D.

## The Secret of Socrates

"Yet things are knowable."—*Plato*.

"One honest man, one wise man, one peaceful man, commands a hundred millions, without a baton and without a charger."—*Landor*.

Who was the sweetest saint in all history? Most of the so-called "saints" of the Christian Religion are purely legendary figures without any relation to life, or even sanity. Of the remainder of the canonized ones, it may be said that many were abnormal, one-sided creatures. So many really admirable historical characters have had, in full measure, the defect of their qualities. Florence Nightingale, the heroine of the Crimea, was dictatorial. Henry Thoreau lived the simple life in solitude. George Jacob Holyoake had only moments of greatness. Joseph Mazzini was aloof and inscrutable. Walt Whitman stammered his message. John Ruskin degenerated into verbosity. Each and all brought some light, but it was not always accompanied with sweetness. In the ancient world it was much the same. Marcus Aurelius, illuminated with the fierce light that beats upon a throne, was almost unapproachable. Seneca vacillated. Epictetus was a little remote. Plato was always the robed scholar. Once and once only, was the gulf between the intellectual and the common man successfully and completely bridged. This was in the personality of Socrates, one of the most lovable of human beings and also one of the wisest of all teachers.

It is said that Montaigne, who possessed a cool head as well as a witty pen, was only once roused to enthusiasm, and that was in writing of Socrates. We all know that wise Plato loved him "this side idolatry." And we all remember that a whole generation of Athenian youth sat at the old philosopher's feet. What manner of man was he? His reputation has lasted twenty-four centuries, and the fame of his passing is one of the immortal things of history.

Born of humble folk, and gaining his living by carving statues, there seemed little promise of greatness in such a humble career. Moreover, he was plain of feature, and careless in his dress; so much so, that people made fun of him in the street and on the stage. When he became famous, potters modelled mugs to resemble him, a pleasant custom of commemorating the famous that has survived to quite recent times. And this plain man was as great a talker as our own Dr. Samuel Johnson. Probably, he talked as much as anybody in Athens, but his hearers found that he was one of the most perfect of preachers, and that he was brimful of ideas and wisdom. Moreover, he was no mere dreamer; indeed, he had, in his time, been a brave soldier, and fought a rearguard action with skill and tenacity. Fond of company, he delighted in the society of young and old, famous or otherwise, rich or poor. Among his disciples was Plato, who sat at his feet, so to speak, for ten years, and whose reminiscences have helped posterity to understand the worth of Socrates. The character of the man may be judged by the impression he made upon his disciples. He gained their hearts and won their admiration. They began the pæan which has since resounded through all the intervening ages, nor is it less loud or confident now than it was all those centuries ago.

Socrates was an educationalist, but unlike the others he taught gratuitously, though he was a very poor man. At the age of seventy, he was prosecuted as an Atheist and corrupter of youth and put to

death (399 B.C.). At his trial, he rose to the full height of a great occasion, and vindicated freedom of speech in an address which is as impressive to-day as ever. Recall his brave words:—

I know not what death is—it may be a good thing, and I am not afraid of it. But I do know that it is a bad thing to desert one's post, and I prefer what may be good to what I know to be bad.

Socrates' death is one of the imperishable happenings of the world's history, but his crowning glory is his influence on others. He moulded the education of an entire generation of Athenian youth, and among his pupils was Plato, that magnificent scholar, who, with a few choice spirits such as Confucius, represents the human intellect at its very brightest. To turn to Plato's works, or to read the *Analects of Confucius*, is to be very proud of one's species, and what more can be said? Both have survived the winnowing of over a hundred generations of men, and both will survive whilst humanity cares for higher intellectual things. As for Plato, you cannot escape him; you are almost forced to say that Plato is philosophy. And the teacher of this intellectual superman was lovable old Socrates, who had guided aright one of the most remarkable of all men. His glory and exaltation is his country's, but his magnificent intellect is one of the proudest possessions of humanity.

Socrates was so eminently sane. His common sense and his gift of humour saved him from the proud aloofness of the scholar. His liking for all sorts of men was as characteristic as his love for truth. It follows that he would have disclaimed that he was either a seer or a saint. His life was like a splendid torch illuminating the recesses of the mind. Yet he never willingly journeyed beyond the walls of Athens, and he had little taste for the country. His reply to a man who asked whether he should choose a wife, still remains reasonable, "That whether he should choose one or not, he would repent it." A plain man, without too much of the missionary fervour, he exerted an enormous influence:—

"For every elemental power  
Is kindred to our hearts, and once  
Acknowledged, wedded, once embraced,  
Once clasped into the naked life,  
The union is eternal."

The fundamental significance of Socrates lies in his freethought attitude. It was his object to bring all beliefs before the bar of reason, to approach every inquiry with an open mind. Plato says that men went away from hearing Socrates talk with the point of what he had said sticking fast in their minds, and they could not get rid of it. Listen to what our own Matthew Arnold has to say on this matter:—

Socrates has drunk his hemlock and is dead: but in his own breast does not every man carry about with him a possible Socrates, in that power of a disinterested play of consciousness upon his stock notions and habits, of which this wise and admirable man gave all through his lifetime the great example, and which was the secret of his incomparable influence? And he who leads men to call forth and exercise in themselves this power, and who busily calls it forth and exercises it in himself, is at the present moment, perhaps, as Socrates was in his time, more in concert with the vital working of men's minds, and more effectually significant, than any House of Commons orator, or practical operator in politics.

Dealing with such a personality, time and place are accidents. What does it matter whether Socrates lived in ancient Athens, old Rome, or modern Lon-

don? Such a character is not of an age, but for all time. His life is a well-spring of perpetual inspiration. One seems to see him, in the mind's eye, strolling quietly down from the twilight of history, through the centuries, calling men from the clamour and chicaneries of the market place, and pointing to the stars.

MIMNERMUS.

## The Scientist With a Wand

THE division of occurrences into natural and supernatural seems so familiar to the people of to-day, that it is difficult for them to realize that at a remote time in history this division could not have been understood at all, for the simple reason that the idea of the natural did not then exist. In the primitive period of Man's development everything was thought to happen according to the capricious activities of gods and spirits, and mysterious forces which to-day would be classed as supernatural; but because there was nothing with which to contrast them the idea of placing them in a special category could not arise. It was not until very much later (as far as history can tell us about the beginning of Greek philosophy) that the idea dawned upon men of seeking for uniform principles by which things happened, and of conceiving these as independent of all volitional forces. Thus grew the conception of the natural, which widened its scope as knowledge advanced. To-day we take it for granted that the occurrences around us fall into this class, and almost without question look immediately for the natural explanation of everything.

This passage from the supernatural to the natural is the passage from superstition to science, and it is marked by an outlook in which the wand gives place to the measuring rod, and the magician to the laboratory worker. Suppose, for instance, any one had been alive at some remote period in the past; and let us further suppose that he was fortunate enough to occupy a wooden house. If he had one day discovered that some of the beams were collapsing because the wood had become soft and friable, it is certain that he would have regarded this as due to the machinations of an evil spirit, and would straightway have consulted a magician. He would probably have told him that an enemy had put a curse upon the wood that must be removed by spells and incantations, which service he would have performed for an appropriate consideration. If the removal of the curse failed to remedy the condition of the wood, it would be easy to suppose that some hidden forces more powerful still were at work on the side of evil. To-day nothing like this could happen, at all events in the sphere of architectural science. In similar circumstances you would simply remark to your wife that the house had become infested with dry rot, and immediately enlist the services of a skilled workman. He would be able to tell you that a fungus had attacked the wood, and that it would be necessary to remove the diseased beams and treat the adjoining structure with a suitable disinfectant. This knowledge he would owe to the researches of microbiologists. Where the magician once gazed into his crystal the scientist now looks into his microscope.

This difference in outlook strikes deep into the whole structure of our lives, so much so that it was said by the anthropologist, Edward Tylor, to represent the deepest cleavage in human thought. What applies to microbiology applies to every field of knowledge; sciences are born out of the ashes of superstitions. The wand of the alchemist is cast

aside for the test tube of the chemist, that of the astrologer for the telescope of the astronomer. Every scientifically-minded person becomes ashamed of his wand, and throws it away to take up some instrument fashioned by the new thought. There remains only one scientist who still finds a place for his wand, and he is—the doctor. To understand this anomaly we must turn for a moment to another aspect of our subject.

Let us begin by introducing two words that have an important bearing upon our thesis; one is the word esoteric and the other the word exoteric. Any doctrine, or body of thought, is said to have an esoteric side when it has a side that is only understood by a select few, and an exoteric side when it has a side within the reach of popular understanding. Familiar examples of such bodies of thought are Art, Religion and Science.

