

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED *by* CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

VOL. LIX.—No. 10

SUNDAY, MARCH 5, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Letting out the Truth—The Editor</i> - - -	145
<i>Britain Goes to Church—Mimmermus</i> - - -	147
<i>Truth, Beauty and Their Poets—Henry J. Hayward</i> - - -	148
<i>Can Mind be Explained—G. H. Taylor</i> - - -	149
<i>Progress and the Hagiographers—Iris L. Abraham</i> - - -	150
<i>"The Revolt Against God"—George Bedborough</i> - - -	154
<i>Spiritualism and the Maskelynes—H. Culner</i> - - -	155
<i>Letters to a Christian Friend—R. H. S. Standfast</i> - - -	156

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

Views and Opinions

Letting out the Truth

DR HEYWOOD, Bishop of Ely, who, some months back, surprised the world by attributing the bad weather we were then having to the action of evil spirits—an unquestionably Christian announcement—is again in the "news" by protesting against the religious laxity of his brother bishops. In the last issue of his *Diocesan Gazette*, he complains that the House of Bishops has "no words of reproof" for those clergymen who explicitly deny such truths as the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection; and he reminds all concerned that

Christianity is based on history. If these events did not occur the whole foundation of Christianity is imperilled.

It is not likely that Dr. Heywood's brother bishops will make any public reply. Things have changed and the Church can no longer deal with heretical opinions, as it would once have done. If some priests are more intelligent than Dr. Heywood they are less honest; their attitude is more artful, and they believe the least said soonest mended. After all bishops are very human, and one cannot expect those living in 1939 to act as if they were living in the year 1200. If they agree with Dr. Heywood, and say so, they will not only lose the more intelligent of the clergy, they will, and this is of greater consequence, lose a great many of the laity. They must do what they can to retain their position, and their emoluments, by practising certain "reservations" (that is, saying one thing and believing another), knowing that their choice lies between speaking the whole truth and losing hold of the people, and professing verbal agreement while disbelieving in fact. Of the existing situation it is not true to say that truth is found in the mouths of intellectual babes and innocents. The truth where Christianity is concerned is that honesty of belief is to-day to be found amongst the least intellectual of the clergy, and superiority of intelligence in

those who practise the least honesty of speech. As we have so often said, any lawyer in a court of law who resorted to the tricks of speech and falsity of interpretation, the evasions and subterfuges that are practised by the present-day bishops and clergy, would be sharply reprimanded by the judge, and reminded that he was treating the intelligence of the court with contempt.

* * *

Man and his Gods

Dr. Heywood can say that Christianity is based on history because he appears to believe in all the crudities and undisguised mythology of the Christian religion. To say that Christianity is based on history is to say that certain things happened at a particular time and place, and that it is upon these certified, or at least credible, happenings that Christianity is built. But that is not the truth. The Christian Church is an historic fact, that is, it appears in history, and this is the only fact about it. It appears in history exactly as other myths and legends and fairy tales appear, and to these Christianity has the closest possible affiliation. Jesus Christ was a god who became incarnate in a virgin. He had no earthly father. But that is what happened to Horus in Egypt, to Krishna in India, and to dozens of other incarnate gods elsewhere. These gods were usually put to death for the salvation of mankind, and just as usually they rose again from the dead. Those stories appear in history, and the religions connected with them also appear in history. But that does not mean that these religions are based on history. They are not statements of fact, they are no more than records of the ignorance and superstitions of early humanity. There is a devil of a difference between *in* and *on*, in this connexion.

In many directions Christians admit this to be so. The belief in the activity of the Devil is as clear as anything in either the Old or the New Testament. So are the operations of witches and wizards. So is the command that the wicked will go to an eternal hell and the "good" to an eternal heaven. So is the power of the disciples of Jesus to drink poison without harm to themselves. (Conceivably this last practice might often benefit others). Dr. Heywood would say these are historic facts, but they are not, history merely records that belief in these things existed, and that same history also records that as mankind becomes more enlightened these beliefs die out.

But why the distinction between Christian and non-Christian mythology? Why is the story of a virgin birth false in Egypt and true in Judea? Why, out of all the stories of slain gods who have risen from the grave, is the Christian one alone true? The evidence in the one case is just as strong as it is in the other. Why is the one true and the other false? Can any Christian bishop oblige by saying in what direction the evidence in the one case is stronger than it is in the other? I say that none of them can point to any substantial difference. I know also that none of

them will even try to enlighten the readers of the *Freethinker* on this point. Faith may move mountains, but it never seems able to get as far as the *Freethinker* office, and operate on its inmates.

It would, by the way, be an interesting topic if some competent person were to work out the steps by which the accepted mythology of the ancient worlds of Greece and Egypt, etc., became transformed into actual objective history. It is easy enough to show the parallels and likenesses between the Christian religion and the ancient mythologies. These are plentiful and well-known. It is the conditions of the transformation of recognized mythology into history that is required. Probably the breakdown of the ancient Greco-Roman civilization, and the complete control for so long a period of the Christian Church, were the main conditions for the transformation of civilization into semi-savagery. If one notes the increasing social and intellectual barbarizing of Germany, and imagine Hitlerism extending over the whole of Europe for a dozen generations, we might get a useful illustration of the conditions that plunged Europe into the Dark Ages, and gave rise to the belief that Christianity was based on historic facts.

Had Christianity been established as a frank continuation of the earlier mythologies it might have found its position easier in a more sophisticated age. For a time it actually did this, for the earliest Christian apologists were too near the sources of Christianity to deny the close resemblances between its own mythology and the mythologies around it. But with its establishment in supreme control, and the degradation of the culture of the ancient world, the Christian mythology took its place as a veritable objective history. Thus it was, or by some steps similar to these, that the claim of Christianity to rest upon a series of historic facts was established. It is this claim that to-day is bringing its own nemesis. For as historic facts the claims of the Church carry their own refutation.

Can anyone seriously believe that about 1900 years ago a boy was born in Jerusalem, for the first and last time in human history, without the co-operation of a male parent? Or can anyone believe that the same person died, and, again for the first and only time in history, came to life again? Does anyone seriously believe that birth, life and death were not the same 1900 years ago than they are to-day? No laboured refutation of the historic truth of such stories is necessary. We know they are not true, no one can possibly believe they are true. Anyone may say with their lips "I believe," but the actuality of the belief remains a psychological impossibility. Not even the Bishop of Ely himself can believe such things to be objectively true. He may whisper his belief to himself, it is his brother bishops who show a really better appreciation of the situation, even though their clearer minds ought to eventuate in the relinquishing of their posts as bishops.

* * *

The Ethical Jesus

But once we let go of the objectively historical truth of the Jesus Christ of the New Testament, what is there left on which to build a religion? The trick here is to utilize the mythological figure for Church purposes, thereby entertaining an unthinking and wonder-loving public—much as children are entertained by an annual pantomime—and then for other reasons depend upon an ethical teacher who, for religious purposes, is as far from reality as the virgin-born God. As I have said elsewhere:—

The Christian Church is here; it is well established, strongly entrenched. To let go of Jesus Christ alto-

gether it dare not. The renunciation would be too striking. It dare not openly say what scholars all over the world know quite well, that the New Testament Jesus Christ is a variant of a widely duplicated mythological figure; neither dare it openly proclaim that the moral maxims found in the New Testament were well-known and widely used long before the date given for the birth of Jesus. So as quietly as possible the god-incarnate is dropped into the background, while with much beating of drums and blowing of trumpets the moral and social reformer was brought to the front. There is a very ugly name for this kind of practice in all civilized States. In our own legal system it is a punishable offence for a man to get credit without disclosing the fact of his being an undischarged bankrupt. In theology a lower code of ethics rules.

No religion yet was ever built on mere moral teaching. There is no evidence whatever that it was the ethical Jesus who attracted people to the Christian Church. When people looked to Jesus Christ for salvation, it was not because they recognized their immoral misdeeds. The cry was not to Jesus to make them better citizens, but to save them from their unbelief, to rescue them from punishment in the world to come. The Church, too, both in ancient and in modern times has always been lenient and forgiving to moral delinquency. It was religious or doctrinal shortcomings that met with the severest punishment. Never in its most powerful day did the Christian Church—in any of its branches—deal harshly with the moral offender. It was the religious offender who met with the bitterest hatred and the uttermost punishment. The Jesus mouthing a few moral platitudes has effected little more than to add hypocrisy to moral turpidity; this could never have been the basis on which to build a religion.

So I agree with the Bishop of Ely. If the Virgin birth, the ceremonial crucifixion, and the resurrection are not admitted as actual historic facts, as objectively real as the battle of Waterloo, then the whole structure of Christianity is imperilled. You can profess a belief in these impossible things and so save your credit as a Christian. But you cannot reject them and retain your reputation for intellectual or moral straightforwardness while calling yourself a Christian. The Lower House of Convocation had asked the Upper House for reassurances of these "historical clauses of the creeds." The Upper House declined to do anything of the kind. An authoritative body of Christian clergy could give no assurance that these "historical clauses" spoke the truth. The parsons were left to do as they pleased. If they were foolish enough to profess belief they would show they were honest. If they did not make any such profession then they saved their reputation for intelligence at the expense of their honesty. And that is really the issue that lies before every professing Christian—whether of the clergy or laity. He has to choose between being counted a stupid man or a dishonest one. He cannot to-day maintain a reputation for both intelligence and honesty and still call himself, with any regard for the proper use of words, a Christian.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Away with the bugbear that to be good we must be pious. If a man is moral and upright, he is so whether within or without the Church. If he is mean and unprincipled it is the same. Nero would have been a tyrant if he had been a Christian, Henry VIII. would have been a monster if he had been a Pagan, Aurelius would have been a true man if he had been a Christian. It is in nature, in character, in disposition, not in religious opinions.—Lester F. Ward.

Britain goes to Church

The difference between a theatre and a church is that you pay to go in the one, and you pay to get out of the other.—Mark Twain.

