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## Views and Opinions

### Man and his Gods

I THINK the following story, which is told by Xenophon of Socrates, is a fitting introduction to what I have to say this week. Aristippus, says Xenophon, asked Socrates:—

Whether he knew anything good, so that if he answered by naming food or drink or money or health or strength or valour or anything of that sort, he might at once show that it was sometimes an evil. Socrates, however, knew very well that if anything troubles us, what we demand is its cure, and he replied in the most pertinent fashion, "Are you asking me," he said, "anything good for a fever?" "Oh, no," said the other. "Or for sore eyes?" "Not that either." "Or for hunger?" "No, not for hunger." "Well, then," said he, "if you ask me whether I know a good that is good for nothing, I neither know it nor do I want to know it."

I was reminded of this passage, the lesson of which I have often had to press home, by an extract from a sermon delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral by Dean Matthews. He complained that "many intelligent and well-educated people seemed to be under the impression that Christians entertained the most childish and ridiculous notions about God. There were those who rejected Christianity because they imagined that Christians thought of God as a magnified man sitting above the sky." This passage recalled to me at once the reply of Socrates to Aristippus. For whether we are talking about gods or turnips our words must refer to something or they refer to nothing. And it must also be borne in mind that "something" and "nothing" are compound words. They refer to some thing or they refer to no thing. If we have some thing in mind when we describe it, whatever it is, the description must be based upon something either known or conceivably knowable. If it is not known or conceivably knowable, then it is no-thing, and we need bother no more about it. And I think if Socrates had lived to-day, and

had taken notice of Dr. Matthews, he would have reminded him that unless when he speaks about God he has some-thing in his mind, that is, some known qualities or properties or personality, then he was talking about no-thing, and was therefore wasting his own time and that of those who were listening to him. Words must refer to things, whether these things be a person, a situation, a quality or an event. If they do not have such reference, then they may make good theology—modern theology—but they are really nonsense—and non-sense means without sense. That also is a lesson worth learning.

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### God or Ghost

Now considering all things, one would have imagined that religious people when they talk, or sermonize, about God, would by now have been agreed as to what is meant by the word. In fact they profess that this agreement exists—and it does, until someone begins to ask questions. Then their affirmation that God exists becomes mainly a matter of saying what he is not. He is everything and anything, and so, by logical inference, nothing, for a figure that is without definition properly falls into the last category. If one runs through a number of modern books dealing with God, one discovers that he is not this, and he is not that, and like Dr. Matthews, their chief anxiety seems to be to remove what they call mistaken ideas about God. But telling us what God is not does not get any nearer to telling us what he is. It does not put a right idea in place of an alleged wrong one; it leaves us without any idea at all. If we profess a belief in some-thing, then it must possess at least some conceivable qualities; if it has not these then it is, *ipso facto*, nothing. And between something and nothing there is no midway term. If a thing is, whether the "thing" is a God or a cabbage, it must be conceived as having qualities which link it up with things already known. There is no room for debate on this point, what has been said is no more than a statement of the fundamental condition of thinking about any-thing.

\* \* \*

### My God!

I know that this kind of reasoning will be thought by the intellectually lazy to be a mere playing with words; but I can assure them it is nothing of the kind. It is no more, and no less, than an attempt to get ordered thinking where it is sadly needed. Dr. Matthews, for example, finds fault with those who think that when Christians talk about God they think of a magnified man who lives in the sky. But the plain fact is that this is the way in which those who originated the idea of God did think about him. Whatever the precise form, or colour, men gave their gods, whatever qualities men thought they possessed, a god was always thought of as possessing the same qualities

as themselves; that is they thought of them as magnified men living in the sky, although they often credited them with excursions to earth. The Christian religion followed this same path, and although they said that God was a spirit, he was a spirit in the same sense that man is a spirit, for to the primitive mind, whether found in the early ages of man's existence, or in St. Paul's Cathedral, the real man was a spirit inhabiting the body, and in saying God was a spirit, they were only saying in another way that God was a magnified man. And whether one makes the god of religion large or small, microscopic or macroscopic, it is impossible for anyone to think about a God in any other guise than that of a man. One must think of even a god as some-thing, and to rob the thing of qualities similar to those possessed by man is to divest him of all religious value. Even the God that Sir James Jeans worships is not a mathematical symbol, he is a mathematical thinker, and the only mathematical thinker we can think about is a man. I turn to my shelves for a book in aid of what I have said, and quite by chance my eye falls on an old seventeenth century Bible. I open it and one of the plates is an engraving after Raphael. It is a plate illustrating, "And he divided the light from the darkness." And one sees God doing it. There he is, an elderly curly-headed long-whiskered man pushing chunks of darkness on one side to enable the light to stand by itself. To-day such a picture in an ordinary paper would raise a laugh—or a prosecution for blasphemy. To Christians of a few generations ago it was a matter of sober fact. I imagine that Dr. Matthews would say that these Christians were very ignorant. I agree with him—but they were very honest. It is an unfortunate fact that to-day honesty of thought in connexion with Christianity should be largely confined to the intelligent.

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#### The Magnified Man

There is one thing that follows from what has just been said. This is that so long as men have any thoughts about God they must think about him as a magnified man. God must be thought about as either "animal vegetable or mineral." But no religious person would think about God as either a vegetable or an animal. Although equivalent absurdities are plentiful in the history of religion, no one can imagine a Dean of St. Paul's openly worshipping a cabbage, even though his salary was doubled. If such a thing did occur it would at least be addressed as "Oh thou eternal spirit who lives in the heart of even the lowly cabbage." Nor would he be worshipped as an animal, except in similar terms. An elephant certainly would not do, and a jackass would be too suggestive. We are left, then, with the form of animal life known as human; and it is here that the verbal thimble-rigging, the circulation of a fraudulent intellectual currency begins. For having rejected the idea of God as a magnified man, mainly because that makes the idea too ridiculous for acceptance to the modern world, the next move is to reintroduce in theory this same magnified man while verbally rejecting the possibility of his existence. If it were possible for the shade of Socrates to return to earth and converse with Dean Matthews, I can imagine his addressing him in something like the following words:—

My dear Dean,—I have lately been reading a report of a sermon which you delivered in the temple to which you are attached. And I note that you reject with scorn the idea that the gods are shaped in the image of man. This is a little puzzling to one like myself who, during his residence on earth, spent so much time in examining and clarifying the ideas of my fellow man, and who always insisted that some definite meaning must be attached to whatever words

we use. In my day there were many gods, and some of the clearest thinkers of my time really believed that the gods were so many symbolical representations of natural facts. But you have but one God, and, moreover, the temple in which you officiate professes to be based on a "sacred" book, that is a book written by the inspiration of God, which is something that did not exist in the civilized world of my time.

Now, my dear Dean, I am anxious only to understand what ideas you really have about God, and I note you reject the idea that your God is manlike. But you do not make the distinction clear. You do not say that God is manlike in the sense of being like a man of a particular colour, or size or capacity. But I would remind you that men vary in these particulars without the differences cancelling their human nature. And if your God is not like a man, although, if he exists, he *must* be like something, because if he is not like anything we know or anything we can think about, then he is not like anything and you appear to agree with the most extreme of your opponents that "God" stands for nothing.

But at this point I am pulled up by my recollection of some lectures you gave a few years ago, and which were re-published under the title of *The Purpose of God*. In that book you say that the only satisfactory conception of the world is that of a "living purpose," that in our own experience of "intentional" action we may find an inference for the existence of a "creative mind," that God is "a willing and purposive being," that God longs for the "love" of man, and will not be "satisfied" until we "find rest" in him.

There are many similar sayings in your book, and I am puzzled to understand your meaning. Such things as purpose, love, intention, a creative mind, willing, a striving after satisfaction, are not things in themselves, they are qualities and functions of at most animal structure, and at least they are human qualities. They are as much human as long hair, or blue eyes, or arms and legs. I do not see how you can get rid of the physical qualities of man and retain the mental and moral ones; or how you abolish the physical properties by mentioning only the mental ones. As I said when on earth, a thing to be good, or an action to be good, must be good for something, they are either that or they are good for nothing, and in what other direction can we look for the "good" in the qualities of man then in the life of mankind as we know it. Man is not made up of intellectual qualities alone, he is, as we say, body and mind, and the one is inseparably connected with the other.

So, my dear Dean, I do not follow you in your denunciation of the God who is man-like. If God is not like man what is he like? If he exists he must be like something; or if he exists and is not like anything we know how is it possible to think of him at all? After all, it is as something man-like that people have always thought of their gods. One who lived on earth nearly 150 years before myself, Xenophanes, said "Men believe that the gods are born, are clothed and shaped and speak like themselves. . . . If oxen and horses had gods they would draw their gods in their own image. . . . The negroes believe that their gods are flat-nosed and black, the Thracians that theirs have blue eyes and red hair." So it has always been, and so it will continue. Man may picture himself as infinitely better and wiser than he is to-day, but he cannot think himself out of manhood. He may picture his gods to be better and wiser as he himself grows better and wiser, but he is still thinking of them as magnified men. He cannot think of them in any other terms. We can, my dear Dean, think of gods as worse than we are, as good as we are, or as better than we are, but that does not do away with the magnified man, it reaffirms his existence. The common man, to use an expression more usual with your people than it was with mine, is not wrong in thinking of God as a magnified man. He can think of Him in no other way. It is you who are

substituting words for thoughts, and in the end conclude in a way that makes a plain man like myself wonder whether you really believe at all. The choice still lies between a God who is some-thing, or a God who is no-thing. Perhaps unconsciously you are adopting the latter view.

The only kind of God that anyone can even pretend to worship is a manlike one; and a manlike God is an impossibility.

CHAPMAN COHEN

## The Lambeth Walk

There is something to be said for every error, but whatever may be said for it, the most important thing to be said about it is that it is erroneous.—*Chesterton*.

