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Views and Opinions

The "Crisis" and After

WHAT we had to say on the question of the Chamberlain "Peace," had not to wait long for confirmation. We are not claiming any great degree of foresight, only that as we have no particular political leanings, and being concerned with the humanistic aspect of affairs, the lesson was not hard to read. We wrote before the House of Commons debate, otherwise much that we said might have been powerfully enforced, although there would have been nothing new to add. For example, we said that it was absurd, even traitorous to the best interests of humanity, to pretend respect and cordial feelings for such a government as that of Germany. We said that our Government when dealing with such Governments as that of Germany should

be restricted to the most formal conditions, and we should cease insulting our own intelligence by pretending that we have any faith in either their word or their peaceful intentions.

In the House of Commons, three days later, Mr. Churchill said:—

You have to consider the character of the Nazi movement and the rule which it implies. . . . You must have diplomatic and correct relations, but there can never be friendship between the Nazi Power, that Power which vaunts the spirit of aggression and conquest, which derives strength and perverted pleasure from persecution and uses, as we have seen, with pitiless brutality, the threat of murderous force. That Power cannot ever be the trusted friend of the British democracy.

And here is another echo of what we said last week, and from the same speaker, as to the aftermath of the Chamberlain peace at any price policy:—

I foresee and foretell that the policy of submission will carry with it restrictions upon the freedom of

speech and debate in Parliament, on public platforms, and discussions in the Press—indeed I hear it said sometimes now that we cannot allow the Nazi system of dictatorship to be criticized by ordinary common English politicians. Then with a press under control, in part direct, but more potently indirect, with every organ of public opinion doped and chloroformed into acquiescence, we shall be conducted along further stages of our journey.

This is not exactly a forecast of what will take place, it is an account of what is taking place. More than once the Hitlerian gangsters have complained of the freedom of the English press in criticizing Germany. And more than once Cabinet Ministers under both the Baldwin and the Chamberlain Governments have expressed the wish for less outspokenness on the part of the press. I will come back to this in a moment, but I may again add a kind of footnote to last week's article, which was uttered in the debate on the practically free hand given by Chamberlain to Hitler. It was pointed out that there was a very grave distinction between passing a group of people from one Power to another (an almost indefensible thing without the consent of the people to be transferred) and placing a body of men and women under the control of the thugs who control Germany. Ill-treatment and the denial of the most elementary social rights are certain to follow. This is already being illustrated in Czechoslovakia, after being illustrated in Germany itself. It is reported by British correspondents in the annexed country, that hundreds have committed suicide, and thousands have disappeared, either murdered or placed in concentration camps. The wholesale flight of the people before the advance of Hitler is alone enough to indicate the nature of the rule with which they are faced. Ordinary people, particularly those attached to the soil, do not leave all their household goods and fly unless they believe they are running away from an approaching terror. In this case there was no need of mere belief. There was absolute knowledge of what awaited them. If the Prime Minister thinks of these things, it may seriously disturb the tranquillity of his fishing holiday. These are not political issues; if there was ever a purely human question awaiting the judgment of the world it is this one.

All there is to add here is that although Mr. Chamberlain informed the House that owing to the Munich visit Germany was getting much less than Hitler demanded at Godesberg, so Conservative a paper as the *Evening Standard* now admits that "the territorial gains go far beyond what was laid down at Munich, and even at Godesberg, while the commercial gains include half of Czechoslovakia's trade with her neighbours," and Germany's proportion of Danubian trade is increased from 50 to 75 per cent. The paper adds, "From now on the Nazi autarchic barter system will hold sway from the North to the Black Sea." No wonder Hitler thinks well of Chamberlain.

Controlling the News

To come back to Mr. Churchill's fear for freedom of speech, public meeting and the press. The chief instrument of instruction with the mass of the people (I do not mean by this what is called the lower class, but to at least more than half of the population throughout the whole of society) are the newspaper and the cinema. Five minutes conversation with casual acquaintances—working-men, business men, professional men, etc., will show how singularly ill-informed they are, on historical matters particularly. It is not a matter of being uninformed merely, that would represent inertia only. But their taking a daily paper of the *Express* or *Mail* type, or the fact of their having passed through a school, a trifle above a council school, gives them such a feeling of self-sufficiency that they almost defy further instruction. They are ignorant without feeling the need for enlightenment. But of the two main channels of information named, one may say of them that they work by methods of suppression, distortion and misleading suggestion. And the platform exists under difficulties that ought not to be in operation. The letting of town halls and public halls is very often determined by whether those having power agree with the purpose for which the meeting is called. Only the other day the Albert Hall was engaged for a meeting of the League of Nations Union on behalf of Czechoslovakia. It was cancelled at short notice. At whose instigation I do not know. Perhaps those in control thought it might interfere with the peace Mr. Chamberlain was bringing from Munich. The B.B.C., a Government controlled monopoly, manages to suppress and mislead by giving "doctored" news. Mr. A. J. Cummings, a particularly well-informed writer on foreign affairs, writes in the *News Chronicle* for October 6 that under pressure from the Foreign Office his own item of news dealing with the European crisis was deleted from a Paramount news-reel, as was also one by Mr. Wickham Steed. But the news-reel was allowed to publish the following over a portrait of Mr. Chamberlain:—

Our words of admiration are exhausted for the man who prevented another Armageddon.

(By the way, the other day I heard a man in the train enlighten a fellow traveller who was seeking information that Armageddon had something to do with Bolshevism). But I am sure that the group of Members of Parliament who have made a contract with an advertising agent to boost Mr. Chamberlain could not have managed it better. With the constant insistence of doctored news, and the exclusion of any counter-suggestion, it is very easy to get anything over under existing conditions. In the long run, it may be that the technique of propaganda bequeathed to us by the "great war" may yet prove the worst of the legacies of a war that was fought to make the world fit for heroes to live in. And the worst feature of it all is that there is not a political party in the country—leaving out of sight the religious bodies, who regard it as a moral duty to prevent the free circulation of opinion antagonistic to their respective creeds—who would not, if they were in power, act on much the same lines as are now being worked. There is more knowledge in the world to-day than there was a couple of generations ago. Of that there is no doubt. There is also more power at our disposal. Whether there is a greater appreciation of intellectual freedom and of the individual dignity of man, is a question that is certainly open to discussion.

* * *

Democracy and Freedom

It has been said over and over again that the principle of democracy is at stake. That is true, but it is

not the lower political democracy that is threatened, but the higher democracy of human dignity and self-respect. Democracy as the wisest of the Greeks saw it, and as the best men of the French Revolutionary period, the dawn of modern democracy, saw it, meant more than a nominal equality at the ballot-box; it meant a settled respect by each for the individual value of each. It stood for human dignity and for the expression of the best in human nature. Democracy is, as one man has put it, the quest of humanity for its own development. The usurpation of political power by a man, or by a class, hereditary or otherwise, is a social crime because it is a denial of the right to that development. As a youth I revolted against the insolence of another who said that mentally I should not go beyond the limits he prescribed, and my repugnance to that form of tyranny has strengthened with the years. It is this freedom of the human spirit, this rejection of the fundamental rights of each human being to express what is best in him that makes tyranny the hideous thing it is; and the worthless piece of paper that Mr. Chamberlain flourished in the face of the British public was a poor substitute for the human rights he had brushed aside and the impetus he gave to the growth of the vilest system that the world has yet seen.

I said last week that the best of German intelligence, and the finest examples of German human nature are now to be found in exile, in concentration camps, or in cemeteries. What that system is with which the British Government has shaken hands and expressed the hope for more friendly relations, while helping to hand over more millions of human beings to its brutalizing influence, I can best put in the words of Thomas Mann, one of the best known of German writers, and who, with Einstein and Freud, and many others, have escaped death or degradation by exile. German Fascism, says Mann:—

Practises a truly grotesque contempt for humanity—grotesque if we think of the victims, grotesque if we consider those who exercise the contempt, since they are themselves the most contemptible of creatures. I am willing to accept contempt which comes from on high, the contempt of the great personality that has outgrown ordinary limitations. But it is impossible to understand how completely despicable creatures, lacking every moral and spiritual attribute, could undertake to be contemptuous. It is, to be sure, the kind of contempt which strives with all its might to degrade and corrupt humanity in order to force the people to do its will. Terror destroys people, that is clear. It corrupts character, releases every evil impulse, turns them into cowardly hypocrites and shameless informers. It makes them contemptible—that is the reason why these contempters of humanity love terrorism. The treatment of the Jews in Germany, the concentration camps, and the things which took place and are still taking place in them, are the illustration and proof of this. Every kind of dishonour, disgrace . . . the destruction of mind and body through bodily torture, the corruption of justice through force until men, overcome by extreme horror, despair of justice and abjure it for the worship of force—these all are expedients of this lust for human degradation which it would be too much honour to call devilish, for it is simply diseased. . . . Is there not something diseased in the boundless confidence which the dictators place in a population that has been stultified and intellectually enfeebled to meet their desires and needs. There is but one public voice—theirs. Every other voice has been silenced. There is no contradiction, not even the slightest memory of opposition. Undisturbed and to their heart's content they can crack the whip of lies over the heads of the populace—the whip of lies called propaganda.

