

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIX.—No. 22

SUNDAY, MAY 28, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>The Jew and To-day—The Editor</i> - - - - -	337
<i>Blind Men's Bluff—Mimnermus</i> - - - - -	339
<i>Sketches in the Biography of God—G. H. Taylor</i> - - - - -	340
<i>Job—George Wallace</i> - - - - -	341
<i>A Censored Film—Peter Northcote</i> - - - - -	342
<i>The Priest and the Woman—George Bedborough</i> - - - - -	346
<i>Art and Morals—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	347
<i>Secular and Supernatural—Ignotus</i> - - - - -	348
<i>Stanley's Christmas Morning—A. R. Williams</i> - - - - -	349
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

The Jew and To-Day

THE benefits the world has derived from the "Holy Land" are open to question. But there is no question concerning the troubles that have originated therefrom. It gave us the Bible, and the Bible gave us a sanctified intolerance that has been a curse to the civilized world. It gave Europe what it had not until the Bible came to power, the possession of a "sacred book" and that reinstated most of the superstitions that the civilized world of antiquity was rapidly outgrowing. And now our Government is experiencing a hatful of trouble from the same source—the Holy Land. This trouble rests on a sheer superstition and an idea the world is being forced to reject by pressure of facts. The latter is the conception of "nationality," the other is that of religion. There is said to be a Jewish nation, when all that can be meant by it is that there are some millions of people scattered all over the world who believe in a particular religion. On that basis one might with equal justification talk of Mohammedanism or Roman Catholicism or Protestantism, as forming a nation. There are men and women who are Russians, Germans, Italians, Britons, Chinese, who are Jews in the precise sense that there are people in all these countries who are Roman Catholics. And but for the malignancy of Christian persecution, it may fairly be said that to-day there would be no Jewish religion in existence. Judaism owes its persistence entirely to Christian persecution, and where persecution cannot succeed to extermination it has the effect of endearing to the persecuted that for which they suffer. Christian intolerance preserved the Jewish religion from extinction, and in the end perpetuated a problem that should have no right of existence in a civilized world.

* * *

Nationality

"Nationality" is an idea that—in spite of its revival as a product of the war in 1914, when it became a bait to bring in allies—is in process of disappearance. I hasten to say that by "nationalism" I do not mean attachment to local scenes, customs, ideas and so

forth. These are as indestructible as is a love for one particular mother out of the millions of mothers that are around us. These local attachments will continue to exist, and are wholly good, so long as they do not breed hostility to improvement, or to other local groups.

The "nationalism" I have in mind is that cheap newspaper flag-wagging which finds expression in "My country right or wrong," which is only another way of saying in practice "My country is always right and other countries are always wrong," and which fails to realize that the civilized world cannot continue with each country thinking in terms of itself only. That way of putting it is not so exact as it might be, but it is brief and will serve. There is indeed to-day no necessary conflict between peoples, save such as springs from the perpetuation of outworn institutions and the prevalence of out-of-date ideas. There was a time when pietists in this country could look upon our "sea-girt isle" as evidence that "Providence" had intended us to take care of civilization, and planted us in the "midst of a silver sea," so that we might perpetuate our dominancy. To-day the single invention of the aeroplane might well make these same pietists believe that this "Providence" had placed us where we are so that we might easily be blasted out of existence. It is also evident to-day that peace is actually "one and indivisible," that one cannot honestly speak of the period 1918-39 as being anything more than an armistice, enlivened with wars here and there.

And the net result of this is that peoples must live with each other in terms of mutual conflict or of mutual peace. I stress "mutual" on either count because the idea of isolation is one that only fools can entertain and only knaves preach as a guide to conduct. We must each either arm as others are arming, or live peaceful lives as others are living peaceful lives. In either case the conduct of one is determined by the conduct of the other. And this is, whether it be for good or evil, collective action. The only choice is which kind of collective action shall we achieve. There is no nation to-day that can build a protective wall so high that ideas cannot surmount them. And you cannot kill ideas with bullets.

* * *

Palestine and the Jew

To get back to the Jew and Palestine and Nationality. Christian persecution of Jews led our Government to propose, as a camouflage for diplomatic gerrymandering, a "national" home for Jews. The protection of some millions of people who were being bitterly persecuted was a world need. To do it in the name of a restored "nationality" was absurd, and in view of the opportunities it gave to creating hatreds and providing opportunity for Italian and German propaganda, almost criminal. That last term may, however, be dispensed with when one remembers what

little real intelligence is manifested by our diplomatists.

What and where was the "nationality" that was to be restored? When and where were the Jews a nation? Certainly not for nearly two thousand years, and one can only grant a qualified assent to an earlier date. How can one call an aggregate of people bound together by nothing but a form of religious belief a nation? Jews have for nearly two thousand years—or longer—lived in all parts of the world. So far as they were permitted to do so, and so far as their own religious prejudices permitted, they have lived the life of every nation, becoming Englishmen in England, Frenchmen in France, Dutchmen in Holland, and so forth. How can such a people be really said to have a "national hunger" for Palestine? Our Royal Family about two hundred years ago were German to the core. Are we to say that they have to-day a national hunger for Germany? When does a family settled in England become English? What has become of the descendants of the Danish, the French, the Dutch, the German and other foreign groups that have taken possession of part of this country? What are we to reckon their descendants if not "True-born" Englishmen and women? Jews have been foolish enough to take up with this cry of Jewish nationality, and at the same time are claiming to be Englishmen, Frenchmen, and so forth. But neither Jew nor Gentile can have it both ways. The Jew may not claim to be English or French or American after a couple of generations and afterwards deny that he has a different nationality from these—after many generations of local residence.

Of course, so long as Jews are persecuted they will long for some land where they can live and work and die in peace, practising their religion as Christians and others practise theirs. They will migrate to the "promised land" for exactly the same reason that in the seventeenth century Englishmen and women left this country to people the wilds of America. The Jews have a hunger to escape persecution; yes, but only political trickery could camouflage its aims under the stupid talk of a Jewish national hunger. How many English, American, or French Jews have any desire to leave their real homeland and get off to Palestine? Fooling people with phrases is so easy a task that one wonders that even Cabinet Ministers can find interest in it.

* * *

A Home for the Persecuted

If to build a refuge for persecuted Jews under the name of a restored nationality was wrong, does the belief in a common religion give any better ground? There is no germ of specific nationality in the word "Jew." It has the same significance as Mohammedanism or Roman Catholicism. There are all sorts of people who are Jews. There is a Jewish religion, there is no Jewish people—save in the sense that there are people who believe in the Jewish religion, but when anyone ceases to believe in that religion he ceases to be a Jew.

I am not, of course, raising any protest, even inferentially, against help being given to a body of people who are being persecuted on account of their opinions, whether these are religious or political in character. My protest now is identical with the one I made many years ago against setting up a new nation, and with a religious basis. Common decency demanded that what could be done should be done to help people in the circumstances in which the believers in the Jewish religion found themselves in certain countries. But that help should not have taken the form of founding a new religious State, which in the circumstances was bound to lead to friction with Mohammedans—who had generally lived on fairly good terms with Jews—

and which also provided a ground for more national scheming, and, as events have shown, provided a good ground for Italian and German propaganda against the British Government. A constitution which gave to all settlers equal rights, but which also avoided putting another religion in a better political position, even though no laws enforcing inequality existed, might easily have avoided the trouble that has manifested itself.

* * *

A Summing Up

What I am insisting on is, first, that the conception of political nationality belongs to a set of ideas that is rapidly decaying (in spite of the revival that has taken place since the war settlements came into being). The "Nationalism" that has been so dominant and so aggressive for the past three or four centuries, must give way to a higher conception of the relations between peoples. That is being forced upon even politicians (usually the last to realize the trend of thought). This decay of the idea of political nationalism is not due to propaganda so much as to the sheer pressure of events. No country can afford to indulge in "Isolation" to-day. That means more militarism, more hatred and suspicion, the perpetuation of political diplomacy with the policy of lying, trickery and sharp practices between people; it is the continuation of a nationalistic thieves' kitchen with its members rigged out in a cocked hat, knee breeches and an imitation sword.

Second, to found a Jewish State on the assumption that French, German, African, British, Spanish and other believers in the Jewish religion have anything in common but a decaying form of religious belief, is equal to founding new "nations" of Roman Catholics and Protestants. There is a Jewish religion, there is no Jewish people, only a people who believe in Judaism. To set up these believers in Judaism as a distinct State, on the assumption that they have a common ideal other than that of religion is as far as absurdity can go. Religious States belong to the past. They can have no reference to an enlightened future.

Third, it is not segregation, that will solve the Jewish problem, any more than the segregation of Roman Catholics would solve the Roman Catholic problem. Religions do not die from segregation, it is the one thing that keeps them alive. The principle of segregation carried on by the Christian world for centuries stereotyped the particularity of the Jewish religionist, and the persecution to which he was subjected developed the vices and the virtues that follow when persecution is unable to achieve its logical aims. If the world that is shocked at the ill-treatment of the Jew were to read the situation aright it would see in it an unanswerable indictment of religious influences. For the Jewish religion was one of the channels through which religious persecution became domiciled in the western world, and so the Jew became the victim of his own intolerance. Given a minority of Protestants in a Roman Catholic country subjected to the same conditions as the Jew faced, treated as a separate people, shut out from trades and professions, cut off from the land, robbed of political franchise, and you would have the Jewish problem in a Christian form.

I agree that some home should be found for those people who are suffering from the Fascist terror, in and out of Germany, but it must rest on some better basis than that of a religion or a manufactured nationality. Ultimately the only way in which the Jewish question will finally be solved is by the disappearance of the Jewish religion. But that generalization also holds good of other situations where religion is strong enough to interfere with the life of a people.