JONATHAN SWIFT, the famous Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, declared that religion was nothing but a trade. He was in a position to know. Certainly, the accumulated wealth of the great Christian churches is passing wonderful. In the Ages of Faith priests rivalled Kings and Emperors in their magnificence and splendour. Hampton Court Palace, for example, was the residence of a priest, and many another palatial building in England showed unmistakably how these prelates identified themselves with the governing class. Preaching a gospel of poverty, these ecclesiastics "out-Heroded Herod" in their ostentation and luxury. Even to-day lawn-sleeved bishops sit in the House of Lords, where they hold the balance of power, and shield the aristocracy from the inroads of democracy.

Even sincere Christians have noticed with misgivings the wealth and ambition of the higher clergy. In a recent issue of the *Daily Mirror* (London), February 6, the Rev. George Braithwaite deals with this matter. Replying to the pointed question, "Can an Archbishop with a huge salary be a humble follower of his master?" he says:—

The answer is: yes!

Because the bishop's or the Archbishop's "salary" is not a salary at all.

It is the Church's money for the administration of a diocese or province, and only a very few pounds of it are spent directly on the bishop.

All the bishops I know of live every bit as simply and cheaply as Jesus Christ himself.

So, for that matter, do most of the clergy.

Is it not strange to find such innocence and artlessness displayed by an adult person in the present day? For the writer is not a maiden lady living in a remote part of the provinces, but a member of the clerical profession, and, presumably, in full possession of his faculties. And why does the editor of the *Mirror* permit such soothing syrup for intellectual infants to be printed in his paper without so much as a squeak from the editorial chair? Editors used to be made of far sterner stuff.

Three hundred bishops "follow Christ" on four-figure salaries. Forty of these prelates share £182,000 annually, and presumably, water their dry crusts with their tears. They must be the Christian martyrs, which generations of artists have painted, and which generations of soft-hearted and soft-headed Christians have wept for.

Mr. Braithwaite lays his hand on his heart and sobs that a bishop's "salary" is not a "salary" at all. Maybe, it is a stipend, or an honorarium, but even Brother B. must admit that it is money, and plenty of it. It is nearly all spent in administration, sobs their apologist. Is that the reason bishops leave large sums in their wills? Here are a few to refresh Brother Braithwaite's memory. The late Bishop of Colchester

left estate valued at £60,848. Bishop Creighton, who used to talk of the fearful financial struggles of the wretched ecclesiastics to keep out of debt, left £29,500. Archbishop Tait left £35,000, and Archbishop Benson a similar sum. This was improved upon by Bishop Walsham How, who left £72,240. A good second to this was Bishop Tuffnell's £65,000, and Bishop Phillpot left £60,000, whilst Archbishop Thomson left £55,000, and Bishop Trollope £50,790. Compared with these sums, the £19,361 of Bishop Harvey Goodwin, the £10,000 of Bishop Tozer, and the £12,605 of Bishop Pelham seem comparatively modest.

Is it not a bad joke to suggest that there is any real parallel between the legendary figure of the mendicant Jesus and these plutocratic prelates? And is it not carrying the jest too far to assert that the prelates are following the example of their alleged master, who is said to have lived simply and to have preached a gospel of poverty? The Rev. Mr. Braithwaite's sense of humour gains enormously when it is contrasted with the dry testimony of facts and figures. But what becomes of his pose of filmy-eyed innocence. The Church of England Year Book and other reference volumes, are to be found in most libraries. Has he never heard of these books? Will Mr. Braithwaite retort that this is a proof of the continuity of alleged supernatural power, and that it is no more wonderful than the feeding of the five thousand, mentioned in the Gospels, in which the fragments left over were in excess of the original loaves and fishes?

"Most of the clergy live as simply and as cheaply as Jesus Christ," declares this apologist for Priestcraft. In so many parishes the parson with his big and expensive vicarage too often is a miniature reproduction of the bishop in a palace too large for him and for the times. The late Judge Rentoul stated that at the annual bequests given to the clergy at the Mansion House, London, seventy-four bottles of champagne were drunk, costing then about £40. He added that he actually saw those figures, and he was told that the amount was every year about the same. Within the narrow confines of the City of London £50,000 is spent each year on ministering to the spiritual needs of a very small resident population of caretakers, policemen and their wives, and Jewish people. The latter, who form the majority of the population, never trouble the Christian pew-openers; so the duties of the pastorates are not unduly heavy. The Church of England also possesses property in the City of London worth over £4,000,000, in addition to huge assets in other places. Does all this spell plutocracy, or vagrancy? It also appears that Brother Braithwaite has entirely overlooked the vast resources of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Queen Anne's Bounty, and other sources of clerical income, which, added together, total the resources of a small state, and make most commercial undertakings appear of little account.

The ceremonial drees of the Christlike bishops costs about £200. "The stair-carpet at Farnham Castle are measured by miles," wrote old Bishop Thorold. "My episcopal income goes in pergolas and geraniums," complained Bishop Stubbs. It is, indeed, a far cry from the fishing nets of the legendary disciples to Lambeth Palace, with its guard room, Fulham Palace, with its pleasure grounds, Wells, with its moated garden; and other haunts of ecclesiastical grandeur.

Mr. Braithwaite pretends that an Archbishop can be, not only a follower, but a "humble" follower of Christ. Does he know anything of the life of an Archbishop, or has he read the "Gospels" with any attention? The legendary Jesus had not where to lay his head, and died a felon's death. His teaching was an evangel of poverty. The first Salvation Army was sold up, including its founder, for thirty pieces of

silver. His Grace of Canterbury pays his chauffeur more than that sum each week. His Grace's ceremonial dress costs near a thousand pounds. His Grace has two palatial residences, Lambeth Palace, with its guard-house and Croydon. His Grace's income would keep sixty ordinary families. His Grace has chaplains to attend him, and he has a seat in the House of Lords. If this be humbleness, what on earth is ostentation? If the Archbishop of Canterbury is a humble follower of Christ, so were Pope Alexander VI. (Borgia) and the Renaissance Cardinals.

"Most of the clergy live every bit as simply and cheaply as Jesus Christ himself," says Mr. Braithwaite, who ought really to read Crockford's *Clerical Directory*, in order to gain some sense of reality in a world of dreams and fantasy. The clergy are notoriously ignorant of the culture of their own sorry profession, but Brother Braithwaite's assumption of innocence is a trifle too overdone to be convincing. Attempts to follow the ascetic teaching of Christ, as presented in the gospels, have been made by a few enthusiastic believers through the ages, but these bishops and archbishops follow in the footsteps of their alleged master in gilded chariots, accompanied by all the paraphernalia of aristocracy. A company of cigar-smoking, pot-bellied bookmakers would be more representative of the Christian virtues than these ecclesiastics. For the bookmakers do not pretend to be holier than their fellow-men, nor do they masquerade as a sacred caste apart. To pretend otherwise is to write oneself as a simpleton, or to bring the religion so defended into something very like contempt.

The Lambeth Palace Way is not, and never has been, the Christian way. According to the Scriptures, Jesus was a poor mendicant preacher and also an iconoclast. In taking a salary of £15,000 yearly, and living a life of ostentation, the Anglican Primate has provided fifteen thousand reasons why he is not a Christian. There are contradictions enough in the Christian Faith, but none greater than the legendary figure of the thorn-crowned Christ going to his felon's death, and the figure of an ecclesiastic shimmering with the needlework of Noodledom, and lording it over his less fortunate fellow-men. The Lambeth Palace walk leads, not to Gethsemane, but to El Dorado, the Land of Gold, and the coffers of the great Christian Churches show that the sorry game pays better than most business.

MIMNERMUS

## The Springs of Behaviour—II.

BEHAVIOUR, the product of cerebral activity, springs from two sets of conditions, external and internal. The former provide most of the material, the latter decide what use is made of it. Both are capable of being moulded, though a certain minimum of hereditary content is fixed at birth. We have been confining our remarks to internal conditions, and here conclude by considering the part played by glands.

That the glands themselves are conditioned we know; that their activity can be affected is a matter of experimental observation. According to an old German saying, *Man ist was er isst* (man is what he eats). If we add, "and also what his ancestors have eaten," we shall probably be still nearer the truth.

Glands are important as centres of organic exchanges. There are, for instance, the sweat glands, the mammary and salivary glands, the gastric and pancreatic glands. The liver and kidneys are glandular organs, and the white corpuscles of the blood (phagocytes) are supplied by the lymphatic glands. A microscope shows a gland to resemble a grape, or a bunch of grapes, each generating the secretion (e.g., saliva). The "stem" will be the duct bringing the

secretion to the main canal and thence, in the case of saliva, to the mouth. The "skin" will be composed of delicate tissue with protective function.

We must now make a very relevant distinction. The liver excretes bile, the lachrymose glands tears and the sweat glands sweat. All these glands are thus responsible for excretions; they are *exocrines*. But there is another glandular system, whose secretions are not excreted through a duct, but absorbed into the blood stream; they are *endocrines*. Their effect on behaviour is more relevant to our present purpose.

One is the thyroid. "Its importance can be realized on seeing men from whom it has been removed owing to certain diseases. They die after exhibiting certain specific symptoms, for which reason an effort is always made nowadays to leave part of the gland; if this is impossible the patient is fed with the thyroid of sheep or some other animal." (*Encyclopædia of Sexual Knowledge*.)

Our character is very closely associated with the quality of the various glands. The thyroids, on each side of the larynx, have an enormous affect on our physical and mental well-being. They secrete a colloidal substance rich in iodine. If the rudimentary thyroid in the frog embryo is removed the result is a tadpole which, having no thyroid, never matures, since the change is initiated by the liberation of thyroid secretion. On the other hand, *Amblystoma tigrinum* inherits a deficient thyroid and thus normally never matures; it is permanently larval because its thyroid cannot utilize the surrounding iodine. Feeding with thyroid produces a normal land-dweller in a few weeks.