With Art we are not now concerned. Of Religion it may be said that it is a body of thought in which the mass of the people participate very greatly. The consequence is that the pressure of exoteric thought is exceedingly strong, and becomes positively embarrassing to those on the esoteric side. Put in another way, the clamours of the crowd weigh heavily upon the initiated few, and obstruct the progress of ideas of which an enlightened minority is capable. This pressure, as you will guess, is economic. For all that the initiated persons are there to teach and to lead, they cannot escape from the necessity of earning their living; and it thus comes about that they bend before the multitude, and echo the popular cry often against their own better judgment.

We should not, however, expect to find this state of things in the scientific world, for the reason that the technical nature of science closes the door against the uninitiated, and scientific workers are thus left very much to themselves.

But in medical science the position is peculiar. Not only are the public directly involved in medical work in their capacity as patients, but the science itself started in primitive religion. The doctor began his career as a witch-doctor, and it is difficult for him to shake off the taint of his ancestry. The atmosphere that surrounded the medicine-man still hangs uncomfortably about Harley Street, and exoteric clamour is not to be fobbed off by the mere substitution of a silk hat for a feather head-dress. The principle of inertia holds good among social as among physical facts, and ideas tend to persist just as motion does, after the initial cause has been withdrawn. So it is that the miasma of superstition obstinately lingers in the doctor's consulting room, and the people demand their magic with economic threats and menaces, refusing to allow their magician to abandon the impressive waving of his wand for the business-like shaking of a clinical thermometer.

No one is more desirous of remedying this than the doctor himself, but to resist it is frequently to commit economic suicide, and to re-educate the public towards a more scientific outlook would be about as easy as to bring sweetness and light into European politics. Moreover, to attempt, as by sleight of hand, to exchange magic for common sense is likewise vain; for the public, gullible in most things, have an unerring sense of the magical. They know true magic when they see it, and will invariably spot a counterfeit specimen. Of all the qualities possessed by true magic, perhaps the most essential is the quality of mysteriousness, and that is the one on which the public insist above all others. That the magic should work is not of great importance; indeed, if this were to be taken as the test, it would destroy much of the

mysteriousness. Rather is it a quality of magic that it sometimes does not work, thereby remaining capricious and obscure. All that is demanded, then, of a doctor's magic is that it should be mysterious; its effectiveness is permitted considerable latitude.

MEDICUS.

(To be continued)

## Man's Inhumanity to Man

(Christianity Slavery and Labour, by Chapman Cohen. The Pioneer Press. Cloth 2s. 6d., paper 1s. 6d. Fourth Edition, Enlarged and Revised.)

MAN'S preoccupation with his soul, the avowed objective of the religious Evangelist, is a major disorder of the body politic. Holy Church, whatever shape it has taken, has striven to awaken man's mind to the Eternal Realities, and this, when accomplished, has played ducks and drakes with other natural processes tending to bring mankind out of the wilderness. When mundane matters have pressed so harshly as to make men clamour for the views of Omniscience on their problems, Bell, Book and Candle have been invoked in the interests of existing institutions. He who Sitteth in the Clouds has invariably expressed himself in the idiom of the ancient regime, that of the Army, the Church, and the Monarchy. Now that the ways of God are called upon to justify themselves to Men, this cold and calculated indifference of the spiritually-minded has undergone a change, for has not History proved again and again that the temper of men in times of stress can become uncomfortably antipathetic to Holiness and all its connotations?

Whenever these conditions are likely to arise, the Church adopts protective colouration and sensitiveness is registered to all matters concerning man's welfare here and now. History is combed intensively for instances of Christianity interesting itself in social problems, a task involving disingenuousness and leading at times to extraordinary claims. We are referred to what Pope A. or Deacon B. said at Puddlecombe, in 1633, to show that on some occasions a humane sentiment was visible. Which nobody can deny. Notwithstanding, any plain man can verify from a Penny Testament that the Kingdom of God was not of this world, that the immediate end of our planet was expected by Jesus, and that if there is any sane meaning at all to be attached to the much vaunted precepts of his Sermon on the Mount (such as Take no Thought for the Morrow) it was because Terra, the only planet favoured with Adam, Eve and an Apple, was to be neatly blotted out by his Father, leaving not a wrack behind.

Jesus was in error, and the business of living had to continue. Soul-saving became the chief industry, and the correct formula for soul-saving the only reputable quest. If this formula had been easy to come by, the way to spend profitably man's few hours of pilgrimage in the wilderness might have had a little attention. But this was never easy; the wrong formula leading to the Pit was (thanks to the Devil, that irritating thorn in the side of Omnipotence) much easier to lay hands on. Still, holding the wrong formula became, by some moral prestidigitation, the Infamy of Magnitude, and thus arose the justification for persecution, for mass massacre and for Piety striving to make friends in influential quarters by bloody attempts to exterminate error. Little chance had his business of living to make headway when regiments of Holy Men, specializing in Heresy-hunting, Other-worldism and Body Odour, were abroad.

They muttered Abracadabras, alternating blessings with curses, and stopped, when required, to administer ghostly comfort. Intent were they in turning the nose of Humanity towards the odour of sanctity, its ear towards the Glorious Gospel of Salvation for the few—and its eye towards Mansions in the Skies.

There is logic in this attitude, which only serves to make the more contemptible the attempts now being made to represent the Churches as interested, from first principles, in the problems of Social Life. Still the Church being, paradoxically enough, subject to the law of self-preservation common to human institutions, finds it imperative to make the attempt. Christians now show sensitiveness to the criticisms of unregenerate and degenerate men. They are eager, even anxious, to show that God has views on subjects other than those which concern His Glory and woman's clothing. He has something to say on child-training, scientific dietary, stag-hunting, war (*everything* that can be said about war, he has said), and the relations, economic and otherwise, between man and man.

What can be deduced from a priori considerations, this volume demonstrates a posteriori. The claim that the Church, or Christianity, has tended to sweeten the relations between employer and employed, is shown to be false, whilst the effect of Christianity on vexed racial questions is shown to be deplorable. The plea that it abolished slavery is demolished, and the hoary old lie cuts the sorriest of figures. There is chapter and verse for everything. There is no gap in the links of demonstration. No one who desires information can fail to be satisfied by either the argument or the documentation. More material could have been provided, but more is not necessary, enough being as good as a feast. All who are interested in the historic relations of Church and people—and the number grows every day—should obtain this work. It is adequate, and no higher praise can be given. Those who do not care for the conclusions will term it *extreme*. Well, facts have a habit of pointing one way or the other and he is well-advised who simply follows the pointer, and dispenses with the adjectives. There is only one reputable course left the critic, and that is to show that the indictment framed in this work in some way falls short of demonstration, either by faulty argument or by a partial or incomplete marshalling of facts. This, we anticipate, will not be attempted. For all that there is extreme in this volume (as we have learnt to expect from its author), is its extreme cogency, comprehensiveness and conclusiveness. There is only one becoming sequel to its reading by the Honest Christian, and that is the donning of sackcloth. It is the only wear. From experience, however, what is more likely to happen is that the representatives of the Christian Church will continue the religious exercise of lying for the Glory of God, will continue to preach to purring listeners of the "great good we have done," and polish up for public use, to be spoken perhaps a little more loudly in future, further picturesque phrases such as "The abolition of slavery is the Brightest Jewel in our Redeemer's Crown."

T. H. ELSTON.

If there are men who regret the Good Old Times, without too clear a notion of what they were, they should at least be thankful that we are rid of that misguided energy of faith which justifies conscience in making men unrelentingly cruel.—James Russell Lowell.

## The Book Shop

*The Fig Tree* is a quarterly, edited by C. H. Douglas, and in No. 2 issue for September, 1936, a passage, brief and memorable, shows the originator of Social Credit at his best, and is as follows—

Freedom is a real thing. It is the most important thing which is at stake in the world to-day, and it is beyond all other things necessary that its nature should be understood. It is the power to choose or refuse one thing at a time. It is the power to choose whether you will play cricket or whether you will play golf, or whether you will play neither. Quite emphatically it is not the power on the part of the non-player to change the rules of cricket or golf; that is not freedom, it is oppression. As the freemen of Abroath said to the Pope when he opposed the enthronement of Bruce: "It is not glory, it is not riches, neither is it honour, but it is liberty alone that we fight and contend for, which no honest man will lose but with his life."