Blind Men's Bluff

The only absolute good is the progress towards perfection, our own progress towards it, and the progress of humanity.—*Matthew Arnold.*

It is from his fellow man that man's everyday danger comes.—*Seneca.*

RELIGION, in the final analysis, is the monument of ancient fear. And, since religion itself has become a huge vested interest, it has also become the life work of a very large body of priests to perpetuate that sense of fear. To primitive people the approach of darkness was as the coming of death. The potent forces that produced night, the equally potent forces that routed it, they regarded as beings whose moods supplication and genuflexions could affect. For untold ages that fear of the unknown has been the secret of religion, and it is still the secret to-day. It is the ultimate source of the priests' wealth, which, in its turn, is the cause of their power. So long as there is religion, the lever of fear will always be used, and the priests are always going back to it.

In the matter of demonology, the ecclesiastics of the great Christian churches and the witch-doctors of Africa are brothers under their skins. It is due entirely to the machinations of Priestcraft that in countries pretending to some civilization the belief in a terrible devil, a frightful hell, and demons, still persists. The Roman Catholic Church, the most powerful church in Christendom, still preaches a literal hell of burning fire, and the Protestant Salvation Army endorses a similar horrible belief, although poles asunder from Rome in so many other respects. Even the Archbishop of Canterbury is not above using the primitive, but now discredited, superstition that the bad deeds of wicked men are due to "Satan." As he surveys the world from the windows of Lambeth Palace he expresses himself precisely as if he were an African witch-doctor, and comes to the conclusion that "it sometimes looks as if the world were, for the present, under the domination of evil spirits."

This is not an isolated outburst of primitive theology. Last year May frosts did serious harm to fruit trees in the Ely diocese, involving fruit-growers in severe financial loss. The Bishop of Ely attributed this damage to the crops to "discarnate rebellious spirits," and, explaining the matter more fully, added: "We know of the fall of man, and we realize that there is an evil influence causing wickedness in the world. It is not unlikely that nature also has wickedness and evil tendencies caused by the demon element. That is what I mean when I say that I believe there are angels and demons both in the human world and the world of nature." Canon Gay also voiced his ardent belief in evil spirits. He asked whether any serious student of the Christian Bible could scoff at the bishop's statement that evil spirits do roam the world.

The Canon may be extensively wrong in attributing to diabolical influences the seasonal aberrations of Nature, but he is absolutely right in his contention that the Christian Bible supports demonology. From *Genesis* to the *Gospels* the volume is saturated with primitive demoniac superstition. The legend of the "Garden of Eden" contains relics of serpent worship; and the Gospel story is full of demonology, from the account of the Temples to the story of the Gadarene swine.

Here is another illuminating report. On May 13 last, villagers of Stanford and Thurston, Norfolk, led by their "reverend" vicars, walked through the fields praying "god" to remove two ancient curses from the land. According to tradition, many years ago, a man hanged himself on an oak tree and thereby

set a curse on the land. The second curse is said to have been uttered by a dying woman, because a lord of the manor in Elizabethan times held Protestant services during the day, and Romish services in secret in his hall at night. The villagers knelt in the open field as the prayers were offered.

What is all this but pandering to popular superstition? It is worthy of a Christian Church which christens battleships, blesses regimental flags, and which invokes divine assistance for fine and wet weather. But it is wholly unworthy of a great nation which has some culture and some pretences to civilization, and it is a complete anachronism that such a savage survival as Christianity should be regarded as the State religion of an educated people.

Indeed, the whole elaborate edifice of Christian salvation, the alleged fall of mankind, which necessitated the alleged sacrifice of Christ, rests upon a Babylonian legend and an error of observation. Belief in the immortality of the serpent was due to the periodic shedding of its skin. In the Babylonian story there is a wonderful tree in the fields of the blessed, and its fruit conferred the gift of immortality. Before man could eat this precious fruit it was devoured by the serpent, which thus obtained the gift of immortality intended for man. Theologians have transformed this primitive legend, and made it the basis of the most mischievous superstition that the world has known. Historic Christianity always threatened unbelievers with the terrors of hell. Our ancestors even visualized this Devil as a being with horns, with a tail, and with cloven hooves.

The Christian clergy exploited this widespread ignorance of their congregations, and made money out of the fear of death. According to these pastors and masters, death was the king of terrors. They heightened the effect by appealing to the fears of their hearers, and used this imaginary Devil and his fireworks as a lever. For very many generations the clergy addressed people who could not read nor write, and this made their sorry imposition the easier. Their sermons, archaic in thought and inflated with sheer nonsense, dealt in the grossest generalities and exaggerations. "The wages of sin is death" they wailed, and it is the bitterest criticism to add that this sort of nonsense was their idea of wisdom. Happily, the "cure of souls" is now passing into the physician's hands with the cure of the body. But for centuries nobody was there to tell people the truth, except a small number of devoted Freethinkers, who were accursed by all the churches of Christendom.

What use are the tens of thousands of Christian clergy who endorse such antiquated and mischievous rubbish as the alleged demoniacal influence in human affairs? Their minds are as empty as that of their coloured prototypes in uncivilized countries. If demons produce late frosts and other seasonal aberrations of Nature, they are also responsible for earthquakes, hurricanes, typhoons, and other natural conclusions? On the whole, the African witch-doctors command more respect than our clergy. They are savages addressing savages, but our pastors and masters pretend to be "the heirs of all the ages," and yet talk the same abracadabra as the barbarians. What a commentary on our boasted culture, and of our overrated and expensive system of education. Britain will never be a really civilized country, in any real sense of that much-abused word, until it has rid itself of a Priestcraft which retails mediaeval ignorance and checks ordered development and progress. As instructed citizens of an important nation, we should be the children of light, and it is we who sit in darkness. We are petty in our reverence for the teachers of barbarism, for by so being, we imperil our mental freedom.

Sketches in the Biography of God

I.

God was a vigorous creature in infancy. His biography shows that, unlike most evolving things, his maturity is accompanied by a decrease in strength, till in old age he does practically nothing. His four stages of infancy, maturity, old age and death might roughly be termed animism, monotheism, pantheism and atheism. There are, of course, other landmarks in the story, such as henotheism (Gods with specialized functions) and Polytheism (an army of Gods frequently under one chief). But to-day most people, by their actions, assert that they are not taking into account the possible operations of deity.

They do not look to God to provide a good harvest, or to cure their ailments or to win wars for them. This, at any rate, is true of their actions, if not of their speech. And there are certainly rites and ceremonies which might lead an uninstructed visitor from Mars to suppose that a very powerful person was being supplicated. But he would be puzzled to find that, along with the plea to cure an illness, the services of a doctor were sought to reinforce the Almighty. And he would soon learn that although God could be asked to do everything, no one really expected him to do anything.

A full-blooded, hearty belief only flourishes, like everything else, when the environment will let it. And such was the environment in which the idea of God was born. Primitive man takes things at their face value. The kind of action of which he has first-hand experience is his own action. His own action is willed and motivated. He acts as a cause producing effects. Causation to him implies personal agency. It becomes a necessity of thought. And there are such things as shadows, echoes, reflections, dreams, epilepsy, disease and death, all pressing for explanation. The result is a state of mind adequately fitted for the appearance of the belief in super-powerful agency. Primitive wonderment is the embryo of God.

In such a mental atmosphere there could be no thunder without a Thunderer, no rain without a Rainer, no wind save by a mighty Blower. By none other than the manifestation of personal agency could the sunshine, the harvest or the seasons be conceived. God became, not the product of well-reasoned induction based on adequate experiment, but rather the basis and condition of thinking. He was eminently to be feared, to be supplicated, to be taken into account. He was to be dealt with as one person to another. He had feelings, as his propitiators had feelings, he could be made angry or pleased, he could be bargained with, even threatened; he could be placated. His power and importance, his influence and sphere of action, were matters superior only in degree, not in kind, to those of his worshippers. And in some instances there was revolt on their part; they were disappointed or dissatisfied; they would transfer their custom to another.

Various theories concerning the relative importance of different characteristics in the origin of the God idea, such as ghost or ancestor worship, the graveside fertility factor developed by Grant Allen, or the ejection of the Freudian Super-Ego, do not affect the fact that the notion of deity has its origin in the false interpretations of phenomena made by man in his primitive ignorance.

As God grew older he became more moral, though he had first to undergo such indignities as being killed and eaten, discomforts which only a hardy non-existent could survive.

The development of morality in deity is particularly noticeable at the stage where the notion takes the

form of a plurality of gods and goddesses. The Egyptian Osiris, a fairly moral being himself, fell a victim to his wicked brother Set. We have the opposition of good and evil well instanced in the Zoroastrian conception of Ahura Mazda and Company *versus* Angra Mainyu and Company. Vedic religion provides examples of the fight of Gods with Demons, and the consistent Christian should to-day hold a belief in Satan.¹ In Yarweh, or Jehovah, the god-idea is narrowed to one god, but while his sphere is the whole earth his first cares are for his chosen people. The Chaldeans, too, furnish examples of deities whose job is to assist men against their demonic enemies, who were put to flight by Gibil Nisku (The "Lord of Fire"); while Zeus was reputed to have saved Greece from Persia.

Some of the gods were invested with the loftiest moral standards which could be conceived at the time, such as the Egyptian moon-god Thoth and his wife Maa, and the Chaldean water-god Ea. To Thoth were attributed the gifts of speech, writing and arithmetic. On the other hand, we have in Rudra the conception of a terribly malevolent (Vedic) God of storm, to whom hymns of fear were sung and with whom the Hindu god Civa is connected. There is also the fearsome virgin goddess Dike (Greek), but to whatever heights of moral splendour, or whatever depths of depravity, the gods soared or sunk, they were neither higher nor lower than the highest or lowest conceived by their inventors.