If thyroid activity is deficient in the child, mind and body growth is seriously hindered. If the deficiency occurs after maturity—after the full stature is attained—the result is a stupid, sluggish individual who is mentally defective (myxedema). The victim's memory fails, his face has a vacant expression, his thinking processes are greatly slowed down, and he walks with slow, uncertain gait. He appears to be in a state of torpor. This demented individual suffers from hallucinations and he is extremely suspicious of the motives of those who attend him. According to Sir Wm. Osler, "Within six weeks a poor, feeble-minded, toad-like caricature of humanity may be restored to mental and bodily health by being fed with sheep's thyroid." The physical accompaniments disappear—slow gait, dry skin, etc. And according to Prof. J. Leuba, "The baby born with an inadequate thyroid gland is a misshapen, drooling little being with protruding tongue and abdomen. He becomes a stunted, bandy-legged imbecile. But if early enough he be given a thyroid extract he will probably develop into a normal human being."

It is fair to add that many who yet profess materialism do not accept all the implications of gland treatment in general.

The management of first-class football teams need not be credited with an abundance of scientific knowledge; nevertheless they may be assumed to act under more expert guidance. If results count, the experiment at Wolverhampton (now followed at Portsmouth) might be deemed successful. Physically—very notably in one or two cases—and in the matter of morale, success is claimed from gland treatment.

In dealing with the thyroid let us consider the opposite effect. Let us suppose a too active thyroid. Excessive secretion by a large and over-active gland produces an exophthalmic goitre. The pulse-rate quickens, there are fine tremors of the voluntary muscles, over-excitement and irritation, accompanied by bulging eyeballs. Now in the normal person, whose thyroid action is just right, these characteristics of excessive thyroid action can be reproduced by

feeding with the thyroid of sheep. And so we have two converse experiments. If thyroid action is defective the body-machine turns out a deficient kind of behaviour. If it is excessive the balance is upset and the behaviour correspondingly altered. Some would go so far as to say, with Dr. Gley, "The genesis and exercise of the highest faculties of man are conditioned by the simple chemical action of a product of secretion."

There are other important glands associated with the way we behave. Two minute ones near the kidneys are the suprarenals. "Addison's disease" is the result of their diseased condition—muscular weakness, lassitude, listlessness. The victim is sometimes without the energy to do the simplest sum. The suprarenals supply a chemical hormone with tonic effect: adrenalin can be made artificially in the laboratory. A very small amount injected into the veins doubles or trebles the artery pressure. The adrenal glands are important for athletic activity and for sustained mental effort. Their product is thyroxine, which also can be made in the lab.

Just as the sluggard may be short of thyroid chemical, just as the fiery-tempered individual may have some perversion of the adrenals, and just as his placid counterpart could be moved to fear and anger by a dose of synthetic adrenaline, so the bright, clever, active fellow has his tissues fired to action by a healthy supply of thyroxine.

Overactivity of the adrenal cortex brings a marked accentuation of the masculine sex traits, affecting both sexes. In woman, it might finally result in transformation to the male sex.

Another very important gland is the pituitary situated at the base of the brain. The science of ethnology goes towards showing that the characteristic differences between Europeans, Negroids, Mongols, Red Men and Australoids is best explained in terms of pituitary functioning. Hypertrophy of this gland during youth produces gigantism. If hypertrophy occurs after full stature is attained the result is acromegaly, gross enlargements of the skull bone, hands and feet. If hypertrophy starts before puberty, the victim has at least the consolation of being a *symmetrical* giant. Otherwise the overgrowth can occur only in such parts of the skeletal frame still susceptible to the influence of the hormone. The result is a large misshapen individual who seems to have reverted to the gorilla. Typical giant rats have been produced by the daily injection of the hormone from the anterior lobe of the pituitary. Deficiency in the secretion of this lobe causes a child to become dwarfed.

Under-activity of the pituitary may arrest sexual development. And, conversely, precocious depravity may indicate premature development of the lobe and an early decay of the thymus, also connected with growth. One of the most recent important investigations concerns the "puberty glands," called interstitials, about which much remains to be discovered.

Further knowledge relating to these and other glands may open up, as visualized by Huxley and Wells, a new vista to the control of the type of people produced by a state directed by men of foresight utilizing scientific knowledge. "Superintelligent and moron strains of rats have been produced; a strain of gentle mice and one of wild mice have been bred." (Leuba; *God or Man*). The influence of drugs on the feelings and emotions is well known. Adrenalin in sufficiently strong doses produces a state of anxiety. Hyoscine will suppress sexual desire. Certain essences produce a sense of euphoria, and so on.

Leuba claims that the discovery of the biochemistry of fear, anxiety and worry is one of the triumphs of twentieth century science. The state of mind known as terror is simply arrested action, pent up activity

with no proper outlet. A stimulation of the adrenal glands ensues from the action of fear on the body. "The secretion adrenalin, liberates sugar, stored in the body, thus flooding the blood with a substance very readily converted into muscular energy. In addition it modifies the distribution of the blood so as to send large quantities of it to the organs called upon in making violent muscular efforts (heart, lungs, muscles) and withdrawing it from those of digestion. . . . In that way the affrighted individual himself in the best possible condition to put forth rapidly a great amount of muscular energy, and this is often needed in order to escape danger. The biochemical effect of fear is thus a protective device." When protracted, exhaustion results, and digestion (the original source of energy) is arrested. Cases of worry, e.g., anxiety over the serious illness of a near friend, are commonly known to affect digestion. From a medical case book (McLester, 1927) we learn that one third of those with digestive disorders had no recognizable disease, but suffered from lack of emotional balance. One of the first aims of the Christian Science practitioner is to remove worry and anxiety and establish a placid confidence. Fear wastes energy by setting muscle against muscle. The liberated energy opposes itself and has a paralysing effect. And so we speak of "rooted" terror. To the anti-materialist this is the straight "action of mind on body." He overlooks that mind has already itself been conditioned by the body and the external world.

G. H. TAYLOR

## Symbolism or History?

ONE of the most interesting questions in connexion with the Bible is whether the writers of the various books sat down with the full intention of writing history as far as they were able to get it, or as they personally knew it, or whether they designedly wrote what we call symbolism. In the case of other sacred books, there can be no doubt whatever that a great deal of symbolism was purposely used. The curious reader should turn to Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*, and he will see how the more or less plain story of Greek gods embodied very fine moral truths. Whoever first put these stories down for future edification wrote purposely in a symbolic language, but this was hidden from the masses. The ordinary man or woman read little but the outward signification of things; it required the more cultivated or better instructed person to see the underlying meaning, the esoteric sense which the author was trying to convey in a popular garb.

If the Bible is taken to be a record of historical events badly put down, perhaps because the various writers were ignorant or fallible men, it is not surprising that it can be shown to contain so much nonsense. "Inspiration" from the Lord has not been able to omit the stupidities, crudities, and inconsistencies with which the Bible is packed. And if one puts aside the miraculous element and confines oneself to the so-called historical books, one is not certain that even here we are getting history. It is taken for granted among many Rationalists that David and Solomon, for example, actually lived, but I have never been able to come across the evidence. Has a single record outside the Bible been unearthed which proves that they actually reigned over Israel?

There can be no question that a great number of eminent Bible students and scholars are convinced that whatever may be said of the outward historical narratives enshrined in the Bible, there is an underlying meaning hiding undoubted symbolism of some kind. Many great Freethinkers have been convinced of this

as well as many Christian commentators throughout the ages. The works of Dupuis, Robert Taylor, Godfrey Higgins, and Thomas Inman are packed with proof of this, and among Christians, Origin openly declared his profound belief in the esoteric teaching of the Bible.

It has always seemed to me that so long as one reads the Gospels as so many biographies of a deified man called Jesus, so long would it be impossible to understand them—or, indeed, understand Christian origins at all. I have often wondered whether the original writers of our four Gospels were quite such fools, as they appear to be on the surface. Did John really believe that water could be changed into wine, or Luke that Jesus could fly into heaven? Was Matthew unable to count properly when he wrote down his genealogy?

Dupuis, and later Robert Taylor, showed how many of the Bible stories fitted in with perfectly clear interpretations of the old Sun-God wending his way through the signs of the Zodiac; and Inman and Higgins prove—to me conclusively—how much phallic signification there is in many of the Bible words and names, to say nothing of some of the incidents. And if one refuses to accept these four writers because they were unbelievers, we can take Christian writers like Origin or Irenæus, Sanday or R. J. Campbell. "The parable of the Leaven the Gnostics explain," says Irenæus, "For Wisdom, they teach to be expressed by a woman; by measures of meal, the three kinds of men—spiritual, animal, earthly. As to Leaven, they teach it to be a name of the Saviour himself." Says Origin, "Perhaps by the five loaves they meant to make a veiled reference to the sensible words of the Scriptures, corresponding in number on this account to the five senses, but by the two fishes, either to the word expressed and the word conceived which are a relish, so to speak, to the sensible things contained in the Scriptures; or perhaps to the word which had come to them about the Father and the Son." Origin in fact was not entirely accepting the story of the five loaves and two fishes on its face value.

As for R. J. Campbell he distinctly declared in his *Thursday Mornings* that "the fourth Gospel is not history, and never was intended to be history. . . . The truth is that in this gospel, the miracles are parables, and every one of them is designed to bring out some special aspect of spiritual truth." And in Hasting's Dictionary, Dr. Sanday says that "the narratives of the Temptation are upon the face of them symbolic." One could, of course, quote similar passages by the hundred—though it is only fair to state that the opposite views are also strongly maintained, many eminent Christian writers asserting that the whole of the stories in the Bible must be accepted as substantially correct, while Rationalists can be found who only give up the miraculous element. This was the position of Renan when he wrote his famous *Life of Jesus*.

In *Ecce Deus* the American writer, William Benjamin Smith, put forward a symbolic interpretation of the Gospels which has been received with profound admiration by numbers of the most eminent Biblical scholars of the day. Unfortunately the wealth and influence of the Christian Church make it almost impossible for this theory to become known. It is so much easier to believe in a plain narrative of "facts," the Gospel story is so easy to understand, and the hold that Christianity still has on our educational system so strong, that any departure to the world of symbolism is laughed out of court.