THE propaganda of religious Orthodoxy is different from other forms of suasion. Not only is it more irresponsible than even that of the politicians, but it seems to be entrusted to great men with one-track minds, and without a scintilla of humour or an idea of proportion. Moreover, in political discussion replies are always possible, but in religious propaganda the Free-thought position is not only ignored but boycotted actively. You can no more state the case for Free-thought in the average newspaper or periodical than you can advocate temperance in a licensed-victuallers' paper, or vegetarianism in a meat-trade publication.

How wild and whirling such pious propaganda can be is shown by the numbers of conversions recorded by the religious press. If the numbers were added together it would show that the total population of Britain had been converted to Christ many times over. Which, as old Euclid said, "is absurd." Consider also the references to Atheists. Many Christian enthusiasts assure the world that there never has been such a creature as an Atheist, and if there were, he would be stuffed and exhibited in the next glass case to the great auk's egg in some Museum. Yet the hard-working Christian Evidence Society and similar organizations actually exist, and collect cash, for the purpose of exterminating such non-existent monsters. Remember also the terrible stories of infidel death-beds which adorn tracts, parish magazines, and other publications for the intellectually lost. Some of these highly imaginative yarns have been going round for many generations, and will do service for as long as Christians lie for the glory of their religion. For the religious racket is, from this point of view, extremely worth while. By concentrating people's minds on an alleged next world, they prevent their paying too much attention to this.

Most of the big newspapers tacitly support religion as a vested interest, but are not actively interested in the furtherance of theology. They report the sermons and utterances of Archbishops and the "upper crust" of Priestcraft, and treat the clergy generally as a branch of the Civil Service. There is one notable exception. The *News-Chronicle* (London), actually has a weakness for cave-man theory and caters for Nonconformists and frequenters of tin-tabernacles. It prints much religious propaganda that the other editors would reject. A case in point was the recent declaration (February 7), that "little over a quarter of the population are regular church-goers, that about four out of ten go to church occasionally; and that of the rest some never go to church at all, others only to attend functions like weddings, christenings, etc., which are more social than religious." In the next column it is stated that "just over two thirds (sixty-eight per cent) of the people are more or less frequent church-goers." And "fifteen per cent" never go to church at all. These statistics are printed under the misleading heading, "What Britain Thinks," and is intended to convey the impression that they represent national opinion.

Sixty-eight per cent of church attendance is a very high proportion. So let us see how this result is obtained. First, the promoters say that the term "church" applies also to "chapel, synagogue, mosque, tabernacle, or any other centre of religious ceremony." Why spread the net so widely? Mosques, indeed! There are not enough mosque worshippers in Britain to fill an excursion train. And, may we ask if an amateur evangelist, with an harmo-

nium and a dozen girl-friends is to be considered a "centre of religious activity"? Or, are they also members of the congregations of some tin-tabernacle or mission-tent, and already on the roster. Are Spiritualist Halls to be considered as "centres of religious activity" as well as of sleight-of-hand and illusion. Anyhow, they are no more Christian than the frequenters of mosques and synagogues. And, might we ask if Ethical and Positivist meetings have the same rights of inclusion in this loosely-compiled list as the followers of Mahomet and Joanna Southcott have? Neither Ethicists nor Positivists are Christians, but certainly they include some of Britain's noblest citizens in their ranks, of which any church in the world could be justly proud. Perhaps, if the enumerator was in a hurry, or shortsighted, he might include a Freethought lecture-hall in his list, and Mr. Bedborough, or Mr. Rosetti, might conceivably figure, unconsciously, as earnest pastors with their pious flocks.

Sixty-eight per cent of church-goers is a formidable total. The population of this country is about forty millions of people. Yet, excluding infants, sixty-eight per cent attend places of worship, and some of the babies may be carried there. The figures are purely fantastic, and have no relation to facts. If the enumerators questioned the sight-seeing congregation of the City Temple, or Westminster Abbey, or St. Paul's Cathedral, the results might bear some resemblance to the published figures, but it is simply untrue concerning Britain as a whole, for the country has not sufficient places of worship to accommodate sixty-eight per cent of the population.

Many years ago a census was actually taken of church attendance in London, and the result then given was that one person in nineteen attended places of worship regularly, in the Metropolitan area. Since then, every sect and every denomination has reported very heavy losses in worshippers, Sunday-school scholars, and revenue. Apart from such showplaces as Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's Cathedral, etc., most churches and chapels lament a beggarly array of empty benches. How can such haphazard figures as sixty-eight per cent be true to-day, when they were wildly improbable before the religious slump took place? It sounds like the boasting of a small boy, who says his parents have given him millions of toy-soldiers as a birthday present.

It must be stated that the *News-Chronicle* quotes the figures referred to as the result of an investigation by a body called "The British Institute," which apparently compiles statistics on a great variety of subjects. It is, however, the publicity given to the figures by a "national newspaper" that matters.

What useful purpose can the retailing of such nonsense serve? The *News-Chronicle*, as a leading English newspaper, should not lend itself to such obvious mis-statements. Journalists are not such simpletons as not to know the world in which they get their living. Even cub-reporters have to attend church to record sermons, and they must know that there are not sufficient places of worship to accommodate such tremendous numbers as sixty-eight per cent of the population. Why is such stuff printed at all, above all in a reputable publication? It is done to bolster a huge vested interest, and to please its pious readers. The *News-Chronicle* has frequently expressed its disapproval of sensationalism and even frivolity in the columns of its rivals. Yet this staid and respectable exponent of Nonconformity is open to much the same objections, and of a constant desire to "tickle the ears of the groundlings."

"O the pity of it!" In truth, and not in the cant of journalism, let us wish for the recovery to sanity of the *News-Chronicle*. There are so many editors for whom the inscription: "Died of humbug" is good,

and good enough. But this paper need not so invite contempt. In its earlier form, as the *Daily News*, it numbered Charles Dickens among its editors, and Harriet Martineau among its contributors. What would they think of the great newspaper, which was once a vehicle of splendid ideals, now that it has declined upon a period of catch-penny opportunism, utterly unworthy of the best traditions of the British press?

MIMNERMUS

Truth, Beauty and Their Poets

As a child I was literally nursed on the epic poetry of classical Greece. The *Iliad* and *Odyssey* of Homer were my bible and fairy-book combined.

I followed with abiding interest the fortunes of the fair but frail heroine of Troy:—

The face that lanced a thousand ships
And burned the topless towers of Ilium.

The wanderings of Ulysses, his adventures with Calypso, Circe, the alluring Sirens, and his too faithful Penelope, all stirred my youthful imagination. I sorrowed with Orpheus over his lost Eurydice, and rejoiced with Ceres at the return from Hades of her lovely Persephone. Clytie, with her exquisite profile and slender beauty was my childish sweetheart.

But when my dear old classical-minded father died, and I was left alone in my golden teens, the yeastings of sex in my veins turned my fancy to the love lyrics of the Elizabethan Age. I sighed and sonneted with rare Ben Jonson, with Herrick, Chris Marlowe and the Swan of Avon.

Thence I made pilgrimage amid the word melodies of Robbie Burns, Thomas Moore and Heine—and their singing verse ever remains with me, as does the charm of Elizabeth B. Browning's *Lyrics from the Portuguese*. Listen! She sings a love song for us:—

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways:
I love thee to the level of each day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight;
I love thee freely, as men strive for Right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from praise;
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints: the widest land
Doom takes to part us, leaves thy heart in mine
With pulses that beat double—

But side by side with my youthful searchings for beauty to satisfy the æstheticism in my nature, was gradually growing a wider outlook towards the deeper problems of the whys and wherefores of life, and humanity's place in the Riddle of the Universe:—

There was a door to which I found no key—
There was a veil past which I could not see.

and:—

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and saint, and heard great argument
About it, and about, but evermore
Came out at the same door as I went.

I had long dragged my anchors from the orthodoxies of Religion, Politics and Economics, and my world wanderings increased my sceptical attitude towards all creeds, formulas and settled conclusions of static thought. My mind found in Freethought the liberty to express itself. I found communion with the great poetic thinkers of all the ages, who blazed the path to Truth as they saw it.

All truth is safe and nothing else is safe.

He that keeps back truth or withholds it from men is Humanity's worst enemy.

There is no religion higher than Truth. The man

who loves Truth and remains wedded to her, has a faithful Bride. She brings him the imperishable dower that satisfies and lifts him to the peaks of thought—far above the miasmas of creeds that stunt and stay mental progress with a static and tragic "full stop."

What is Truth?

Pilate's question reverberates through the twenty centuries since its unanswered challenge rang through the Roman Court.

Sir Richard Burton, a century ago, said:—

Truth is the shattered mirror, strown
In myriad bits while each believes
His little bit the whole to own.

Enough to think Truth can be;
Come sit we where the roses glow,
Indeed, he knows not how to know
Who knows not also how to un-know.

Albert Einstein, to-day, says:—

Truth is a lovely statue that stands in a desert; the sands of prejudice and intolerance blow over it, and each generation—they who love Truth—have to uncover it anew.

Man has outgrown the swaddling clothes of Oriental theologies that filled the seeming voids of Nature and its skies with Gods, Goblins, Devils and Demons, and environed Humanity with spirits, evil and good, to interpret the varying moods of Nature's processes, its storms and sunshine, its famines and fruitings, and, too, its earthquakes, pestilence and the inevitable death—all that come with unswerving impartiality alike to saints and sinners, to believers and heretics.

A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jellyfish and a saurian,
And caves where cavemen dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
A face turned from the sod,
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

What is Truth? The challenge remains, but it is not to be found by filling the terra incognita of Nature with atavistic Gods and Devils—or Heavens and Hells that are not on any astronomical map. Yes! Man has outgrown his swaddling clothes, and instead, faces the unexplored in Nature and Life as problems to be solved by the patient application of Science, rather than the alleged inspiration of Priests and Soothsayers.

And dreaming much I never dare,
To dream that in my prisoned soul,
The flutter of a trembling prayer
Can move the Mind that is the Whole.
Though kneeling Nations watch and yearn,
Does the primordial purpose turn?

THE FREETHOUGHT MIND

Freethought teaches us to look fearlessly upon Life—"to accept the Laws of Nature, not with meek resignation, with the rusting chains of Theological Predestination, but as Nature's Sons, who dare to search, question and adventure towards wider Truth."