In many cases their creators could imagine nothing more perfect than a strict dispenser of punishment and reward. The Chaldean sun-god Shamash and moon-god Sin were supreme judges and dispensers of justice; the supreme moral ruler in Vedic religion is Varuna, who sees all because his eye is the sun; Indra, however, is inclined to forgive, being susceptible to favours. Another way of mitigating divine wrath is by way of the mediator priests, who in Brahmanism become "sub-gods." The idea of a Moral Avenger is still strong in Judaism and Mohammedanism, though the teachings of the Baba in the last century have produced a more liberal-minded section in the latter. In our own country it is still common to swear "by Jupiter."

And so, in spite of refinements and developments, the god-idea in the ancient world took the form of strong belief in the action of personal or super-personal agencies which might be approached with a view to propitiation. And throughout the dark ages of Christianity the activity of gods and devils and angels was open and undoubted. There were so many things it was then impossible to explain without them. It was a world where religion stood unquestioned and supreme, with God on his throne in heaven.

G. H. TAYLOR

¹ Compare also Vishnu v. Shiva (Indian), Osiris v. Typhon (Egypt), Aschera v. Elion (Hebrew), etc.

It is not theology which purifies humanity, but humanity which purifies theology. Man civilizes himself first, and his gods afterwards—and the priest walks at the tail of the procession.—G. W. Foote.

Miracles come of an impassioned credulity which creates what it is determined to find. Given an enthusiastic desire that God should miraculously manifest himself, the religious imagination is never at a loss for facts to prove that he has done so; and in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake is the scale of the miraculous interposition.—Froude.

Job

Goodness would not make evil—Byron.

MUCH philosophic and religious nonsense has been written about the *Book of Job*. In this brief essay I may add only a poorer quality of it to the already accumulated stock but, at least, I will try to avoid high sounding, meaningless words and phrases, by remembering one of the few sensible remarks of the bogus Elias (Elihu)—“For the ear trieth words as the palate tasteth meats.” (xxxiv. 3).

In *The Hero as Prophet* (Mahomet) Carlyle tells us, speaking of the Arabs:—

They are, as we know, of Jewish kindred: but with that deadly terrible earnestness of the Jews they seem to combine something graceful, brilliant, which is not Jewish. They had “Poetic contests” among them before the time of Mahomet. Sale says, at Oadh, in the South of Arabia there were yearly fairs, and there, when the merchandising was done, poets sang for prizes: the wild people gathered to hear that. . . .

Biblical critics seem agreed that our own *Book of Job* was written in that region of the world. I call that, apart from all theories about it, one of the grandest things ever written with pen. . . . There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible, or out of it, of equal literary merit.

And later when speaking of the religion of the prophet:—

He made us at first, sustains us yet; we and all things are but the shadow of Him; a transitory garment veiling the Eternal Splendour. *Allah Akbar*, God is great; and then also *Islam*, that we must submit to God. That our whole strength lies in resigned submission to Him, whatsoever He do to us.

Submission to the will of God in view of the unsearchableness of his wisdom is said to be one of the greatest lessons to be derived from this book—and as this is certainly the very spirit of the Arab, Carlyle's opinion expressed above is not without point.

But the *Book of Job*, says Dr. Noyes:—

Is not only in the Hebrew language, but in the best style of Hebrew composition. The parallelism is uniform and well sustained; the sentences are pointed; the style is fresh and vigorous, and bears not, in its general characteristics, the slightest mark of a translation.

And by supposing that the Hebrew author, like Plato, travelled extensively in Egypt and Arabia with the purpose of enriching his mind; and after settling down to write his drama he decided (to allow himself greater freedom of expression) to make his leading character an Arabian (?) Satan a Persian, the three comforters wailing Jews, and the Almighty the “great Panjandrum himself with the little button on his top”; the barriers to its Hebrew authorship are broken down surely.

Similar arguments, to those used by Arabian advocates, might be made use of to show that Shakespeare was not an Englishman.

Renan places the *Book of Job* about 100 years before the Captivity. (It is said by the Talmud to be only a parable—how then account for Ezek. xiv. 14-20, and Jas. v. 11?). And Renan's opinion may be nearer the truth than most.

Of the four translations in front of me, that of Thomson's Septuagint is the most intelligible. That of Dr. Noyes, 1874 (Hancock Professor of Hebrew, at Harvard) containing one hundred and ninety-eight pages of explanatory notes, for instance, is not so lucid. I am therefore quoting solely from the Septuagint.

The *Book of Job* deals with the problem of evil

affecting both the saintly and the wicked alike. And it is said to justify the ways of God to man! It has a prologue and epilogue, and it consists of, more or less, quiet speeches made between Job and his friends. Their symposium is broken up eventually (“with most admired disorder”) by the Almighty filling all their bellies full of his windy eloquence.

I am supposing then, that this book was written by a Hebrew poet, more than a century before Æschylus, who made his hero a Hebrew, like himself, and not an Arabian. From the beginning of this drama to the end Job is full of protestation against the Almighty's treatment of him (so unlike an Arab). His trials may be said to have ripened his patience and ended in his absolute submission (like an Arab) when the Almighty, unable to answer him, flattered him by saying: “Dost thou think that I have spoken to thee for any other purpose, but that thou mayest appear justified?” (xl. 8). He also convinced Job that all his arguments were futile because He could convincingly shout much louder by thunder, etc., than he, Job, could ever hope to do.

But was Job a perfect man, except in his own eyes? He was one of the wealthiest men in the East—“Spacious in the possession of dirt”! How had he acquired this wealth? The country was full of a very downtrodden needy class. While he had both feet in the trough—“living luxuriously” (xxxii. 30)—was he not keeping others from getting their noses into it? He mentions the poor—“widows, fatherless, the naked perishing, those who were crowding round the sapphire on the sounding shore; and feeding on sea-weeds as their food; despicable and contemned and in want of every good, they, through extreme want, were chewing even the roots of trees” (xxx. 2-5), had he no share in the making of these? He tells us that he had a hand open as day for melting charity, and many other virtues, but he had not sufficient imagination to awaken the consciousness of his own defects. Ignorant of his own shortcomings, therefore, he egotistically tells us: “Till I die I will not give up my innocence. And for asserting my righteousness I make no apology; for I am conscious to myself of having done nothing amiss.” (xxvii. 5-6). His wife held a different opinion, as did Eliphaz and his other two friends. But they all failed to see that Job's sins of omission were their strong point.

The Prologue to the drama tells us, after describing Job's wealth, etc., how the Almighty bragged of Job's uprightness in the presence of Satan—a sort of public prosecutor, and *ad interim* “Agent Provocatif.” Delivered into Satan's hands to be tested, Satan destroyed Job's family and all his property, but his exertions were only met by—“The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away. As it pleased the Lord so hath it come to pass. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” (i. 21).

Defeated but not discouraged Satan asked permission to touch Job's bones and flesh—“All that a man hath will he give for his life” (ii. 4). He is empowered to do so but not to touch his life. Job was now smitten with foul ulcers from head to foot, etc. (ii. 7). “And when he had patiently sat down in an unclean place outside the city to scrape away the ichor, and much time having elapsed, his wife said to him: How long will thou persist saying, Behold I will wait a little longer, in hope and expectation of my deliverance? For behold the memorial of those sons and daughters, whom I brought forth with pangs and sorrow, and for whom I toiled in vain, are vanished from the earth; and thou thyself sittest among the putrefaction of worms, and all night long in the open air, while I am wandering about, or working for wages, from place to place and from house to house,

wishing for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from the labour and sorrows I endure. Do but say something for the Lord and die." (ii. 9). Whereupon he, looking steadfastly at her, said: Like one of the women without understanding hast thou spoken. (ii. 10).

There is much to be said for Job's wife. Her husband, his friends, and the Almighty ignore her. The latter handed her over to the tender mercies of Satan, along with Job's other possessions. Satan, however, did not destroy her. She cannot be said to be of an Arabian spirit. She was full of rebellion—original sin! Our A.V., on the face of it, is wrong. Would any woman, under the circumstances, have said so little? (as in c. ii. 9). Her speech quoted above, from the Septuagint, is given in full to do the poor woman justice.

His three friends were now let loose upon Job. Having wept aloud, rent their garments and disinfected themselves, they sat down by him, "in an unclean place outside the city"! for seven days and seven nights. And none of them spoke. This probably accounts for Carlyle's exaggerated opinion of the book! After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day on which he was born. Then he is followed by one of his three friends. He speaks again and is again followed and so on, until the Almighty winds up the proceedings.

To the believer there may be a problem to be solved, or unsolved. To the unbeliever there is no such problem. To the latter, evil takes its place in the natural order of things; just as God will do if there be one.

To the credit of the Almighty, be it stated, he commended Job for speaking the truth; while his friends charged him with "speaking irreverently and of insulting God!" It was ever thus!

But there must be conclusions! The following few verses, picked out here and there from the various speeches, have been selected to show the differences between the text of the A.V. and the Septuagint:—

When the superintending care of the Lord overlooked me, my nearest friends did not regard me: like a failing brook, or like a wave of the sea, they passed me by. vi. 15.

O thou who knowest the hearts of men! why hast thou set me up as thy mark to shoot at? Am I indeed a burden to thee? vii. 20.

Though he prop up his house, it cannot stand.

viii. 15.

He will fill the mouth of the upright with laughter, and their lips with songs of thanksgiving. viii. 21.

O that there were a mediator betwixt us—one to determine between and hear us both. ix. 33.

Hast thou not churned me as milk, and curdled me as cheese. x. 10.

For there is hope for a tree; for if it be lopped it may sprout again. . . . xiv. 7.

But when a man dieth he is gone: when a mortal falleth, he is no more. . . . v. 10.

And when composed in the grave cannot rise again.

v. 12.

And see Moschus Epitaph. Bion. 105:—

The meanest herb we trample in the field,
Or in the garden nurture, where its leaf,
At winter's touch, is blasted, and tis place
Forgotten, soon its vernal buds renews,
And, from short slumber, wakes to life again.
Man wakes no more!—man, valiant, glorious, wise,
When death once chills him, sinks in sleep profound.
A long, unconscious, never-ending sleep.