In an admirable introduction to the work of Professor W. B. Smith, *The Corner Stone of Christianity* (Open Court Publishing Co., 1938), the author, Mr. W. A. Campbell, gives an excellent precis of the sym-

bolism which Smith claims to see in the New Testament narratives.

Says the Professor himself:—

The new interpretation does not debase the idea of the Jesus or the Christ, but rather restores its original surpassing grandeur and exalts it to world supremacy. For example, the terms Son-of-Man and Son-of-God, so distinctive of the Gospel and the New Testament, are revived in their proper and primitive sense, they mean one thing only: **THE PEOPLE ISRAEL**.—not a mere collection of individuals, but a psychic unit, a racial entity stretching unbroken through the ages, crucified as a nationality on the Roman cross but re-risen (in the Monotheistic Crusade) to the spiritual headship of humanity, idealized and universalized (i.e., transfigured) to include all worshippers (of the One God) and so made co-extensive with monotheistic mankind.

And he adds:—

The popular notion that the New Testament presents in the Jesus a distinct and vivid or "convincing personality" (in Findlay's phrase) that the writers could never have originated, seems to depart about as far as imaginable from the obvious fact that the Figure presented is too dim and vague to justify any single confident conclusion at any point. Consider the countless "Biographies" any two disagreeing in essential features, each only the conceit of its own author an image of his ideal self in the mirror of his conscience. The sanest critics have long since abandoned all such imaginations. Even Bultmann admits that the personality and career "are for us no longer knowable," that concerning the personality "we know as good as nothing at all"; only the message (he thinks) is still ascertainable. And it is the method with which this later theory of interpretation is mainly concerned.

Of course it is impossible to say whether the interpretation of the symbols by Prof. Smith is the correct one. It certainly differs from that of the other symbolists—notably that of Robert Taylor; but it is possible that this is because we have not the "original" gospel at all, but a very much edited one by later hands in the interests of the Christian Church.

However that may be, the story of Christian origins must certainly now take into consideration the symbolistic view. No longer is it possible to explain Jesus and his apostles "literally." And for the Freethinker this means the end of a "literal" God as well as of religion.

H. CUTNER

#### THE MEANING OF "SELF"

It is still fashionable to regard the self as a substance, but, when one comes to enquire into the nature of this substance, one finds that it is an entirely unobservable entity. It may be suggested that it is revealed in self-consciousness, but this is not the case. For all that is involved in self-consciousness is the ability of a self to remember some of its earlier states. And to say that a self, A, is able to remember some of its earlier states is to say merely that some of the sense-experiences which constitute certain memory images correspond to sense-contents which have previously occurred in the sense-history of A. And thus we find that the possibility of self-consciousness in no way involves the existence of a substantive ego. But if the substantive ego is not revealed in self-consciousness, it is not revealed anywhere. The existence of such an entity is completely unverifiable. And accordingly, we must conclude that the assumption of its existence is no less metaphysical than Locke's discredited assumption of the existence of a material substratum. For it is clearly no more significant to assert that an "unobservable somewhat" underlies the sensations which are the sole empirical manifestations of the self, than it is to assert that an "unobservable somewhat" underlies the sensations which are the sole empirical manifestations of a material thing.

## Acid Drops

A most generous member of the East Suffolk County Council, is Mrs A. J. Hawkes, and one who is determined that ratepayers shall not be imposed on. So when a recommendation came before the Council that inmates of Public Assistance Institutions (the workhouse) who did not receive a pension should have some sweets and tobacco given them weekly, this lady was on guard at once. She moved that the recommendation should be referred back, remarking, "Some of them get more than they want. It is difficult to know what they are going to do with their two shillings (the weekly allowance)." The charge against these "inmates" is that some of them hoard their weekly allowance of two shillings, while others actually invest it in football pools. At any rate anyone over sixty who has a whole two-shillings every week—twenty-four pennies—must have some difficulty in finding out how to get rid of it. To give these old people a few sweets and a "screw" of tobacco in addition is ridiculous. They are not Germans who have to be appeased.

Dr. S. Peters is a Member of Parliament. He is also private secretary to the Minister of Labour. But he claimed that he is able to cure all sorts of complaints by prayer. He told the House of Commons, on March 9, that he was once very ill and the doctors failed to cure him. So he sent for a woman who lived in St. Ives and she came, prayed over him and "made me well." Then the doctor discovered that he had the same power of healing. For instance, there was a woman near Huntingdon who suffered from cancer. Dr. Peters prayed over her and "the cancers left her body, roots and all." There was also a man who was near death with "double pneumonia and other complications." Dr. Peters prayed, and he (the invalid) got better. We wonder whether Dr. Peters has ever tried laying his hands on the heads of a number of his fellow-members, in the interests of the nation? But perhaps prayer is not so effective against mental weaknesses.

We must admit that Dr. Peters has many authorities on his side. Jesus himself, by the power of prayer, cast devils out of men and women. It is true that none of those that Jesus so helped really was possessed of devils, but that is a very minor consideration. If the devils had been there they would have been prayed out; if they were not, then it shows at least that Jesus meant well. And the Christian Church has never been without evidence of the power of prayer to cure disease. Sometimes it was done through the magic of the bones of a dead saint, sometimes by direct application to the saint himself, sometimes by the prayers of a people, as when a king is ill; but always the power of prayer has been manifested in this way. And the Rev. Leslie Weatherhead, of the City Temple, cured many people by prayer. In his own case he had to retire for some time under medical orders, while a cure was worked by more mundane methods.

On the other hand, in these cases as in those mentioned by Dr. Peters (he is not, by the way a medical man) we have no scientifically reliable evidence that the people cured actually did have cancer, or that the illness from which Dr. Peters suffered was of a very desperate kind. To say that a qualified doctor failed to help means, in all probability, that there was nothing organic, ally wrong with him. And every doctor in the course of his practice effects any number of cures that Dr. Peters would say were due to prayers. But the medical doctor does not usually talk about cure through prayer, even when prayer may be used. He knows that in such cases a bread pill is as efficacious as a prayer, provided the patient believes in the bread pill or the prayer. But Dr. Peters is a Member of Parliament. So is Sir Thomas Inskip, so is Captain Ramsay, and there are many there of the same religious type. Which does not increase our intellectual respect for our legislators—or, in a kindlier mood, we might say, it explains them.

We may take it as indication of the influence of the work of the German Nazi movement in England that organized disturbances by Fascists at public meetings are now frequent. There can be no doubt, since the disclosures of Nazi methods in North and South America, and the technique adopted in different parts of Europe, that German activities represent a threat to the normal life of every country. Nor is it believable that our Government is at all in ignorance of what is going on. So we repeat the suggestion made two or three weeks ago. In return for our permitting a "Brown House" in London, established for the avowed purpose of conducting political propaganda in England, our Government should set up a "Democratic House" in Berlin for the purpose of democratic propaganda among the German people. If that is not permitted, then the "Brown House" should be forbidden. Even Mr. Chamberlain ought to recognize that there must be a limit to a policy of appeasement, the result of which, so far, has been to give to the German gangsters all they wish, with nothing on the other side.

We cannot join in the protest by the Bishop of St. David's against Tank Gunnery in Pembrokeshire. Military requirements make it necessary to take over the rich farms of Castlemartin, and it seems quite logical to us, since warfare has never received any real opposition by the clergy, that the military authorities can do as they like with protests. The Bishop wishes to have it both ways, and he will have to produce other reasons than æsthetic ones to bring Mars to reason.

The *Church Times* discusses in a leading article whether the Church is, or is not, making the best possible use of the press. We do not see that the Churches have much of which to complain in this direction. Meetings between the clergy and editors have in many provincial areas made the appearance of a weekly religious article in newspapers a regular feature, and as hardly ever does it happen that criticism is permitted, nothing is done to disturb the pleasant feeling that all is going on as well as may be expected with the Churches. Religious "news" generally gets a very fair show, and many other articles appearing concerning their activities, apparently written by ordinary journalists, have no better basis than the statements sent out by the churches and chapels, and published without the slightest attempts at verification.

But the chief help given the Churches—and chapels—by the press is of a negative kind. It keeps back all news and refuses all articles that attack the Churches—at least the only exception is when a criticism is offered by a writer whose name is of advertising value to the paper. We do not know of any paper in this country that would accept an article which made a straightforward attack on religious doctrines, with the result that the ordinary newspaper reader is in complete ignorance of what is the present position of religion in the light of modern scientific thought. News of anti-religious activities, unless it can be served up in a raw-head-and-bloody-bones style, very seldom appears in the press. It is not alone the reader of newspapers who is ignorant of what is going on in the shape of anti-religious activities, but our personal experience is that the ordinary journalist is as ignorant in this direction as is the public that looks to him for instruction. And as the education of a working journalist seems to run along the lines of giving the "public" what it wants and writing only what an editor finds saleable, the newspaper reading public is as ignorant of the effects of the incidence of modern thought on religious ideas as it is of many other subjects.

The Ayr Presbytery has passed a resolution that all ministers should offer themselves for A.R.P. work. It was urged on the Presbytery that public opinion thought ministers were somewhat backward in this work. Really, we are surprised. The proper weapon for these inspired servants of the Lord is prayer. The power of prayer is great, and it looks like casting a slur on the Lord to fall back upon gas-masks and deep shelters. Scotland is (religiously) declining at a remarkable rate. If it had been a meeting of Atheists it could not have more conspicuously shelved God Almighty.

The *Universe* thus lays down what Roman Catholics must believe concerning the birth of Jesus:—

The Catholic Church teaches that Our Lady was always a virgin, and therefore the birth of Our Lord took place without detriment to her virginity, i.e., was miraculous.