But it is the "Hand of God" that has moved out

Government to give what help it can to hand a people over to the Fascist Government of Germany, and to do so with expressions of still more friendly relations than exist at present with such an excrescence on civilization.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

A Princely Propagandist

"In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them."—*Bernard Shaw.*

At the time when the Secularists had started their hard task of converting the English-speaking world to Freethought, a kindly, handsome Englishman conceived the idea of devoting himself to Rationalist propaganda on his own account. The man was Thomas Scott, of Mount Pleasant, Ramsgate, Kent. He had charm, he had that chivalry for principle which represents the highest manhood, and he did his work joyously. His memory is kept green for what he was; his memory is treasured for what he did; and the record of his life's work is a footnote to the history of Freethought.

Thomas Scott had an adventurous career. Born in 1808, he was, in his youth, one of the pages to King Charles X. of France. A great traveller, he journeyed in all parts of the world. Well-educated, he knew the world of books, and also the book of the world. In the later years of his life he devoted his time, money, and abilities to the furtherance of Freethought, and proved himself a veritable prince among propagandists. During the years 1862 to 1877 he issued from his pleasant seaside home a very large number of booklets and pamphlets, privately printed, and distributed at his own expense, the total collection making twenty stout volumes of Biblical criticism. The writers he gathered around him were men of outstanding ability, and among them were Moncure Conway, the Ethical stalwart, and the author of the standard life of Thomas Paine, John Addington Symonds, the historian of the Renaissance, Sir R. D. Hanson, Judge Strange, Dr. Zerffi, Bishop Hinds, and Sir G. W. Cox, the Orientalist. Mrs. Annie Besant made her first Freethought appearance under the banner of brave, old Scott. She contributed an "Essay on the Deity of Jesus of Nazareth," "by the wife of a benefited clergyman." This led to the Rev. Frank Besant insisting on his wife taking the communion, or leaving him, and, brave woman that she was, she chose the better course. Afterwards she wrote more tracts for the indefatigable Mr. Scott, since incorporated in her famous book, *My Path to Atheism*, an illuminative piece of self-portraiture.

It is difficult to imagine now the flutter and excitement caused in Victorian sheltered homes and country rectories and vicarages by Thomas Scott's persistent propaganda. In the "sixties" and "seventies" of the last century, Freethought views had a decided air of startling novelty, and the clergy had not then realized that discretion was the better part of valour in their particular case of defending a two-thousand-years'-old superstition. For Scott levelled so many of his heaviest guns at the clergy, and bombarded them through the post with tracts and pamphlets. One of them was entitled "213 Questions," to which answers were respectfully asked, and each one was well calculated to make a parson think furiously, if he were capable of such action.

The most ambitious work Scott issued was a book, entitled the *English Life of Jesus*, which was designed to do for British readers what Renan had already done

for France; and Strauss for Germany. It was, indeed, a thunderous weapon of revolt, and was actually written in conjunction with Sir George Cox, who being a bishop of the Established Church, was unwilling to put his own name to the volume. In laying down his life's work, Scott said: "The only true orthodoxy is loyalty to reason." He died at Norwood in 1878, and he most certainly deserves a niche in the Freethought pantheon because in his day he did valiant work for human emancipation. Animated throughout by high ideals, and supported by a strong character, he had the true courage which sweeps away selfishness, weakness, and fears in discharging what he felt were moral obligations.

The work done by Thomas Scott and his circle of enthusiastic friends has its importance in the history of the popularizing of Freethought principles. During sixty years which have elapsed since Scott's death, great and far-reaching changes have taken place. The most important are the safeguarding of bequests to Freethought; the right of Freethinkers to sit in Parliament without taking an oath; the right of affirmation; and the ever-increasing number of women associated with the Freethought Movement. In the far-off days of Holyoake, Southwell, and Bradlaugh the audiences at Freethought meetings were almost entirely composed of men, whereas to-day the position is very different. Under present-day administration, the Freethought Party is increasing in numbers and influence. The tone of its literature is more cultured and scholarly, and its criticism more varied. It is still in the vanguard of progress, and is actually sheltering behind it all the weaker heterodox people, who otherwise had been crushed out of existence by the sheer weight and influence of Orthodoxy.

Freethinkers have a right to be proud of their history. As the little "Revenge" earned an undying name by hurling herself against the great battleships of the Spaniards, so the Freethinkers have displayed extraordinary courage in attacking the heart of the far more formidable Armada of Superstition. The greater the perils, the greater the victory; and in the ripe years to come recognition must be given to their superb courage, which, disregarding any material reward, was satisfied with the knowledge that their action would diffuse the blessings of Liberty. For in that happy time the stormy note of battle will be changed to the stirring and triumphant music of victory.

"Hail to the courage which gave
Voice to its creed, ere the creed
Won consecration from time."

MIMNERMUS.

The Cinema and "The Christian"

THERE are two distinct parties in Christian Journalism, and in Christian churches, for and against the "Films." One side thinks the films will help religion, the other side regards them as a hindrance.

The Christian, which has pursued a consistent attack on "Cinema-churches," recently issued a challenging pamphlet called: *Film or Sermon*. It is prefaced by Testimonials from such leading clergy as Dr. Campbell Morgan, and influential laymen like Sir Edgar Plummer.

Like so much Christian "logic," most of the arguments are of the usual absurd type, based on a supposition that unless the Cinema and other inventions happened to have been mentioned and recommended by Jesus Christ—or perhaps used by Him—it is a sort of blasphemy to admit them into "Divine Service."

We see this sort of thing in the anachronistic bias—especially in Catholic churches and Catholic usages in all kinds of ceremonies—in favour of Candles, where gas or electric lights would be infinitely cleaner and better if illumination were the object aimed at.

To such a bias we must attribute the argument implied here by Clarence H. M. Foster, M.A., "There is grave danger of departure from the God-ordained method of presenting the Gospel." The Editor of the *Christian*, while summoning every kind of consideration against Films, also contrasts the cinema with: "the Divine plan for the evangelization of the world." It appears that Jesus once and for all, in full knowledge that Cinemas and Wireless, and all kinds of inventions which would improve upon His own way, namely preaching sermons, has banned in advance everything He Himself never used.

There is, however, much more in this pamphlet than this barren plea. The evangelical school which *The Christian* represents never approved of Roman Catholic "Passion Plays" or their predecessors—the ancient "Miracle" and "Morality" Plays so beloved of many Christians to-day. This particular pious editor objects to Crucifixes, pictures and images which "not only do not aid the mind, but often become a positive hindrance to spiritual perception." We admit that Jesus never painted pictures, and never carved crucifixes in his own carpentry. But then Jesus is not reported as sending telegrams, or stamp-licking, or joining the H.S.A. Yet good Christians do these things.

But "the greatest of all objections," says *The Christian*, is that "any attempt to present the essential teaching of the Gospels cannot be made effective without introducing both the figure and the voice of the Lord Himself." This, of course, would never do. No mere actor would LOOK like a God, and, of course, it would spoil the effect of the "teaching" if "the Lord Himself" were a Cockney, or if He coughed, or "spake like a man spake." Jesus would have to talk in more or less plain English. Our clergy, especially the specimens who are chosen to grind out their weird "teaching" over the Radio, surely talk exactly like a God would talk, that is to say there is nothing MANLY about their ill-conceived church-yard intonation. If they can be trusted to voice "the oracles of God" in the B.B.C. Studio, nobody need cavil at their dressing-up in more or less "Oriental" dress and introducing themselves to an audience as ignorant as themselves (as in "Green Pastures," where even the humble "fish-fry" is called in aid of an artistic illusion).

"A true sense of reverence," says *The Christian*, forbids all human "personation" of Christ. Why? The admission is clearly a proof that the historic Christ is altogether abandoned. There was no "Incarnation," because any incarnation depends literally upon the "personation" of a human being. In fact "Incarnation" IS Impersonation! If an unpersonable "God" (whatever that may be) came on earth (from the Infinite which includes earth) such an "advent" would have exactly the same effect (namely none at all), as if this Deity remained in heaven or wherever he usually resided. Merely to say "I am here" would involve human organs—and we suppose also a Heaven-earth Dictionary—or a course at the nearest Berlitz School. The old painters were right; if Jesus was any kind of man He wore the ordinary clothes and looked like an ordinary man. Let us add that the survival of the Passion Play in ignorant rural districts amongst untravelled peasants has greatly helped RELIGION to survive amongst the same honest but unlearned rustics.

The Christian is on more scientific ground, when it realizes that the Cinema substitute for Sermons "may easily be interpreted by the public as a confession of

bankruptcy of the pulpits concerned." We see no escape from this certainty. But a bankrupt is not to be blamed for admitting his bankruptcy. The fault rests with those who deny a failure obvious to all on-lookers.

Incidentally the *Christian* adverts to the mischief of the Wireless. It lays its finger on a genuine loss of something very valuable to the Church, in the fact that people are getting something "without charge." The Bishop of Winchester is quoted as saying: "I have heard of churches which have drawn large congregations when Motion Pictures were shown, but have been empty directly the films were exhausted" (we understand this exodus precedes the collection as well as the prayers).

The conclusion of the onslaught of this highly evangelical weekly is to ask despairingly:—

Will the people who have to be lured by a film rise any higher in the sphere of worship than do those who comfortably listen to prayers over the wireless while they loil in armchairs at home, and think they have thereby satisfied the claims of their Maker and Redeemer?

We are bound to admit that our own answer is as pessimistic as that of *The Christian*. The armchairs win.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH.

Charles Thomson

"An honest mind and plain."—*King Lear* ii. 2.

IRELAND (like every other country) knows nothing of her greatest men. Strange is it not that phantoms, regardless of time and place, should instantly command attention, and find both footing and following!