Gisborne.

But why have set times escaped the notice of the Lord; and the wicked transgressed all bounds; and ravaged both the flock and the shepherd? xxiv. 1.

For O! how I wish that I might lay violent hands on myself; or beseech another to do this for me.

xxx. 24.

GEORGE WALLACE

A Censored Film

ONE of the burning topics of the day is the freedom of the press. The freedom of the film is no less important; it is so closely allied to the press, and it, also, is being endangered by increasing Government interference and other forms of censorship.

"Professor Mamlock," a Russian film dealing with the Nazi Revolution, was shown privately at the New Gallery Kinema, Regent Street, a few Sundays ago. The fact that it had to be shown *privately* was due to the British Board of Film Censors' reluctance to allow audiences to see a piece of filmcraft which can only be described as both moving and enlightening.

The film opens with the position occupied by a famous Jewish doctor, Professor Mamlock, at the time the Nazis are about to fire the Reichstag, and the story of the Professor's life, from the time the Nazis seize power until he is shot by storm troopers after delivering an impassioned speech against a bestial regime, is vividly and most beautifully told. We see the depths to which man can sink, when the old Doctor is taken out of his hospital and made to walk through the streets of Berlin with a large "Jude" painted on his operating dress. We see the humiliation and torture of the old German as he is subjected to bitter taunts because of primitive racial theories which bring about his dismissal from the clinic, where he has been Senior Specialist for a score of years past, and finally we are shown the Professor from the balcony of his sick ward in a hospital, breaking a noble silence and shouting to the Germans in the street below his opinion of the Nazi regime; it is for voicing this opinion that he is subsequently shot dead. Between these scenes is woven a realistic romance between the Professor's young son and a woman doctor, who is filled with Nazi notions about Aryanism and other unscientific twaddle. These minor scenes are all well done, and fit perfectly into the film, but it is with the Professor's own story that we are most concerned. With inspired direction and brilliant acting the picture reaches great heights, and we are all the more resentful of the Censor's refusal to allow the picture a public showing in view of the fact that we are being so deluged at this particular time with appeals from Refugee Committees, and from our Government itself for recruits for the army. Surely refugees would be considerably helped if the British public could be shown the mentality of the people from whom they are compelled to flee, and the public made aware of the one and only country we are compelled to arm against. Thus, I suggest "Professor Mamlock" is also good recruiting propaganda. Seeing Nazis in action would prove beyond doubt that it is a wise thing to join the army against such a nation as the one they have in Germany at the moment.

The censorship in this country of the clever "March of Time" films has attracted attention from time to time. In 1937, Ernest Hemingway's "Spanish Earth" was cut to pieces because Hemingway had the temerity to show by a series of pictures that Germany and Italy were openly intervening in Spain. And this has happened in many other instances. It became so bad that last December Mr. Mander, M.P., referring to these many interferences with films, said that he would ask the House to observe that in every case where cuts were made in a news film, nothing anti-Fascist was allowed, and added: "I venture to suggest that it is not the job of the British Board of Film Censors to deal with political matters of this kind at all. It is monstrous that they should be allowed to carry on this subtle kind of unofficial political censorship." About this time, the News Theatres' Association, representing nearly 90 per cent of the News Theatres of this country, passed a resolution saying that they would resist by every legitimate means the censorship of news reels or other harmless pictures, which some might desire to impose either officially or unofficially, from outside or inside the Industry. This meeting of the News Theatres' Association was called after Movietone speeches by Mr. Wickham Steed, a former editor of the *Times*, Mr. A. J. Cummings, the political editor of the *News-Chronicle*, and a running commentary by Mr. Vernon Bartlett, M.P., had been censored. And

so it goes on; the banning of "Professor Mamlock" being the final example of how the cinema trade holds back from the British public films, that are offensive to certain right wing circles. I have no hesitation in labeling "Professor Mamlock," the greatest piece of anti-dictator propaganda ever made. It would appear though that many members of the National Government don't want anti-dictator propaganda on show just now; they are too keen on learning how to become miniature Hitlers themselves!

PETER NORTHCOTE

Acid Drops

Mr. Hore-Belisha says that Colonel Blimp—Low's unforgettable picture of a type of character quite plentiful in English society—is dead. We beg to differ. Colonel Blimps can be found in the tram-car, in the train, in the street, even in Parliament—which is probably its breeding place. At all events cannot one easily imagine Mr. Hore-Belisha himself playing the part, with the Cabinet nodding a solemn and Mandarin-like agreement:—

Gad Sir, the Prime Minister is right. Our army is the finest in the world. It is made up of men who serve by choice, and are not brought in by compulsion. Britain is proud of its voluntary army, and we must support the Government in establishing Conscription in order to prove to the world that our voluntary Service is able to meet any contingency.

The *Daily Express* advises that we ought not to depend upon Denmark for our pigs, we must breed them in this country; and in a burst of religious ecstasy breaks forth with:—

If we are not to have peace in our time, O Lord, save us from starvation.

Is that an invitation to the Lord to produce more pigs? It looks like "Give us pigs in our time O Lord!" instead of peace.

The *Express* also twits the *Daily Mail*, which it says was only yesterday "bellowing that the Soviet leaders were savages, murderers, robbers, brigands and a gang of criminals and revolutionists," now saying that "it would be unfortunate if there should be any delay in securing an alliance with Russia." But the *Express* appears to forget—conveniently—that it was, but yesterday, declaiming against collective action, and swearing that our policy should be one of isolation. What faith these papers have in their readers not remembering to-day what they read yesterday.

An incident that is reported with respect to the Queen on her voyage to Canada. Invited by one of the officers to come on deck and look at what he considered a particularly fine iceberg, she declined with the apology that one berg seemed much like another. It reminds one of the remark of King George when Gibbon presented him with a newly-issued volume of his *Decline and Fall*. "What, another big book, Mr. Gibbon." That is all he could see, probably all he could understand—another big book.

Bishop Williams wrote to the *Times* a week or so ago, "Permit an aged Bishop to demur to the assertion that war is un-Christian. War is no more un-Christian than idle self-indulgent peace." Spoken like a good Bishop! The nearer war comes the more Christ-like it will be. The priests on both sides will prove to their soldiers that Christ has girded on his sword, and become a God of Battles; and whichever side achieves victory, it will be due to God, or Jesus, or Christianity, or the whole lot. The soldiers on the enemy side will, of course, be fighting for the devil, and religion will come once again into its own. More power to the aged Bishop's pen!

Fr. Vidler, a great advocate of Prayer, thinks that "it ought not to be, but often is, childish." We agree, but are left wondering why the qualifying "often" is inserted.

Mr. T. J. Campbell, K.C., is horrified that the English Matrimonial Causes Bill will apply to Northern Ireland. He calls the Bill a cold, cruel, and heartless measure. That is, anyone applying for divorce on such grounds as insanity, or habitual drunkenness, or if one of the parties is a murderer, or incurably insane, should be refused because Mr. Campbell is a Roman Catholic, and his Church does not agree with the Bill. This is a piece of colossal impudence, and one can understand sometimes why Ulster is so bitterly opposed to Catholic Ireland. There is no reason whatever for Mr. Campbell and his fellow believers applying anything in the Bill to themselves; but it is mere bigotry and intolerance for them to prevent others doing what they feel right and just in a law passed for the people by the people. But the incident proves clearly what a Catholic regime would do if it had the power.

The Rev. Cecil Joseph Jones formerly of Great Malvern, Worcestershire, left estate of £132,500 (£89,000 net). A son and daughter, and then their children, are the legatees. No mention is made of any bequest to charity or church organizations, and we can only surmise that the appeal forms of the Clergy Sustentation Fund, the Clergy Widows' Fund, the Sons of the Clergy Fund, the Penurious Parsons' Poundage Fund and similar organizations have not found Mr. Jones in time.

The *Catholic Times* has a very serious complaint against the New York World Fair. There is not enough religion about it. In fact "it stands for Secularism and the Anti-Christian tradition." We don't know what it is thought might improve the situation. But as we note that one of the Sunday papers gives prominence to a drawing of the hand of a reporter, which same hand was shaken by the King, and that the said reporter threatens to have a model of the hand made and handed down as a national treasure, we suggest that the Church might romp in with some models of the holy relics it possesses, in the shape of old bones and decayed teeth of saints, with samples of holy water and consecrated biscuits. We feel sure that the mentality which can worship at the shrine of a portrait of a hand that was actually shaken by a King would form excellent material for the Holy Roman Church. And lest we should be thought to be partial, we would remind readers that one sporting nobleman still preserves in a special cabinet a cigar that was given to him by Edward VII.

Miss Dorothy Sayers, the famous writer of Detective Stories, in an interview with *Illustrated*, explained the ideal which binds together the members of the new Detection Club. The members are all writers of Crime Stories of the Sherlock Holmes type (more or less). They make a solemn declaration that their characters "shall truly detect the crimes presented to them, and shall not place reliance on Divine Revelation, Mumbo Jumbo, Jiggery Pokery, Coincidences, or the Act of God," and similar foolishness. It is lucky for Miss Sayers that the Blasphemy Laws never attack respectable authors who kow-tow generally to religious superstitions. Otherwise she would never be forgiven for placing God and Divine Revelation on the same level as Jiggery Pokery and Mumbo Jumbo.

We can fully agree that at the present day the anti-Semitism of Hitler is repudiated by many, if not all the Christian Churches outside the Fascist "axis." We doubt, however, the wisdom of mixing-up questions of "assimilation by Conversion," or boasting about "our common religion" as likely to help a solution of the Jewish Problem. It seems as if in either case it is deplorable to let the justice of toleration be confused with a credal condition. We are told that Christians to-day do not persecute those who disagree with them. We

need only refer to the opposition to the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws and to the hypocritical Sabbatarianism of Christianity in England to-day to warn mankind against the belief that the wolf has become a sheep.