All we have to say about this is that the miracle is incomplete. Why not lay it down either that Joseph was the mother of Jesus, or that Jesus had neither father nor mother. Mary alone gives us only half a miracle at best, and it would be no greater trouble believing that Jesus came without having either a father or mother, than to believe that the father alone was dispensed with. As it stands there will always be ill-disposed people who, so long as the mother is there, will suspect there was a father in the neighbourhood. Let us have a miracle worth believing while we are about it.

After all, it is the reputed father, Joseph, on whom we have to depend for this virgin birth. Mary never claimed that Jesus had no earthly father. Joseph said he had not, but that was due to a dream. Joseph, upset over the business, was inclined to break off the engagement. But in his trouble an angel appeared to him "in a dream" (that is he dreamed an angel appeared to him), and told him that a certain ghost was the father of the child. Joseph remembered his dream and told it to the world. That is all the evidence that exists—if we put on one side the scores of other gods who have been born in this way.

The League of Prayer and Service has, according to its own figures about a million and a half members. We should not be surprised if it had ten million members. It is a league that all members of Churches and Chapels could join, since they all believe in prayer, and as to service, well, they can take up whatever service they please, and as most people, whether in the Church or out of it, are doing something or the other which they call "service," if it is only looking after themselves, the "service" part of the business is even easier than the praying portion. The League says prayer is of no use without service. The question may be put, if the service is rendered, what is the use of the prayer? Is it any more than a piece of elaborate humbug?

The tame parson of the *News-Chronicle* recently went to a mass meeting of this prayer league that was held in the Albert Hall. He says that the surprising thing to him was that the men were in "such an impressive minority." He doesn't say what he makes of it, but, we suggest that in some respects women have not yet caught up with men, or it may mean that women are more susceptible to the influence of the opinion of their neighbours than are men. It will also be remembered that George Meredith said women would be the last thing man would civilize. If that be true, then we must expect the last believers will be women. The noticeable thing is that while the Christian Church has been one of the most powerful influences for maintaining the "subjection of women," it has always made good use of them for a very bad end.

The Rev. E. A. Ruskin, of the Regions Beyond Mission, says that some natives in the Congo district wear necklaces of human teeth taken from the people they have killed. He added the touching note that when he first went among them the natives were against his being there. When he left they were in tears begging him to stay. It is worth noting that Mr. Ruskin still has his teeth.

We must not judge the decline of religion solely by the increasing number of its open enemies. Here is the evidence of the Rev. Bernard Manning, M.A., Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge:—

We have churches where the inheritance of the Reformation has been almost lost, because the Word and the sacraments have almost gone out of their life. The readings from the Old and New Testament scriptures have dwindled to a snippet of one lesson. The hymns are not

paraphrases, nor are they charged in very line with scriptural content. They discuss mountain scenery (with special attention to sunsets), psychological disorders, priggish ambitions, and political programmes. The preaching of the Word has evaporated into flabby platitudes about the dangers of the international situation or the benevolent commonplaces of Ella Wheeler Wilcox expressed even more prosaically than in her poetry.

The Editor of the *British Weekly* rather monotonously returns continuously to his One Remedy for the ills of the world. He repeats:—

More than once since these critical days descended upon us have we said, here and elsewhere, that *the human race must be unanimous concerning God*. So long as we are in conflict concerning God, we shall be in conflict in the long run on behaviour. (The italics are as in the original.)

It is like postponing reforms for millions of years—on the principle of the critic who assured the completely impossible dramatist: "Your drama, Sir, will be read when Shakespeare is forgotten."

Once again, that redoubtable fighter and controversialist, Dr. G. G. Coulton, has called Mr. Hilaire Belloc to account. Mr. Belloc, writing about the (so-called) Wyclif Bible tried to fasten some absurdity on those "Cambridge critics of Cardinal Gasquet," and Dr. Coulton has responded, unless evidence is brought forward in proof, that he "must point out publicly that his [Mr. Belloc's] article rested mainly upon an impudent falsehood." The *Universe* published Dr. Coulton's letter, but has closed the correspondence. Whether this is done to vindicate Mr. Belloc by making it impossible for the proof which is certainly there to be brought out, or to allow Dr. Coulton to call his opponent a liar without redress, is not exactly clear. One thing is plain in all the theological controversy in which Dr. Coulton has been engaged, and that is, that Roman Catholicism and its disciples have come out in a sorry light, which is what one must surely expect.

Mr. H. V. Usill, who is the general editor of the new *Year Book of Education*, writes:—

Whatever may have been true in the past, it would now appear abundantly clear that the increasing exploitation of the educational machine for the propagation of national or supra-national ideologies is a problem which cannot be ignored.

That is so, but what about the use of State schools for the propagation of religion—and religions—the truth of which is not merely questioned by prominent educationalists, but actually *denied* by many? It seems useless to discuss "nationalist ideologies" as harmful, and not take into account the harm and the waste of time teaching infantile stories of the "origin" of the Universe, and childish myths as historical truths of early man, in the name of religion.

The desperate efforts to control education by religious bodies can be seen in the way the strident appeals for funds for Roman and Anglican schools are successful. For example, Archbishop Amigo, writing of Southwark, warned his readers that for the senior schools Catholics have to provide, £250,000 will be required. He adds that £200,000 has already been spent in building new schools—and we are quite sure the money will not only come to the last farthing, but it will be gladly paid, the State, of course, paying whatever more is required. And yet never has the case for Secular Education been more urgent and necessary than to-day when the "truth" of religion is more questioned than ever.

In West Suffolk five churches have been closed to visitors in consequence of a letter received that they would be blown up by the I.R.A. Great is the power of prayer and the potency of faith. The clergymen belonging to these churches have infinite trust in the power of prayer and the might of God. But just to avoid appearing to treat either with disrespect, they appealed to the police and have acted accordingly. It is in times of stress that we see the benefits of religion.



# THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

R. S. JONES.—You must be patient and long-suffering, and not expect to convert the world in a day. One cannot reasonably hope to bring people away from religion in a day. From some of the articles we have written of late you will have gathered that even in the case of professing Freethinkers the freedom from a sense of religious values, from fundamental religious ideas, in short from the religious outlook is not quite so complete as they imagine.

T. LYONS.—We note your suggestion that a pamphlet on "Secularism" might form one of the *Pamphlets for the People*. We may act on it.

F. W. R. SILKE (Cape Town).—Profesor D. Lategan evidently has a deal to learn concerning the meaning and quality of "civilized utilitarianism." If the quotation you sent is a sample of the Dutch Reformed Church, one wonders what it was like before the reform took place.

V. KILPATRICK.—Thanks for cutting. Shall hope to see you when you next come this side of the channel.

N. GOULDEN.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

A. H. STONE.—We are obliged for cuttings; new address noted.

DAVID PUGH.—Thanks for your letter. Price of volume of *Freethinker*, bound, 17s. 6d., plus 1s. postage.

F. B. CARLTON.—Received and will appear.

L. HAMILTON.—Pleased you felt "repaid a hundred-fold" for your journey to Nottingham on Sunday last. Probably next season, but cannot make any promise at present.

T.W.—You will find a great deal to help in *The Legacy of Islam*, Oxford Press, 10s.

M.C.—Thanks for article but we do not think that many of our readers will be at all interested in lengthy articles disproving astrology—at least we hope this is the case. The man who needs arguing out of astrology seems to us too far mentally gone to be worth bothering about. And if he is a rogue who is working it for his own interests he is not likely even to see the *Freethinker*.

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.

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.

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

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the Publishing Office at the following rates (Home and Abroad):—  
One year, 15/-; half year, 7/6; three months, 3/9.

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.

Whenever knowledge takes a step forward, God takes a step backward.—*Nacquet*.

## Sugar Plums

We again remind members of the N.S.S. that the date by which all resolutions must be received for the agenda of the Conference at Bradford on Whit-Sunday, is March 25. Individual members have the same right as Branches to place resolutions on the Agenda, subject to their being within the Constitution of the Society.

There was a crowded audience at Nottingham on Sunday last to listen to Mr. Cohen. The large Lecture Theatre of the University College was crowded, with many standing. There were many questions asked, with the usual number of speeches of for and against. The meeting was a live one from beginning to end, and there was no mistaking the enjoyment and interest of those present. There were many friends from a distance, and after the lecture Mr. Cohen had tea with many of them. But the journey to and from Nottingham in one day, with a lengthy meeting as a kind of "refresher," made the day quite long enough.

Our old friend Mr. F. A. Davies writes:—

I am afraid our friend Seibert has not dug deep enough to reach the foundation of the South London Branch. It is about 45 years ago that I became connected with the old Lambeth Branch and Camberwell was a going concern before that, in fact, lectures were being delivered in the Hall in the New Church Road in 1885 and possibly earlier. When the Lambeth Branch ceased to function several of us, including V. Roger, F. Wood and—I am not certain—"Mimnermus" went over to Camberwell and engaged in a heroic but unavailing struggle to keep the Hall above water. Among the early workers, as distinct from the "orators," in addition to those above-mentioned, honour is due to the late Mr. and Mrs. Harry Baker and Tom Wilmot, now, I believe, a successful South London landlord.

We believe that we first visited the Camberwell Branch, as it was then called, some time in 1890. At any rate it was soon after we commenced lecturing on the Freethought platform, which was in 1889.

On Sunday next (March 26) Mr. Cohen visits Glasgow, and will lecture in the McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, taking for his subject "Freethought and To-day." The lecture should prove an interesting one.

On Saturday evening (March 25) the Glasgow Branch will hold its Annual Dinner at the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross. Dinner will be served at 7 o'clock prompt; Reception at 6.30. Tickets are 5s. 6d. each, and may be obtained from the Secretary, Mrs. M. Whitefield, 351 Castle-milk Road, Glasgow, S.4. Mr. Cohen has promised to attend, and will hope to meet many old and new friends there. We may safely promise visitors an enjoyable evening.