The Freethought Mind has thrown aside the blinkers of atavistic dogmas—it is not shut up in the gloomy prison of a religious creed till it thinks the walls of its own dungeon the very limits of the Universe and the reach of its own chain the utmost limit of human intelligence.

Too long has Truth been prisoned in the Hell of Theology—too long has mind-shackled Mankind been looking backward. To-day, more and more, men are throwing away the blinkers of orthodox religion, and looking forward through the Searchlight of Science in true brotherhood as wide as all humanity. Free-

thought is helping to build a creedless shrine which alone can rescue them from the intolerances of the curse of Theology's fears and dreads.

Meanwhile! let us find courage to shed the Oriental Mythologies that too long have prisoned with fears the Mind of Mankind.

Out of the Night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable Soul.

In the fell clutch of Circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud,
Under the bludgeonings of Chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate;
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the Master of my Fate,
I am the Captain of my Soul.

HENRY J. HAYWARD

(President New Zealand Rationalist Association)

Can Mind be Explained?

(Concluded from page 134)

But the person who bites an apple, or writes a letter, or eats his dinner, *feels* that he is acting as an originating force. He is *aware* of what he is doing, and knows there are alternatives, of which he could take a choice. He needn't bite the apple at all; he could go and buy an orange. He might even school his mind so as to inhibit mouth-watering.

This *feeling* of freedom need not be denied. It can, nevertheless, be shown to exist side by side with the accurate predictability of his actions by an external scientific observer armed with the necessary knowledge of (a) his previous history, and (b) the present stimulus. Certainly we *feel* free because we are *not* concerned, in the act of willing, with what has gone before, of much of which we are, indeed, ignorant.

The religionist who claims "intuition" of free will need not be contradicted. It is enough to show that this sense of power over effect is merely a recognition of our own efforts as important turning-points in the path of causation. But ours is not a contribution ready-made by the "soul"; it is a quality created in our biography by a deep-rooted history of causation to which hereditary genes made the first contribution. It is enough to show that the *feeling* that will is free (unconditioned) is not a valid criterion.

Modern physiology has undermined the distinction between conscious and reflex behaviour, in such a way that the former can be investigated without departure from the terminology of mechanism; without, that is, having to utilize such foreign entities or concepts as "soul" or "ego." The voluntary will be the highly complicated reflex with memory throwing up the light of awareness.

* * *

Next, what is meant by "explaining" mind? Well, we should explain mind like we should explain any other phenomenon—a volcano, say. That is, we should give an account of the conditions which render it possible, i.e., *analyse it*. We must find the conditions, and show that any rearrangement of those conditions entails an alteration in the product. By altering the conditions we alter the output, i.e., the be-

haviour. By altering the conditions in one way, we might delay the volcano, in another way precipitate it, change the chemical quality of the lava, and so forth. What the thing *is* determines what it *does*, and what it does tells what it is. We explain by exploring the conditions; that is, by analysing them. So that by the word "explain" I here mean "analyse." I do not mean "describe." COH explains sugar, but does not describe its sweetness.

The question then becomes, can we render a complete analysis of the conditions determining conscious behaviour? How shall we know that we have located *all* the conditions? What of the possible conditions not revealed by analysis? What is our guide as to whether we are exploring the true conditions?—Experiment, by observation and testing—here is our guide. If we alter a condition, or a condition is naturally altered, we must find a corresponding alteration in product. Each modification in the product (behaviour) must relate to the working of some conditioning factor. As we interfere with, destroy, add to, the conditions, we must note the corresponding changes in the result. The final ideal test is to reduplicate in a mechanical medium.

We are justified in framing hypotheses when our experience shows a systematic statistical consistency. I say statistical because it would require a vastly more detailed technique in physics, let alone physiology and psychology, to account for every individual fluctuation. In tracing the causal history of any event it is important to decide how much of the environment may safely be ignored, and how much microscopic behaviour may be treated as neutral.

In tracing the history of the volcano I might prefer to restrict my researches to a limited amount of space and time. But if we were absolutely thoroughgoing we should trace back the history of the conditions in order to account for their nature at the time of the eruption, and we should find ourselves back to the primitive nebula. Every individual event or group of events involves ultimately the whole of that part of the universe which has percolated down to it, and the sphere widens as we recede in time, in the way that we have two parents, four grandparents, eight great grandparents and so on. The full causal history of any one mind refers right back to the time when life appeared from matter, and matter from its forerunner. So that in exploring the conditions of every piece of conscious behaviour it will not be expected that we should do other than confine ourselves to a comparatively near and given set of conditions. When we get a very high degree of consistency we may adopt the hypothesis which meets with such satisfactory experimental response. Every condition and factor must be put to the test of interference.

There is room for two words, "factors" and "conditions." By condition we mean the factors in relationship. The factors of water and H and O; the condition is their compound with a double quantity of H. The condition for water can be determined with exactitude, but it is only to be expected that with such a highly complex matter as conscious behaviour a full and complete explanation of determining conditions will not be so readily susceptible to scientific test; it will be more difficult. It will also be more delayed. As man understands all things, he understands himself last. But just as we seek the causes for the emergence of water in two gases, both dry, so we can seek the material and physiological bases for the emergence of conscious behaviour.

In another article I hope to show the close relationship between our physiological make-up and the way we behave.

G. H. TAYLOR

Progress and the Hagiographers

WHAT has progress got to do with religion anyway? Most religious people are conservative looking to a possibly happy future beyond this life, and convinced of an ancient golden age of the "good old days."

Without progress there would be no religion, because the fact of one age often becomes the religion of the next. Strictly speaking, religion cannot begin until science has come into being. Then natural events are divided into those capable of explanation by natural laws, and those which could not be so explained, and were held to be in the realm of ungovernable non-human forces. Among very primitive people, religion is a "natural" religion, the personification of natural forces. When they increase their command over nature by the acquisition of knowledge, certain events are regarded as in a certain class, the supernatural class, and the struggle that gives such concern to certain people to-day begins, the conflict between science and religion.

There is nothing new in this. The first man to use fire must have been a man of great energy and fearless originality. For a long time fire had been thought of as something sacred. When a Greek city sent out a colonizing expedition, they carried from the parent city, a vessel containing fire, a symbol of life, and lit their fires in the new settlement from it.

Every new departure from the established routine has been condemned in its time as impious. Every hagiographer and most of them have been anonymous, has mourned over a wicked and irreligious generation. They all point to the past when things were better.

Those writers of sacred texts identified themselves with their gods. Praise their gods and you praised them. Revile them, and the hagiographers felt it for them. Not being familiar with Freud, they had no idea of the mental phenomenon of "projection."

When some critics began to notice that a man's god was very much like the man, a clever man having a clever god, a just man a just god, as the man so the god, the gods were then said to have no "body, parts or passions." The earlier type was called "anthropomorphic." In certain religious circles it has become a term of contempt, just as superstition means "some one else's religion."

Reading a review of a play about Welsh life by Caradoc Evans, in a religious paper, I was amused to read that it was about a people whose religion was so anthropomorphic that their god was called the "Big Man." This is a literal translation, but "Big Man" means a lot more just as the English word "great" means literally big and also large in a figurative sense.

But are not all the gods anthropomorphic in their origin? Of course they are. And however much they have been whittled down and their human attributes taken away, they still retain the marks of their human origins. A real old-fashioned god could not live to-day. He could not stand the new way of thinking. Science has taught us to take a more objective way of looking at things. Less notice is taken of dogmatic statements without any natural foundations.

That is the real value of science, not its material gifts. When some people listen to the wireless, drive about in motor-cars and aeroplanes, speak across the Atlantic telephone and imagine they are civilized they miss the whole point of the use of science to the world.

Science explains the universe, the world and (what is more important) ourselves. Every twopenny ha'penny hot-gospeller thinks he can explain man to you, and the rights of man and man. What has puzzled quite intelligent men like Plato, Socrates,

Bacon, Kant, Schopenhauer, etc., has no difficulties for these men. They might not know much about frippery subjects like Greek Art and Chinese Philosophy, but they do know what man is, where he is, and why he is and where he is going.

A question often asked is: "Why did not the Greeks make use of their science in a practical way?" Because in Greece there was no contact between the artizan class and the men of science. Therefore the scientists could not get their ideas carried out, and the artizans had no knowledge of science to improve their methods of working.

The principle of the steam turbine had been discovered by the Greeks thousands of years ago. But no one thought of applying it to a practical use. With the rediscovery of science in the sixteenth century, men who were engineers and craftsmen studied the ancient mind. This led them to apply the principles to current problems. This in its turn brought the Industrial revolution and steam power and machinery.

This in turn set men studying the laws relating to power and machinery. Thus there is a constant increasing reaction of theory and practice, practice and theory. A new theory might have tremendous practical possibilities. A new invention by setting men to find the theoretical foundations involved, would add greatly to the knowledge of scientific principles.

Thus a scientific problem can be approached from both the practical and theoretical angles. An example can be taken from the life of Edison. When occupied in searching for a suitable filament for an electric lamp, he tried out and tested some thousands of different substances, before finding one suitable. A Frenchman who was engaged, at about the same time, on a similar research, by his knowledge of chemistry eliminated the unsuitable materials and narrowed his search down to a few. Two methods of work giving the same result.

Science has had one effect on religion. Some modern hagiographers write and talk in a pseudo-scientific jargon. "Through Science to God." Shaw has his "life force," and others their "sense of values," whatever they may mean. If science leads to god why has religion fiercely resisted any and every advance of science?

What the "life force" means Shaw only knows. And as to the Christian sense of values that is what has changed the most during the last few centuries. A bishop once said in a post-prandial burst of candour, that if the Christian doctrines were attempted to be put into practice, it would mean universal misery, poverty and chaos. This is true. We are not living in the same world as the early Christians, and it would be impossible to act like them.