The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland is greatly concerned about the religious state of the B.B.C. It thinks that much good might be done by the B.B.C. to preserve the sanctity of the Lord's Day if it would limit the programmes on that day, and especially "by giving much less place to the demands by Freethinkers." In other words, by giving subscribers less and less decently hearable matter. But it is quite news to us that the B.B.C. has ever paid attention to Freethinkers except to the extent of deliberately lying about the number of protests that have been sent in against the large dose of Sunday religion that one gets, and carefully excluding a deliberate and informed criticism of religious beliefs. But we now at least know what the Free Church of Scotland desires—to be free with other people's money and civic rights, and to perpetuate at the expense of the public a set of ideas that have direct reference to the jungle.

Sad news reaches us from New Zealand, via the *Auckland Star* for April 8. Mr. W. T. Wilson, in his Presidential address to the Conference of the Churches of Christ, associated for evangelical purposes, laments that while "we have opened wide our doors to receive, during the past five years, 1,345 have been received into the Church, 1,400 are lost to the Church." It looks as though it would have been better for the Churches if they had kept the doors closed. Isn't there an old adage about the folly of locking the door after the horse has escaped? The gathering appears to have ended with an appeal for funds—perhaps to put up stronger doors, with much bigger bolts.

In this country, the Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales laments that only about 5 per cent of the people attend Church. He also says that his Union has a decreased membership of 20 per cent compared with 1912. Perhaps they too need stronger doors. But to be quite fair the very truthful, and very honourable, and very honest—in a Christian way—B.B.C. asserts that it has thousands upon thousands of letters praising the sermons that come "over the air." So probably the people stay away from Church in order to listen to the moving sermons preached by the B.B.C. parsons. Or perhaps they who suffer from insomnia welcome the Sunday sermons as a first-class opiate.

European and scientific "experts" have proved now beyond a doubt that the "holy" shroud, believed to be that in which Jesus was laid in the tomb, is quite genuine. The experts included Fr. Gemelli and Cardinal Fossati, and against such unimpeachable authority we really have not the heart to protest. The "holy" shroud *must* be authentic.

Father O'Donoghue—in a Catholic "truth" pamphlet—says that "the date of St. Paul's birth is unknown." He accordingly decides that he was born in (or about) the year A.D. 1. Apparently there is no similar hesitation about the other dates of the incidents in Paul's life. Father O'Donoghue puts down A.D. 35 for Paul's Conversion as to which the Rev. Father says, "We know nothing of the way he went, nor of those who accompanied him," but this does not prevent his believing in all the miraculous incredibilities which happened on the road to Damascus. That Paul said so himself is certainly not quite clear, but even if he did it seems inadequate evidence for so unlikely—and impossible—a thing to happen. As for Paul's execution "upon a Summer morning A.D. 67," we miss the old familiar yarn that where Paul's head bounced after it fell, three fountains sprang up, and the place is called "Tre Fontana" to this day—some of us have visited Tre Fontana and seen with our own eyes the actual three fountains (and we've enjoyed the excel-

lent liqueur manufactured by the Trappist Monks whose monastery is built there). It is a pity to take from us the most interesting part of the legend.

The Rev. A. F. Robson, vicar of Hemel Hempstead (Herts), has for some time been suffering from an ailment which hindered his walking. Recently he has benefited from special treatment, and he writes in the parish magazine:—

There lived a stout Vicar in Herts,
Who ambled by fits and by starts.
But his ambling so tragic
Was altered by magic,
And now he's as rapid as darts.

Yes, swifter and surer than darts,
And it's all through the magical arts.
In Denmark devised
And by no one more prized
Than by this slim Vicar of Herts.

Really, we can't allow the "Stout Vicar" to get away with it so easily:—

Come, come! doughty Vicar of Herts,
Do you scorn theological arts?
Is not *prayer* the true magic
For every ill tragic?
Surely *Faith-healing's* one of your parts?

Tut-tut, must you give your flock starts,
And break evangelical hearts?
Won't they all be surprised
To see advertised
Your Faith leans to medical charts?

At the triumphal parade of Italian and Spanish troops in Madrid the British Ambassador was instructed by the Government to be present at the parade. The Ambassador saluted the "gallant" Italians who have shown unparalleled courage in bombing women and civilians, and, by his presence, congratulated Franco. Some of the papers are complaining at this, but without justification. The British Government contributed very materially to Franco's success by its action, or want of it, and our Ambassador ought to be present and show by his presence that we are pleased with the triumph of Italy, Germany and Franco in Spain.

Two items from the *Daily Telegraph* of May 21:—

No. 1. An Englishman, whose name was not revealed, has been arrested here (Prague) by the Gestapo—the secret German police . . . charged with a political offence.

No. 2. The German Consul-General, who was mentioned in the trial of the man who at Liverpool was sentenced to ten years imprisonment for selling plans to Germany, and who was said to have been introduced to the German agent by the Consul-General is remaining at his post.

Evidently the Germans are not quite so keen on "appeasement" as we are.

Fifty Years Ago

THE "soul" elicits one of your characteristic sentences. "Here," you say, "Science fails us altogether, Philosophy speaks with a doubtful accent, and Theology remains master of the field." True, my lord; theology is always master of the field of ignorance, and where our knowledge ends our religion begins. What we know is Nature, what we do not know is God. Science is ever widening the circle of light in which we live and work, and on the border of darkness the theologian plies his trade, passing off as the voice of the Infinite the echo of his own babblings.

The Freethinker, May 26, 1889

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

To Advertising and Circulating the *Freethinker*.—W. T. Hawks (Durban), 58.

CINE CERE. Thanks for securing new subscriber, and evidently an enthusiastic one.

B. A. WILDER.—Obliged for cuttings.

C. MARTIN.—Visitors to the Conference business meetings must produce their current card of membership. If for any reason they are without it they must apply to the Secretary at the Conference, and he will put matters right.

A. GLASS AND J. BRIMELOW.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper being sent for four weeks.

W. KENT AND REV. C. M. BARKER.—Next week.

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. Rosell; giving as long notice as possible.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

Members and Delegates who are attending the N.S.S. Conference at Bradford, on Sunday, May 28, and who arrive on Saturday, will make their way to the Great Northern Victoria Hotel, where a reception will be held at 7 p.m. On Sunday, at 10.30 a.m., in the Mechanics' Institute, the Conference will hold its first sitting. A Lunch will be provided at the Victoria Hotel, on Sunday, at 1 o'clock, price 3s. 6d. An excursion has also been arranged on Whit-Monday, to one of the Yorkshire Moors, particulars of which may be obtained at the Conference. All that is now needed are fine weather, a good attendance and a united desire to forward the Cause of Freethought.

Many of our readers who remember the matter of the police attack on an "Arms for Spain" demonstration on January 31, will recall that in reply to a request in the House of Commons, it was stated that sworn declarations had been taken, and evidence was available in other directions. Sir Stafford Cripps asked for a Committee to be appointed to examine and report to the House. Sir Samuel Hoare, as a means of quieting the storm, said he had applied to the police and they denied that any violence had been used. That seemed to be quite enough—for Sir Samuel—but as a concession he said he would look into the matter personally.

He did so and reported that he has been unable to obtain enough evidence to warrant a committee being appointed. Only Sir Samuel knows what evidence he got—beyond applying to the police—or what it was worth when he got it. In quite a Chamberlain style he says he is satisfied the police were blameless, and that should be enough for everyone else. We are not surprised that Sir Stafford has replied that in future he will be "unable to place any faith whatsoever in any undertaking given by you as a Minister of the Crown." We are not surprised, and are inclined to say only that Sir Samuel Hoare has behaved like most Ministers of the Crown would behave in similar circumstances. Sir Stafford cannot be so simple as not to regard most "official" statements as being under suspicion. And for fear we may be accused of political prejudice, we hasten to say that if and when Sir Stafford becomes a Minister of the Crown, he will behave in much the same way as other Ministers have behaved.

But why in such cases as the one under consideration is not a definite case taken into the courts at once? That would at least secure publicity, even though a verdict was not gained by the complainants. Questions in Parliament are worth but little unless they can be enforced from the outside.

There has been for years a standing notice in the *Freethinker* stating that notices of meetings for the current week, or other urgent items cannot be dealt with after the first post on Tuesday. Yet, week after week, we get notices after we have actually gone to press. Last week, for example, two notices came to hand after we had left the office on Tuesday—one a telegram. Will Branch Secretaries make it a rule to send their communications early on Monday. We see no reason why this should not be done.

After a successful week in Edinburgh, Mr. G. Whitehead will visit Glasgow and address meetings each evening from Monday until Friday of this week (May 29 till June 2) at stations announced in the Lecture Notices column. The local N.S.S. Branch maintains an active propaganda, and the work done will no doubt bear good fruit at the meetings to be addressed by Mr. Whitehead.

The *Evening Standard* attempts to correct Mr. Kennedy, the United States Ambassador, for warning readers to beware of history "distorted by propaganda." The *Standard* says that all good history is written by propagandists, and cites Froude, and Lingard as propagandists, and says that history written by an unbiassed historian is tedious and dreary. It adds, "Heaven save us from the unbiassed historian." We might agree with the last sentence, but that is not what Mr. Kennedy had in mind. He properly distinguished between propaganda and bias. A man who writes without bias is a man who has no opinion and no feeling connected with his subject, and history in his hands is dull stuff, even stupid stuff. But history written for propaganda is not a consequence of bias, it is a deliberate falsification of the events and their significance in the interests of a party, or a movement, or with a deliberate desire to fool readers. A Roman Catholic history is often, for this reason, not unbiassed, it is made up of falsification. A bias means only that the writer has opinions, genuine opinions concerning the significance of the matter with which he is dealing, and he sets that meaning before his readers. His "bias" is an indication of his judgment. But when things are written for propaganda the aim is to prevent the reader forming a considered judgment. Still, we are not surprised at the editor of an evening newspaper confusing the two meanings, although to discriminate between the two is essential to understand what is before one.