The fifth volume of *Essays in Freethinking* is now ready, and the advance orders promise well for the sale of the book. All that need be said now is that the book contains some of the best of Mr. Cohen's writings, and each essay deals with permanent issues illustrated by some current event. The price of the volume is, as usual, 2s. 6d. The five volumes will be sent post free for 12s. 6d.

Two new *Pamphlets for the People* (Nos. 13 and 14) will be ready by about March 21. The titles are *Freethought and the Child*, and *Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live*. The first should lead to discussion among Freethinkers, as well as supplying useful suggestions to others. The latter outlines the history and consequences of one of the vilest superstitions that the Christian Church helped to perpetuate. Mr. Cohen hopes to issue further pamphlets in the near future. Each pamphlet runs to 16 pages, and is priced at one penny.

Ashford, Kent and Sussex Tithepayers' Association have launched a campaign for the abolition of tithes, and Mr. Neville Kedward, a Methodist minister of Kingsway Hall, London, led it forth to battle at Battle the other day.

He told the meeting how his father, the late member for Ashford and originator of the anti-tithe campaign was ordered to pay tithes on a piece of land that was not his. Because of this, he had refused to pay and had not, and died without doing so. He, himself, had not paid anything and did not intend to. "Fancy a man like the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is responsible for this outrage, appealing to people to come to church when they are associated with this sort of thing," said Mr. Kedward. The losses of the farmers due to tithes run into hundreds of millions of pounds, over a period of a few years.

We wish to call special attention to the offer made since the beginning of the year, of giving every new annual subscription to the *Freethinker* (15s.) the right to select five shillingsworth of Pioneer Press publications. Many new subscribers have been gained in this way, and we commend the method to those of our present readers who wish to induce a friend to become a regular subscriber. This offer stands until the end of the present month.

## Of Worship

Ye worship ye know not what. (*John* iv. 22).

We must neither lead, nor leave, men to mistake falsehood for truth.—*Archbishop Whateley*.

RELIGION and Science provide us with abundant proofs that something to worship, from the first syllable of recorded time, has never failed to claim the attention of man.

The natural preceded the supernatural. Traces of sun-worship appear in the earliest records of the human race. The moon, stars, the vault of heaven, and other aspects of nature followed. A list of these animate and inanimate objects, arranged from A to Z—Adder, Beetle, Cat, Cow, Dog, and so on to Zebu—is significant of much.

Without a knowledge of the above, ancient literature generally, and the Bible particularly, cannot be understood.

To consider the Bible for a moment: Sun-worship is denounced in *Deut.* iv. 19; xvii. 3; *Jer.* xliii. 13; and *Ezek.* viii. 16-18. It had been adopted by the rulers of Judah according to 2 *Kings* xvii. 5-19.

What is really old in the Old Testament is not really Jewish but Babylonian. And the key to both the Old and New Testaments is to be found in the Zodiac.

John Denham Parsons tells us that "the Zodiac was planned before the Biblical date of the Biblical Creation." (*Our Sun-God, or Christianity before Christ*, p. 76). Hipparchus and Ptolemy thought it of unknown origin and of "Unsearchable antiquity." The Zodiac was the first map of the heavens, particularly of the stars in that circular pathway around the heavens. These groups of stars have been from time immemorial divided into twelve groups, or constellations, forming imaginary figures of men and animals. The Sun formerly entered Aries, one of these constellations, on March 20, now owing to the precession of the equinoxes the point of the heavens intersected by the celestial equator and the ecliptic, technically called the first point of Aries, has moved well into Pisces. In studying the Zodiac the precession of the equinoxes and their action must not be lost sight of. The Arcadian Calendar with its 360 days, and the Zodiac with its 360 degrees are relics of a pre-existing civilization. The Zodiac is a valuable key for unlocking secrets in the Old and New Testaments. For instance:—

To apply it to *Gen.* iii. 15; *Rom.* xvi 20; *Heb.* ii. 14 and *Rev.* xx: In the Zodiac the Serpent and the Sun-god are for ever pursuing each other, and, as the Sun-god leads the way, the Serpent follows at his heel. The Sun-god accordingly bruises the Serpent's head, and the Serpent cannot choose but bruise the Sun-god's heel.

A strange light is also thrown on *Gen.* v. 23-24. Enoch, we are told, walked mysteriously with God and *he was not* for God *took* him. "And all the days of Enoch were 365 years." It is significant that Enoch did not *die*, he was only *taken*, and that 365 days make a solar year!

The story of Jacob and his twelve sons, like that of Samson, is a sun myth. The famous dream of Joseph about twelve stars—*Gen.* xxxvii. 9—the twelve stars, or constellations, are those of the Zodiac. They can all be traced individually. Jacob, when dying, blessed his twelve sons, and in this blessing Joseph is described as the one whose "bow abode in strength." (*Gen.* xlix. 24). That is the Constellation, Sagittarius, the archer. He is represented as a Bowman on a horse with his bow bent and the arrow ready to fly—i.e., the bow abiding in strength. In the same chapter (v. 17) we have Dan "a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Scorpio in the Zodiac occupies a position to attack the heel of the horse upon which Sagittarius rides. And so one might explain the whole twelve tribes. Gemini—the Twins—may seem doubtful to many, but Simon and Levi are coupled together. Verse 5 tells us that "Simon and Levi are brethren." The Zodiac gives a feasible explanation of the smallest things—even the barbed tail of the devil! The devil is seldom seen without a barbed tail. The barb represents the sting of the Zodiacal Scorpion.

The Bible is a collection of literature gathered together by people during many centuries, when and where written and by whom—heaven only knows! Why cannot Bishops to-day take as sensible a view of it as Bishop Colenso did nearly one hundred years ago. He was asked, "Do you then take from us God's Word, the Bible?" To which he replied—"Whatever is done, it is not I, but the Truth itself, which does it. If the arguments which I have advanced, are not really founded upon Truth, let them be set aside and thrown to the winds; but if they are, we dare not as servants of God, do this—we are bound to hear and obey the Truth. It may be then—rather, it is, as I believe, undoubtedly—the fact, that God himself, by the power of the Truth, will take from us in this age the Bible as an *idol*, which we have set up against His Will, to bow down to it and worship it. But while he takes it away thus with the one hand, does he not also restore it to us with the other,—not to be put into the place of God, and served with idolatrous worship—but to be revered as a Book, the best of books, the work of living men like ourselves—of men, I mean, in whose hearts the same human thoughts were stirring, the same gracious Spirit was operating, three thousand years ago, as now?" (*The Pentateuch*, Vol. II., p. 508.)

In Genesis we also find two different accounts of the Creation given. The first from an Elohistic story-teller, the second a Jehovistic story-teller; why? may be suggested later. These writers are not always "both in a tale." Elohim commands Noah—"Of every living thing of all flesh, *two* of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee, they shall be male and female. Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing on the earth after their kind, *two* of every sort shall come in unto thee, to keep them alive. (*Gen.* vi. 19-28.)

And Jehovah commands: "Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by *Sevens*, the male and his female, and of beasts that are not clean, by two the male and his female; of fowls also of the air by *sevens*, the male and his female, to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth." (*Gen.* vii. 2-3.)

The second number *seven* suggests that the second

story-teller was making provision for the rite of sacrifice after the Flood. The first one may have been ignorant of clean and unclean beasts. And neither of them make any provision for the carnivorous animals!

Then in the early chapters of Genesis we have a number of objects of worship mentioned, notably Tree Worship, Serpent Worship, Fire Worship, Sun Worship, Star Worship, etc., all of which give evidence of a civilization several thousand years older than the Biblical Creation.

This curious mixture may have resulted from the burning of every article of Jewish literature at the time of the Babylonian Captivity (606 B.C.) and its restoration by Ezra and others after 536 B.C. Collectors engaged in this work would enjoy a person who could tell a good tale! in fact any one, ready and able to tell any sort of story would be received with open arms. This would account for variations, would it not?

But wherefore all this, and to what end? To be brief: In the beginning man had very few gods, but as his knowledge of nature widened, and his ignorance of physical causes remained practically stationary, necessity compelled him to make many gods to account for phenomena which his knowledge could not explain.

To hark back then, and trace briefly the path trodden by humanity for some twenty or thirty thousand years:

"Day followed day," as Horace observes, "and the new moons hastened to be extinguished," yet all remained as hushed as midnight until a member of the human family had developed sufficient intelligence, and pluck, to make a god of his own—an idol! This material image was the forerunner of the mental image—a higher form of idolatry—which the Archbishop of Canterbury—"The chief spokesman of God to his fellow countrymen"—upholds, is paid £15,000 a year for doing so, and passing on, when he dies, to his brethren so that it may be kept alive—"yesterday, to-day, and forever." Clergymen, to-day, have not yet reached the height of Isaiah's vision (xl), 700 B.C.

"The achievements of man as a barbarian," says Morgan, "transcend, in relative importance, all his subsequent works." (*Ancient Society*, p. 31.)

Had Whately's advice been acted upon—"We must neither lead, nor leave, men to mistake falsehood for truth," we might have had a better result.

Renan tells us that "nothing great has been established which does not rest on a legend." And that "we can only lead the people by adopting ourselves to its ideas." (*Life of Jesus*.)

The Church was founded on a legend, and its clergy have been leading the people long enough to justify Morgan's assertion (quoted above). The greatness of the priest, then, admits of no doubt.

Much light may be thrown on their long, successful run by reference to the works of one of their number—Lawrence Sterne. Preaching on Ecc. vii. 2, 3, he says:—

"... nor can gravity, with all its studied solemnity of look and carriage, serve any end but to make one half of the world merry, and impose upon the other." A clergyman, himself, he seems to have abhorred "gravity." Speaking of Yorick—a great character in his novel *Tristram Shandy*, he tells us:—

"Sometimes, in his wild way of talking, he would say that Gravity was an arrant scoundrel, and he would add—of the most dangerous kind too—because a sly one—and that, he verily believed, more honest, well-meaning people were bubbled out of their goods and money by it in one twelve-month than by pocket-picking and shop-lifting in seven. In the naked temper which a merry heart discovered, he would say there was no danger—but to itself—whereas the very

essence of gravity was design, and consequently deceit: it was a taught trick to gain credit of the world for more sense and knowledge than a man was worth; and that with all its pretensions—it was no better, than what a French wit had long ago defined it—viz., *A mysterious carriage of the body to cover the defect of the mind*—which definition of gravity, Yorick, with great imprudence, would say deserved to be written in letters of gold."