The extract, which is good free thought, coming from an economist, set me thinking of a passage in our Editor's *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*. This shows that the writer, who throughout his whole life has kept his mind nimble and mercurial, could perhaps say in a few words what it took many books on the subject to expound with a more or less varying degree of clarity. Here then is our Editor grasping the essentials of Social Credit, although not laying any claim to be an economist. He writes: "The situation in the intellectual world is somewhat analogous to that which exists in the world of economics. The application of new ideas to industry has resulted in giving the world more utilities in the shape of food and clothing than it can, in existing circumstances, use. This has produced the curious result that a considerable part of the world is threatened with partial, or complete starvation. And again, in existing circumstances, the shortage of food and clothing promises to increase with our capacity to produce more of both. We will not bother with ideas, so ideas bother with us. One might almost paraphrase a well-known saying, 'He that does not think neither shall he eat,' as descriptive of the situation." Enthusiastic admirers of Major Douglas have bought and read *Primitive Survivals in Modern Thought*, and in some Utopian world which will not arrive with the milk to-morrow, it may be that philosophers with a disinterested interest in truth will make sallies at each other's territory with advantage to all their followers. *The Fig Tree*, published at 3s. 6d., is good value for the price, and there is throughout its pages an element of precision in its contents, which in dealing with its own particular subject shows the futility of trying to introduce emotion into a mathematical problem. This is to the good as, after all, the multiplication table is a fact for any man, whether he has changed his heart or for that matter his shirt. The hoary old chestnut is now hardly a subject for derision to those whose function is to make the unready mind recognize the obvious.

George Gissing has an essay on one of our best writers entitled, *The Immortal Dickens*. His judgment of Dickens as a novelist will be found in this essay, and considering the chequered career of Gissing, it is a generous tribute from one writer to another, and reads as follows:—

The aim of fiction, as Dickens saw it, was to amuse, to elevate, and finally to calm. When his evil-doers have been got rid of, he delights in apportioning quiet happiness to every character in the novel beloved by him and his readers.

We have been reading Mr. J. B. Priestley's latest novel, *They Walk in the City*, and there is no doubt that this writer is influenced by Dickens. The story of Rose Salter and Edward Fielding is paralleled by John Westlock and Ruth Pinch in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, but Mr. Priestley, of course, is dealing with a world somewhat "coked to the gills"\* with gadgets. In spite of this he

\* Americanism, meaning "fed up."

maintains a strong grip on the human side of life; he can write interestingly and hold the reader's attention. Wholesome happiness in whatever way achieved is a desirable end, and Mr. Priestley is old-fashioned enough to make virtue attractive, and this characteristic distinguishes him from hosts of other writers. There are some fine arresting phrases in this novel, and one passage which circumscribes the pleasures of a household reads, "The females were always making one another cups of tea! the males were always opening bottles of beer, or slipping out for a jug of old ale. Every weekend with them seemed like Christmas." Mr. Hilaire Belloc, when he wrote in the world of fact, many years ago foretold government by newspapers, and Mr. Priestley, I am glad to see, neatly skewers the idea in his commentary on the tactiturnity of Londoners. Talk and conversation are cloud dispellers as well as fog-bringers, and although your neighbour in the railway carriage may not speak of anything more interesting than the particular remedy he takes for a bad cough, or the varieties of roses that he is growing, this is better than the stony and superior stare of people who are being thrust out of the life stream of commonsense. The following passage illustrates Mr. Priestley's observation on this point: "In a Halifax teashop, people talked hard and loudly at one another, or looked about them to see who else was there. In London, it seemed, you gave all that up as a bad job. Either you shut everything out and brooded or put the *Evening Standard* or the *Star* between you and the rest of London."

Although the central couple of the novel walk in the City of London, there is not the magic touch of Dickens, who in a different age, could write the following of John Westlock and Ruth Pinch: "They went away, but not through London's streets! Through some enchanted city, where the pavements were of air; where all the rough sounds of a stirring town were softened into gentle music; where everything was happy; where there was no distance, and no time. There were two good-tempered, burly draymen letting down big butts of beer into a cellar somewhere, and when John helped her—almost lifted her—the lightest, easiest, neatest thing you ever saw—across the rope, they said he owed them a good turn for giving him the chance. Celestial draymen!" This is not written in any spirit of destructive criticism, for if the present generation do not know their Dickens, then they will make good their loss by reading Mr. Priestley's novel, which is always on the rail of good sense. There is a happy ending, and whether a writer is a propagandist or not, there is sufficient stimulative matter in this novel to take the reader further in his study of modern life, where we have got everything right the wrong way up. "When we all have leisure," writes Mr. Priestley in one chapter. This is possible, providing that two million unemployed is something to be proud of, and not regarded as a disease; what could even the elementary mind expect but unemployment when there are automatic machines to make automatic machines, and a razor blade which will never wear out, but which is withheld from the market. I recommend this novel as a golden gleam among a more or less wilderness of trash, for the reader will find that the story is close to fact, and at the same time holds out hope for better things; after all the reader who dislikes economics may be indirectly led to examine them when he has finished following the fortune of the pair who walked in the City.

C-DE-B.

At this juncture a fellow priest put into my hands a production whose very existence I was ignorant of—a copy of the *Freethinker*. I devoured its pages, and in reading them I experienced an altogether new sensation. I seemed for the first time in my life to be walking on *terra firma*. Hitherto I had walked in the clouds, now my footing was firm, here nothing was concealed, every statement was frank and straightforward; no conventionalism, no sitting on the fence, no fear of letting out the secrets, but fearless speech and above board from start to finish.—F. Bonte. From "*Fiction to Fact*."

## Acid Drops

A great deal has been done of late towards the raising of wages that were lowered during the "cuts" imposed by the Government a few years back. But there is one class that has had nothing done to remove the cuts made in their salaries. We refer to the class named by W. S. Gilbert as "the dignified clergy." Consider the wages as they stood in 1830, and to what they were reduced a century ago by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners:—

	1830	1936
	£	£
Archbishop of Canterbury	22,000	15,000
Archbishop of York	13,000	10,000
Bishop of London	15,000	10,000
Bishop of Durham	21,000	10,000
Bishop of Ely	12,600	5,000
Bishop of Winchester	12,107	6,500

When we consider how greatly the cost of living has risen since 1830, we marvel that no steps have been taken to restore the money that was taken away at the time of these cuts. Cannot Mr. Macdonald take up the case of the clergy and demand that the wages of these servants of the Lord be raised to their old level? It might form the occasion of a striking "come-back," and bring him once again into the limelight.

Mr. Duff Cooper, together with other heads of the fighting departments, are complaining of the poor quality of the men who offer themselves for the army. About half are rejected because of their poor physical condition. So steps are to be taken at once to raise their physical condition. If steps were taken to raise their intellectual condition the consequences might very well be revolutionary. But it is worth noting that this alarm over the physical condition of forty-seven per cent who offer themselves for the army (the proportion would obviously be larger if the whole of the population were considered, since the very weak do not offer themselves) is because one must have the best physical type for killing, and Mr. Duff Cooper views human beings as a farmer might view cattle. And it was not so long since the Government was having a quarrel whether working men could live on less than five shillings per week for food. Doctors stood out for five shillings. The Government thought four and ninepence was enough. Instead of asking how much can the people have, the question was how little can the people be kept alive on?

Hitler and Mussolini have now issued an ultimatum that they will not permit a Communist State to be established in Europe. The particular instance that has called for this declaration is, of course, Spain. But the resolve must also apply elsewhere. We may next expect an ultimatum that these two dictators will not permit any form of Government other than the rubber-truncheon, castor-oil, concentration-camp variety to exist. The appointment of Mosley as governor of the British Isles will follow. But it is quite obvious that if Fascism is to become stabilized in either Germany or Italy, the existence of a people who are—within even moderate limits—permitted to write and say what they please, and of people who can meet in public and talk without carefully looking round to see they are not overheard, is a standing threat to the rule of the bully or the brigand. A sense of human dignity is very catching, and although it may be suppressed for a time, in certain countries, it is bound to break out if nations can see it in action in places near them.

Mr. J. W. Wild, of Rainsford, Lancs., left instructions that his body was to be cremated and the ashes scattered over the Haydock Park racecourse. The Vicar of Rainsford, on learning the destination of the ashes, refused to conduct the service at the Anfield Crematorium, Anfield. We presume the Vicar did not want to give the recording angel the job of "bringing home the ashes" at the resurrection.

A spiritualistic contemporary takes Mr. Jasper Maskelyne to task for claiming that his grandfather could do by "legerdemain," what mediums professed to do by spirits. "That Mr. J. N. Maskelyne did, with the help of three tons of machinery, produce colourable imitations of some psychic phenomena is quite true." Maskelyne did better than that. He produced such striking "phenomena" that Alfred Russell Wallace accused him of being a medium and prostituting his great gifts for commercial ends. "Maskelyne made far more money than all the mediums living in London put together." Perhaps, but surely being an Illusionist is an honest way of earning a living.