Apropos of our "Views and Opinions" this week. It is said that one of the French Rothschilds was present during a discussion of the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. "Well," said Rothschild, "If ever that occurs I shall at once apply for the Post of Ambassador to Paris."

The Priest and the Woman

THE Report on Doctrine in the Church of England has distracted attention from the less spectacular, but not less important, Report of the Archbishops' Committee on The Ministry of Women.

The latter is, in some respects, a contrast to the former. Although the "Doctrine" Report exhibited many Fundamentalist prejudices, it showed a tendency to the toleration of some Modernist ideas. It made no attempt to cure Fundamentalist stupidities or to shut out the most benighted beliefs and ignorant interpretations. But it left the door open to divergent practices—some of which are considered heterodox by most churchmen.

The Commission on "The Ministry and Women" reported after five years study as compared with the fifteen years taken by the "Doctrine" Commission.

The former report merely reiterates the existing objections to admitting Women to the Priesthood, and unanimously declines to be swayed by modern progress and the examples of secular States admitting women to citizenship on the same terms as men.

The unanimity of the commission is unaffected by the "Note by Dean Matthews," which is published as a Minority (of one) Report. The Dean fully agrees that "as a matter of policy and expediency it would be dangerous for the Anglican Church to admit women to the priesthood at present."

Dean Matthews' disagreement (explained perhaps by the qualifying phrase "at present") is characteristic of the type of those who never "say when," whose "jam" is never to be shared to-day but always tomorrow. Even the Report (which the Dean signed with the rest) does not and cannot shut out hope for all eternity; it just "postpones" it indefinitely.

An almost amusing touch is supplied by Dean Matthews' remark:—

I hold no less strongly than those who have signed the Report without reserve that the Holy Spirit guides the Church, but I take a different view of the manner in which that guidance should be recognized.

There are no other jokes, intentional or other, in this lengthy Report. Indeed the whole Report might well have been confined to the one word NO.

It is only fair to Dean Matthews to quote his very straightforward utterance that:—

There is no more justification for discriminating against women than there would be in discriminating against Jews or men with red hair.

It is strange therefore to find the Dean signing a Report, whose main purpose is to discriminate against women.

While religions generally either ignore women or reserve all the highest positions for the male Medicineman, Priestesses in some pre-Christian religions were held in high honour, and some ancient religions allowed no males to administer the Temple rites.

Sacred women (in Uganda and elsewhere) shared with Kings immunity from the fatigue of walking or even stepping a yard on the earthen floor or outside their special enclosure. In Central Borneo the priestesses while on duty could never walk, but rode upon the bare backs of male bearers.

Prophetesses are common enough in the Old Testament, and, to our profane judgment, were quite the equals of any of the male prophets in intelligence; and were often superior to them in morals. Even the New Testament alludes to female prophets (see Luke ii. 36-38; Acts ii. 17-18; 1 Cor. xi. 5-16; xiv. 34-36; 1 Tim. ii. 12, etc.). But the Sacred Priesthood

means one who administers the Holy Sacrament, mounts the pulpit to preach, and is specially licensed to declare the "Absolution and Remission of Sins" to "penitent" people. And the exclusion of women from this priesthood is confirmed most definitely by this Report.

While the Report ranges over many irrelevant reasons for its refusal to tolerate priestesses, the fact is that in the Church of England women have never occupied any post which dared to ignore St. Paul's clear commands:—

Let your women keep silence in the Church, for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience. And if they will learn anything let them ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. (1 Cor. xiv. 34-35.)

In the Section "Practical Considerations" (page 32) one finds exactly the same "arguments" against admitting women to the ministry as were used to deny women the right to their own person, their own estate, and to equality with men politically and industrially. Also it is decided that women "could not give spiritual and moral advice to men on certain subjects." The intimate talk by bachelor priests to unmarried young women is ignored. And the Liturgy contains a number of allusions to sexuality, which seem far more out of place when said by beardless youths than by matronly women.

"Psychology and Physiology" occupy together under two pages in this queer rigmarole of objections to women sharing with men a job at least as suitable to one sex as the other. The pretence that the priesthood is too sacred for such co-operation is obviously a mere conservatism which prevents well-paid jobs being easily obtained by outsiders.

A great many pages are devoted to the glorification of minor offices—with much lower wage-scales—where women are welcomed. Deaconesses, Clubworkers, and a new group of such minor officials as "Messengers" are badly paid jobs for women. Messengers, by the way, are women who, since 1916, have been appointed to work up enthusiasm for the new "Recall to Religion." They "wear a distinctive dress which includes either a cross or diocesan badge," says the Report (page 64).

A final comment on the Report is to be found in the Church Union's publication: "Some Considerations on the Report," which does not observe the decent reticences of the Archbishop's Commission. It says:—

But we maintain that the ministration of women in the face of congregations which include women will tend to produce a lowering of the spiritual tone of Christian worship, such as is not produced by the ministration of men before congregations largely or exclusively female. It is a tribute to the quality of Christian womanhood that it is possible to make this statement. . . . We believe, on the other hand, that it would be impossible for the male members of the average congregation to be present at a service at which a woman ministered without becoming unduly conscious of her sex.

This then is the deliberate judgment of a champion of Christianity, giving us the character of a congregation of Christian men in 1930. This is in a world where women as doctors, educators, magistrates, and legislators, can address male audiences on secular subjects with no such demoralization as this Church Union Council experiences or expects after religion has deteriorated the morals of its male worshippers.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Art and Morals

THE recent attack in the pages of the *Freethinker* on the character of Byron, by my friend Mr. Kent, and Mr. Syers, leave me not a little cold. With the best will in the world I simply cannot arouse any enthusiasm for the raking-up of old scandals, even when they are, as in Byron's case, so closely connected with hectic love adventures. It does seem to me that with him, and with other famous artists, we are simply wasting time judging them from the narrow standards of what we call Christian morality, when it is perhaps precisely because they have all been courageous enough to depart from that morality, and do what they like, that we are indebted for the work which has given them immortality.

A good, pure, faithful, benign, Byron (from the Christian standpoint) might never have given us *Don Juan* or even *Childe Harold*, though we might have got something in the style of Robert Montgomery. A pious Robert Burns in the same way might have bettered a little, Isaac Watts, but we would never have had the *Jolly Beggars* or *Tam O'Shanter*. And after all, why keep harping on Byron's seductions? Was Lady Caroline Lamb seduced—or most of the other ladies whose names only live because they were in some way linked with his? It takes two to make a bargain, and I am by no means sure Byron was constantly on the warpath, and that it was his wicked wiles which led to the downfall of so many innocents, who all would have otherwise remained pure and untouched. And I have seen little evidence for Dean Inge's story that Byron had a child by Mrs. Leigh.

In any case, it does not appear that the Countess Guiccioli thought that she was hardly done by. In 1869 appeared her book *Recollections of Lord Byron*, and one of its reviewers (John Paget) pointed out that:—

There is something inexpressibly touching in the picture of the old lady calling up the phantoms of half a century ago—not faded and stricken by the hand of time, but brilliant and gorgeous as they were when Byron, in his manly prime of genius and beauty, first flashed upon her enraptured sight, and she gave her whole soul up to an absorbing passion, the embers of which still glow in her heart. To her there has been no change, no decay. The god whom she worshipped with all the ardour of her Italian nature of seventeen, is still the "Pythian of the age" to her at seventy.

Nowadays it is the fashion to indulge in plenty of "debunking," and of course Byron, who has had calumniators by the score since the day when he and his wife parted, is bound to have his full share. But the British public which took him to heart when the first cantos of *Childe Harold* were published, let loose a howl of execration as soon as it was learnt that Lady Byron had left her husband, and he seems never to have been forgiven since, except by a faithful few who have steadfastly refused to go with the crowd. Mr. Syers is even anxious to debunk Byron's joining the Greeks—it was probably undertaken because he wanted to get rid of the Countess, he tells us. I like that word "probably." For my own part I prefer to believe that Byron wanted to help, if he could, in the Greek fight for freedom, and all the evidence that has come my way points to this.

After all, why should Byron be always blamed for his disastrous marriage? Even the saintly Shelley made a complete mess of his first marriage, his wife committing suicide. Because Shelley, in his youthful enthusiasm, proclaimed Atheism and Republicanism, it is the fashion of many Freethinkers to surround him with a sort of halo of apology—he was so young, and chivalrous, and believed so utterly in womankind.

All this may be true, but there may also have been many condoning circumstances in the case of Byron's marriage; yet he is almost always condemned and Shelley excused.

And after all there are some people who knew Byron intimately, who have given us a quite different impression of him from that given by his detractors. Lord Broughton, who was an intimate friend, wrote thus twenty years after the poet's death:—

Lord Byron had hard measure dealt to him in his lifetime, but he did not die without leaving behind him friends—deeply and affectionately attached friends . . . they were not blind to the defects of his character, but they know that some of the gravest accusations levelled against him had no foundation in fact. . . . Lord Byron had failings, but he was untainted with any of the baser vices; and his virtues—his good qualities—were all of the highest order. He was open and honourable in all his dealings; he was generous and he was kind. He was affected by the distress, and rarer still, he was pleased with the prosperity of others. Tender-hearted he was to a degree not usual with our sex, and he shrank with feminine sensibility from the sight of cruelty. He was true-spoken, he was affectionate, he was very brave . . . he was totally free from envy or jealousy . . . he was neither vain-glorious nor overbearing . . . he was in the best sense of the word a gentleman.

I have unfortunately no space to transcribe all that Lord Broughton wrote, but it will be seen from the above very brief extract that the calumniators did not have it always their own way.