Be it Jesus, the founder of Christianity in Palestine, two thousand years ago, or Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism in America, just over one hundred years ago, the result is the same. It may be a question which of these two—Jesus or Joe—will be leading two thousand years hence. Jesus had an eighteen hundred years start of Joe, but Joe, in a more enlightened age began remarkably well. When he founded his religion he had only six followers, but he could boast of having 150,000 disciples who regarded his voice as from heaven, and were ready to do his bidding when he died fourteen years later. Now, he has a large following, and his religion is gaining converts all over the world.

'Twas ever thus! Jesus, St. Patrick, Joseph Smith, and their like, are accepted by the many headed multitude whilst men like the subject of this sketch remain practically unknown.

Truth is often more interesting than fiction. In 1730 a poor Irish lad of eleven years of age denied food and freedom at home found both, for himself and his fellowmen, in America. It was largely through his activity that we lost America.

Shortly after landing in Philadelphia this boy bought, for a few cents, part of an old MS., which the auctioneer said was full of "outlandish letters." This Greek MS. fascinated him, and he determined to learn its language. He acquired by patient study a fine classical education and translated the "outlandish letters"—a fragment of the Septuagint. Intoxicated by his efforts he commenced a search for the missing parts, which fortunately, after two years, he found. And so to Charles Thomson we owe the first English translation of the Septuagint.

Thomson's efforts to educate himself made a man of him. He played such an earnest part in Colonial affairs that he was called—"The life and cause of

liberty." And when he became Secretary of Congress it was customary for the members to call upon him to verify disputed points by saying—"Let us have truth or Thomson." He was a great friend of the Delaware Indians who called him WEH-WO-LA-ENT—"The man who speaks truth." To George Washington he was a life-long comrade and friend.

Men like Washington and Thomson must have been a sore trial to George III. No wonder he wanted to chastise America! And that he failed! But the tumult he caused over its loss, unlike the Byronic tumult raised over his *soul* in "The Vision of Judgment," didn't "dwindle to a calm" for many years after th' war (1775-1783), which may account for the following.

"The COVENANT, commonly called THE OLD TESTAMENT, translated from the SEPTUAGINT," by Charles Thomson, was published in 4 vols. with the N.T. added, etc., at Philadelphia in 1808, but very few copies of it had reached this country fifty years later, and even in America, says Horne, in 1846 it had become very scarce and dear. In 1904 Mr. S. F. Fells published a nice edition in two volumes (Skeffington & Son, London) but the book still remains unknown. By a few it was warmly welcomed, and by a few it is still prized.

Dr. Adam Clarke (1762-1832) was not only a scholarly Wesleyan minister, but a singularly honest man. "The man who has not read Shakespeare, public prayers ought to be offered up for him," is one of his great sayings, known to most people, but few people know of his early championship of Charles Thomson. In his "Commentary" on the Bible, for instance, he says: "The study of this version (Thomson's Septuagint) served more to expand and illuminate my mind than all the theological works I had ever consulted. I had proceeded but a short way in it before I was convinced that the prejudices against it were utterly unfounded, and that it was of incalculable advantage towards a proper understanding of the literal sense of the Scripture." The *literal* sense, yes! The Authorized version, written with poetic freedom and licence, without regard to either logical connexion of thought, or correctness of detail, appeals to the imagination only. The Septuagint is free from many of the contradictions, blunders and blemishes which disgrace the Authorized Version, and give pain to believers who possess a moral sense.

The Old Testament Scriptures are translated from manuscripts of no great antiquity. The oldest manuscript of which the date is certainly known is that of A.D. 916. The Greek Septuagint was made two centuries before the Christian Era. In the *Preface of the Revisers* to the R.V., we are told that—"In some words of very frequent occurrence, the authorized version being either inadequate or inconsistent, and sometimes misleading. . . ." But in the Revised Version we have a repetition of the inspired blunders, contradictions, immoralities, etc.—didn't they need revising?

Yet this imperfect translation of a faulty manuscript is preferred to the more perfect Septuagint! But why should the Septuagint version of the Psalms of David be accepted and incorporated in the Church of England Prayer Book, and its other books rejected? St. Paul and Jesus were acquainted with the Septuagint. It seems to have been considered genuinely sacred by them. For instance: Psalm xiv. in the Bible has only seven verses while it has eleven verses in the Septuagint, and these missing four verses in the Bible are quoted by Paul—Rom. iii. 14-18. The sole instance is given here to Paul because it serves a double purpose.

To illustrate the style of the Septuagint spoken of by Dr. Andrew Clarke the following may interest many readers:—

Ezra v. 9. (Referring to the building of the Temple)—"Who commanded you to build this house and to make up these walls?"

Sept. Who has given you orders to build this house and renew this theatrical entertainment?

Prov. xix. 22. A poor man is better than a liar.

Sept. A poor just man is better than a rich liar.

Prov. xix. 11. The discretion of a man deferreth his anger.

Sept. A merciful man is slow to wrath.

Prov. xxvi. 17. He that passeth by and meddleth with strife not belonging to him, is like one that taketh a dog by its ears.

Sept. He who meddleth with another's strife, is like one who taketh a dog by the tail.

Prov. xxvi. 27. Whoso diggeth a pit shall fall therein.

Sept. May he who diggeth a pit for his neighbour fall into it.

Ecc. vii. 13. For who can make *that* straight which he hath made crooked?

Sept. For who can make *him* straight whom God hath made crooked?

Zeph. ii. 14. The Cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows.

R.V. The pelican and the porcupine shall lodge in the chapters thereof: their voice shall sing in the windows.

Sept. In its stalls the chamelions and porcupines shall make their beds; and wild beasts shall utter their voice in its vaults.

The above illustrations have been chosen because of their brevity. To economize space I have not, save in the last instance, given the R.V. because of its similarity to the A.V. The last revision from "Cormorant and bittern" to "pelican and porcupine" I thought deserved notice.

In conclusion, if this should meet the eye of a believer wishing to get at the meaning of "the many things hard to be understood" with which the Bible abounds (Paul has not got all of them) he will find Thomson's Septuagint all that Dr. Andrew Clarke says of it as an aid to study and clarity of thought. As a book of reference to anyone interested in the Old Testament it is invaluable.

GEORGE WALLACE.

Loisy and Couchoud

IN M. D. Petre's eulogy of the ex-Abbé Loisy in the *Hibbert Journal* for July, he refers to one of the *Pensées* of Charles Péguy—"When it is a question of ancient history we are held up by the lack of references; when it is a question of modern history we are obstructed by the mass of references." This is undeniably true, and it is a pity that those engaged on the various "biographies" of Jesus seem to imagine that the references for the truth of any episode in his life need only come from the Gospels. *They* contain the Truth, *they* are the Truth, and nothing more is needed.

Loisy has never actually written a "life" of Jesus. His work has been to try and get at what really happened in Palestine at the time of Jesus—to cut away the obvious myth and legend, and to present to the world a picture, the veracity of which it is impossible to question. So drastic, however, have been his conclusions that the Roman Church had to get rid of him. He conclusively proved that, when one severs the truth away, there is practically nothing left of the Christian religion. Away go the miracles, the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, the Ascension. Away go the pretty stories in which Jesus is shown as a marvellous teacher with a huge crowd always following him to listen to the

gospel of good tidings. Actually we know next to nothing of what really happened.

Loisy did not reach his results without tremendous labour. Year after year he drudged at his task, working mostly for the honour of truth, and there was little left of official Christianity when he had finished. It is doubtful indeed that at long last he was even ready to defend the historicity of the Crucifixion—though he knew well that if that event went, there actually was nothing left of Christianity—or Jesus. The whole point of those who maintain the reality of the *probable* events in the life of Jesus is that the martyrdom of Jesus created such a tremendous impression on his followers that almost by itself it can account for the founding of the deep religious faith which went to the making of historic Christianity. It is a facile solution, but it has never satisfied all historians. Gibbon tried to show that the evolution of Christianity was a perfectly natural happening, granting, of course, that there was a Jesus who really was martyred. But a deeper study of the religious atmosphere in contemporary society showed that there were far more elements in the question than the simple one of a real Jesus.

Loisy soon found this out, and he set to work to preserve, if he could, all that was possible in the faith in which he had been brought up. It must have been a heavy blow to him to find that it was impossible to hold to any of it with the exception of about one per cent. But like Renan he would never give up the striking figure—to him—of Jesus of Nazareth. And so we find that in his old age Loisy has taken up the challenge, as Petre says, "passionately to prove that Christ was man, that he lived and suffered, and left his message, and his memory behind him." Loisy had already proved that the central thesis of Christianity, that Jesus was God, was utterly false; but he could not dispense with Jesus the man.

Dr. P. L. Couchoud is Loisy's formidable opponent. Already he had written a book entitled *The Enigma of Jesus*, in which he tried to show that the evidence for Jesus as a historical personage was simply non-existent. But like Robertson, Drews, and W. B. Smith, before him he was not content to leave it at that. If there never was a Jesus, how can we account for historic Christianity? The religion must have had some beginning, and if Jesus is eliminated, we must at least offer some alternative explanation. Couchoud's thesis in his latest book *Jesus the God made Man*, "is that Christianity originated in the myth of a God sacrificed in the heavens, this being the common belief of Christians till about A.D. 130, when Marcion transformed the myth into the historical tale of the canonical Gospels, in which Jesus appears as an historical person." This seems to me to be one of the very best theories ever put forward to account for the rise of historic Christianity. It accepts the various astro-myths and Pagan legends which can incontrovertibly be proved to have so far influenced Christianity as to cause St. Augustine to admit that there was a Christianity before *his* Christianity; in other words, that it was merely a modified Paganism. And it accounts for the *real* existence of Jesus, just as the continual discussions on the character of Hamlet make one almost come to believe that it was a real Hamlet who was actually described by Shakespeare, and that he did think and act as the play indicates.