IDRIS LI. ABRAHAM

There is a great difference between the sea pilot and the sky pilot. The honest salt boards the ship, and takes her out to sea, or brings her into port. When the work is over he presents his bill. He does not ask for payment in advance. He neither takes nor gives credit. But the sky pilot takes credit and gives none. He is always paid beforehand. Every year he expects a good retaining fee in the shape of a stipend or a benefice, or a good percentage of the pew rents and collections. But when his services are really wanted he leaves you in the lurch. You do not need a pilot to heaven until you come to die. Then your voyage begins in real earnest. But the sky pilot does not go with you. Oh dear no! That is no part of his business. "Ah, my friend," he says, "I must leave you now. You must do the rest for yourself. I have coached you for years in celestial navigation; if you remember my lessons you will have a prosperous voyage. Good day, dear friend. I'm going to see another customer. But we shall meet again."—G. H. Foote.

Acid Drops

Every one knows that Hitler operates in this country as well as in Germany. Germans are carefully watched by Hitler's agents, what they read, what meetings they attend, the conversations they hold, and the friends they make, are all carefully noted and reported. Even those who are here as refugees are carefully shadowed, and as these often have relatives left in Germany, there is always the threat hanging over them of revenge on those at home. Nothing is too mean or too brutal for Hitlerism in action.

These operations threaten to become more open and more avowedly official. Nazis in London are now to have their official headquarters at 18 Belgrave Square, W. According to the *Daily Telegraph* of February 22, the institution will be under the direction of Herr Karlowa, and "an intensive Nazi propaganda will be carried on." The propaganda will be "political," and will also aim at popularizing "German cultural and social institutions." Well, we already have some thousands of people here who have suffered from German "cultural" ideas, which in Germany are fast reaching the point at which Goebbels and Co. are openly aiming, to reduce intellect to as low a level as possible. So we know the class to which German Fascism will appeal.

Now we are not advocating that even so open a return to the brute, so obvious an apotheosis of all that is ignorant and vicious, as Nazism, should not be allowed to express itself here. But there are a few observations that might be made. The forgetful character of the general public ought not to have quite wiped out all recollection of the bother that was made by the Government and by people in high places, to say nothing of papers such as the *Daily Mail* and the *Express*, about Russian propaganda. Relations were suspended, or badly strained, at the infamy of Russia carrying on a political propaganda here, and the alleged supply of Russian money. Now in the case of Nazism there is hardly any disguise that the Fascist movement here is fed by money from Germany. It openly avows that it will carry on a vigorous political propaganda, and it is doing so from headquarters where such aristocratic people as the Duke of Kent, the Duke of Norfolk, the Duke of Bedford, Earl Bathurst, the Earl of Stradbroke, the Earl of Haddington, and the Earl of Mount-Edgcumbe reside. These will all be neighbours of the Nazi political propaganda headquarters. Hitler and Goebbels and Streicher perhaps hope to make some converts "high up." A next door neighbour to the Nazi headquarters is Lady Sassoon!

We repeat, we are not advocating that German propaganda should not be permitted. But we do suggest that what is good for the goose should be good for the gander. So we advise that steps should be taken, helped by a grant from our Government, to establish a headquarters for Democratic propaganda in Berlin. This should aim at lectures to English residents, and also for carrying on an intensive political propaganda among the people of Berlin. Surely no reasonable objection could be raised. And we should make the condition of the carrying on of German propaganda here our being permitted to carry on British propaganda there. We wonder whether any member of Parliament will have either the courage or the wit to raise the issue. If Germany declines, then we should close down the Nazi-German subsidized headquarters here. There must be some limits to the policy of "appeasement," and up to the present the only thing this country has really done is to help Nazi propaganda abroad. But the help given to Nazi propaganda here might be at least conditional. That is if we wish to save democracy instead of burying it.

Nor ought we to overlook that, following the precedent of Hitler in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, a consequence of the political propaganda of Nazism in England would be the creation of a German minority oppressed, of

course, by the British Government. Then would come in logical sequence the demand for a measure of autonomy for Germans in this country, with a special representation in the House of Commons and the allotment of a certain number of official posts. And at this point the full significance of a policy of appeasement would be made clear.

The Archbishop of York, speaking at Durham recently, said he did not regard the question of disestablishment of the Church with any concern. It is not a matter in which "the Church is interested one way or the other." But he says that disendowment is a more serious matter. This reminds one of Karl Marx's opinion that the Church of England would rather sacrifice the whole of its thirty-nine articles than a thirty-ninth part of its income. Whatever opinion one may hold of Marxian philosophy, there seems little doubt of the soundness of that little bit.

The Roman Church, say all Roman Catholics, was established by God, and God presides over the election—through the Cardinals—of every Pope. We may therefore expect to find occupying the papal chair the best of Christians, animated by the best of impulses, and far above the temptations that beset such poor creatures as ourselves. Well here is a gentleman, ex-Dean Inge, who was himself once called in by God to take up a well-paid post in the English Church, writing in the *Standard* for February 23, on the character of some of the Popes:—

Some of the medieval Popes were blackguards of the deepest dye, sunk in debauchery, gluttony, avarice, and every other vice. The word "nepotism" preserves the memory of the practice of almost all the Popes, to enrich the young men who were politely called their nephews. It was a recognized thing that a new Pope should at once make his nephew a Cardinal. Paul III. bestowed the hat on several of his grandsons, the eldest of whom was fifteen.

The avarice of the Popes in the Middle Ages was insatiable. All ecclesiastical dignities were openly sold; taxes on disorderly houses brought in a steady revenue; and there was a tariff for the absolution of all crimes, to which Sixtus IV. added a plenary indulgence to anyone who killed a Venetian. In the reign of Leo X., the magnificent Medici Pontiff painted by Raphael, indulgences were staked for in gambling hells.

It doesn't look as though things could have been much worse had God left the matter alone—and even then Dean Inge has not said all he might have said, and probably would have said had he not once been in the priest business.

But the ex-Dean's summary reminds one of a story that goes back, I think, to Boccaccio. A Jew visited Rome, and when he returned, declared his intention of becoming a Roman Catholic. "Why?" asked his friends. "Well," said the Jew, "I have just returned from Rome. I have seen the way in which both the Cardinals and the Pope live, and I am convinced that God is behind the Church. For without the aid of God nothing so vile could have existed for so many years." That is as good a religious explanation of the persistence of the Church as anything we have come across.

The Rev. H. R. Grubb, of Sanderstead, Surrey, is a firm believer in Spiritual healing. To begin with he says that he must bear testimony that spiritual healing takes place to-day as it did "nearly 2,000 years ago." We congratulate him upon his excellent memory concerning the past, but we must forbear expressing our admiration for his insight into the future, because he is quite assured that the cures effected are permanent. The only way that we could make sure that a cure was permanent would be that the patient was dead. We are amazed at his profound knowledge of disease, with his unerring diagnosis, since the cures effected cover influenza, hernia, cancer, heart-disease, etc. The faith that these spiritual healers have in a casual diagnosis, a region in which our most skilled medical men move cautiously, fills us with admiration.

Now we think that if Mr. Grubb will look into the matter he will find that the average doctor who knows his job cures as many sufferers from disease, through faith, as any preacher may do. But the doctor is usually concerned with curing his patient and not with fooling the public. And his cures come under the head of what is known as psychopathology. It is only the religious quack who talks of the power of Jesus or some other mythical character.

Dean Matthews—preaching on a very foggy night in St. Paul's Cathedral—assured his hearers that "the Church is not in full retreat." Nobody ever said it was. So long as the loaves and fishes are miraculously available through the ignorance of so many of the electors, we feel the Church will stand on the defensive, while the parsons stand on the fence as far as doctrines are concerned. It is most noticeable that in the recent *Report on Doctrine*, about half the total space is devoted to "The Church and Its Sacraments," while God, Christ, Mankind, Heaven and Hell, have to be contented with a few pages, some indeed with a few words. The Vicar of Bray will never be "in full retreat"—he will have to be carried out.

The Friends of Reunion met in conclave, the other day, but we are told that the attendance "was somewhat thin," which rather tends to show that reunion does not arouse intense enthusiasm. Of course, the Chairman, the Bishop of Lichfield, insisted that "with the widespread repudiation of Christian standards, all Christians should draw together and present a united front in a world which was not only different, but hostile." The Bishop of Bristol admitted very dolefully that they were up against two main forces—people were against "traditionalism," and they were "indifferent." Dr. Berry, a Congregationalist, said his ideal was "one great religious family with freedom for individual development yet all within the one fold." But nobody seemed wildly optimistic of "reunion." On the contrary, they all appeared to be very sad about the decreasing prospects of one happy religious family lovingly united in God, Christ, the Bible—and perhaps, the Virgin thrown in as a sort of makeweight. Which is as it should be.

But in the *Daily Telegraph* of February 14, the following rehash of the story is told of the Boxer outbreak in China. The story is told by the Rev. Archibald E. Glover, of Worthing. Speaking of the siege of Peking, he cites a Dr. Goodrich as saying:—

At the time the assault was made we were reduced to the utmost extremity, and it seemed that our destruction was inevitable under the violence of the attack. Our only resource was in God alone. The community was called together for prayer, and we cried to God in our extremity.

It happened to be my turn to do sentry-go on the wall, and from that vantage ground I was a witness of the most amazing spectacle. Just when the enemy was within an ace of achieving his objective, suddenly the whole attacking force turned and fled in confusion, and the plain was soon littered with arms and accoutrements of every description.

Later on, when the relief was effected and prisoners were brought up before General Gaselee for interrogation, I was acting as interpreter, and to the question I put: "Why was it that just when you were on the point of breaking through the walls you suddenly fled as if routed yourselves?" in every case I received the same answer: "We saw the walls of the Legation suddenly swarming with spirits in white, and we cried out, 'The gods are come down to fight for the foreigners, and our cause is lost.'"

Which just proves what we said above to be true. Christian truth is the same, generation after generation.