But this priestly line will not stretch out to the crack of doom. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides! Thinkers, all over the world, have by their labours so far lightened the fog of superstition that the sun of intellectual freedom may now be seen rising with healing in its wings.

GEORGE WALLACE

## Apathy

It has been said that advertising is usually an indication of bad business on the part of the advertiser. If there be any truth in the dictum we may fairly conclude that religion, which is as much a business as any other form of money-making, is no longer regarded as "a going concern." Few schemes of publicity have been more widespread and intensive than the Archbishop's "Recall to Religion." Press and pulpit have been worked, in showman's phrase, "to capacity" in the endeavour to "bring the nation back to God." Pathetic and persistent has been the wail over the ever-decreasing church attendances. Instead of the rows of up-turned faces that once met the cleric's gaze as he stood aloft in the dignity of his full-flowing canonicals, he is now, it seems, faced with "a beggarly array of empty benches." The defection is a matter of deep concern to the ecclesiastical authorities. The pulpit is the main source of their power over the minds of the people, and the maintenance of this citadel they rightly regard as vital to their interests. In their attempts to explain the cause of the decline, they assign every conceivable reason except the one which the fact itself suggests—that the majority of people no longer believe that God plays such a part in their lives as to make any appeal to Him of this kind other than a waste of time. Experience has evidently proved as good a teacher in this as in other things. It is scarcely too much to say that, by most Christians, the probability of any divine interference in their daily concerns of business or pleasure is never considered, or, if the idea ever does occur, it is dismissed as something so contrary to their experiences as to border on the absurd. This tendency to eliminate the Almighty from their ordinary calculations would seem to be the first step in an easy transition from a God who *does* nothing to a God who *is* nothing. But let us not infer too much from this attitude of indifference, or assume too hastily that apathy towards religion is a boding sign and precedent condition of its decay. With most people faith in religion amounts to little more than a passive acquiescence in certain beliefs the nature and implications of which they are either too ignorant or too indolent to examine. Early inculcation has fixed in their minds ideas which their subsequent apathy tends rather to preserve than destroy.

When belief has once found a lodgement, indifference is nearly always on the side of credulity. Apathy is a state of mental inertia, and as such is favourable to the continuance of "things as they are." On this account it has often been found a greater obstacle to reform than active opposition, for no progress can be made in anything till interest in it has been aroused.

We may confute or convince an opponent, but we can do nothing with the man who ignores the question at issue. The priesthood have not been slow to perceive the value of this supineness in furthering their interests. They have ever been apprehensive of the danger of any critical inquiry into religion, and have neglected to use no means that cunning or cruelty could devise to suppress every attempt to examine its claims. But the sluggish mentality that accepts without question has always been regarded by them with favour as one of the main securities of their power to be fostered and maintained by every verbal wile and sleight of pulpit sophistry. Hence their perpetual preaching up of the "virtue" of contentment which in their mouths has often been only another name for a slavish submission to those iniquitous social conditions which religion has done so much to create. "Contentment is great gain" to those that preach, not to those that practise it.

That this inert mass can be roused into mental activity by any *direct* effort of organized Freethought is hardly to be expected. It is, from its very nature, impervious to purely intellectual appeal, and presents a stolidly immovable front to every rationalist attack. The religious beliefs of this type of Christian are usually of the crudest and vaguest description. He is a Christian, not because he understands the doctrines of Christianity—as a rule, he neither knows nor wants to know anything about them—but from mere association and habitude. His religion is the result, not of any intellectual process, but of the social conditions which long-established Christianity has created—in short, he is a Christian by the formative power of environment, and would be anything else in an equal degree by the same means. But the mind that accepts without question what it regards with unconcern is beyond the reach of logic. That which is not founded on reason can scarcely be shaken by reasoning. As such a mentality is formed, so it must be re-formed—by the agency of material environment. Every progressive movement that has shaped the course of human destiny has had its origin in an intellectual nucleus around which, as it advanced, material accretions of social life and custom were formed. It is the objective environment created by ideas and not the ideas themselves that mould the mass of mankind. The ignorant, the stupid and the indifferent (and such form, as far as religion is concerned, the greater portion of every Christianized community) though incapable of responding to the direct appeal of reason, are nevertheless plastic to the conditions physical and social which are produced by its action. It follows that every victory gained by rationalism over the active forces of superstition will, as far as it promotes the secularization of social life, effect a corresponding change in this class—that is to say their secularism will be, like their Christianity, not an active principle of conduct, but a mere static product of their material surroundings.

That no intellectual impression can be made on such should be a matter of little concern to the Freethought propagandist. They are a physiological fixture. They will exist as long as human nature is what it is—a complex of unequal powers, and of conflicting passions and interests. In the ceaseless conflict between reason and superstition the apathetic or mentally stagnant count for little. They are merely a remora that may retard, but cannot stop the advance of rational thought.

Truth, knowledge, understanding—these are the main factors in human progress, and it is to these that the exponent of Freethought appeals, and on these he relies for the ultimate triumph of his cause.

A. YATES

## The Present Position of Christianity

FOR over nineteen thousand years Christianity is self-proclaimed as the Supreme Religion, the one legitimate Light of the World, quite oblivious of the fact that, as a religion, it is far from being in numerical superiority. After a reign—oppressive rather than benign—of nearly twenty centuries, it still protests that it is unique in doctrine, although its evolution from older and often better cults has been established by research. It has repeatedly avowed its foundation in pacifism and love, even when waging relentless wars. It has pretended humility when most arrogant, preached poverty while amassing ill-gotten wealth, and preached abstinence and self-control while indulging gluttony and incontinence; extolled mercy while merciless. After centuries of damnation based upon ignorant superstition, it has striven to adapt itself to the dawning of science, but only when scientific truth has been too much for it, and the first severe blow to its reign was struck by the growing evidences of Evolution. With that Christianity began to enter upon its down-grade, and found itself fighting a losing battle. It had fought other battles before, especially those of a civil war between its diverging sects. But the war against science was no mere internecine contest, and Christianity has steadily lost prestige ever since. Its very foundations are giving way because based upon the insecurity of falsehood and illogical paradoxes. Had Christianity been all it pretended, it could not but have achieved an unassailable position in far less time than it has held the stage. With every crisis it should have become more impregnable, but instead it has signally failed. The first of such crises was the struggle between the dark falsehood of superstition against the growing light of scientific truth. The last began with the World War, and has had a more shattering effect upon Christianity than any other in world history. To-day, when the vilest and most insane passions of mankind are rampant throughout Europe, and the threat of war more inhuman than ever before, it is worth while to examine the claims of Christianity as a humanizing influence and to consider its present position.

The truth of the failure of Christianity was put in a nutshell by the simple question with which the late Lord Salisbury is said to have posed certain Church dignitaries: "God is all-powerful and God is all-loving—and the world is what it is! How are you going to explain that?" It is inexplicable, like all paradoxes. Indeed, containing as it does a group of paradoxes which become the more ludicrous the more they are contemplated, the question holds a grave indictment of the whole Christian doctrine. Moreover, it postulates a question that is even more insistent to-day than it was in Lord Salisbury's time. Its impartial consideration demolishes the whole framework of Christian teaching, as a breath will scatter a house built of cards. Let us take these fundamental doctrines upon which the fabric of the Faith depends and see how they bear impartial examination.

Since the young Christian is still taught the Bible story of the Creation, we may begin with that. True, we know that it is merely one of many myths of explanation borrowed from earlier sources, but that need not deter us from examining it to ascertain how the Supreme Deity of Christianity appears therein. If God created man, he appears to have made a terrible bungle of it. It suffices to point out that he gave him anatomical items which are now known to be more or less useless developmental survivals, which he would have been much better without. For all his omni-

science, God seems to have proceeded as a system of trial and error—a valuable method for the limited brain of a man groping for scientific truth, but surely unsuited to a deity who knew everything, past, present, and to come. After making his experimental man, the Divine Hand started on woman and, instead of adopting the simple “dirt baby” method which had pleased him so much for making Adam, he robbed that unfortunate being of a rib and fashioned Eve as a kind of side-issue. The rest of the story—the test, the temptation, and the expulsion of God’s playthings—may be passed over. They seem to show a curious lapse on the part of an omniscient creator, and suggest a mind with a taste for the macabre and a leaning towards sadism.

The Creation doctrine, however, is the least important of the paradoxes, if not the least amusing, save that it gives an insight into the mind of the Christian Deity, which is further developed in the other and more important doctrines. In the latter the main attributes of God that he is (1) *Omnipotent*, which postulates a supreme power before which everything contrary to his will must disappear. (2) He is *Omniscient* and *Prescient*: knowing everything that has happened, is happening, and *will happen* everywhere—in heaven, on earth, and in the waters under the earth. He knows even so trivial a thing as the fall of a sparrow. (3) He is *All-loving*, with a love that transcends the highest love of man, which can be self-sacrificing and above all the baseness, as many a human love story has proved. (4) He is also a *Jealous* God, which is in flat contradiction of the last attribute, for in the supreme form of human love there is no place for jealousy. Truly it is said that “The Love of God passeth all understanding.”

Let us take these attributes, belief in which is a *sine qua non* for every Christian, and see how they work out in practice.