On October 5, one of Christ's tender lambs, Monsignor Bartolomasi, Bishop to the Italian Army, spoke at Piedmont to commemorate Cardinal Massaia, once a missionary in Ethiopia. He paid a tribute to the Marshal Badoglio, saying, "he had militarily concluded the work begun evangelically by Cardinal Massaia," and concluded by referring to the Ethiopian War as "the victory of the Roman sword and of the cross, united in a great civilizing work." Such instances of what Christians consider "civilizing work" are as plentiful as autumn leaves in Vallambrosa. It is the ideal of civilization approved by such papers as the *Daily Mail*, and accounts for their enthusiasm for all things Christian.

Mr. Edwin Orr is our latest—and one of our youngest—evangelists. We are solemnly told by Mr. Hugh Redwood, that deeply orthodox Christian, that Mr. Orr is "now an evangelist of world-wide repute," and when he rose to address an audience the other day, "he became a flame and a scourge." Why an evangelist should break out into a flame is one of the mysteries of the craft, and as for his scourge, it was, needless to say, directed "in uncompromising language" against "secret sin," upon which any fiery evangelist can let himself go like a tornado. Mr. Orr also "prayed that God might shake London." Perhaps a few thousand gas and explosive bombs sent by the Almighty *via* enemy planes would do just what Mr. Orr wants.

To show his supreme power over the Lord, Mr. Orr, incensed that some Australian paper slandered him, "called down God's curse," and the unlucky editor promptly died. Mr. Redwood does not like this story. Still, we wonder what he would say if Mr. Orr saw the *Freethinker*, and called down God's vengeance on us? Would Mr. Redwood object if the earth suddenly swallowed up our offices and contributors? But somehow or other this paper has outlasted quite a number of flaming evangelists.

Although very few people ever hear of it, there is a Catholic Guild of Israel, whose mission it is to convert Jews. A meeting recently held was addressed by Canon Vance, Fr. V. McNabb, Fr. A. Day, and Mr. R. Sullivan, K.C. How much more effective would the Guild have been if, instead of four Catholics, four prominent Jews could have spoken, proving beyond all manner of doubt, that the contempt they used to have for three gods as one, for the silly story of their own deity having both a son and a mother, for the still sillier story of being able to eat the Catholic god and drink his blood, was all wrong; and that now they gladly subscribed to these stories, and even the more absurd ones which form the basis of Catholic belief. Jew-baiting, the favourite occupation of the true Christians in the Fascist movement, is, of course, a monstrous crime; but Jew-converting is a laughable farce.

A big blaze sweeping through a town near Quebec, destroyed several hotels, shops, and houses, with damage estimated at £66,000. It very nearly destroyed the famous new basilica of Ste. Anne de Beaupré, which cost nearly a million dollars, but a crowd of women and children in a Blessed Sacrament procession prayed so ardently that God immediately changed the wind, and the basilica was saved. It is worth noting that the Lord was

not always so obliging. In 1922, the original basilica was destroyed by fire; while quite a number of Catholic Churches and buildings have also been destroyed by fire in Canada in some cases with loss of life. In these matters, God seems extraordinarily inconsistent. Fancy destroying a Cathedral worth £320,000 in this way, while allowing local cinemas and pubs to carry on! It is a question which causes Catholics extreme perplexity.

In one of the "refresher" courses of Catholicism provided by the *Universe*, we are told the usual drivel about the "three Persons" in one God, etc., but it is interesting to note that we are also informed that "this doctrine is essentially a mystery, a truth above reason. We know that there are three persons in God, because God says so, but we do not know how these three Persons, nevertheless, constitute only God." This logically clear enunciation of the Holy Trinity ought to satisfy the most pious; but sometimes we really wonder which is the bigger nonsense, the doctrine, or the explanation of the doctrine. We wish an intelligent convert would tell us.

There is a society called the "Seven Year's Association," which has put in a "campaign" demanding the "Reservation" of the Blessed Sacrament. The Society is fearfully disturbed at the difficulty of the large "number of persons in nearly every parish who are practically excommunicated and denied their spiritual food." As an example, we are told of the extreme difficulty of a country labourer to attend an eight o'clock service on Sunday morning. We doubt very much whether there are many "horny-handed sons of toil" who trouble themselves about "spiritual food" of any kind. If one meets them in a country pub, their complaint is more likely to be about the price of beer; we should like to meet one who could tell us clearly and intelligently what "reservation" meant or what good it did to him even when he knew what it meant.

As a matter of fact, some of the speeches at a recent meeting of the S.Y.A. are typical of the kind of muddle which characterizes people who believe in "reservation." One of them was to the effect that "reservation ought not to become a practice in any parish before the people had been taught to understand the principles involved in the centrality of the Mass." And another declared that there are many parishes and districts where any hasty introduction of Reservation would be disastrous; it would tend to irreverence and sacrilege. We hope an attempt will now be made to educate people in the Mass generally; after nearly 1900 years teaching, their ignorance on the subject seems to be appalling. Or is it?

Christian Pacifists are really at their best when trying to explain Jesus as the Prince of Peace. Mr. G. Bedborough's book, *Arms and the Clergy* is, of course, never quoted, as, strangely enough, Jesus is there shown to be by many Christian priests as a God of war, when the war—like the last—is a "just" one. A Christian Pacifist, who now insists that Jesus always was a Prince of Peace, just hates to be told that Jesus said, "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." The way one of these pious people gets out of his dilemma is quite simple. Jesus' advice was that you should buy a sword and then not use it!—a most valuable lesson, which proves conclusively that he was thus a genuine Pacifist. By this wonderful piece of reasoning all the nations who are desperately arming are Pacifists. They are piling up arms so as not to use them and thus following out Christ's behest. What marvellous minds these Christians have!

At a recent consecration of a church in Croydon, the Archbishop of Canterbury said, "It is a remarkable fact that within one week I should have consecrated two new churches in Croydon. For these signs of God's goodness and blessing upon our desire to enable the Church to show her motherly care for all her children,

I am most thankful." We can quite understand the Archbishop's pleasure. More churches mean more business; and the fact that large numbers of other churches are very poorly patronized simply proves that what is lost on the swings is gained on the roundabouts. But the lesson for Freethinkers is still—make more Freethinkers. In no other way can the waste of money in building new churches be stopped.

Nothing seems too stupid for the credulous Christian implicitly to believe. The other day the Rev. Sparrow Simpson preached a sermon mostly on what a remarkable person was Luke. He was, first, a truly great physician. "It is significant," we are told, "that the Virgin Birth of Our Lord is attested by a physician." It is far more significant that such nonsense can be preached by a presumably intelligent man. There is no evidence whatever that the writer of Luke's Gospel was a "physician." It is simply a legend.

Then, of course, Luke was an artist, "he was intensely human, deeply sympathetic and keenly appreciative of the pathetic element in the life of man." Well, he may have been all this as millions of men and women have been throughout the ages. But what of that? Do these qualities make him a *truthful* historian? Or even a credible one? The myths and legends which decorate his gospel and history make Luke—or whoever wrote the gospel and the Acts—just as credulous and superstitious as is the Rev. Sparrow Simpson. Anyone, whether physician or layman, who can testify to such a piece of absurdity as the Virgin Birth, is put out of court as a serious writer; and this, no matter how well he can write.

Mr. G. E. Macdonald writes in the *Truthseeker* :—

The "Christian" Union for Social Justice, in the States, has drawn the fire of the Jews by declaring: "We believe in the principle of love thy neighbour as thyself. I challenge every Jew in this nation to tell me whether or not he believes in that principle. Since the Jewish doctrine of a tooth for a tooth and an eye for an eye has failed, I ask the Jews to accept Christ's principle of brotherhood." The Jews quickly point to the dishonesty of the Christian who claims for "Christ" the "love thy neighbour" passage, since it is found in the Old Testament at Leviticus xix. 18—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Where the words occur in the New Testament, in the nineteenth of Matthew, Jesus repeats them as though they were already one of the Commandments. The Jews possessed this "principle" of humanity, and their "tooth for tooth, eye for eye" doctrine carried out to the letter was more humane than the "everlasting fire" principle of Jesus, which was one of his few teachings not borrowed from the Jews.

### The "Freethinker" Circulation Drive

It is proposed to celebrate the coming-of-age of the present editorship by an attempt to create a substantial increase in the circulation of this paper. The plan suggested is:—

(1) Each interested reader is to take an extra copy for a period of twelve months, and to use this copy as a means of interesting a non-subscriber to the point of taking the *Freethinker* regularly.

(2) So soon as this new subscriber is secured, the extra copy may be dropped by the present subscriber. Until this is accomplished, he will regard the extra threepence weekly (for one year) as a fine for his want of success.

The plan is simple, and it is not costly; but it does mean a little work, and whether or not it is more blessed to give than to receive, it is certainly easier for most to give than it is to work. But in this case it is the work alone that will yield permanent benefit. There are many thousands of potential readers in the country; why not try to secure some of them?