After this angel story we may as well give a specimen of the type of mind to which this tale will probably appeal. The occasion was the discussion in Committee of the Government's Criminal Justice Bill. Sir Archi-

bald Southby, Conservative member for Epsom, discovered that the Bill did not provide for religious probation officers. As the Bill stood there was nothing to prevent a probation officer of Atheistic views being appointed. Seeing that this could only affect religious prisoners it looks as though a change of person in the direction of non-religion might be a change for the better. At any rate we feel that Epsom ought to be congratulated on sending Sir Archibald to Parliament. He is probably doing less harm inside the House than he might outside. We feel he ought to link up with Captain Ramsay. They should make a good pair.

That difficult question, "Whom did Cain marry?" has now been pontifically answered by the *Universe*. "He must have married either a sister or a niece"—though strangely enough the Bible mentions neither. Still, that is a little matter, as a priest must know what happened in those early days of man's history, because of his being in direct touch with God. But the sequel to the story is just as interesting and true. It seems that Cain, after marriage, had a son called Enoch, after the birth of whom Cain built a city. A city for three inhabitants must have been some city!

What the Roman Catholics call "the Conservative-dominated Liverpool City Council," has agreed to a round-table conference of all interested parties on the education question. So far, the Council has resisted the attempt made by the religionists to run religious schools on ratepayers' money, but they have put forward a plan, the problems of which are—according to the *Universe*—"to build schools and lease them to the religious authorities, and they include the number, size, cost, and location of the schools to be built by the Council; the basis of the rents to be charged; whether or not all denominations are to be treated alike, and the appointment of teachers for the leased schools." If agreement is reached "it will require the approval of the Board of Education as well as the City Council." As the Catholics will be represented by Mgr. Traynor, Mr. P. Taggart, and the Labour Party by Alderman Hogan, who is, of course, a Catholic, it will be most interesting to see the outcome of the Conference. And once again we must point out how simple is the solution—that of Secular Education. But the religionists prefer eternal squabbling.

Fifty Years Ago

Just look for a moment at these Parnell letters. They were printed in facsimile in the *Times*, published in *Parnellism and Crime*, circulated among millions of people, and accepted as genuine by half the population of England. And on what ground? Solely on the ground that Parnellism was heterodox and the *Times* was a respectable journal. That was enough. The laws of evidence were treated with contempt. Investigation was thought unnecessary. Thousands of people fatuously said, "Oh, the letters are in print." And all this is an age of Board Schools, printing presses, daily papers, and unlimited discussion; nay, in despite of the solemn declaration of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, backed up by a demand for investigation, that the letters were absolute concoctions.

Now if such things can happen in an age like this, how easily could they happen in ages like those in which Christianity produced its Scriptures. Credulity was boundless, fraud was audacious, and lying for the profit of the Church was regarded as a virtue. There was no printing press, no free inquiry, no keen investigation, no vivid conception of the laws of evidence; and the few brilliant critics, like Celsus and Porphyry, who kept alive in their breasts the nobler spirit of Grecian scepticism were answered by the destruction of their writings, a process which was carried out with the cunning scent of a sleuth-hound and the remorseless cruelty of a tiger.

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

For Advertising and Distributing the *Freethinker*.—A. E. Stringer, 5s.; I. Newman, £1 15s.

FREETHINKER ENDOWMENT TRUST.—A.B., £1.

P. O'DEE.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

SEEVARETMAN JOHN (Malay States).—We are pleased to have your appreciation of this journal. Have carried out your wishes.

J. YULE.—See *Views and Opinions*.

THE *Freethinker* is now being supplied from this office to the Dartford Public Library and Museum. It is being similarly supplied to a number of Public Libraries throughout the country. The copies are sent free.

MR. R. BROOME writes concerning an article by Dr. Harvey in the *Freethinker* for January 15, that the reference should be Exodus xx. 5, not Deut. xx. 5 as given. Not much appears to escape our readers.

A. HANSON.—Obliged for copies of correspondence. They will be made use of.

G. K. THORPE.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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

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

Sugar Plums

To-day (Sunday, March 5), Mr. Cohen will speak in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The occasion is the Anniversary of the opening of the Secular Hall, and proceedings will commence at 6.30.

On Sunday next (March 12), Mr. Cohen will visit Nottingham. The lecture will be an afternoon one, commencing at 2.30. The meeting will take place in the Lecture Theatre of University College, Shakespeare Street.

Mr. T. H. Elstob paid his first lecturing visit to Leicester on Sunday last. He took for his subject, "And God Made Insects." How he made them gave plenty of opportunities for illustrating the alleged wisdom and goodness of the "creator," and those present were not slow to draw the logical conclusion from the situation. An important political meeting in the town prevented the attendance being as large as it would otherwise have been, but Leicester folk will have another opportunity of listening to Mr. Elstob in the near future.

There was a very much improved audience on Sunday last at Mr. Rosetti's lecture at Birmingham. The lectures

are being better advertised, and the advertising is bearing good results. We are also pleased to hear that the Branch Whist Drive and Dance at the Bristol Street Board Schools was a complete success. The thanks of the Branch are due to the ladies who helped, and also to Messrs. Ashford and Cottingham. Birmingham has not been doing so well of late years as might have been the case, but we hope that things will now continue on the up-grade. There are plenty of Freethinkers in and about Birmingham, and their help should be sought and enlisted in the Cause.

The fifth volume of Mr. Cohen's *Essays in Freethinking* will be ready for sale on March 8. These volumes contain some of the author's best writing, they deal with a large variety of subjects, and with permanent issues. The price of the volume will be as usual 2s. 6d. The five volumes will be sent post free for 12s. 6d. A full list of the contents will be found on the back page of this issue.

We can comment for reading two recent books. The first is *Fallen Bastions, The Central European Tragedy*, by G. E. R. Gedye, the well-known newspaper correspondent. (Gollancz, available through the Left Book Club at 2s. 6d.). It is a sickening account of double-dealing, trickery and international dishonesty, written by one who was in intimate touch with affairs, and who writes with justifiable bitterness. The *Fallen Bastions*, are, of course, Czechoslovakia, and other parts of Eastern Europe which were given to Germany in a few weeks, by an applied bluff, so transparent that it is difficult to believe that the bluff was not clearly seen by those implicated, and who appeared to be taken in by it. When all allowances are made for Mr. Gedye's obvious hatred of Germany and its works, the book makes one wonder whether, if war wiped out the present generation of politicians and professional diplomatists, the younger generation might not have a much better chance of building a world in which the populations might look forward hopefully to a better existence than one passed in panic, with part of their lives spent in dug-outs. The world which we have as a consequence of the "Great War," so different from the one we were promised, seems hardly worth the having. Lying and dishonesty, with disregard for human dignity, were never more marked than they are at the moment.

The second book is by Mr. W. Teeling, *Crisis for Christianity* (John Gifford, 10s. 6d.). Mr. Teeling writes as a Roman Catholic, but one of a better type than Mr. Hilaire Belloc, and with a greater regard for truth, and a less obvious desire to act as a special pleader for the Roman Church. Some time back Mr. Teeling wrote a book called *The Pope in Politics*, which brought against him, principally from Roman Catholic sources, a charge of unfairness to the Foreign policy of that Church. The present work is written to disprove this charge, and deals more fully with the position of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. There are two things brought out very clearly in Mr. Teeling's book. The first is that the alleged united support of Hitler by the German people is part of the "bluff" upon which informed and impartial observers have frequently laid stress. The second is the comparative weakness of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany. There is a very useful and informing sketch of the history of the Christian Church in Germany, which will help one to understand the present situation, whatever opinions one may hold. Mr. Teeling also stresses the consideration that the annexation of Austria has brought into the Reich a predominantly Catholic population, which is likely to make the pacification of the religious section of the population more difficult than ever. And added to this there is the danger that the attack on the Christian Church as a whole may force Protestants and Catholics into combination. The picture drawn does show, perhaps unintentionally, the huge game of bluff played on this country—that is if our own Government was not aware of the bluff, and so became helpers in the manoeuvre. Mr. Teeling's book will help to a better understanding of the religious situation in Germany, besides throwing light on the game of plot and counterplot.

"The Revolt against God"

THIS title heads a somewhat hysterical article in the *Commonwealth*—a weekly Catholic newspaper of New York. This "revolt," we are assured, "is the stark terrible fact of to-day." It is particularly shocking because "never before has there been a direct revolt against God by vast masses of human beings." The writer ignores the "War in Heaven" recorded in the Book of Revelation—presumably because only Lucifer and a few angels rebelled and met their reward, for apparently they became Lords of Hell and rivals—frequently quite successful rivals—of their old Divine Dictator.

There is considerable truth in the *Commonwealth* reference to the "Revolt" in our own day. In the ages of universal ignorance there was universal belief in superstition. Enlightenment was an exceedingly slow process. But gradually—as education led to knowledge with the aid of reason—analysis of superstition led some pioneers into an acknowledgement of scepticism. Under direct persecution, only a few courageous sceptics survived. But their scepticism and explorations and intellectual speculations inspired many others to unbelief. With widespread education the "Revolt against God" became an evolutionary inevitability.

The *Commonwealth* article admits that "the MOST PRIMITIVE peoples are religious." Except in a Religious essay, one would expect the last sentence to continue: "and, quite naturally, enlightened peoples are different." It is only in regard to Religion that primitive peoples are credited with exact solutions to problems which have puzzled subsequent ages of scientific thinkers, and some of which still baffle our wisest students.

Perhaps the most interesting part of this Catholic protest is its frank denials of Christianity's "essential" interest in ethics:—

It is no doubt important and valuable to show the world that the Church is not indifferent to man's earthly lot, to bring before the public her principles of social and economic justice. But this must never be regarded or made to appear as her primary and essential office. If the Church were primarily an organization to assist men to lead a happier healthier or even more moral life on earth, secularism could adopt her programme while dropping the religion as superfluous.

Human welfare and social morality are, of course, "valuable" for advertising purposes—that is all—sheer window-dressing of commodities always out of stock. This being so, the *Commonwealth* is merely impertinent in imagining that "Secularism" would deign to "adopt the programme of religion without the religion." Nor would we fear the Bogy this writer suggests as the result of unbelief:—

If in fact religion were untrue, if there were no Creator, no Wisdom and no Love at the heart of reality, if man were indeed the product and plaything of blind unintelligent forces, and his doom—individual and racial—were complete annihilation, then he ought to be plunged in the profoundest gloom.