Couchoud may be right or wrong, but he has put forward a very fine theory. It was not difficult for a good story-teller to make a real personage of a myth. The pre-Christian Jesus with his Virgin Birth, his miracles, and his death as a Saviour, was already a familiar personage in contemporary legends, not necessarily under the same name. Put him in a definite epoch, give him a martyr's death, make the hated Jew respon-

sible for that death if possible, add the best ethical teaching from contemporary documents, work in plenty of esoteric symbolism to placate those people who wanted "mystery" in religion, and a clever novelist would have no difficulty in presenting a convincing picture. Couchoud does his best to show how all this was done, but, of course, he was obliged to resort to conjecture to fill in the details.

It is here that Loisy saw his opportunity. If Couchoud was right then a great deal of what Loisy had written about the Christian religion was so much waste paper—and his life-work was misplaced effort. Would it be possible to convict Couchoud of mistakes—mistakes of fact and of inference, mistakes in quotations, and mistakes due to downright ignorance? It was the usual theological method. Bentley tried it with Collins, Lightfoot tried it with the author of *Supernatural Religion*, and it has been the way of almost all theologians in dealing with the heretic. The unbeliever was bound to make mistakes, let us show up his ignorance.

Loisy was in his element, and anyone reading the articles dealing with Couchoud in the *Hibbert Journal* can see how the old theologian enjoyed showing up the "mistakes" of Couchoud, some of which I am quite ready to agree are mistakes. So pleased has Loisy been with himself about the whole question that he has now published a book entitled *History and Myth apropos of Jesus Christ*, in which he has gone far more in detail on the problem. I hope to read it one day for the purposes of a review in these pages.

And what is the upshot of it all? Supposing Couchoud has fallen into error in some of his conjectures and quotations? It is good to have a keen-eyed critic on these points, they can be put right and be eliminated if necessary. But how far these minor (or even major) points will effect the main thesis is another matter. It is almost an impossibility to get at what really happened nearly 2000 years ago, the materials are not available. Even if they were, different thinkers might come to different conclusions. Let anyone read the multiplicity of books dealing with the war of 1914, for example, and see how varied are the points of view and conclusions.

If Couchoud has done nothing else he has shown that it was not a difficult matter to transform a myth into reality—on paper; and that a credulous, superstitious, and ignorant people, under certain circumstances, were ready to believe anything, no matter how stupid and impossible. Loisy himself has given up almost everything that these people believed so religiously; in fact he has shown that nearly everything in the New Testament was utterly impossible. But he still clings to the central figure; no one more than he has proved the mythical origin of other deities; no one more than he has so contemptuously rejected many of the stories regarding Jesus; but Jesus *must* have lived. He is necessary in order to understand the growth of Christianity.

For my part I welcome Loisy's defence. It shows more and more how the myth theory of the story of Jesus has gained ground, how well the work of Dupuis and Volney in France, and Robert Taylor and Robertson in England, has done its part in exposing one of the greatest hoaxes ever perpetrated on mankind.

H. CUTNER.

What a good fellow you are to send me so long an account of the Oxford doings. I have read it twice and lent it to my wife, and when I get home I shall read it again; it has so much interested me. But how durst you attack a live bishop in that fashion? I am quite ashamed of you! Have you no reverence for fine lawn sleeves?

(Letter to Huxley) Charles Darwin.

Acid Drops

The Archbishop of Canterbury is evidently beginning to think that he may have backed the wrong horse. At any rate, after on two successive days assuring the world that the Chamberlain-Hitler arrangement was a manifestation of the "Hand of God," two days later when the general hysteria had died down, he asked the Church Congress at Bristol, "Can the terms of the peace arouse much enthusiasm?" This is very, very bad. After God's hand had been at work to say that its working cannot arouse much enthusiasm is hardly cricket. If Dr. Lang goes on in this way, suggesting that God's interference might be better timed, when he at last presents himself before the throne expecting to grasp the "Hand of God," he may find himself the recipient of the "Divine boot," and be sent to spend eternity in better company than he really deserves.

The Archbishop said they gave thanks to God for having removed the menace of war. But he must not count on being able to fool God as easily as he did the public in the King Edward affair. To thank God for giving us peace, and to add that the way in which he did it does not rouse much enthusiasm, is a back-handed kind of a compliment.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is not alone in developing doubts as to whether the "Hand of God" has been quite as efficacious for peace as it might have been. The Pope, according to the *Universe* of October 7, is of opinion that men have not prepared the way for peace, and even to the last moment their efforts were not for peace. God wants peace, but men won't let him have it. In that case what did the hand of God intend to do, what was it his hand was unable to do, and what were the thanksgiving services about—which thanked God for doing something that has not been done? Is it that the whole religious situation was controlled by that great supporter of modern religion, General "Kid"?

An anonymous clergyman writes to the *Church Times* saying that when it looked as though the Allies were being defeated in 1914-18, prayers of intercession were held and things went well. After the Armistice the attendances dropped off. He feels sure that had the intercessions been continued there would have been "no sowing of dragon's teeth" such as the Versailles' treaty proved to be. But folk can't keep on perpetually bothering the Lord with intercessions. He might take the general wish for granted without needing constant reminding. Besides, nowadays, he doesn't seem to run even the weather in a satisfactory manner. And as Goering has thrown over Jehovah for Odin, how is the former to get into touch with the followers of the latter? The writer of the letter signs himself "Senex." Perhaps it is a slip of the pen for "Senile."

The *World's Press News* for October 5, contains the information that Mr. E. W. White, managing director of the Star Advertising Company, has been appointed by a group of House of Commons Members, to undertake a campaign on behalf of Mr. Chamberlain, to establish him in the position he has taken up with regard to his foreign policy. Now we shall really get the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And if further skilled help is needed, some of the Hollywood experts, or others of even a less expert quality could be hired. The advertising is to start at once. Of course, it is stated that Mr. Chamberlain knows nothing of the arrangement for this advertising, as he would naturally object to being placed upon the same level as an advertisement for soap or a cinema star. These things never are known to the parties concerned. Even the bouquets that are handed over the footlights to an actress, and for which the actress may have paid, are received with great surprise and "You really shouldn't" kind of an air.

The more things change, the more they remain the same. The Rev. J. W. Welch is to succeed the Rev. Ironmonger as Religious Director of the B.B.C.—at a very good salary. It will be his job to see that Sunday broadcasting is conducted in accord with (his) Christian feeling. And it will be his job to circulate the usual lie that nearly everyone is quite pleased with the amount of religion being served up on Sundays, and subscribers prevented listening to anything else while religion is being served out—so far as the British stations are concerned.

The Lord's Day Observance Society, of which Sir Thomas Inskip is, or used to be, President, recently wrote the Worthing Chamber of Trade pointing out that many shops failed to cover their windows on Sunday, and suggested that this was an encouragement to Sunday trading. This was silly enough, but the Chamber went one better in an exhibition of sheer idiocy by solemnly discussing it, and finally adjourned the matter for further consideration. We suggest that the Worthing Chamber of Commerce asks the Council to order that all blinds be drawn on Sunday. That would probably please Sir Thomas Inskip, who used to believe that the troubles of this country are partly due to the desecration of the Sabbath. So they made him a Cabinet Minister.

A chapel in Marylebone recently exhibited the advertisement of a sermon on "How Can I Find God?" One would imagine that God gets lost as easily as an umbrella. But why should any man find God? It is, or ought to be, God's business to find man. And it is certain that no one would discover they had lost God, or that they wanted to find him, unless the discovery was made for them by those who live upon this game of alternately losing and finding God. It is a strange business.

Wreaths were recently laid by the Imperial War Graves Commission, on the Unknown Soldier's Tomb in the Unter den Linden, and the British War Cemetery, Berlin. The Commission represented the "Million dead of the British Commonwealth in humble gratitude to Almighty God." What a thing to be grateful to God for! If there had been two million dead the Commission would, we imagine, have been twice as grateful—and twice as ridiculous.

There was a very important item of news broadcast on Sunday evening last. The son of the Duke of Kent was spending his birthday in Buckinghamshire. We do not know how many engagements he had cancelled to do this, or whether he had intended to go on a shooting expedition in Africa. Probably it was the "Crisis" that led him to celebrate his birthday in the domestic and rural surroundings of The Coppins, Iver, Bucks. We forgot to mention that the son of the Duke of Kent is just three years of age. Sons of ordinary persons are inclined to go off on their own at that age. But the domestic ties in our Royal Family are unusually strong. Hence the son of the Duke of Kent spent his birthday at home.

It cannot be said that Hitler is not helping Chamberlain to secure peace. He is now proceeding to still further increase his armaments (in this he will be materially helped by having control of Czechoslovakia) and publicly warns Mr. Chamberlain that the appointment of men such as Churchill, Eden and Duff Cooper will be displeasing to him. We have no doubt that this warning, which may also have been given through other channels will receive attention. It is quite certain also that neither Mr. Churchill nor Mr. Eden would be acceptable to Signor Mussolini. Hitler has given Chamberlain the first crack of the whip.