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

M. RAWLSON.—You are quite in error. In saying that sorrow is not multiplied by a thousand suffering instead of one, we are not casting a cloak over the number of sufferers, we are advancing a reason for believing that the crime is as great when one person suffers unnecessarily as when the number of individual sufferers amount to hundreds. See "Views and Opinions" in this issue.

H. SHAW.—We do not now recall the specific question you wish answered. With regard to the writers you name, they are all worth reading, particularly Kropotkin and Dietzgen; but there is no importance that we can see in our writing at length when we agree with certain writers, and where we disagree. We are not delivering laws, we are merely stating our own opinions of things. Everyone must take them for what they are worth. Letter has been forwarded.

MRS. M. J. WADMAN (Durban, S.A.)—We are delighted to hear from so old and so loyal a reader of the *Freethinker*. Best wishes for continued good health.

VIVIEN PHELIPS.—Pleased to have high opinion of your friend on *Humanity and War*.

T. SMITH.—Mr. Cohen is responsible for the selection of the series, "Things Worth Knowing," but that does not mean that he endorses all that is said by the writer from whom the excerpt is taken. Each selection is printed because it gives a point of view worth stating.

G. E. MACDONALD (New York).—Many thanks for the reference. Trust you are keeping in good health. Good spirits in your case we take for granted.

J. FREEMAN.—Thanks for address; paper being sent for 4 weeks.

P. A. MASON.—*Christianity and Women*, by C. Cohen, would give you what you require. (Pioneer Press, 1s.).

G. PRESCOTT.—Pleased you have found the "Things Worth Knowing" series helpful. They will be resumed shortly. We do not know of any other party than the one you name.

To Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—D. C. P. Phelps (Rangoon, India), 5s.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—J. Petersen, £10.

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 "*Freethinker*" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums

There was a good audience at the Winter Garden Ballroom, Clapham, on Sunday last, to listen to Mr. Cohen on "The Fight for Freedom of Thought," although there were a few vacant seats. After the lecture there was a number of questions, and it was quite evident that many were making their first acquaintance with a Freethought lecture. The meeting lasted for two hours, the longest Mr. Cohen has had lately, but he went through it with no apparent strain. Mr. Corrigan was in the chair, and there was, we understand, a good sale of literature.

*Spain and the Church* has proved itself to be not only a pamphlet that has sold with extraordinary rapidity,

but it is the best pamphlet published by us as a medium of propaganda. Spain, as we have so often said, offers a clear case of a country, once in the van of civilization, brought to ruin by the action of the Church. The pamphlet is a clear statement of historic fact, the interpretation of which hardly admits of discussion. The result of the reading to those who are not acquainted with the facts of the case has been to set them enquiring more into the nature of Freethought work, and in this way it had done a great deal of good. Best of all, the pamphlet is still selling steadily, and newsagents are less hesitant in displaying it than they would be with ordinary Freethought literature.

We must not omit to thank those who have responded to our call, and have done what they could to put *Spain and the Church* into circulation. We hope they will keep on at the work, and that others will join them in the good work. And while we are about it, we may as well thank all for the efforts that have been made to secure the *Freethinker* Circulation Drive being a success. We knew that the task would not be an easy one if anything substantial was to be achieved, but some success has been achieved, and the move is of the snowball variety, and every new recruit is also a potential worker for the Cause.

We are glad to see that Mr. J. B. Priestley has declined to submit to the B.B.C. censorship. He received a letter asking if he would broadcast, during a visit to the North of England, on Repertory Theatres. He said he would, and then received notice that his manuscript must be in the hands of the Committee fourteen days beforehand, "otherwise the project must be abandoned." Mr. Priestley declined, and says:—

I cannot see why I should send them a copy of my talk a fortnight in advance of giving it. . . . It is not as if I were a novice. And editors do not ask me to call at their office and do a trial article.

We hope that Mr. Priestley will stick to this attitude for the future. We shall then be able to pick out the goats from the sheep, and know that there are at least some men in the country who have enough self-respect to decline to encourage a censorship which in practice may become one of the most dangerous forms of "doping" that we have. And a censorship may be equally dangerous in what it leaves unsaid as in what it permits to be said. We must not forget that the press also has its form of censorship. The fortunate thing is that the press and the B.B.C. have not at present established an agreement. When they do we shall have one of the most complete methods of doping the public that has ever existed.

Will Bradford and District Freethinkers please note that Mr. R. H. Rosetti will lecture in the Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford, this evening (November 8), on "A Search for God"? The local N.S.S. Branch has the arrangements in hand, and are anticipating a good rally of saints and their friends. The hall is very comfortable, and the subject attractive. Admission is free, with some reserved seats, and the lecture begins at 7 p.m.

At the West London Branch to-night (November 8), Miss Kathleen Melzi, A.R.C.A., makes her debut as a Secularist Lecturer, her subject being Vincent Van Gogh, the Atheist artist, whose work, reviled and scorned in his lifetime, is highly prized in all collections to-day. Miss Melzi—herself an artist of merit—will devote much of her lecture to that aspect of Van Gogh's life and work which sees in art an essential and perhaps ideal form of self-expression. This is a subject of interest to all Freethinkers, and we hope a good audience will rally to hear Miss Melzi's first lecture to a general audience.

We note an excellent letter in the *Croydon Advertiser* from our friend, Mr. H. R. Clifton, on "World Problems," as treated by Christian speakers and writers. Mr. Clifton closes his lengthy letter with an appropriate eulogy of Thomas Paine.

The following is from the *News-Chronicle* of October 30:—

Passing through thick scrub on his way to visit some members of his flock, a missionary was suddenly confronted by a lion.

Snarling and lashing its tail, the lion approached. In desperation, the missionary hurled his Bible at the beast. The lion dropped dead.

As the missionary rounded the next bend of the path he pulled up with a start. Before him was a man reloading his gun.—*Reuter*.

We shall be surprised if this does not at some time appear in a religious journal, the *Daily Mail* or the *Daily Express*, minus the last paragraph.

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## Thank God!

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“I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth more than ninety-nine just persons.” *Luke xv. 7*.

This is the story of the conversion of Robert James, as told by the *Los Angeles Evening News* for October 5. Fourteen months ago James carried his wife into the bathroom, put her in a bathful of water, and held her down till she was dead. The jury found that James had strapped his pregnant wife to a table, plunged her foot in a box containing a rattlesnake, left her to suffer the pain of the poison for some hours, and then drowned her as described. Then Robert James was convicted of murder and sent to prison. But Robert James was not alone. The Lord was with him, and the Lord induced someone to send James a Bible. And James read the Bible and his eyes were opened. So, on October 4, James was permitted to go into the prison laundry, where he plunged into a wash-tank full of water, and remained under water until he was (symbolically) dead. Then he came out filled with joy and exclaimed:

I've found the Lord! I'm a Christian now!  
Washed in the blood of the Lamb! I'm born again.  
Praise the Lord! I'm not afraid to die now! I'm not afraid to die!

The power of the Lord did not end here. James was not merely a repentant and redeemed sinner; the Lord used him as a missionary to others.

In the same prison were three other men sentenced for life. One had killed his wife, the other strangled his 18 year-old sweetheart, the third had killed a man. These three were also converted through the example of Robert James, and were baptized by the minister of a Church. And on October 5, the “Good News Tabernacle Choir” gathered round the four new heavenly recruits and sang “O Happy Day that Fixed my Choice on Thee, My Saviour and My God.”

So the Lord works that all things may end well. Had he stretched forth his mighty hand and saved from the bathtub the wife of Robert James, then would he have been unable to save the souls of the other three men. Had he saved from death the wife of one of the others, the sweetheart and the friend of the other two, they would not have been in the prison to which Robert James was sent. So many different circumstances culminating in the salvation of the souls of these four men could never have been brought together by mere chance. There was design in it. Behind it all were the workings of God. Without the four murders the souls of these four men might have been irretrievably lost. Hell would have had its population increased by four, and heaven its inhabitants decreased by the same number. These

men have been born again. They are now ready to meet the Lord; the Lord is ready to meet them. What a glorious company! What an example of God's foresight! What an example of the way in which he watches over the spiritual welfare of the vilest among us, and stops at no sacrifice (the two wives, the friend, the sweetheart) when it is a question of saving the souls of four convicted criminals.

And the two wives, the friend and the sweetheart? Well, one may trust the Lord to reward them for their instrumentality in the working out of His plan. The four men will shine as diamonds in the Saviour's crown. The sweetheart, the man, the two wives who were murdered, will watch from afar the exalted state to which their deaths have lifted the others.

Has Atheism anything like this to show the world?  
QUONDAM.