Why should we thus be "plunged"? Facts are facts. We experience daily the natural forces which include some pleasant and some very unpleasant ones. Man tries, and in many cases is able, to harness otherwise "evil" forces to beneficent uses; but these forces exist, harnessed or unharnessed; God or No God! The Theist apparently needs the "Opium" of Marx and Lenin—Religion—to save him from that "profoundest gloom" from which normal Atheists are exempt.

After all, if Atheists see neither "wisdom" nor "love" "at the heart of things"—wherever that may be—even Atheists are not indifferent to these and countless other excellent qualities, which let us add are not in any degree improved by being spelt with a capital initial letter, for love is as good as Love, or even LOVE.

Perhaps our lack of "gloom"—"profoundest" or other—is not entirely unconnected with our lack of belief in the fierce brutality of an angry God. We are free from the terrors with which ages of Christian doctrines have blasted human life through the persecutions of intolerance, and have made death hideous with hellish promises of eternal fire.

The so-called "Oxford Group" seems to have made impression on both sides of the Atlantic—amongst morons in Europe as well as America. They too protest against "The Revolt." Their prominent apologists do not condescend to argument. "Absolute obedience is the only qualification for finding God" is their dictum, and "before an authority recognized as Supreme, all arguments are futile." It is about as logical—and absurd as the "limerick" attributed to Dean Inge:—

O God, forasmuch as without Thee
We are not able to doubt Thee,
And we MUST answer "yes"
Before we can guess
The tiniest trifle about Thee.

"We have no grounds to fear the godless battalions," was the courageous boast of the Bishop of Lichfield, preaching recently in Westminster Abbey. It was in striking contrast to the obvious fears—and retreats—of many other Christian professionals who are always fearing a curtailment of their "rights and privileges" through a Revolt against the Source of All Goodness—and all their emoluments.

"The Fool Hath Said—" is a favourite Christian quotation—considered specially suitable for a Book of arguments against the Atheist leaders of the "Revolt." Beverley Nichols—whose "Fool" book fell very flat—writes in the *Sunday Chronicle*:—

All around us is the evidence of the most miraculous design. The commonest flower, the most ordinary crystal, is a witness to design on a scale that surpasses the imagination.

You cannot have design without a Designer.

and the same writer, in the same journal, gives us an example of this "Design" and this "Designer":—

In the Vincent Square Hospital, which is a miracle of cleanliness and efficiency, I saw one of the smallest babies in the world. It had weighed under three pounds when it was born. It was being fed through a little tube the size of a fountain pen filler. It was incredibly hideous.

Beverley Nichols is almost incredibly silly!

Dean Alington (late Head-master of Eton) is another writer of a book with the same title: *The Fool Hath Said*. It is an unusual book, and totally free from the salient faults of Nichols' advertisement of Nichols' ignorance. It fairly states (mainly in Chapter headings) arguments quoted from some actual Atheist exponents' writings and speeches. Alington pokes fun at some Christian ideas and "explains away" many others. But for himself, he says:—

"As far as I can see, the whole value and reality of the existence of man are bound up with the existence of God," and "a complete readjustment of our standards is involved by the claim that "GOD MUST GO."

Dr. Alington's logic is like the "Peace of God," except that possibly Dr. Alington himself knows what his words mean. Man's Revolt against God is rightly

the effect of our realizing "the whole value and reality of man's existence" . . . and his welfare.

A recent advertisement in many London papers must have cost a lot of money—presumably paid by the "Panacea Society," whose name and address accompany it. It called upon all Christians to pray:—

I intreat Thee to MAKE HASTE O God to frustrate the godless menace in Britain.

But we imagine that if God allowed the Freethought International Congress to take place it is useless worrying the Almighty to "Make Haste" now. We are amused at the words "IN BRITAIN." God has evidently told the Panacea Society that the case is hopeless in Russia. It is the "Revolters" who "made haste" there.

The Bishop of Fulham clearly admits that GOD HAS GONE, judging by his sermon at Christ Church, Norwood, where he solemnly proclaimed the Abdication of another—this time a Heavenly—monarch. "God," he declared, "has handed over to mankind the management of the world." If this is true neither the "House of God," nor the salaries of "His Ministers and Stewards of His Mysteries" are any longer required. The "Revolt" has won.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Spiritualism and the Maskelynes

A few months ago, I dealt with the reasons given by a well-known conjuror, Mr. Will Goldston, for his belief in "the reality of survival," expressing my surprise at their inadequacy; and at the same time mentioned the contempt the cult of Spiritualism received from two of the greatest of all conjurors, the late J. N. Maskelyne, and Harry Houdini. In a very angry reply, Mr. Goldston challenged me to give any reference to this contempt in their published works—which, of course, I very promptly did. This reply made Mr. Goldston still more angry, but instead of dealing with the works in question, he adroitly gave a turn to the discussion by pointing out that Mrs. Houdini had received a spirit message from her husband from "over there," and that Maskelyne had admitted his belief in Spiritualism in a letter to an Italian paper. Both these statements are very interesting, and may or may not be true; but they do not answer my categorical account of the utter unbelief of the two great "magicians," as far as their easily procurable works are concerned. What Mr. Goldston heard privately, and retails after their death, is no more evidence than his own story of seeing a table levitate to the ceiling in spite of the fact that twelve men did their utmost to keep it down, and that on the table the medium was kicking another man with hob-nailed boots without hurting him.

However, I do not wish to start again a very unprofitable discussion with an angry Spiritualist, which would probably bore a good many readers. Instead, I should like to call their attention to a very interesting book written by J. N. Maskelyne's grandson, Jasper, entitled *White Magic*. Here will be found what he calls "The Story of the Maskelynes," and most entertaining it is—especially to those who, like myself, love to be thoroughly deceived or mystified by the extraordinary illusions and sleight of hand of such masters of the art. In particular, the sections dealing with spiritualism should prove even more important to non-believing readers, as what Mr. Jasper Maskelyne has to say on the subject, and what he reports as to his grandfather's beliefs on the question, have at least the merit of being authoritative.

We first get the full account of the exposure of the Davenport Brothers, whose performances caused such a sensation in the '60's of last century. Whether these Americans really claimed that their show was due entirely to "spirits," I am not altogether convinced. I have seen a facsimile of the letter written to Houdini by Ira Davenport, the then surviving brother, in which he says that the spirit part of the business was claimed for them by others in the interest of showmanship. In any case what they did seemed impossible to be done without the help of the unearthly survivors of "summerland" in the eyes of many people—until Mr. J. N. Maskelyne showed he could give the same performance with additional and still more mystifying sensations all done by purely physical means. Needless to say this did not impress true believers at all; they continued to believe still more.

Maskelyne became famous, introduced all sorts of new illusions which outdid anything produced by Spiritualists, and continued to challenge these people whenever he had the chance. When Home started "levitating" at seances, J. N. "responded by floating a woman over the heads of the audience at the Egyptian Hall." When Charles Williams raised "the ghost of John King," J.N. exorcised a second and identical John King who walked, in spirit form, the boards of the illusionist's stage. When Dr. Slade startled the unthinking world with his spirit messages on slates, J.N. sent him "a couple of slates so bound and sealed together that no human agency could unfasten them without leaving obvious marks—and asked the spirits to write on the inner faces of the slates. This impious request was rightly refused." J.N. subsequently went to court as a witness when Slade was tried as a fraud, and "demonstrated how it was possible to write on a slate, sponge out the words, and make them reappear there a short time later as large as life, and twice as natural." Yet there are still people who believe in Slade.

In 1906, Maskelyne wrote a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* expressing his usual strong views against Spiritualism, and a reply came from Archdeacon Colley, who challenged him to reproduce some spiritualistic phenomena that he had seen and deposited £1,000 to be paid if J.N. succeeded. To cut a long story short, Maskelyne did reproduce most of the phenomena stipulated, but Colley became such "a nuisance that J.N. was forced in his own defence to issue a pamphlet telling what he considered to be the true facts of the whole story." Unfortunately he made some statements about Colley's clerical degree which were not accurate, and an action for libel followed, in which a right-minded jury naturally vindicated religion by awarding the Archdeacon £1,000 damages, and refusing to allow J.N.'s counterclaim for the £1,000 because his ghost did not do everything the other ghost did. This would have been just as easy, but I am afraid that Maskelyne never discovered how thorough was the trickery associated with true Christianity combined with spiritualism.

And now comes an interesting part of the story. In 1917 Maskelyne confessed he was puzzled how men like Doyle had apparently been convinced that there was "something genuine" in spiritualism. He therefore called his son Nevil to him, and said, among other things, that he intended to try and find out. "When I die," he added, "I shall make a very great effort, if it is permitted for dead people to do so, to establish contact with you and assure you of the reality of spiritualistic teaching." His son was to sleep a few nights in the bed in which J.N. died, to have a trumpet there, and to make every effort to get in touch with him. Nevil did exactly as was arranged—but nothing happened. There were no messages.

There were no inexplicable phenomena." Says our author:—

The knowledge of this experiment has done more to shake my belief in Spiritualism than anything else I have experienced or known. Since then I have carried on the challenge of my grandfather and father that I will reproduce exactly any spiritualistic phenomena that any medium can show to an unprejudiced audience. I have sought for years to be admitted to a seance. Always I have been refused this request. Yet I, too, am sincerely ready to be convinced. . . . When great men die—and I claim that J.N. was a great man in his own sphere—there is almost always a spiritualistic attempt to produce "messages" from the departed spirits. I challenge the authenticity of these "messages!"

. . . It has been stated in a leading spiritualist magazine within the last twelve months, that my grandfather, J. N. Maskelyne, confessed to a well-known surgeon, just before his death: "It is all true. Spiritualism is all true, but I dare not tell the public." The same statement has been attributed in print to my father. I would like to say here that it is a foul lie, and an abominable libel, in both cases. No one outside a lunatic asylum or a seance room would credit my grandfather with being afraid to tell the public—anything. It is like the spiritualists, as I have seen them, to put yet another bogus statement into the mouth of a dead man.