I do not want to labour all this unduly—I prefer to point to the glorious work of Byron—surely his great monument in the heart of all who love literature. What does the scandal and tittle-tattle against him amount to in the face of his poetry, with its beautiful lyrics, its masterpieces of descriptive beauties, and the wit, satire, and cynicism of one of the greatest works in our language, *Don Juan*? It is not the man, but his work, which mean something to posterity, and it is for this reason that I so strongly deprecate all this calling of names.

Why do some writers, if referring, to give another example, to Casanova, call him a "scoundrel"? Granted that he was a scoundrel; he was an adventurer in the eighteenth century, a period rather different from ours, and he had to live by his wits. Most of the people he defrauded were, like himself, adventurers, and it was his wit against theirs. Had it all rested there, Casanova could have joined the long gallery of other scoundrels, and been called all the nasty names in the language for all I and many other people care. But in his old age, he spent ten years writing his *Memoirs*, and they are perhaps the most entertaining memoirs ever written, and that is saying a great deal. If Charles Reade went through the Middle Ages with a lantern in his *Cloister and the Hearth*, Casanova did far more for the eighteenth century. His accounts of the many European countries he visited, and the people he met there, help us to understand his times with a vividness no ordinary historian could possibly have shown. It would be well worth while to have had a few more scoundrels with Casanova's literary gifts and his marvellous memory and descriptive powers.

Why is it that even with cultured Americans one gets them so often roused to fury over the "bestial drunkenness" of Edgar Allen Poe? He is, in my humble opinion, one of the great creative writers we have, but the fact that he did drink overshadows with so many folk almost all his superb achievement. Poe actually was one of those unhappy people who are upset—or if it is preferred—made drunk, on the smallest quantity of liquor. But the bulk of his work shows a

perfectly sane outlook, the outlook of a fine poet, story writer, and critic, and surely it is that upon which we ought to judge him. It is the same with Burns, or Phil May, or George Morland. Here is their work, what do you think about it? Never mind the man, his weaknesses, his moral poverty, his pitiful end—how high is the standard of his achievement?

Ever since I was a small boy I have heard and enjoyed those wonderful plantation songs—"The Old Folks at Home," and other famous negro ditties, without knowing for years who wrote them. But I am glad to say that my appreciation of their haunting melodies were not one whit lessened when I learnt that the composer was a "drunken" American, Stephen Collins Foster, who died in poverty and misery when he was only thirty-eight.

And finally let me add that I am not impressed when it is urged that some of our greatest writers and artists wrote or painted "indecent" things. We know, of course, that Rembrandt, and Titian, and many other great artists, were responsible for pictures which could not possibly be shown in our public galleries; but why should it be always expected of them that they should conform to a morality imposed—perhaps quite rightly—on young school girls? That Burns and Byron turned their genius to composing poems which can only be privately printed is really a matter of small consequence. The people who object to this kind of thing need not read them—they are adequately provided for in the pages of Miss Charlotte M. Yonge or Miss Emma Jane Worboise. And in any case, most admirers of the great poets never come across their erotic work, and little harm would be done if they did.

Art has actually nothing to do with "morality"—particularly the morality which Christians claim as the highest that is, their own. Art is independent of morals and must stand on its own accomplishment. The final verdict of its greatness rests with posterity, and always, in the ultimate, it is not the man who matters but his work. Which is as it should be.

H. CUTNER

Secular and Supernatural

It is related that in a conversation between a judge and a bishop, the former observed: "When you say to me 'You be damned,' you can give no guarantee that I will be damned; but when I say to you, 'you be hanged,' you certainly will be hanged."

The point is that, in any modern community, the secular law is the only real and effective law, disobedience to which is followed by punishment or penalty. Any other law, declared to be of supernatural enactment, must go down before the secular law.

Quite recently, a clerical writer, referring to the Ten Commandments, stressed their inadequacy to the living of a full religious life. As usual, he got into the clouds of fancy by citing the precepts of Christ. Any thinking person knows that Christianity's claim to a monopoly of the inculcation and practice of the common human virtues—known, valued and commended for observance by human thinkers long before Christ—is an absurd, impudent and arrogant claim. It is a remarkable commentary upon the so-called influences of religion that it should be necessary still to devise so many punitive restrictive and repressive laws! But, even through these we see glints of light from the increasing scientific knowledge, which now guides legislators and criminal courts to more humane and more discriminating methods in the treatment of offenders against the secular laws to which all of us are subject, including the members of the clerical pro-

feSSION. Old-time ecclesiastical indulgences and dispensations now avail not at all. The secular law makes all men equal before it. The secular law is the supreme power in the organization and regulation of human society.

Religious influences in the devising and enactment of secular law are clearly year by year being more and more left out of account. The improvers of the law are men and women most swayed by the principles of Humanism. The lamentable record of the Bench of Bishops in the House of Lords with regard to humanizing and ameliorative legislation is more than justification for depriving these prelates of any power to participate in the devising of new legislation in the future. *Their day's work is done*; and they only remain as grim monuments of the sinister policy of an angry, jealous and vindictive god, the thunder of whose decrees counts no more.

In the organization and regulation of the community, God is becoming merely a name. He is being edged out of the Courts of Law, as he will sooner or later be edged out of the legislature. No witness in a Law Court is now obliged to swear by God, or with his hand on the Sacred Book of the Christians, that he will speak the truth. Any witness is now, by statute, entitled to declare by affirmation that he will do so. For this enactment, thanks are due to the persevering efforts of Charles Bradlaugh. The significance of this tremendous step in advance is, naturally enough, ignored or minimized by occupants of pulpits and Christian journalists.

All legislation of the future must be in the direction and to the effect of making the bounds of freedom wider yet. The religious idea of freedom, experimentally, differs in essence from the freedom which humanists proclaim as essential to justice, progress and peace. For example, there have been several efforts made by religionists to secure dictation by the State as to how unemployment benefit is to be expended by those who receive it. Happily the dole is not a Christian charity, and is not administered by Christians officially as such. The "deserving poor" (conceived by Christians as those who never drink a glass of beer and never say "damn") are periodically entertained to tea and buns, prayers, gospel addresses and sacred songs in Christian mission halls. But these guests are deprived of all personal freedom, and are obliged to conform—during the entertainment at any rate—to the rules of conduct laid down by their hosts. Such repressed guests have no self-respecting independence of mind, and are very largely of the vegetable order. So long as the viands are available, they accept all they are told, and laugh at and cheer the missionary's jests and stories. And of such is the Kingdom of Heaven—lay parasites upon clerical ones.

Deprived of knowledge and bullied into belief, the submerged masses have not the power to do anything for their own emancipation. We have only to look around us to realize what havoc has been worked by supernatural law for many centuries. We see honourable understandings between nations trampled upon, and greedy and aggressive wars begun without declaration. Among individuals, the lack of self-respect is accompanied by disregard of the secular law. Take a typical case from the press. A lad of 18—an apprentice—is charged at a police court with breaking and entering and stealing from shops. His father appears for him and makes this appeal to the magistrate: "It came as a great surprise to us, and has grieved us very much. We are church-going people, and the boy went to church and Sunday School, and was in the Scouts for four years. I ask you to let the lad finish his time as an apprentice." The increase of shop-breaking and theft by young people is disturbing

and disquieting. But the fact is that parents too frequently shift their responsibilities in the way of instruction and training on to outside agencies—mostly religious. Nothing can take the place of the example and guidance of one's parents. Young people will never receive proper or adequate teaching as to their duties of good citizens unless they are furnished with true knowledge by natural, not supernatural, preceptors. Time passes quickly and the children of to-day are the law-makers of to-morrow. It is now that they must be encouraged to read and think for themselves, unhampered by any fetters with which ecclesiasticism seeks to bind and cramp their faculties. Otherwise they will grow up in a state of dependence upon external authorities set up by superstition and clericalism, buttressed by the power of wealth. The rich well know how to play upon the minds of the ignorant poor by the fears or consolations of a future life! Bend the knee to the conventional, all powerful Mumbo-Jumbo of Christianity; and though your lot in this present existence may be bare, narrow and hard you can depend upon it that

You will get pie
In the sky
When you die.

Even the great body of those calling themselves reformers among law-makers profess to act under supernatural influences because the very wealthy support the Churches in return for the support they receive from them. The great thing with the rich is to keep the masses in order and to constrain them to believe what they say they believe:—

Capitalists and Socialists
Bowing down before thee,
Who wert and art
And evermore shall be! Amen!

IGNORUS

Stanley's Christmas Morning

EARLY on Christmas morning Stanley White lay awake in bed. Too dark for him to see them more than faintly, the boy knew that a pile of presents lay on the table at his bedside. They were good; exactly as he desired, for he had told his parents what he wanted a week previously.

There was no foolery of hanging up his stocking; an act he did not do, as the belief that Santa Claus brought the gifts Stanley never held. Since earliest memory he knew from whom the gifts came; that his father slipped in quietly after he was asleep and laid them on his table as a surprise in the morning. The pleasure of discovering them was not less, perhaps greater, for having no superstitions about their origin or ceremonial over their arrival.

Stanley White smiled at the innocence of other children. Boys and girls who really believed Father Christmas drove over the roofs in a loaded sleigh drawn by reindeer; came down chimneys—some incredibly tried to lie awake to see him descend, or called up the chimney to him—who wrote letters to him, and other queer results of the belief in Santa Claus: the whole affair was stupid in idea and silly in practice; soft altogether.

As he lay and thought thus Stanley White's forehead wrinkled in a frown. Trying to trace back the foolishness to its beginning he realized children were not to blame, but their elders. Many grown-ups were sloppier than boys and girls.

Himself he had to keep up a constant warfare against effusive or slobbering aunts and other females, and not a few men. With the latter it took the form of exaggerated heartiness or too obvious talking down to a child.