Stanley Grove Spiro, who has just "gone down" under sentence of eight years, is evidently a cute psychologist. A friend of his says that Spiro had three offices; one in

New Broad Street, E.C., for City business; one in Waterloo Road for doctors, churchmen, and people of religious views, to whom he posed as a "serious God-fearing man who could take a dean's cheque for thousands with a 'Heaven bless this venture,' or a bishop's bearer bonds, with the expressed hope that there would soon be a Christian revival in England"; and one in Suffolk Place, Pall Mall, where pretty typists, well dressed clerks, and a butler serving champagne, sherry and cigars welcomed the smarter set. In the last instance "smoke-room stories" would take the place of Spiro's pious comportment in Waterloo Road.

"Judge" Rutherford, the American Barnum of Prophets, doesn't allow failure of his prophecies to damp his prophetic soul. At the Albert Hall he foretold that the Czech crisis was preliminary to the wiping-out of Satan's followers. His "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society" must have an enormous amount of "mugs' money," for his piffle was broadcast to 50 cities around the world. This showman has no use for critics, of whom there were a few at this meeting. One woman asked: "What good is it preaching about Christ to me? I haven't enough to eat. I'm unemployed." Christian stewards of the "Judge's" and the Lord's rich vineyard led the demonstrator of Truth out of the holy assembly. The Truth game isn't cricket—or rather, we should say, religion.

"Where there's a church there's a pub," is an old saying appealing to the heart—or soul—or interests—of the Rev. Maurice Child, rector of Cranford, Middlesex. Indeed, he goes so far as to say to a reporter:—

It is a form of collaboration between church and inn which might well be practised on a much larger scale, and it appears to me to be a practical way of making both spiritual and social recreation easily available to the "suburban neurotic."

As a remedy for social ills the Church and inn together need be no less effective to-day for having served so successfully in the past.

The rector is evidently but a "child" in this matter, else he would know his idea is far from original; church and pub and brewers have been associated like brothers since they first met.

The Vicar of St. Paul's, Clapham, the Rev. Leonard Llewellyn, slangs the parish that provides his living, by calling it semi-pagan. (A description really honourable as compared with calling it "truly Christian," eh?) "The people don't seem to want the church or to use it for worship," he complains. *There's* an implication that they might use the church for *other* purposes: perhaps Sabbath hops, whist-drives, club-houses, billiards, darts, and similarly more interesting diversions than moaning and groaning on the knees or gibbering unintelligible laudations. But a question of fees also seems to worry our Welsh friend; he laments that only 100 children are baptized each year out of the population of 10,000. "Breed, you blighters, breed!" is not a very apt slogan for a church of *St Paul*, however, is it?

Here's a trifling point of "history as it is written," which has its analogy in the handing down of scripture. Mr. Sisley Huddleston is the author of *In My Time*, and ascribes to Lord Chesterfield the words: "My son, the older I grow the more I marvel to see with how little wisdom the affairs of the world are conducted." Mr. Edward Shanks, who reviewed the book mentioned, has to thank "many correspondents" for pointing out that "it was Oxenstjerna, Chancellor of Sweden under Gustave Adolphus, who said: 'Thou knowest not, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed.'" As in the case of Bible interpolation and revisions, Chesterfield's phrase is but a laboured copy of the original.

Religion may survive one way or another—even if it should only become a feature of music-hall billing. Des-

cribed as an "apparently boneless young man," Cliff Cook, at the London Coliseum, contorted his anatomy into absurd twists, and delivered a "spoof" broadcast while balanced on the nape of his neck. Then, "with a lightning change of mood," writes a reporter, he "grips his audience with an intensely topical prayer for peace." George Robey's semi-clerical garb would go well with this sort of thing. Yes, dear brethren, let's make religion "topical"; let's bring God up-to-date!

Father Bede Jarrett's book—so popular amongst young Roman Catholics, *The House of Gold* (Not of God!), contains some "advice" quite inconsistent with "Our Lord's" "Advice About Eunuchry" (Matt. x. 12). We wonder how a Catholic priest—true to his vows—can pose as an authority on (to quote Father Jarrett's chapter-headings) "Courtship Days," "Love's Choice," "Love's Expression," "The Unborn Child," and "Many Children." It is well to remember that "Father" Jarrett is only a "Spiritual Father," and it will be best for Courtship Couples to ask ordinary parents for accurate information about marriage. As to Birth-Control, it is possible for no humane observer to have so low a moral code as to teach young people that "You will find in all human history that birth-control in turn is followed by open immorality" (page 56 in Fr. Jarrett's book). Such loose lying proves the writer to be unfit for the rôle of moralist, which he so unworthily assumes.

The Rev. William White, of Kilmarnock, rightly asserts that there is as much sense in praying for the dead as for the living. He says:—

It is sometimes said by those who object to prayers for the departed that we should leave them in the hands of God, for we can trust Him to do what is good for them. A little thinking will show that such an attitude could be used to discourage prayer for the living; for those who are here, as well as those who are there, are in the care of the Heavenly Father.

But what of the many people who do not want their friends to die just at present? Most of the pious praying of these worthy people is for God "to spare the life" of their friends. God must be singularly dull of understanding if He thinks these people mean "life in heaven" (or hell).

The Rev. F. Norman Charley recounting his recent Holiday Pleasures, in the *Methodist Recorder*, is pretty pessimistic about "those who are fairly consistent at home in their attendance at the Means of Grace, but feel quite happy about having a holiday from church while at the sea-side." However, he was "lucky" enough to find one unnamed locality where they held services at 6.30 a.m., every day, and sometimes as many as thirty worshippers attended. It is a pity the name of the town is omitted. We might check up the criminal statistics, and note whether the prison population has increased during the time this exceptionally early piety began.

Fifty Years Ago

THE Church Missionary Society spends nearly £300,000 a year on the work of converting the heathen, yet Canon Isaac Taylor, in the *Fortnightly Review*, calculates "it would take the society 2,750 years to overtake the additions made by birth in a single year to the non-Christian population; while if the population remained stationary and all the converts remained steadfast, it would take more than 330,000 years to convert the world, or nearly a million years if the relapses are taken into account." It would seem that if Jesus is going to defer his long-delayed second coming until all the heathen are brought to own him he will have plenty of time for a trip round all the planets.

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H.Y. (Bradford).—We are pleased to hear of Mr. Wishart's very successful lecture in Bradford. He is a very old hand at the game, and we are not surprised to know that you enjoyed his discourse.

A. SHARPLES, F. HOEY.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

E. F. RUSSELL.—We do not know what is meant by visions of atoms. The atom is not and never was more than part of a hypothesis attaching to physical theories. No one has claimed infallibility for Einstein, and the intelligent reverence that may be shown to professors of science is of an entirely different order from the superstitious reverence shown to the "sacred" person of a priest. You are confusing yourself quite unnecessarily.

S. GORDON HOGG.—See *Acid Drops*.

PENSADORA.—We have been overcrowded with copy, but your note will appear next week. It will be none the worse for the delay.

HUGH THOMSON.—Your letter with its reminiscences of old Glasgow friends has been interesting reading. But it helps to remind us of the many gaps there are there now, but which we hope are being filled with others of equal worth. Thanks for your interest in the paper. We are getting all the holiday and rest we can.

C. H. RUDGE.—Most of the proceedings of the Conference will be issued in book form. For the rest all the information available is that which has already appeared. Any particular information that is within our power to give we shall be pleased to give.

G. L. DEAN (Ottawa).—We are never offended at honest criticism and never bother about the other sort. We note what you say. Correction of what you say is mostly a question of finance.

"DAMODAR."—The letter you refer to did not reach us, Sorry. Obligated for good wishes.

H. DE MONTMORENCY.—We agree with you that if God has spared us from the terrors of war he has compensated by giving others their full share of suffering. But it is on quite orthodox lines for a Christian to thank God for saving him from a railway disaster and leaving others to be killed.

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

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Sugar Plums

To-day (October 16) Mr. Cohen will speak in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. His subject will be "The New Science and the New God." Doors will be open at 6.30; chair will be taken at 7 o'clock.

Among the books we have gone through during the past week are two new issues in the Pelican sixpenny's. The first of these is *Europe and the Czechs*, by S. Grant

Duff. The book is quite up-to-date, running to within a few weeks of the handing over of the Czechs to Germany. It should be read closely by every Member of Parliament, to say nothing of the man in the street. The author's conclusion, well sustained by unquestionable facts, is:—

Germans in Czechoslovakia have all the political, personal and intellectual rights of a civilized democracy, which the Nazi leaders have taken away from the Germans in Germany. The Sudeten Germans have the same rights as the Czechs. They vote freely and by secret ballot, they have their own Members of Parliament, their own schools, universities, theatres, libraries. They may form and maintain their own trade unions (banned in Germany), and may confess whatever religious faith they please without, as in Germany, fear of imprisonment and persecution. They enjoy equality before the law in a democratic judicial system. In addition to all this the Nationality Statute now under discussion would give them a large measure of autonomy—that is a commanding voice in purely Sudeten German affairs, with their own officials, their own local police.

It would not be out of place to compare the Nazi treatment of the only minorities which live in the Third Reich. Socialists, Communists, Liberals and Pacifists have been exterminated. Protestant and Catholic priests are in gaol. The treatment of the racial minority is an object-lesson of political and racial retrogression. The Jews in pre-Hitler Germany were, like the Sudeten Germans in pre-war Austria, a *Staatsvolk*. Hitler relegated the Jews to the position of a minority in the same way that the Sudeten Germans were relegated to the position by the Minorities Treaties. But the Sudeten Germans, even as a minority, never lost their political, social, economic and intellectual rights. To-day they again have the position of a *Staatsvolk*, and special autonomous rights in addition. Compare the case of the Jews. . . .