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## “The Bible Corpus”

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We have before us a Report of the recent “Conference of Modern Churchmen.”\* We notice it is called a Conference of Churchmen—which one might suppose meant men and women members of the Church. But only one church was represented, only men are reported as speakers and readers of papers; and not a single layman's contribution is mentioned. It was a Conference of the paid professional male teachers of a single branch of the Christian Church.

The Report is as interesting as an ordinary novel. Indeed it is probably being studied by amateur fundamentalist “sleuths” looking for “clues,” which may conceivably become the subjects of trials for heresy. There is not much heresy except that of ex-Dean Inge on Prayer, and there is a commendable spirit of something like toleration. At any rate, we see less of the old “Believe or be damned” attitude, although there is enough and to spare of the inexhaustible “superiority” of the cleric which regards Materialism as the enemy of all that is good.

There is also an amusing “Donnishness,” like that of Dr. A. C. Bouquet, of Cambridge, whose paper is called: “What to Believe About the Bible.” In “simplifying” the simple word “Bible,” Dr. Bouquet tells us, “It is the title of a body of literature rather like Corpus Inscriptorum Latinorum.” It is as simple as that.

This paper is as good as any and is characteristic of all of them. Dr. Bouquet begins by protesting against the “barbarous error to talk about the Bible ‘being true.’” It is quite delicious to find Christians positively annoyed and obviously embarrassed by their fellow-Christians claiming (as Sir Charles Marston, a mere layman does) that recent archaeological investigations confirm the historical veracity of the Bible. Wait a minute, says Dr. Bouquet: “It does not follow that we WANT to prove historical accuracy of ALL the documents.”

We are not surprised that Dr. Bouquet considers that the Christian Scriptures “are different from any other sacred literature.” This, of course, is only another way of saying that the latter and the former are not the same, as one might with equal truth admit that the Book of Mormon is different from the Upanishads. This is consistent with a recognition which an outsider, not interested in maintaining the superiority of one over the other, might make, namely that all “Sacred Books,” all “Revelations of Gods” possess many qualities in common.

Dr. Bouquet's references to Communistic teach-

\* *The Modern Churchman*, October, 1936.

ing is highly ambiguous and guarded. If anything, he favours the alleged policy of the early Christians who "defeated their pagan adversaries because they out-thought them, out-lived them and out-died them. The Christians of to-day can only expect to triumph if they do the same." But he does not explain the process of "out-thinking, out-living, and out-dying" other people. He probably means something analogous to the Tories "stealing" the policy of the Whigs. May we expect the Modernist Christians to adopt Bolshevism with its accompanying Atheism? With reference to verbal values, Dr. Bouquet speaks with two voices. "It is the SUBSTANCE of the Bible-literature which is important, not the actual words themselves," he says (italicizing the word "substance.") But all the same he insists that "some of these words are of immortal preciousness," which leaves the reader doubting whether "immortal" and "precious" "words" are superior or inferior to what he calls "the substance."

Dr. Bouquet divides the "Bible Corpus" into sections of differing values. The old Testament is dismissed—no, the Modernist never becomes quite definite enough to dismiss anything. Let us quote: "The exclusively Hebrew use of what is called the Old Testament involves a belief which ends in stagnation, in a blind alley, in a dead-end." It would seem then that the Old Testament can only be accepted by those who reject it! It is only true if you agree to tag on to it something which those who accept only the Old Testament do not believe. If you believe the New Testament you are at liberty to believe the Old Testament also, but otherwise God's original and earlier revelations are out of date. If so why not reject the Old Testament?

Dr. Bouquet does not help us by comparing the relationship of the Bible to the Creeds, with the relationship of one Testament to the other. The Creeds, he says, are similarly "subordinate to Scriptural proof." But he is not claiming that the teaching of the Bible is true only in so far as it supports the later manufactured (or revealed) Creeds!

It is important to note that Dr. Bouquet "rules out all merely humanistic use of this collection of literature." He and other Modernists will not accept the Bible as "merely God permitting Himself to be understood by man." It is "God finding man out and causing him to understand what He, the Lord God, is Himself doing." This seems to us to reduce "rationalistic religion" to a useless cul-de-sac. He deplores the fact that "in certain sections of the Christian Church, reason has been and still is disparaged." Luther, he reminds us, "speaks in quite shocking and brutal terms of 'that whore, Reason.'" Man's intelligence, however, and even man's so-called "religious instinct" are unnecessary if man must leave it all to God to "find man out," etc. We are back to Luther, to fundamentalism, and even to predestination.

Simultaneously with this declaration of man's insignificance, Dr. Bouquet insists with Benjamin Jowett that "we must interpret the Bible like any other book." Why should man do this if God can be trusted to interpret Himself, and presumably His Book also, to such men as God cares to seek and "find out."

There is a feverish fatalism about Dr. Bouquet's glorification of the Church, which, he says, "can only declare what God has instituted it to declare." But perhaps Dr. Bouquet uses the word "can" in the sense in which a smoker is told, "you can't smoke here." We imagine that Reformations and Dissent of all kinds prove that many people believe that "the Church" has often done precisely what Dr. Bouquet says it cannot do.

To the question of how far the Bible reveals a portrait of God, Dr. Bouquet replies by a paradox: "The Holy One may be beyond all likeness, but man's intellect may form *some* idea as to his nature" (italics are Dr. Bouquet's). Yes, but he may form quite *inaccurate* ideas. "That Face," he says, "perhaps never really painted, comes to us more surely through the Television of the worshipping disciples." If it is true that the Lord God reveals Himself thus, two things seem certain: "the worshipping disciples" would have had to wait nineteen centuries, and "that Face" would need a most expensive Broadcasting apparatus, and a far from cheap Receiving Set before the "Television" became available to mankind.

Dr. Bouquet has to quote Hooker's "definition of the way in which the Anglican Church relates reason to revelation." To go back to the sixteenth century for such a definition seems odd for a Modernist to do, but Dr. Bouquet describes Hooker's sermon (it is not a definition) as "the charter of a true and wise modernism."

Dissenting as we do from so much that Dr. Bouquet says, we heartily endorse his plea for a "shorter Bible." By omitting all its crudities, barbarities, immoralities, inaccuracies and absurdities, with all its supernaturalism, we should have a much shorter but a much better "Bible Corpus."

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

## Conscience

FLAT-FOOTED Science defines Conscience as "simply the reflection of one's environment, and the way one has been brought up; or the same, with the addition of racial factors—e.g., the "taboo," the "mysteries," etc., of early tribal organizations.

Winged Science—ably represented by Professor Eddington—has a very different story to tell. "We are helpless," he declares, "unless we admit, as perhaps the strongest conviction of all, that we have within us some power of self-criticism, to test the validity of our own convictions. This power must surely be a ray proceeding from the light of absolute truth, a thought proceeding from the Absolute Mind. Secure that we are not left without guidance, we may embark on the adventures of spiritual life, uncharted though it be. It is sufficient that we carry a compass."

So impressive a statement of the case for the Inner Light demands our careful attention.

We notice first, that Transcendent guidance is provided for "the adventure of spiritual life"; "the daily round, the common task," of life in time and space is not specified; yet must surely follow, as "the night, the day." In the case of George Fox, for instance, the doctrine of the Inner Light is seen to issue in the notable series of adventures undertaken by that extraordinary man. More generally, we find the historian much occupied with the results of adventures in spiritual life. From him we learn, that in the "ages of Faith"—say a period of some 20,000 years or more—these "adventures" caused the deaths, by means as cruel as man could devise, of countless millions of men, women, and children. The "adventurers" doomed their victims as "sacrifices," witches, or heretics.

In comparatively recent times we find the conscience of a Pope Innocent III. prompting him to the extermination of the Albigenses; that of a Calvin insisting on the treacherous murder of Servetus; that of a Sir Thomas Browne enthusiastically approving the burning of poor and helpless old women as witches.

It is perhaps claimed that these highly-conscientious persons did not really follow—but only flouted—the dictates of Conscience?

No such claim can stand against the overwhelming weight of evidence for the relativity of the content of Conscience. Not only does this differ for the European (or American), the Hindoo, the Chinaman, the Eskimo, or the Pigmy; it differs for the Catholic and the Quaker, the Fascist and the Communist. In short there is no reason to suppose that the consciences—any more than the countenances—of any two individuals are alike; though close resemblances both cause, and result from, the formation of co-active groups.

Here we must notice a probable objection. Professor Eddington may reply: "The compass is all right; it is the readers who mistake its indications."

But does this help us? The compass then, though infallible, can only be read aright by a favoured few, who (as Carlyle might have put it) "mak' a pair show" in the world's history—the history that records, in large type, the proceedings of those who *misread* the compass.

Such a view lands us back into the quagmire of Gnosticism; from which, after nearly 2,000 misspent years, we seemed to be emerging. A compass which could only be relied upon to guide a mariner here, and a mariner there, to the right Port, would surely be worse than no compass at all.