It seems to me that this and the fuller statements in the book are final, and should at once settle any "post-mortem" accounts of J. N. Maskelyne's attitude towards Spiritualism. For my part, I refuse to believe now anything said or written to the contrary—and that goes for people like Mr. Will Goldston as well as professional mediums.

One more interesting thing may be noted. It concerns the "one trick that the Maskelynes admitted they could not perform"—the one known as the Indian Rope Trick. The original form of the legend is, of course, the "true" one. In it, the fakir performs in the open air away from all obstacles, and allows his rope to be thoroughly examined. It is then thrown in the air and remains rigid and suspended from nothing, as it were. A boy then climbs up it and vanishes. The fakir follows with a knife, slashes about with it at the top, and bits of the boy, including his head, come falling to the ground. The fakir then descends the rope, pulls it down and rolls it up, puts the slashed portions of the boy in a bag, then in a box which the audience has examined, and in a moment or two the boy comes out alive and kicking.

Mr. Jasper Maskelyne says that *the trick has never been performed*. Of course, hundreds of travellers claim that they have seen it, or at least, have known somebody who saw it, but no one has been able to produce a fakir who would perform the trick before an audience when challenged. In support of this, Mr. Maskelyne quotes the Maharajah of Jodhpur, who searched his dominions to find someone who could do it and failed. But, of course, there are as many people who will continue to believe that it can be done, as there are people who believe in levitating tables. In case anyone believes that the people who claim to have seen the Indian Rope Trick were "mesmerized" by the fakir, all one can say is that this is just as big a piece of nonsense as the trick itself.

While Magic deals with the many interesting topics contained in its title, and I heartily recommend it to readers of this journal. In many cases, it completely pulverizes any suggestion that the great J.N. was a Spiritualist.

H. CUTNER

Theology is a collection of meaningless words about unintelligible chimeras.—Leslie Stephen.

Letters to A Christian Friend

(6) "GOLDEN RULES" AND THEIR MOTIVES

MY DEAR CHARLES,

When Jesus expounds what is described as his "golden rule"—"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them"—he immediately adds, "for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. vii. 12). And, though not explicit, it is, of course, implicit in what Jesus calls "the second great commandment in the law" (Matt. xxii. 34-40)—"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," which is a commandment not of Jesus, but of the Old Testament (Lev. xix. 18).

Note also the inevitable reward slant that Jesus gives the rule. The passage in Matt. vii. 11-12 begins, "Ask, and it shall be given you," and ends in this manner: "If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things unto them that ask him! Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. . . ." (See also Luke vi. 32-36).

In the Jewish Talmud it is related how the famous Rabbi Hillel was asked by a would-be convert to be taught the commandments of the Torah in the shortest possible form ("while I stand on one leg"). Hillel told him, "What is unpleasant to thyself, that do not to thy neighbour; this is the whole Law, all else is but its exposition."

"This allusion to the Scriptural injunction to love one's neighbour (Lev. xix. 18) as the fundamental law of religious morals, became in a certain sense a commonplace of Pharisaic scholasticism," says an *Encyclopaedia Britannica* writer on Hillel (11th edn.). "For the Pharisee who accepts the answer of Jesus regarding that fundamental doctrine which ranks love of one's neighbour as the highest duty after the love of God (Mark xii, 33), this was because as a disciple of Hillel the idea was familiar to him. St. Paul also (Gal. v. 14) doubtless learned this in the school of Gamaliel."

In the Old Testament book of Tobias we find, "See thou never do to another what thou wouldst hate to have done to thee by another" (iv. 16: Douay Bible).

Of similar expressions to be found among the Pagan philosophers, here are two by Epictetus, "What thou avoidest suffering thyself, seek not to impose on others"; "If thou wouldst be well spoken of, learn to speak well of others."

Then there is the most famous "golden rule" of all, that of Confucius 500 years before Christ, "Never do to others what you would not like them to do to you." The suggestion that this teaching—like the others I have mentioned—is inferior because of being phrased in a negative form carries little weight; Confucius (born about 550 B.C.) taught the idea of "reciprocity," and the ideogram or character of the Chinese language in which he gave his rule denoted "as heart," or "my heart in sympathy with yours."

Actually the rule of Confucius was much superior to that of Jesus, for whereas the latter plasters up his teaching with the motive of certain reward in heaven, the Chinese sage taught a natural morality, related solely to "man as he is, and the duties belonging to him in society. . . . His teaching was hardly more than a pure secularism. He had faith in man, man made for society, but he did not care to follow him out of society, nor to present to him motives of conduct derived from the consideration of a future life."

So, when asked by a disciple if one ought to return good for evil, Confucius replied, "No, for how then shall we treat those who are good to us? To those who

injure us we owe—justice." There again you see a more practical touch than in Jesus, who was not concerned with working out balance and result in this world, but taught that we should return good for evil because if we did so we should inherit "everlasting life," and have a good time in heaven. Viewing this world simply as the ante-room of the next, and this life simply as the examination-room where we get our pass-out checks as "sheep" or "goats," Jesus was full of exaggerations and wild generalizations about returning good for evil, loving your enemies, and forgiving seventy times seven, none of which he consistently lived up to himself even in his own short life.

Five centuries before Christ men were being taught to cultivate "love without measure towards all beings . . . towards the whole world—above, below, around—a heart of love unstinted, unmixed with the sense of differing or opposing interests." The place was India, and the teacher was Buddha, the "secular sage"; and Lao-Tze, the Chinese mystic of about the same time as Confucius, but of a very different type, taught extreme compassion and humility, and that one should requite injury with kindness.

In his opposition to some of the theories by which the teachings of Buddha were degraded after the Master's death, one of his followers, Mencius, made strenuous efforts on his travels from court to court to inculcate the view of the essential goodness of human nature, which needed only moral training in order to develop its virtues, virtues that were not acquired but innate. Mencius bade princes discard from their minds the idea of profit in their dealings with their subjects, and to rely instead on the maxims of benevolence and righteousness; and he denounced those rulers who excite rebellion by neglect of the economic welfare of their people.

This concern for the economic and social welfare of the people as distinct from their "spiritual welfare" is in striking contrast to the attitude of Jesus. Jesus tells the poor how blessed they are—not because he is going to help them in this life, not because he thinks or makes any suggestion that the conditions of this life should be altered so as to give the poor a fuller and fairer share in its good things; but solely because there's a good time coming for them when they die—theirs is the "kingdom of heaven." God bless them! One needn't worry about poverty and want if only one believes—"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . . but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. . . ." (Matt vi. 19-20). And when Jesus advises a person to sell all that he has and give the proceeds to the poor, that is not to benefit the poor, but to benefit the person who does it, because, he is told, "thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matt. xix. 21).

"Christian morality," wrote John Stuart Mill, in his essay *On Liberty*, "holds out the hope of heaven and the threat of hell as the appointed and appropriate motives to a virtuous life; in this falling far below the best of the ancients, and doing what lies in it to give human morality an essentially selfish character, by disconnecting each man's feelings of duty from the interests of his fellow-creatures, except so far as a self-interested inducement is offered to him for consulting them."

"What little recognition the idea of obligation to the public obtains in modern morality is derived from Greek and Roman sources, not from Christian," added Mill; and another writer, the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher considers that "of all the political lessons bequeathed by the Greeks to the modern, the most valuable is the idea of the nobility of public service. The Greeks contributed an ethical exaltation to the idea of political life which, whenever classical influences have been especially prevalent in the world, has inspired

good men to spend themselves in the service of their country" (*Universal History of the World*, Vol. III. ch. 52).

A very different story is to be told of the influence of early Christianity and the primitive Gospels; and you may recollect Prof. Gilbert Murray's words, from *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, that by the time the early Christian Era had got into its stride there had come about "an indifference to the welfare of the State, a conversion of the Soul to God . . . an atmosphere in which the aim of the good man is not so much to live justly, to help the society to which he belongs and enjoy the esteem of his fellow creatures; but rather, by means of a burning faith, by contempt for the world and its standards, by ecstasy, suffering and martyrdom, to be granted pardon for his unspeakable unworthiness, his immeasurable sins."

So the world that had seen "the glory that was Greece, and the grandeur that was Rome," sank into the torpor of the Christian Ages, or what are sometimes known as the Dark Ages. But even in the Middle Ages we sometimes find "a fresh and courageous mind at work, thinking for itself logically rather than theologically," and whenever we do, says E. B. Osborn, in *Our Debt to Greece and Rome*, "investigation shows that some knowledge of Greek literature was involved. . . . The Greek spirit caused the great awakening of the human intellect known as the Renaissance, and so brought into being the mobile modern world out of the fixed medieval order. . . . Recovered by the interpretation of its works, the Greek spirit taught men to trust their intelligence and imagination once more, to question the authority of medieval theologians and philosophers, and to steep themselves again in Nature. It persuaded them to see the world as it is and to enjoy it—not to make life a period of penances undertaken in the hope of winning a place in a feudal Heaven."

Yours affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDFAST

Correspondence

THE POLICE AND CIVIL LIBERTY

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I was glad to see in this week's *Freethinker* that a reference was made to the conduct of the police at a demonstration in Parliament Square, on the evening of January 31 last. I hope also that the matter will not be allowed to drop. It was to be expected that such a well-known champion of civil liberties as the *Freethinker* would take an interest in the happenings which have led to such serious accusations against the police, and I should like to be allowed the opportunity, as one of your regular readers, of relating a little of what I saw and experienced on the night in question.

Shortly before 9 p.m., I went across Parliament Square to the side entrance of the House of Commons to "lobby" my M.P. The policeman who was on duty at the door informed me that as there was no room in the lobby (it was disclosed subsequently that this statement was untrue) I should have to wait outside in a queue. The policeman pointed to where I should stand in the queue, and I was careful to obey his instructions. While waiting for what appeared the best part of an hour in a queue numbering a dozen or so people, whose one desire was to exercise the democratic right of speaking with their M.P.'s, a number of demonstrators came along in a perfectly orderly manner, and I must state quite emphatically here that neither at this time nor to my knowledge at any other time during the evening was there any violence or disorderly conduct on their part.