Thousands of German Aryans have had to leave their homes, and are wandering abroad without the means of subsistence; thousands are persecuted for their religion; are held in prison without trial; mutilated in concentration camps, and have lost their lives. (The murderers of Dollfuss are publicly honoured). Every honest man knows that it is miserably hypocritical for Nazis to talk of the oppression of Sudeten Germans.

This was written a few weeks before the Czechs were deserted by Britain and France.

From another source one may learn to appreciate the impudent lying of Mussolini and Hitler, who paraded their concern for minorities before the simple Mr. Chamberlain. There were 257,000 Germans handed over to Italy by the Peace treaty. In that territory the Germans have no representatives in the legislative assembly; German is not allowed to be taught in any schools, there are no German educational or cultural institutions permitted, the names of all streets, etc., in German have been abolished; only one German paper is permitted to be issued, and no books in German are published. There are no German theatres and no association of German workmen. So much for the Germans in Italy. Similar cases, although not quite so glaring, can be found in Hungary, Jugoslavia and Poland.

In Czechoslovakia there is a population of over three million German-speaking peoples. They are not Germans in any other sense. These Germans had 70 Members in the lower House of Parliament, and 36 in the Senate. There were 5,293 German schools (actually more per population than there were in Germany) one university and two technical schools. They were not barred from attending other schools and universities. There were 2,237 German educational institutions, in addition to numerous private ones. Nearly 2,000 German books a year were published, 249 German newspapers were issued, and there were 49 German theatres. There was also one German broadcasting station, with 102 German workingmen organizations. It was these people that Mr. Chamberlain has helped to rescue from the tyranny of the Czechs, and hand over to that liberty loving, truthful and promise-keeping "Idealist," Adolf Hitler.

The second book we have been reading is *The Mortal Storm*, by Phyllis Bottome. It is a well-written novel, written without exaggeration, depicting the influence of

Nazism on family and individual life. Those who prefer to get their opinions of life and history formed in this way will be pleased with Miss Bottome's fine work. She does not, we may say, write history in novel form by depicting "types," or by caricature, but by taking ordinary human individuals and studying their reactions to a given set of circumstances. The two books make a wonderful shillingsworth, and those who have friends who are just recovering from the hysteria of a week or so ago, might be given these two books as an aid to their mental convalescence. We have been reading some other good books this past week, as well as being busily engaged in writing, but these must wait for attention.

Organized Freethought Propaganda

(By J. REEVES, author of *The World-Story of
3,000,000,000 Years*)

(Concluded from page 646)

In the organic realm we emphasize the direct evidence of evolution in the fossil series, and the fairly frequent discovery of important "missing links." Following on that of the bird-reptile, *Archaeopteryx*, and the ape-man, *Pithecanthropus*, and the construction of geological genealogies of the horse, elephant and other animals, equally significant discoveries have been made in the plant world: of the link between aquatic plants and the well-developed land plants of the Devonian period by the unearthing in the rocks of the earlier part of that period of what undoubtedly represent some of the earliest land forms, two genera without roots or leaves and two with small simple leaves; of a class of plants which occupy the formerly existing gap between non-flowering and typical flowering plants; and of the presence of motile male fertilizing elements in Cycads, which yields valuable confirmatory evidence of the relationship between the spore plants (ferns, etc.) and flowering seed plants.

Much advance has recently been made in biological psychology, where we trace the evolution of mentation (chiefly or wholly or perceptual thought) up to the point where the apes have attained to "a foothold on the lower rungs of the ladder of human intelligence." And an eminent psychologist assures us that Recapitulation—the reproduction in (human) development of ancestral features, such as gill-arches, the lanugo and the tail—is as cogent in psychology as it is in biology.

(4) *The Anthropological-Historical Section.* It will be desirable here to show that the parallelism between the productions, including the art, of prehistoric mankind and those of existing savage and barbarian peoples clearly indicates similarity of transcendental mentation and practice. E.g., the figured animal-headed (masked) dancers (including the famous "strcerer of Trois Freres")—who were probably engaged in a magical attempt to secure good hunting and/or protection from dangerous animals—would lead on to the animal-gods of ancient Egyptians and other peoples. Like evolutionary relationship between barbaric and civilized thought is displayed in early Egyptian records: "The Egyptians began with the naïve superstitions of savages who imagine they secure their king eternal life by chanting in unison that he is a great king who eats the gods and boils their grandmothers in a cauldron. (Text from the Pyramid of Uanis, a survival of cannibalism)." (*General Introductory Guide to the Egyptian Collections in the British Museum.*)

Later records show the earliest development of many

familiar religious ideas, side by side with pervading magic. The creation includes not only that of the world and mankind, but also of the gods. The first of these, being self-begotten and self-produced, fashioned a goddess out of the matter of his own body, and the pair became the parents of other gods, such as Osiris and Isis. The cult of the former is as old as dynastic civilization (five to six thousand years old); he was the god of gods, lord of lords, king of eternity, etc., who made men and women to be born again. . . . The idea of a "good shepherd" also arose, one who would bring justice and happiness to all, and was presumably the original ancestor of the genre of messiahs, a line which is not yet extinct.

Among our tasks in this section is the extirpation of the notion that knowledge can be acquired through revelation, inspiration or prophecy. It is clear enough that these are variants of the world-wide divination of barbaric peoples (from the appearance, movements and sounds of animals, spirit voices, etc.), which evolved into the oracles of the ancient Egyptians and other peoples. Existing vestiges are the alleged spirit communication of Modern Spiritualism, astrological horoscopes and other fate or fortune telling.

We have also to show that so-called religious experience (inner conviction of supernatural action or influence) is as vacuous as what may be called magical experience. It is known that a man may be killed, and that rather quickly, by sufficiently strong magic unless stronger counter-magic is promptly applied. These are apparently facts of experience. We recall that when an eminent anthropologist was being shown by a native of Central Australia how magical "pointing" was done, the man became convinced that the power had "kicked back" and entered into him; he collapsed, and looked as if he might die; but the observer was able to administer to the sufferer effective counter-magic, viz., a dose of Eno's Fruit Salts.

Of course these two species of "experience" belong to some extensive genus that includes inner conviction of the reality and activities of demons, angels, the "familiar spirits" of the Bible, ghosts, djinns, etc., etc.

(5) *The Ethical and Social Section.*—We now hear much of the "Christian ethical system," and of the "moral challenge of Christianity." But we have to show that the miscellany of moral pronouncements of the Bible and of the literature based upon it cannot be regarded as a system. Though some of the precepts and suggestions are of value, practically all of these were extant before the advent of Christianity. Others are absurd, e.g., "Take no thought for the morrow." The injunction to "Render good for evil" is calculated to encourage morally defective persons to commit offences, and so long as human nature and environment remain approximately as they are, would, if put into practice, go far to render the establishment of a rational system of justice impossible (note also H. G. Wells' criticism of the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule in *The Anatomy of Frustration*).

While much of the moral medley stands condemned, the supernatural sanction and the hortatory method have failed during nearly two thousand years to effect the general "change of heart." We have therefore to try intelligence—enlightenment—copious genuine knowledge, with freedom from superstition and other harmful archaic tradition—an instrument which, as Professor J. B. Robinson reminds us, is "an untested hope in its application to human relations." (*The Mind in the Making.*)

With reference to the claim that Christianity has forwarded civilization, we cite the suppression, largely by extermination, of more advanced—independent, prosperous—groups, such as the Albigensians and the Waldenses of France and the "Moors" and Jews of

Spain; to the barbarising effect of religious wars and massacres; to the Inquisition, including that amazing practice in France (mentioned by Bodin) of burning persons convicted of eating meat on Friday—though if they were penitent the sentence was reduced to hanging; the burning of witches and related features.

We adduce also the separatist and hatred-engendering effect of rival religions and sects, extending in our own day to riot and deliberate murder, as recently in India, Northern Ireland and elsewhere.

And finally we add that the perpetuation of beliefs such as immortality, and of attitudes of "pious resignation," "submission to the will of God," and the like, associated with the urge to "sacrifice and prostrate and kneel and crawl" (to quote the words of H. G. Wells)—tend to engender acquiescence in remediable evils, and to deflect attention and effort away from reality and realizable good, and toward fantasies and impossible ends.

J. REEVES.

God and the British Navy

ACCORDING to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Pope, and other religious leaders, the person we have to thank for saving Europe and the world by averting war in the recent crisis is not Mr. Chamberlain or Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini or M. Daladier (as uninformed newspapers have been assuring us), but none other than our old friend, God Almighty.

It was, they tell us, an answer to prayer. Now, as for many years I have been diligently searching for a concrete case of a prayer being answered, and so far have been unable to find one instance that stood up to a moment's sober consideration, this unanimity on the part of opposing religious leaders looks decidedly interesting.

On reflection, however, there are one or two snags to the immediate acceptance of the Churches' propaganda. The crisis had been going on—and gradually getting worse—for weeks, even months. People had been getting killed, arrested, imprisoned; preparations had been going on all over the world which were not going to be needed (and which God presumably knew would not be needed); people were spending money they could not afford on things they would not want (and which God knew they could not afford and would not want). It seems, then, at first glance, that God was a hell of a long time making up his mind to answer the barrage of prayer that was daily ascending to him.