In any case, our withers are unwrung: because our argument for the Relativity of Conscience is no more based on "the thing in itself" than is the argument for the Relativity of Motion. What we are dealing with, is the report given by each individual on the dictates of his conscience. This is obviously the only Conscience we can talk about; any other is "wropt in myst'ry."

Observing the "fruits of faith"—which surely cannot be discrepant with the dictates of conscience—we come to the conclusion that those dictates may either be good or bad, right or wrong. We therefore call Conscience "Jekyll-and-Hyde." If we succeed in eliminating the Hyde, it will only be to substitute for it that sinister product of modern psychology—the Satyr who, lying perdu within the inmost recesses of our being, so dominates our personalities, that we cannot vouch for the Jekyll innocence of a single thought, belief, desire, or action.

One or two important deductions from the theory of the Relativity of Conscience must be indicated before we conclude.

If we suppose an individual to have been isolated, from the moment of birth, from all human environment (as in a popular film), we can see that for him the only conceivable dictate of conscience would relate to self-preservation. For one normally brought up, and subsequently isolated—like Robinson Crusoe—Conscience, in addition to self-preservation might prompt self-mastery, self-development, etc. Under circumstances like these, and under all circumstances where the self only is in question, we do not challenge the authority of Conscience over Conduct. We agree to obey it, as the sole available standard of action.

On the other hand, in the case of an individual who is a member of a community, and who either chooses, or is obliged, to remain in it, the standard for "other-regarding" actions can only be derived from a synthesis of consciences; which is the *fons et origo* of Law in a modern Democratic State.

In such a State, if "the Mean" is to be preserved, the extravagant part played by rhetoric (e.g., in the Daily Press, the novel, the platform and pulpit) in the manufacture of the Consciences of the majority,

will have to be countered by persuasion, cajolery, and political manoeuvre on the part of the superior Consciences of the minority.

In spite of this drawback, our own political history sufficiently demonstrates that the machinery of the "Synthesis of Consciences" will work; and it is pathetic to notice that the promoters of such movements as, e.g., the Conscientious Objectors; Suffragettes; "General"; "Hunger"; and "Stay-down" Strikes, while professing undiminished enthusiasm for the Democratic form of Government, fail to perceive that its machinery is simply sabotaged, if the Individual Conscience is to prevail in these matters over the Synthesis of Consciences.

Few will deny that there have been—and perhaps still are in some Democratic States—laws so unjust, that a man might well say: "Rather than submit to this, I will endure any punishment, and strive to upset even that form of Government which alone offers any chance of reform." But can any rational-minded person, with a due sense of proportion, endorse such a claim for any one of the grievances to which the above list relates? Or indeed for any of the minor injustices still unhappily maintained by our laws?

To sum up. If individual Conscience must lose its halo, and is no longer sacrosanct, but the product of environment, it should no more be allowed to wreck national comity, than the Sovereign Independent State to wreck international comity. Both these Absolutes must abate their claims if men are to live together in peace.

G. TODHUNTER.

### Mussolini in 1904

M. L. GABEREL, in *La Libre Pensee Internationale* of August, tells us that: In 1904 Mussolini established at Geneva the *Biblioteca Internazionale di Propaganda Razionalista* (International Library of Rationalist Propaganda), a series of small paper covered booklets of which certainly three made their appearance.

These were *L'Uomo e la Divinità* (Man and the Divinity), by B. Mussolini; *La Bibbia è immorale* (The Bible is immoral), by Ariste Tormenti; and *I Ciarlantani Neri* (The Black Charlatans), by A. H. Malot, translated by Mussolini from the French, with a preface by the Socialist, Maurice Allard, which was also translated by Mussolini. Mussolini added notes, moreover, to the last-named booklet, and these notes are not without interest to-day.

On page 6 is the note: Christ's existence tends to be relegated to the region of myth. In the first place the objective study of Christianity from its origins to the earliest phases of its development thrusts Christ into a subordinate position, for He is not necessary to the genesis of the Christian phenomenon, and may be eliminated from the historical scene. Recently a learned man, Emilio Bossi of Lugano (has written) a book which will cause a great stir with the suggestive title *Christ Never Existed*.

On page 7: Every founder of a new religion has been enveloped in a cloak of miracles (*circondato da un mantello miracoloso*), eg., Buddha, Christ and Mahomet. But these miracles have not only been explained by science, but also refuted, for it has been shown that when they are brought out into the light of day, they contain nought of the supernatural or of the divine, but are always the product of cerebral matter or of physical matter in special conditions. . . ."

Where Malot had written on page 9 "Let us be firm, let us be united and we shall be strong," Mussolini appends, "Let us not do as some anti-clericals. . . talkers who are married in churches and have their children baptized."

Since then Comrade Benito has found a more remunerative occupation. Will he return to his first love?

C. BRADLAUGH BONNER.

## The Church's Quest For Beauty

PROF. G. SALVEMINI, a scholar of world-wide reputation, and who has suffered imprisonment under Fascist dictatorship, has completed a work proving the Papal connivance with Fascism. *The New Times and Ethiopia News* is doing valuable service by translating weekly portions therefrom. We reproduce a typical extract from this week's issue:—

From December, 1934, to February, 1935, the *Osservatore Romano*, the chief Papal organ, ignored the Ethiopian question as completely as though that country had been a spot on the moon.

Then suddenly, on February 24, a week after the first troops left Italy for Africa, it published an article under the title: "The Colonizing Principle," in which the inspired writer observed:—

"Colonization should be considered as a great work of human solidarity . . . a work composed of great daring, of profound will, of fatherly love. No people, no race, has the right to live in isolation. The great wealth of the world with which God has so lavishly endowed the earth must be put at the disposal of all, and must not be left unproductive in the land occupied by such a race. To-day, all over the world, the idea is accepted of a frank co-operation between various races, between dominators and dominated. The native masses, in general, accept this new conception, offered to or imposed on them; they accept the pacific penetration of a nation better provided with means and instruments of exploitation. They feel, were it only slowly, the beneficial effect of civilization.

"The complete and protective adhesion which the Roman Church has always given to the colonizing idea makes us certain that any move in this direction will be conducted in accordance with moral principles.

"The problem of colonization is strictly bound up with that of the question of population.

"For this reason we feel its great beauty and its profound and undying fascination."

That article was signed "C." The columns of *Osservatore Romano* are never open for discussion; they always represent the official views of Papacy. By that article it was made evident that the Vatican adopted all the pretended reasons for the invasion of Ethiopia. The need of Italian expansion; the selfish action of Ethiopia in keeping locked up her natural riches; the necessity of bringing civilization to a "barbarian" country, and so on. The Vatican even gave its sanction to the claim that civilization might be imposed!

## Correspondence

### FASCISM AND FREETHOUGHT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—On behalf of the British Union, I would offer apologies to Mr. Eric Frank Russell, who states in a letter to your columns that his question to Sir Oswald Mosley at the Liverpool Stadium, on October 11 was not answered. Sir Oswald always adopts the practice of answering written questions for half the available time, and taking verbal questions for the rest, so that those whose written questions he does not reach can ask them verbally.

His question was:—

"Do you agree that the intellectual standard of the nation cannot possibly be raised to a satisfactory level, unless denominational schools are abolished and are replaced by a purely secular education provided by the State?"

To this I would offer the following reply, which may be taken as official:—

We do not agree that denominational schools as such are unable to provide education of a satisfactory intellectual standard. A Fascist Government would however demand that the standard of purely secular education at denominational schools should come up to the level demanded at State schools. If this standard of education were maintained, the question of religious instruction is not a matter that properly concerns a State

whose principle is complete religious toleration, and this principle is supported by us.

In his letter, Mr. Russell raises other points to which perhaps I might also reply. First, he challenges the right of parents to have their children brought up in a religious faith. There are only two possible authorities for the guidance of children until they are old enough to order their own affairs: the State or the parents. Marxist teaching opposes the institution of the family, and therefore demands that the State shall be the custodian of children, but Fascism upholds the family, and is therefore not entitled to deny the parents authority over the child. Would Mr. Russell contend that the intellectual ability of Agnostics, such as Winwood Reade or A. E. Housman, was diminished in any way from their having been brought up in religious faiths which they later renounced?

The attitude expressed recently in the Fascist newspapers has not, as Mr. Russell suggest, been dictated by desire to blacken the moral character of law-abiding citizens who happen to be unbelievers. We would strongly condemn any attempt of members or religious creeds to persecute those who belong to none, but equally we are entitled to denounce the arson and massacre practised in Spain against Christians by those who are Atheists.