If God is omnipotent, why does he permit human suffering? Why did he allow Satan to revolt and plague the mankind he loves so much? Why does he permit this fallen angel to tempt his victims and claim them when they fail, to consign them to a fearful and eternal punishment? The fundamental theme underlying this conception is the eternal struggle between the Good and Evil Principles, which is embodied in the Zoroastrian system (which has been described as “the noblest and purest of the ancient faiths”), founded by Zarathustra over six centuries B.C., before the Assyrian conquest of Bactria. It contains the essence of practical ethics and, as such, is purely rational. To make the God who represents the Principle of Good as an omnipotent, prescient being converts the original conception into a supremely foolish paradox. If the Christian Deity is omnipotent, how can he permit the Evil Principle to exist at all? That he is omniscient, prescient, and all-loving makes his laxity in permitting suffering, that he can foresee and prevent, nothing short of criminal. The logical outcome is that his responsibility for war, injustice, and every other form of human suffering shows his complete failure. But plainly, with his attributes of perfect love, omniscience, and prescience, his failure to exercise his remarkable gifts for the good of his beloved creation brings the Christian God to the mean level of an arrant humbug—a conclusion from which there appears to be no escape.

Christianity teaches that God, appalled by the evil rampant in the world of which he is the Lord and Master, sent his only son, in the person of Jesus Christ, to save mankind and to bring to it a message of universal love and peace. How, then, can his benevolent mission be reconciled with some of his sayings as reported in the New Testament? Three quotations will suffice:—

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I come not to send peace, but a sword. (*Matt. x. 34*).  
I am come to send fire on the earth. (*Luke xii. 49*).  
Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay, but rather division. (*Luke xii. 51*).

It is useless to endeavour to explain away these facts and deductions as a part of the “Great Mystery of God,” after the manner of the priest. As my old friend Edward Clodd used to put it, “God moves in a mysterious way his *blunders* to perform.” The only position to assume is frankly to admit, as Rationalists do, that the whole irreconcilable muddle is the result of the evolution of Christianity from a hotch-potch of primitive beliefs and myths, altered and adapted from time to time by an interested and not over scrupulous priesthood to keep a strong hold over the people, introducing occasional modifications when pressed thereto by expedient. The position of Christianity to-day is a doleful one. During the past half-century at least it has failed completely to hold its own against the increasing truths brought to light by science. The appalling political events of the last twenty-five years have revealed its absolute incapacity (save as dope) as a guide for mankind.

There is, however, one single outstanding truth enshrined in Christianity—the injunction to “Do unto others as you would they should do unto you”—reducible to the one word, a magic word, “RECIPROCITY.” This is the one genuine jewel in the Christian crown. But, alas! it is a stolen jewel at that. It embodies the oldest ethical principle in the world. No virtue but can be included in this single maxim. It belongs to no single faith, but comes down to us from the time when man first realized the true meaning of social organization, and is traceable from early historic times as the product of the social faculty. The Egyptian Book of the Dead contains it. It is not Christianity nor any other organized religious cult that can save the world, but only Reciprocity, perfectly and impartially applied.

AUTOLYCUS

## Correspondence

MRS. EDDY AND CHRISTIAN SCIENCE  
TO THE EDITOR OF THE “FREETHINKER”

SIR,—In your correspondence column of February 12, 1939, I read with interest your answer to Robert Key to letter defending Christian Science.

I would like to add two bits of information, which you perhaps already know. First—her book has been proven to consist of a re-hashing of *Quimby's Personal Notes*, which she copied during the course of her treatment at his office, and the *Bible*. Secondly, in my thesis, entitled, “A Psychopathological Analysis of Mary Baker Eddy,” which I wrote as part of my work in 1936, *Seminary of Psychopathology*, conducted by a Professor of Psychology of Harvard Medical School (Boston, Mass., U.S.A.), I clearly proved that Mrs. Eddy was definitely a victim of paranoid insanity with symptoms ranging from illusions of grandeur to illusions of persecution. Usually a paranoid has either the illusions or the delusions; Mrs. Eddy had both. During the last few years of her life, she had weekly or more frequently injections of dope administered by Boston physicians.

Never during the long years of her denials of the existence of all material things, did she deny the existence of money. The value of her estate at her death was, I believe, close to a million dollars.

DAVID LANDAU

## HITLER AS LIBERATOR

SIR,—In your issue of March 5 the writer of “Sugar Plums” says: “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.”

I do not suppose that in the history of the world there has been a Government which everybody approved. I am well aware on better evidence than that of most "informed and impartial observers" that there are plenty of people in Germany who do not approve of Hitler. But I also know that there is a very wide belief that Hitler has done a good deal for Germany which the Republic failed to do. Hitler took over seven million unemployed, of whom nearly half were not receiving any public relief. The number of unemployed is small now. Many are grateful for that. In 1923 the French invaded the Ruhr, because a gentle and mild Republican Government was in power. In doing so they precipitated a financial crisis which caused millions to lose all the savings of a lifetime, and reduced many to destitution. They will not do that again under Hitler. The Germans all know it. Ten years ago Germany and Austria earnestly desired a peaceful union. The other countries said they would not allow it. Hitler has brought about that union without asking the other countries. The Germans like him for that.

Land is the source of all wealth, and the British Empire has sixty times as much land as the German Empire. That is greatly resented in Germany. One of the German best sellers, published long before the Nazis attained power, is *Volk ohne Raum* (A People without Room), by Hans Grimm. The Germans think Hitler will get them some more land, and I think he will too. Germans have as much intelligence and character as any other people. When they do not want Hitler any more, they will know what to do. Meanwhile they have a strong conviction that their rights are better guarded under Hitler than they were under the Republic.

R. B. KERR

[Candidly we should not have published the above but for the fact that it is a criticism of something we had written. All that need be said is, First, few people will now dispute that the behaviour of the Allies towards the German Republic was bad, and that the almost criminal Germany that exists to-day is the nemesis which that bad treatment brought. The world is paying a heavy price for it.

Second, the attempted justification of the establishment of the Nazi terror in Austria, by the assumption that the Germans like Hitler for that is very open to question.

Third, the assumption of the last few sentences that because the German *people* do not get rid of Hitler they therefore want him, and that so soon as they do not want him they will get rid of him, is one of the queerest pieces of political philosophy we have met.

Last, the citation of "rights" in connexion with the people of Germany—a people who may not think without danger, who are ordered what they shall say, what they shall read, what radio messages they may listen to, with a surveillance kept over every household, men, women and children brutally tortured, and Germans who have escaped to this country avowedly afraid to speak because of the vengeance that may fall upon their relatives who are still in Germany,—is too grotesque for criticism.—Ed.]

#### CHRISTIAN COWARDICE

SIR,—On March 7, 1939, the *Daily Herald* (page 11) reported that Mr. Bert James of Swansea, who was projecting a boxing match at Carmarthen, received fifty anonymous letters threatening him with hostile processions throughout the town unless he abandoned his project. All these minatory missives bore the signature "Churchman." Their sentiments, without their sign, were repeated by two other concealed scribes, who added respectively that, if Mr. James did not give way, his car would be burnt, and he himself thrown into the river. The report says that the storm was raised by the Nonconformist ministers of the town. Yet there still are people who venture to declare that Christianity owes its prevalence to its straightforward and peaceful methods.

C. CLAYTON DOVE

#### Obituary

ROBERT BELL

It is with deep regret that I note the passing of another old North Country Freethinker in the person of Robert Bell, of Oxhill, Durham. He was one of the old type of sturdy northern Freethinkers, clear in his views, loyal in

his support to the movement, and uncompromising in his opinions. I came into frequent contact with him over forty years ago, when I was very busy in the Tyneside district. As I had two lengthy spells of residence in South Shields, one of six weeks and one of six months, I travelled all over the area, and had many interesting and sometimes exciting times. Wherever help was needed one could be sure of the presence of Robert Bell. No service was too small, and none too arduous for him to attempt. Very often in the background, he was one of those who made it possible for others to be at the front. He died on March 9. A secular service was conducted at the graveside by Mr. J. T. Brighton. I pay my respects to one who deserved the respect of all fighters for freedom.—C.C.

#### 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 and Mrs. N. Buxton. Weather permitting.

###### INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (The Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, Camden Town, N.W.1): 7.30, Mrs. Janet Chance (President, Abortion Law Reform Association)—"Religious Tolerance and Abortion."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Alexandra Hotel, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W.): 7.30, Mr. W. H. Townley—Freethought, Politics and Economics."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Dr. C. E. M. Joad, M.A.—"The Twilight of the Gods."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (The Laurie Arms, Crawford Place, Edgware Road, W.): 7.30, Mr. H. Cutner—"An Evening with Medimus."

##### COUNTRY

###### INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane): 7.0, Mr. W. Fletcher—"Psychology and the Soul."

BRADFORD BRANCH N.S.S. (Laycock's Forum, Kirkgate): 7.15, Mr. H. S. Baron—"International Situation and Secularism."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley): 2.30, Mr. J. Clayton—"Man's Unconscious Spirit."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 7.0, Miss Hilda Pocock (Eugenics Society, London), Cinema Lecture—"Heredity and Citizenship."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (East Hall, McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Wilson (Catholic Evidence League)—"Existence of God."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. M. Cameron—"The Future of International Relations"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, Liverpool, entrance in Christian Street): 7.0, Walter Atkinson (Manchester)—"Life and Death."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (King's Café, 64-66 Oxford Street, Manchester, near All Saints Church): 7.0, Mr. J. V. Shortt (Liverpool)—"Is Thought Free?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Bigg Market): 8.0, Friday, March 17, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Co-operative Hall, Green Street): 7.30, Mr. Rovshen Mahomed and Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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Secretary: R. H. ROSETTI.

THIS Society was formed in 1893 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of enquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularization of the State, etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up.

All who join the Society participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest.

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Friends desiring to benefit the Society are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favour in their wills. The now historic decision of the House of Lords in *re Bowman and Others v. the Secular Society Limited*, in 1917, a verbatim report of which may be obtained from its publishers, the Pioneer Press, or from the Secretary, makes it quite impossible to set aside such bequests.

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