It must also be emphasized that the members of the queue were not connected in any way with the band of

demonstrators. Soon after the last of the demonstrators had appeared, there was a concerted action on the part of foot and mounted police. The latter charged on to the pavement, and drove those who were waiting in the queue into the band of demonstrators. Despite a great deal of pushing, punching and indiscriminate truncheon play on the part of the police, I saw no provocation from either the members of the queue or from the demonstrators. I made appeals to several mounted policemen, saying that I was not amongst the demonstrators until I had been driven away from the queue. I received one reply only—from a mounted policeman who had truncheon raised in a threatening attitude—and it was: "If you want to keep out of trouble you shouldn't be here the same time as this mob." Despite all efforts to escape I was unable to do so, for the police who appeared to be there for the sole purpose of dispersing the crowd, made quite certain that cordons were drawn up along every side street, and one was only driven in one direction so that they might meet a charge coming in the opposite direction. I saw a great deal more that night which shocked me, and angry and horrified I felt it my duty to make a statement immediately I disentangled myself from the ugly business, at the offices of a well known national newspaper, who the following morning gave the incidents, as well as my statement, leading space along with that of two witnesses who accompanied me to the House of Commons, and who also testified as to the truth of my statement.

Sir Stafford Cripps, with whom I was fortunate enough to have an interview, promised to mention the matter in the Commons, which he did at great length (see *Hansard*, February 13, 1939), but despite an overwhelming case for a public enquiry, which was supported, apart from Sir Stafford, by members of all parties, the Home Secretary refused to do more than promise to look into some of the cases himself.

Is it too much to hope that pressure of opinion will ultimately demand that every member of the Police Force should be specifically instructed that he exists as a servant and protector of the public, and not yet as a repressive agent under the Government in power?

PETER NORTHCOTE

THE NUISANCE OF CHURCH BELLS

SIR,—With reference to Mr. C. H. Bulman's letter on "Church Bells," and answering Footnote. May I state on a point of General Information, that about two years ago I applied for summons under Noise Abatement Act, at Acton Police Court, against the Rev. Rich, Vicar of Chiswick, against the infernal nuisance caused by this continual banging around of old iron and brass, to the point of distraction and nervous prostration of productive citizens. The magistrate informed me that I could not take action individually, but I could collectively, by getting a petition presented by 20 householders.

As Atheists are forced to use 99½ per cent of their time and energies for removing Christian barricades and obstructions to the Intellectual Progress of Humanity, time has not allowed yet for the "follow through" on Petition, but the Christians can always get a million helpers to keep alive and incite opposition and legal enactments against Sunday Cinemas, balanced B.B.C. output, etc.

The Atheists can only "bam" a "sortie" here and there at the enemies' entrenchments as they contact these scores of instances of Christian intolerance and tyranny.

FRED MUSTON

Obituary

ALFRED HOWARTH

I REGRET to report that the life of Alfred Howarth drew to a close on February 18, at the age of 79, at his Manchester home. A short time ago his eyesight began to fail, and this affliction made him lose his lively interest in all those matters to which he would otherwise have given his attention.

At the request of his relatives, Mr. Bayford attended the

Crematorium on February 22, and said a few words as to his outlook, life, and character. Mr. Howarth leaves several sons and daughters and numerous grandchildren, most of whom were present at the Crematorium amidst a large circle of friends.—W.A.A.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place): 7.30, A Lecture. Weather permitting.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond): 11.30, Sunday, Mr. L. Ebury. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. L. Ebury.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 3.30, Sunday, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Collins, Tuson and Mrs. N. Buxton. Weather permitting.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W. 1): 7.30, F. A. Ridley—"Hitler—the last of the Gods?"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.4): 7.30, Mr. R. B. Kerr (Editor *New Generation*)—"Could Socialism Abolish War?"

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, W. B. Curry, M.A., B.Sc.—"If War Comes."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, A. E. Carpenter—"Death on the Roads."

COUNTRY

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, Demonstration by local speakers. Women and Freethought. Miss A. M. Perry—"Mother's Religion." Mrs. Elsie Thompson—"Atheism and Abortion." Mrs. W. Standfast—"My Child and Religion."

CHORLEY AND DISTRICT BRANCH N.S.S. (Labour Rooms, Halliwell Street): 7.30, W. A. Atkinson (Manchester)—"Life and Death."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"The Bishop, Science and Religion."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place, Edinburgh): 7.0, Professor Crew, Institute of Animal Genetics, Edinburgh University—"Mechanistic Biology." Possible lantern lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Muriel Whitefield—"Pathology of Religion."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, 58th Anniversary of the Opening of the Secular Hall. Mr. Chapman Cohen (President N.S.S.)

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, A. J. Ashby (Liverpool) A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Road, Manchester, near All Saints Church): 7.0, Mr. J. Clayton (Burnley)—A Lecture.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, March 3, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.30, Mr. J. T. Brighton—"The Sex Problem in Religion."

TEES SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. Jubilee Hall, Leeds Street): 7.15—A Lecture.

Infidel Death-Beds

BY

G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren

Price 2s.

Postage 3d.

FASCISM & CHRISTIANITY

Chapman Cohen

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

This is a timely and appropriate propagandist pamphlet, and should be circulated as widely and as wisely as possible. Packets of Fifty copies will be sent post free for 4s. 6d.

ONE PENNY. By post Threehalfpence

PAGAN ELEMENTS IN CHRISTIANITY

H. CUTNER

A concise and scathing account of the debt Christianity owes to Paganism, with a chapter on Relics

Price Sixpence

Postage 1d.

PETER ANNET—1693-1769

By ELLA TWYNAM

A sketch of the life and work of the bravest of eighteenth century Freethinkers. The only pamphlet available, and which should be in the possession of every Freethinker and as many Christians as possible.

Price post free 2½d.

Prayer : An Indictment

By G. BEDBOROUGH

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Prayer : The first Duty of Man ; Un-answered Prayer ; Answered Prayer ; Science is better than Prayer. 32 pages.

Price post free 2½d.

MEAT EATING INVOLVES CRUELTY

Why not try the Vegetarian Way ?

Free Literature, including Recipes, from The Vegetarian Society, 57 Princess Street, Manchester, 2

FANFARE FOR FREETHOUGHT

By

BAYARD SIMMONS

A collection of verse wise and witty, filling a gap in Freethought propagandist literature. Specially and tastefully printed and bound.

Price One Shilling.

Postage Twopence.

Twelve Religions and Modern Life

By HAR DAYAL, M A., Ph.D.

H. G. WELLS : " I find it a useful summary." *Public Opinion* : " Humanism and its ideals form the keynote of Dr. Dayal's unusual work."

Price 2s. 6d. Post Free

MODERN CULTURE INSTITUTE, EDGWARE, MIDDX.

HENRY HETHERINGTON

(1792-1849)

Ambrose G. Barker

Hetherington was a pioneer in the fight against religious orthodoxy and of Trades Unionism, of the cheap Newspaper Press, and of many other reforms. An avowed Atheist, he served three terms of imprisonment, but, like Carlile, the Government could not bend and, in the end, did not break him

Sixty-four pages, with portrait : Sixpence, by post, Sevenpence

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

CHAPMAN COHEN

A critical examination of the belief in a future life, with a study of apiritualism

CLOTH 2s. 6d., postage 2½d.; PAPER 1s. 6d. postage 2d.

RELIGION AND SEX

CHAPMAN COHEN

Studies in the Pathology of religious development

Price 6s.

Postage 6d.

FIFTH SERIES

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING

CHAPMAN COHEN

ABOUT BOOKS
 THE DAMNED TRUTH
 MAETERLINCK ON IMMORTALITY
 ON SNOBS AND SNOBBERY
 JESUS AND THE B.B.C.
 MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY
 DEAN INGE AMONG THE ATHEISTS
 POLITICS AND RELIGION
 CHRISTIANITY ON TRIAL
 WOMAN AND CHRISTIANITY
 WHY?

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT
 THE NEMESIS OF CHRISTIANITY
 GOOD GOD!
 GOD AND THE WEATHER
 WOMEN IN THE PULPIT
 ALL SORTS OF IDEAS
 ACCORDING TO PLAN
 A QUESTION OF HONOUR
 ARE WE CHRISTIAN?
 A STUDY IN FALLACY
 MEDICAL SCIENCE AND THE CHURCH

Price 2s. 6d.

Postage 2¹/₂d.

1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Series, Two Shillings and Sixpence each Volume

Five Volumes post free 12s. 6d,

A NEW YEAR'S OFFER

THE "FREETHINKER"

Edited by CHAPMAN COHEN

is published every Thursday, and may be ordered direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates: One Year, 15s.; Six Months, 7s. 6d.; Three Months, 3s. 9d.

Until March 31, 1939, a year's subscription will entitle the sender to a selection of five shillings'worth of Pioneer Press publications, provided that he is not already a subscriber. This offer applies to new subscribers only. Specimen copy with list sent on request.

The Freethinker is indispensable to anyone who wishes to keep in touch with the Freethought Movement in this country, and its fearless and uncompromising criticisms of religious belief.

To the PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Please send me the Freethinker for one year, for which I enclose 15s. Send me also the promised publications to the value of 5s. free of cost and carriage. I am not already a subscriber to the Freethinker.

Name

Address

The Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon St., London, E.C.4

WILL CHRIST SAVE US?

G. W. FOOTE

This pamphlet is a characteristic piece of writing of the founder and late editor of the Freethinker.

Thirty-two pages, Twopence. Post free 2¹/₂d.

Other Pamphlets by G. W. FOOTE

BIBLE AND BEER. 2d., postage 1/4d.

THE MOTHER OF GOD. 2d., postage 1/4d.

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH (being his speech before Lord Coleridge in the Court of Queen's Bench). 6d., postage 1d.

THE JEWISH LIFE OF CHRIST. (Translated from the Hebrew), with introductory preface. 6d., postage 1/4d.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM. 2d., postage 1/4d.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

By G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL

Cloth 2s. 6d.

Postage 3d.