People who thought a healthy intelligent ten-year-old simple were simple themselves.

This persistent forcing of fanciful impossibilities upon children was not confined to Santa Claus. Talking animals and fairies were other dreadful examples of it. A kid who thought tiny creatures with gauzy wings could be seen in the woods was potty.

No doubt the belief was old, but people hundreds of years ago were ignorant. Also they did not tell tales of pretty-pretty fairies. They told of elves, gnomes, pixies, imps, witches, wizards, ghosts and other monsters and horrors. That was entertaining, but no more to be believed by a modern boy than the dainty dancing fairies foisted upon children by inferior story-tellers.

Stanley White remembered attending a performance of "Peter Pan." As adventure it was crude, dull and boring. He listened with disgust to Peter's question, "Do you believe in fairies?" contemptuous of the shouted "Yes!" around him, prepared to yell "No!" if he could make himself heard. He was not alone in this.

Looking back on his school career Stanley White concluded Infant School teachers were largely to blame. They loved teaching poems and songs and stories about fairies. Similarly in Scripture lessons they talked of angels in tones of awed familiarity.

The boy chuckled aloud. The idea of angels hovering over his bed was comic. Why were they always pictured wearing long white robes? Naked they would be much more interesting and welcome, especially cherubs.

At Christmas teachers made such parade and display of the Santa Claus stunt no wonder youngsters' minds were muddled, some of the simpler ones really believing there was a living Father Christmas.

Stanley could not remember how the chance arose, but he was able when newly in the Junior School to deliver the opinion aloud "Miss, I don't believe in Father Christmas or fairies or angels or anything of that sort."

As the teacher gazed at him with what she thought was a quizzical smile, but which annoyed Stanley, he rammed home the heresy with "The only living things are animals and people."

"I'm sorry for you, Stan White," said the teacher gravely.

"No Miss. I'm glad," retorted he swiftly, and the incident closed.

It was not that he lacked imagination any more than other children. His mind, like theirs, was thronged with men and women, unknowingly projections of themselves, who did things. Their accomplishments had no limit, but all were a semblance of actuality. Non-human agencies were barred. People alone were the springs of action.

Stanley White drew a long breath, almost a gasp, as the truth of the matter dawned before him. No child would ever believe in Father Christmas or any other tale of the same sort unless it was forced upon him by adults. They did so to please themselves, getting amusement out of pretending it amused the children, while their juniors looked on somewhat puzzled or scornful.

What's the big word for it? queried Stanley of himself, to clinch the business in one phrase. Oh, I know: Sentimentalizing over children; pretending they're taken in by all this fancy stuff about Santa Claus and fairies, whereas they deceive only themselves. We kiddies 're hard. It's the grown-ups who're soft.

Satisfied at having settled the problem Stanley White fell asleep again.

A. R. WILLIAMS

Correspondence

ATHEISM IN EXCELSIS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I saw a copy of your blasphemous production, the *Freethinker*, a few days ago. You say you don't believe in God! Very well. In your ignorance you have obviously never heard of faith being the evidence of things unseen. Very well, and now listen to this, for this instance is not even a matter of faith, but a concrete example through my humble self of God's divine mercy and intervention.

To-day in a nearby garden, on the wall was a beautiful Persian cat which loves to be fondled and petted. This I was doing when I noticed that his fine eyes were rivetted on some near object. I looked, and then I saw a large bee, but it was on its back and struggling to get up. I wondered what could be the matter with it. Then I detected a fine filmy thread enfolding its body, and, at the other end, a few inches away, I saw a small spider slowly and cautiously advancing with the obvious intent of "operating" on the now helpless bee. It was a very small spider, which explains its cautious advance. However, it gauged the situation quite correctly and commenced operations on the bee. Here it was that I as the instrument of God's mercy stepped into the breach. I very gently applied the lighted end of my cigarette to the spider's headquarter's, and, by God, you should have seen him scoot! Then, you know the old saying in God's Own Book about "Where the carcass is etc," well, I noticed another very big fellow this time coming along with deadly intent, and he too commenced operations on the more than ever helpless bee, but to him too I applied the lighted torch of God, so to speak, and on the same place as the other one with, of course, the same result. And then another one, but I must in this case have destroyed the filmy coils which had enveloped the bee, for he got up, and after a few minutes he flew off to freedom and safety, and to produce honey for humanity.

As you are an Atheist I don't suppose you will see the obvious moral of this almost tragic incident, but I would like to ask you what would have happened to that helpless bee had not God in his infinite kindness directed me to pet that Tom cat? Now please understand me, I want no Atheistic dialectics, but a plain straightforward answer—"Yes" or "No."

I will add just one more point for your information and assistance, and it is this: Those spiders for many long days to come will have a very deep-seated objection to sitting down!

A. HANSON

LA PASSIONARA

SIR,—In "Galmat's" letter published in the *Freethinker* of May 21, it was rather disheartening to see his remark implying that Passionara was a sort of deserter. She, I suppose, is still at liberty, in so much as she lives, to fight on. What useful purpose can a leader serve by remaining behind and being done to death, just because, for the time being, the cause appears to be lost?

Had the advice of such as Passionara been taken, there might not have arisen the necessity for the "common soldier" to have fought "to exhaustion," neither would things look so black as they now do for all of us, soldier and civilian alike.

Let us be fair. Surely it is better to live for a cause than to die for it.

C. F. BUDGE

When the year was reckoned by thirteen moons of twenty-eight days each, thirteen was the lucky number (a charm of primroses or a setting of eggs was thirteen), but when this was changed for the twelve months of solar time, then the number thirteen became unlucky or accursed.—*Gerald Massey*.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD MAY 18, 1939

THE President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, in the chair.

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Bryant, Wood, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Silvester, Bedborough, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted, monthly Financial Statement presented.

New members were admitted to Birkenhead, Bradford, Manchester, West London, and the Parent Society.

Completion of arrangements for Mr. G. Whitehead's Summer work was reported. A suggestion for a Diary was considered, but could not be recommended. Items of correspondence were dealt with. The Executive's Annual Report to be read at the Conference was before the meeting and generally discussed. The Report was then adopted. The Chairman announced that the present meeting was the last one of the existing Executive, and that the first meeting of the Executive elected at the Conference would be called in due course.

The proceedings then closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN AND HACKNEY BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 6.30, Mr. P. Goldman.

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (White Stone Pond, Hampstead): 11.30, Messrs. J. G. Lupton and J. I. Lewis. Parliament Hill Fields, 3.30, Mr. G. W. Fraser. Highbury Corner, 8.0, Friday, Mr. L. Ebury.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Brockwell Park): 6.30, Mr. P. Goldman. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. P. Goldman. Undine Road, Tooting, opposite the Granada, 8.0, Thursday, A Lecture.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park): 7.30, Wednesday, Mrs. Buxton and Mr. Carpenter. Thursday, 7.30, Mr. Saphin. Friday, 7.30, Mr. Barnes. Sunday, 3.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes and Collins. Sunday, 7.30, Messrs. Bryant, Barnes, Tuson, Wood and Mrs. Buxton.

COUNTRY

INDOOR

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

OUTDOOR

BIRKENHEAD BRANCH N.S.S. (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday, Mr. D. Robinson. Well Lane, 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. D. Robinson.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, A Lecture.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Albion Street): 7.30, Mr. T. L. Smith. Albert Road, 8.0, Tuesday. Minard Road, 8.0, Thursday. Albion Street, 8.0, Friday. Muriel Whitefield will speak at these meetings. Monday, 8.0, Albion Street. Tuesday, 8.0, Albert Road. Wednesday, 8.0, Rose Street, Sauchiehall Street. Thursday, 8.0, Minard Road. Friday, 8.0, Albion Street. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at these meetings. Sunday, 7.30, Albion Street, Mr. T. L. Smith.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Corner of High Park Street and Park Road): 8.0, Thursday, Mr. G. Thompson. Corner of Queen's Drive, opposite Walton Baths, 8.0, Sunday, A Lecture.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Eccles Market): 8.0, Friday, Mr. W. A. Atkinson—"The Roman Catholic Menace."

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE

CHAPMAN COHEN

No. 13. Thou Shalt not Suffer a Witch to Live No. 14. Freethought and the Child

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>No. 1. Did Jesus Chris Exist?
 2. Morality Without God
 3. What is the Use of Prayer?
 4. Christianity and Woman
 5. Must We Have a Religion?
 6. The Devil</p> | <p>No. 7. What is Freethought?
 8. Gods and Their Makers
 9. The Church's Fight for the Child
 10. Giving 'em Hell
 11. Deity and Design
 12. What is the Use of a Future Life?</p> |
|--|---|

Each Pamphlet Contains Sixteen Pages

Price One Penny

Postage One Halfpenny

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President - - - CHAPMAN COHEN

General Secretary - R. H. ROSETTI.

68 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C. 4

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

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

Name

Address

Occupation

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

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

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

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLL

BY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Price 2s. 6d.

Postage 3d.

THE MIRACLES OF ST. MARTIN

BY
C. CLAYTON DOVE

Price post free

7d.

MEAT EATING INVOLVES CRUELTY!

Why not try the Vegetarian Way?

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

ANNUAL CONFERENCE of the NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

A Public Demonstration

IN THE

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE

TOWN HALL SQUARE, BRADFORD

Whit-Sunday, May 28th, 1939

Chairman - - CHAPMAN COHEN

SPEAKERS:

J. T. Brighton, G. Bedborough, Mrs. Muriel Whitefield,
J. Clayton, L. Ebury, J. V. Shortt and R. H. Rosetti

Doors open 6.30 p.m.

Commence 7.0. p m.

Admission FREE.

Reserved Seats ONE SHILLING Each

FIFTH SERIES

ESSAYS IN FREETHINKING

CHAPMAN COHEN

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

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

Price 2s. 6d.

Postage 3d.

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

Five Volumes post free 12s. 6d,