The difference between Mr. Russell's attitude and ours is that he is anti-religious and pro-Atheist, whereas we as a political organization, can only demand complete freedom for both the religious and the non-religious, and guarantee that neither shall suffer for their belief or lack of belief.

J. A. MACNAB.

[We do not wish to intervene in the correspondence, but it strikes us that Mr. Macnab leaves untouched the important question of the right of parents to put before children their own views of political and social matters, as well as religious ones.—ED.]

### THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

SIR,—You devote two pages or so to arguing that those who speak of the Authorized Version of the Bible as "a well of English undefiled," are woefully mistaken creatures, obsessed with the fetish value of a book which has outlived its time. As one who is prepared to disagree with you on that point, though agreeing wholeheartedly on its absolute lack of doctrinal or theological value, will you allow me a few lines to state the other side of the case?

The so-called "Song of Solomon" contains magnificent love-poetry; the "Book of Job" is a sombre mystery drama; such fantastic tales as that of Daniel in the den of lions, have a fascination comparable with that of the tales of Edgar Allen Poe. And who can resist the last despairing cry of the suddenly human Jesus on the cross, when he realized at long last that all his pretensions had been without basis?

The language in which these things are written is magnificent, and we do not improve our case by denying it. As to whether it is Elizabethan language I do not care. That it is wonderful English which can be read for that fact, and for that alone is all that matters to me.

You would not deny the purely literary merits of a book, say, on Fascism, which was written in flawless English, even though you would abhor the doctrines which it expressed. Why, then, attempt to deny the literary merits of the Authorized Version of the Bible, which every literary critic of distinction (and every student with a sensitive ear) has admitted to be written with a touch of genuine genius?

Incidentally your arguments are answered by Mr. Cutner's article on Tyndale, in the course of which he says: "A great deal of the special kind of language of the Authorized Version is real poetry."

JOHN ROWLAND.

[In his haste to defend the Bible, Mr. Rowland completely misunderstands the question at issue. Whether the Bible has or has not magnificent love poetry, or anything else of a striking nature simply has nothing to do with the case. And it would be quite easy to parallel any "magnificent"

passage taken from the Bible, with passages on the same subject from Spenser, or Shakespeare or other writers of that era, to say nothing of those taken from Greek literature.

The points at issue is whether the Bible really is a "well of English undefiled," and whether the English of the Bible was ever an English that was written and spoken by the English people. It is so easy to fall into line with an accepted tradition that has been created and perpetuated in the interests of an established religion. The last cry of Jesus is a particularly unfortunate illustration in this respect. We advise here the reading of *King Lear*. The example of Daniel as a supreme example of even the scene it describes is almost grotesque, if it is meant that it cannot be bettered elsewhere. What Mr. Rowlands ought to have done is to show (a) that the English of the Bible was a written or spoken English, (b) that the Bible enriched English by furnishing models for literary works that were copied by others to the extent that English literature would not have been what it is in the absence of the Bible, (c) that the Bible is not what it was because of the special retention of a set form that was peculiar to the Bible because it largely retained the quality of a dead language, (d) that it was not the genius of its translators that by retaining a set (largely archaic) form of speech, gave the Bible an authority it could never have possessed without it. We admit the Bible contains poetry, but it certainly does not contain *great* poetry. And to compare its dramatic and tragic force with that of Shakespeare, Æschylus, or Euripides is just absurd.

With regard to Mr. Cutner's article, every contributor is responsible for his own views.—C.C.]

STR.—We have had some "differences," so I am taking this chance of writing to say that I agree entirely with what you say about the Bible. I have always believed that the talk about the Bible's style was sheer cant; the only people who ever talked or wrote under its influence were small puritan sects; it never entered into the real life or speech of the people. You put the whole case forcibly and effectively.

JACK LINDSAY.

## Obituary

ANDREW MILLAR

VERY many of our readers will have learned from a hurried note in last week's issue, of the death of our old friend and contributor, Mr. Andrew Millar. Chiefly he was known to Freethinkers by his writings in this paper, articles always marked with a fine feeling, poetic vigour, and a broad humanitarianism that endeared him to many to whom he was no more than a name. Those who knew him personally, found in him a very staunch Freethinker, a man filled with kindness to all living things, passionately fond of nature in all its moods, modest and quite devoid of self-seeking. He was a very frequent contributor to these columns, and his articles were, we have cause to know, admired by our readers. He also contributed regularly to the local paper, *The Ardrossan and Salrcoats Herald*, and took part in those columns in many controversies on behalf of Freethought. His opinions were known to all, and we think we may say that his character was respected by all. He died as he lived, a Freethinker, and was cremated at the Maryhill Crematorium, Glasgow, on Friday, October 23. The sympathy of all our readers will go out to his wife and children.

We append an affectionate tribute by his son Hugh.

### LAST SCENE OF ALL

The hail was being driven by a snell son' wester on the bleak uplands of South Ayrshire, when we arrived at that haunt of Andrew Millar's, which was the source of much of his inspiration.

The "brawling Coyl," that Burns speaks of was in spate, its muddy, brown waters flowed swiftly between grassy banks mantled with sodden Autumn leaves, and the wind sighed through the leafless trees. Above was the lowering sky laden with black slow moving clouds.

It was a natural and appropriate setting for this informal ceremony, and the atmosphere of melancholy would have inspired the thinker whose wish it was to have his ashes flung to the winds at this boyhood haunt.

Andrew Millar has lived and now Freethought is the poorer for his passing. But memory like the Coyl flows on. The snowdrops will spring again on the banks of this murmuring brook, and we who are left will gaze on the harbingers of Spring when grief has lost its poignancy and memory its sting.

HUGH MILLAR.

MR. GEORGE CARRINGTON

WE regret to hear of the death of Mr. George Carrington, of 12 Randall Street, Battersea, which occurred in St. James Hospital, Balham, on October 27, in his 68th year. Mr. Carrington did good public work for Freethought in the days when it required both devotion and courage, and his interest in the cause never wavered.

## 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, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Evans, Barnes and Tuson. *Freethinker* on sale at Kiosk. Should be ordered in advance to avoid disappointment. *Freethinker* and *Spain and the Church* on sale outside the Park gates.

#### INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Primrose Restaurant, 66, Heath Street, Hampstead, N.W.3, one minute from Hampstead Underground Station): 7.30, H. Stewart Wisheart—"Freethought and Atheism against Religion and Reaction."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4, opposite Clapham Common Station, Underground): 7.30, Mr. Ben Bradley—"The Policy of the Anti-Imperialism League."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C. 1): 11.0, Professor H. Levy, D.Sc.—"The Crime of Being a Jew."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Miss Kathleen Melby, A.R.C.A.—"Vincent Van Gogh, What is Self-expression?"

### COUNTRY

#### INDOOR.

BEDLINGTON STATION (Welfare Hall): 7.0, Tuesday, November 10, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"Has Humanity Benefitted by Christianity?"

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, D. Robinson (Liverpool)—"Why I am an Atheist."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N.S.S. (Shakespeare Rooms, Edmund Street, Livery Street): 7.0, Mr. H. W. Cottingham—"Is War Inevitable?"

BLACKBURN BRANCH N.S.S. (Cobden Hall, Cort Street, Blackburn): 7.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Secularism and Current Events." Literature on Sale.

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Bradford Mechanics' Institute, Town Hall Square, Bradford): 7.0, Mr. R. H. Rosetti—"A Search for God."

BURNLEY (Barden House Club): 11.0, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Catholic Church and Spain."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Freecardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.45, Mr. R. Foulis—"The Blue Book."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mrs. C. M. Bridges, G.S.S.—"How I Got Salvation."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chapman Cohen—"Some Aspects of Life and Death."

(Continued on page 719)

What the Church did for Spain

# SPAIN AND THE CHURCH

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Members of the Society will be admitted free to the lectures upon production of a member's ticket. Tickets will be issued for single lectures at a cost of 2s. each.

## PAGAN ELEMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY

H. CUTNER

The author has here collected a number of the most striking facts about the origin of Christian institutions, such as Christmas Day, the Sabbath, Easter, the Virgin Birth, the Cross, etc., and has shown, from reliable authorities, that these origins were all Pagan. A chapter is devoted to the Pagan origin of the Mass, with many illustrative comments; and finally there is an entertaining account of Holy Relics which are one of the grossest frauds in the history of the Christian Church. This little work should be on the bookshelves of all "fighting" Freethinkers.

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ESTABLISHED NEARLY HALF A CENTURY

(Continued from page 718)

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, entrance in Christian Street, Liverpool): 7.0, Rev. S. Spencer, B.A. (Liverpool)—"Is the Golden Rule a Fallacy?"

PRESTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hesketh Buildings, Room No. 9, Ormskirk Road entrance): 7.30, Mr. McClellan (Bury)—"Is Spiritualism True?"

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