Secondly, to a mere mortal not intimate with the ways and mentalities of gods, it does seem rather curious that God did not make up his mind to act until after the British Navy had been mobilized.

Maybe I am wrong, but judging from the newspaper accounts, the mobilization of the British Navy appears to have had more effect upon people throughout the world—particularly in the threatened countries—than the fact that at any moment God might make his mind up to mobilize his "spiritual forces." (Unless, indeed, it be claimed that the British Navy is one of God's spiritual forces—which, if I know anything of sailors, it won't be.)

The Pope broadcast his appeal for peace at 7.30 on the evening of the Four-Power Talks at Munich, and it was little after midnight when the news was taken to him that the peace agreement had been signed. Perhaps the Holy Father exclaimed to himself, "My God, God's been quick." Anyhow, according to one report, after hearing the news, he retired to his private apartment, "where he prayed for some time, thanking God for the miracle."

But was it his God who had wrought the "miracle"? Let us remember that the Archbishop of Canterbury had got in first with *his* broadcast plea for peace; so—first come, first served—why shouldn't the credit go to the Anglican God? The Nonconformists and other sects had also been busy on their trunk lines to the seat of the Almighty, but God must surely have been more impressed by the solemn majesty of a radio message; so—agreeing to leave the British Navy out of it—the Holy Father and the Archbishop must settle the matter of credit between them.

The Archbishop assured us that prayer for peace—like all prayer—must be simply prayer that God's will be done. This, to the ordinary sensible person, must seem a very curious statement; but, to the sensible person, all religion must appear a very curious thing. We pray, then, not for peace as such, but simply that God's will be done. Whatever happens, happens as the expression of God Almighty's will.

In that case, however, there is no need for prayer at all. If whatever happens is God's will, then it would have happened in any case, and all this prayer business is so much poppycock. It has about as much place in the general scheme as the Czechs' "acceptance" of the Four Powers' peace terms. Moreover, to pray for peace sounds almost like blasphemy, because God might have decided on war, and to suggest peace after he has declared for war, is not praying that God's will be done, it is praying that God's will shall *not* be done.

The Archbishop might retaliate, with the same irrational assurance as before, that this could not possibly be so, because the good God's will could not possibly be for war. Then what happened in 1914? In 1914—as perhaps even the Archbishop will admit if he leaves cloudecuckoo land for a moment—there occurred what is generally described as a war, which went on for several years, and did quite a considerable amount of earthly damage to the human beings and property involved in it. In 1914, too, the Churches prayed for peace just as enthusiastically as, shortly afterwards—when war had begun, and become popular—they justified and prayed for war and the "victory" of war. Since—on the Archbishop's testimony—all prayer is simply prayer that God's will be done, they believed in the first place that God willed peace, and in the second that he willed war. But if war is such a horrible thing that when God averts it, it is a "miracle," how can God will war—as in 1914-18—and remain at the same time "all-good, all-just, all-merciful"?

In 1914 the Churches—as in the recent crisis—did quite definitely pray for peace. But it was not peace, it was war that came. In that case, the prayers were not answered. Why didn't God answer them? Does the Archbishop agree that the Almighty made a big bloomer in 1914 in not answering the Churches' prayers? Or—whisper it—does it not seem more probable that war and peace have got nothing to do with "God" at all, and that prayers simply don't matter a damn one way or the other?

We were told in 1918—as we have been told recently—that God had answered the prayers sent him, and brought peace to a troubled world. But again, as last month, he seemed a hell of a long time making up his mind, when he could have stopped it all in 1914 before war had started. God does not seem to be able to accommodate himself at all to the swifter move of events in the modern world.

Apart from the fact that God did not act in the Czech crisis until the British Navy had acted, it appears strange also that he did not act until an honourable peace was no longer possible. The uneasy peace which has saved the world from its blood-bath may—

by human standards—be statesmanlike and wise, in decreeing that the few should suffer rather than the many—which became the paramount consideration. But even if we agree with it as the best that could be done in the circumstances, when we look at the concessions forced upon little Czechoslovakia, can we call it an honourable or a just peace in any accepted sense of adherence to principles? Would a war in its place have been any less “just” and “right” than the 1914-18 business, which, at the time, the Churches—whether on the same side, or on opposite sides—were so eager to assure us was a perfectly just and justified war? For human beings, caught in the web of their own affairs, the Czech “compromise” is perhaps a notable achievement; but for an Almighty God self-endowed with all wisdom, power, mercy, justice and love, it seems a pretty bad show.

For God, it must be remembered, as the “author of all things,” created the crisis. He did not just allow it to happen; as the source of all things, good and evil, he is responsible for creating the crisis, for developing it until it reached the brink of war, and for averting it by a “miracle.” Both the evil and the remedy must—on the ultimate implications of the Christian theory—be “expressions of God’s will,” and the only sensible conclusion is that God is mentally deficient. If he is going to avert these crises—as he must know right from the beginning—why on earth does he start them going at all? Or is it that ever so often he has to get things into a hell of a mess in order to give himself an opportunity to answer our prayers and get us out of the mess, in order to prove to us the existence of a God who got us into the mess?

Nor do I think God has been very considerate in this matter. He knew all the time there was not going to be a war, and that we should find a solution at the Munich Conference. Yet for weeks he let us go on talking about war, fearing and dreading war, preparing for war, and hoping against hope there would not be a war after all. Wouldn’t God have earned our gratitude a little more if, instead of waiting until the British Fleet had steam up, he had, right at the outset, told the Pope or the Archbishop or one of the other people he is in such intimate touch with, the joyful news that there would *not* be a war, and so saved us all the anxiety and needless inconveniences of the “crisis”?

As I conclude, the Archbishop has just been on the air again, calling the nation to “thanksgiving,” and taking full advantage of the occasion to push his previously not very successful “recall to religion.” But I waited in vain for any suggestion from him that the British Navy should be disbanded. Apparently God Almighty still needs it.

R. H. S. STANDFAST.

The Art of Life

BE not content with death, for heaven lies
Not at the door of death, but in your lives;
And hell’s not fire, but simply time that flies;
And heavenly virtue may be found in wives:

Though loud your prayers, they end in nothingness;
And charity’s a name that’s blessed or cursed
According to your station, nothing less;
And faith is ignorance in hope immersed.

Entreat with God, your cause now importune
With utmost faith to match a heart that’s pure—
He’ll hear you not—and doubt will now impugn
The motive thought; ’tis this alone is sure:

Live out your life and welcome death, and then
Sleep sweet in peace, you will not rise again.

H.D.

The Quality of God

Do not imagine that this is to be a dissertation on the unknown and unknowable. That would be to invade the realm of the Clergy, and while we lay no claim to be very bright, we are certainly brighter than that.

No. It has struck us that in this age of competition and commercialization every perquisite of man is measured by a fixed criterion, and that that standard of measurement is—price.

That is to say, that if we pay a high price and go into the best shop, we can reasonably expect to obtain an article of high quality.

Now in spite of God having become a family of Father, Son, and Virgin Mother—all having a common Ghost—he still lays some claim to be One. This, like all higher mathematics, is not very clear to the lay mind, but in grappling with these problems, it is as well to accept, for argument’s sake, the Church’s postulation that there is one God, and that that God is good.

If then there is only one God, he must have one standard of goodness. That is to say he cannot be at the same time very good, good, only passable, and bad.

We see that manufacturers of a proprietary article are very careful to make a set price for their product, in order to assure their customers of a certain uniform quality.

Now in the case of God, we find that the Archbishop of Canterbury gets many thousands a year, while a poor simple Bishop only a very few thousands. The duty of a man of God is to bring God to the people. After all—the people pay. Are we to conclude that the God of the Archbishop is a better class of goods than the God of the mere Bishop? If not, then why the difference in price? Further, what sort of trash can we expect to get from our local padre for £11 11s. a week.

It is palpably unfair. Not only are the rich having the best of things here below, but contrary to general belief, they are getting the highest class God for the hereafter!

However, there is the consolation that competition caters for every purse, so that we find there are men, who, employed all the week at secular work, will go out on Sunday night and give one a four-square God for about thirty shillings. It is obviously only a matter of time before we shall be accosted by such placards and advertisements as:

If you want the best God—We’ve got ’im.
Try four-pen’orth to-night. Satisfaction guaranteed—or your money returned. (In Heaven or Elsewhere).

Quality with Economy.
Service and Satisfaction.
Don’t pay more!

* * *

Some time ago a young man who was by calling a trader in West Africa, took note of the procedure of some of the missions in that primitive land.

Competition there was very keen. Firstly because the local ju-ju man had the advantage of being always on the spot, of speaking to his people in their own tongue and of understanding their mentality. He also dealt in a more terrifying type of God, and one therefore more convincing to his congregation.

The missionaries who had only a book to offer in opposition to these awful effigies were at some disadvantage. Still the local man had to make it pay, while the white man was subsidized from home. Consequently the white man set up store and dispensed charity in the shape of clothes, tinned goods and pretty pictures—of a religious nature—to protesting

Freethought in Action

Christians. Here then we get a case of God given away with a tin of milk. This was perhaps the cheapest God of all! One does not need to understand the workings of the primitive mind to realize that there were plenty of professing Christians.

On a certain occasion this young man had in his employ a native who could read and write, and who had been educated at a mission school. This native was employed as a clerk in a trading store. Owing to a difference which came to light, between the material stock of the store and its spiritual counterpart in the ledgers, the native gentleman was discharged.

Some months later he presented himself at the store, demanding audience with the young man, his erstwhile master. Reluctantly the white man saw him, and the following conversation took place.

"Well, Ankrah, you thieving b . . . d, what do you want?"

"Massa, I come look your face."

"What's the palaver?"

"No palaver, massa. I no boy now. This time I be fine gentleman." His appearance certainly bore out his words. He had on the customary cloth, a bowler hat, and bright brown boots. He carried an umbrella and a small shiny black bag.

"I be doctor, now," he offered, grinning widely.

"Doctor!" said the white in amazement. "But you have no possible qualifications to call—" He stopped, seeing the futility of argument.

"How Doctor?" he asked.

The native proudly explained.

"I go to the far bush villages, where the people are very simple, and where it is every woman's ambition to have children. If any woman is barren I sell her a magic powder to make her bear children." The coloured man tapped the little black bag significantly. The white—a man of action—jumped up and seized the bag. Fending off the protesting Ankrah he proceeded to open it. Inside was a number of small flat packets done up like headache cure. The white man opened one of them and found inside a small quantity of white powder. He put a little on his tongue. The black looked amused. The powder did not effervesce, and it had no taste. It was slightly gritty.

"What is it?" said he at last. "Chalk?" It did not seem that it could be anything else, but he looked for confirmation.

"Massa is too clever," smarmed the grinning black, "It be chalk."

"But chalk will not make barren women bear children."

"No massa. But every woman who buys my powder has husband. Else she no buy powder. In a little time some get with pickin (child) for sure."

"Yes, but suppose they don't?"

"If she get pickin—it be my powder do 'em. If she no get pickin, it be God do 'em. I sell plenty powder. I be rich man past you." It was true.

So was God relegated to the position of taking blame while the rascal took the praise, which would seem to be the result of selling God too cheaply.

One looks forward to the time when salvation shall be purchased at one price—and that a cheap one, the price of sweet reasonableness. Thus may so much surplus money be diverted into more useful channels.

G.F.

The earth is flattened at the poles. Thank God!
 A fishing-net is full of holes. Thank God!
 Though priests are warmly housed and fed,
 A homeless wretch may get, instead,
 A storm-blown slate upon his head. Thank God!

G. L. Mackenzie.

THE November Municipal elections are now near at hand, and they will offer an opportunity to Freethinkers to further their aims and ideals in a very practical manner. The importance of bringing Freethought views before both the candidates and the electorate cannot be too strongly emphasized, for the elections present an opportunity to Freethinkers to place their aims before the public at a time when they have a bargaining price.

Religious organizations for many years have appreciated the power which is vested in local councils, and have exerted themselves to direct that power to their own ends. To make individual protests against these tactics is not sufficient; the challenge must be an organized one. All Branches of the National Secular Society have a definite duty at the approaching elections to place their views before the candidates, both by means of a questionnaire and by questions at public meetings.

At the Annual Conference of the National Secular Society, this year at Glasgow, the following resolution was passed:—

"That this Conference re-affirms the non-party political character of the National Secular Society."

At the time of an election the value of such a resolution can be understood. No Branch of the N.S.S. is compelled to support any candidate or any group of candidates, but rather is it free to offer support or opposition, together with that of its sympathizers, in accordance with the attitude of the individual candidate.

It almost goes without saying that official questions from any Branch should be in conformity with the principles of the National Secular Society. A possible questionnaire could be:—

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

JOHN O' GROATS BRANCH

19 Ingersoll Avenue,

John o' Groats.

September 30, 1938.

DEAR SIR (OR MADAM),

For the guidance of Freethinking electors of this area I would be glad to receive a reply to each of the following questions.

Kindly return the form in stamped addressed envelope enclosed.

Yours faithfully,

THOMAS SMITH.

Question.

Reply.

- (1) Will you support the opening of places of culture and recreation on Sundays, including museums, art galleries, libraries, cinemas, theatres, playgrounds and playing fields?
- (2) Will you oppose religious attempts to control or censor the work of the Libraries Committee?
- (3) Will you support the principle that all schools should be under the control of the Local Education Authority?
- (4) Will you protect children in all State-aided schools from all forms of exploitation, and in particular from intellectual exploitation in the interest of religious sects and political parties?
- (5) Will you support the principle of secular education in all schools under the control of the Local Education Authority?
- (6) Will you oppose in this area all efforts that have as their aim the glorification of militarism?
- (7) Will you protect all creatures

from cruelty, and in particular urge the need for a strict supervision of all abattoirs?

- (8) Will you demand a full examination of the rating records of your area in order to ensure that religious organizations do not evade paying their full and proper share of rates?

Date

Candidate's Signature.

The cost of running such a campaign need not be an expensive one. Fifty duplicated circulars can be obtained from a local commercial school or copying office for three or four shillings. The postage would be a half-penny on the outward and three-half pence for the return, which would give a total cost of about twelve shillings. Even this could be reduced if the members of the Branch undertook to deliver and collect the envelopes.

In addition an official letter should be sent from all Branches to each political party in the area, and an official reply requested to points similar to those in the questionnaire.

The campaign could well serve the basis for a public meeting shortly before the election day, and perhaps a letter to the local papers, in which the views of the various candidates and parties could be made public.

It is along such lines as these that the Freethought movement can best consolidate the position which its developed philosophy deserves.

JACK WALTON.

Correspondence

ATHEISM AND THE ELEMENTS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—Those who speak of Atheism with bated breath and regard it as spiritual decadence, may be reminded that all animal life on this planet, beginning with the amœba and leading on to the philosopher or the Church Dignitary—as the case may be—depends primarily and ultimately on the elements, fire, air, earth, water, "supposed by the ancients to be the foundation of everything.

The flood, the earthquake, the tornado, are responsible for far more indiscriminate slaughter and far more ruthless destruction than any possible wartime onslaughts which we do our best to parry by the gasmask, the bomb-proof shelter, the anti-aircraft and all the defences put up by humanity for protection from human adversaries.

But what defences can be put up against the indiscriminating catastrophe or calamity, described in legal terminology as "Act of God?" The Atheist joins hands with the philosopher, and probably with many a churchman in posing the question, "What God?"

MAUD SIMON.

Branch News

BIRKENHEAD (WIRRAL) BRANCH

HAVING concluded a very successful outdoor season, the Birkenhead Branch has now embarked on its indoor session. Meetings will be held each Sunday in Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane. A very attractive syllabus of lectures has been compiled. In addition to the usual Sunday lectures, three special week-night meetings have been organized to take place in the large hall at Beechcroft.

On October 25 the lecturer will be Mr. Joseph McCabe, who will speak on "Roman Catholics and their Schools." Mrs. Janet Chance will give an address on "Abortion," on December 13. A debate has been arranged between Mr. G. Whitehead and the Rev. P. M. Despres (Methodist), on November 23, the subject being "Is the Belief in God Reasonable?" Admission to the debate will be by ticket

only, price sixpence. As only half the tickets have been allotted to the N.S.S., it is important that all wishing to attend should apply at once to the Secretary, Mr. W. Fletcher, 5 Queensbury Avenue, Bromborough, Cheshire. Cash must accompany all applications.

The Branch Committee, which has every reason to anticipate a record indoor session, extends a hearty welcome to all unattached Freethinkers and sympathizers, to whom a complete syllabus will be sent post free on request.

WALTER FLETCHER,
Hon. Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4) : 7.30, Capt. B. Acworth, D.S.O. (Evolution Protest Movement).—"The Cuckoo's Secret."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1) : 11.0, Dr. Marie Jaboda—"New Methods of Social Investigation."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. ("The Laurie Arms," Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.) : 7.30, Mr. A. Burall—A Lecture.

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 7.30, Mr. Evans.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Highbury Corner) : 8.0, Friday, L. Ebury. White Stone Pond, 11.30, Sunday, L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, L. Ebury. South Hill Park, 8.0, Monday, L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 3.30, Sunday, Mrs. N. Ruxton, Miss Millard, Messrs. Bryant, Baines, Collins and Tuson.

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLYTH : 7.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SOUTH SHIELDS : 7.15, Thursday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR

ACCINGTON (King's Hall, Cinema) : 6.30, Debate—"That no Man can be an Atheist." Affir.: Councillor T. Maxfield, J.P. Neg.: Mr. J. Clayton.

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, Dr. W. O. Stapleton (West Kirby)—"Evolution."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh) : 7.0, Mr. T. L. Smith—"India—Chinese—Christianity."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, 270 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow) : 7.0, Chapman Cohen—"The New Science and the New God."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate) : 6.30, Miss Emma Goldman—A Lecture.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, R. H. Standfast (Birkenhead)—"God among the Psychologists."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, Oxford Road, All Saints, Manchester) : 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt—"What are We Seeking?"

MIDDLESBROUGH (Labour Hall, Newport Road) : 7.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

NORTH SHIELDS (Lord Nelson) : 7.0, Tuesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

STOCKTON (Jubilee Hall) : 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President - - - CHAPMAN COHEN.
General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

68 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE National Secular Society was founded in 1865 by Charles Bradlaugh. He remained its President until shortly before his death, and the N.S.S. has never ceased to live up to the tradition of "Thorough" which Bradlaugh by his life so brilliantly exemplified.

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

Name

Address

Occupation

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

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

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

MATERIALISM RESTATED

NEW EDITION. GREATLY ENLARGED

CHAPMAN COHEN

CONTENTS

A Question of Prejudice	The March of Materialism
Materialism in History	On Cause and Effect
What is Materialism?	Reply to a Critic
Science and Pseudo-Science	Emergence
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