

THE FREETHINKER

• EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN •

— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIX.—No. 26

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
Propaganda—The Editor	401
The Clutch of Clericalism—Mimmermus	403
Letters to a Christian Friend—R. H. S. Standfast	404
Londoners Through the Centuries—H. Cutner	405
Elegantly Attired Jumping Jacks—Pro Reason	406
Moses in 1939—George Bedborough	410
Moral Aspects of the Gadarene Miracle— C. Clayton Dove	411
A Mixed Grill—D.	413
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

Propaganda

We are still paying the price for the policy that led up to Munich and has followed from Munich. Manchuko, the emasculation of the League of Nations, Abyssinia, Spain, Czechoslovakia, and the transformation of a Cabinet that is as near a Dictatorship as one can get, a promised war in the East, Conscription, and now the creation of a Ministry of Propaganda—I beg pardon, it is, at present a Ministry of Information. It is designed to correct the lies of Mussolini and Hitler, on whose honesty and good faith our Prime Minister placed such pathetic reliance. The proposed Ministry of Information is to give *reliable* news to other countries, by broadcasting information concerning British aims. Let us hope that the British public may be treated with equal generosity, and that we shall be told officially what the aims of our Government really are. It is also announced that if war comes the Ministry of Information will become a Ministry of Propaganda. The distinction does not seem very important. Information in the hands of the Government cannot but be propaganda. It is information which the Government desires the world to have, and therein lies the danger. We have no autocratic Government in this country, but we do manage to get along with a Prime Minister who refuses to tell an elected House of Commons what he intends doing, why he intends doing it, and will merely inform the House after he has done—whatever it is. But the one thing we will *not* have is a Dictator.

I am not denying the need for making the aims of this country known abroad, and for doing what can be done to correct wrong impressions of this country's aims. We have had to institute Conscription, not so much because we could not have got the army required without it, as because it had avowedly become necessary to prove to our allies and would-be allies that our Government was in earnest in professing an intention to resist Italy and Germany. But still the stubborn fact remains that whether we call it a Ministry of Information or of Propaganda, in the long run it means the control of information. It means

that the news given the people will be "cooked" to the extent the Government thinks advisable; it means that the policy of lying and suppression, candidly admitted to be in operation during a state of war, will also exist in a state of "peace."

I think this will remain true whatever Government is in—Labour, Liberal, Conservative, or other. In this respect Governments run true to type. No Government that has ever existed has been able to resist the temptation of keeping a people in blinkers if circumstances were favourable. The only check upon this is a nation of liberty-loving individuals. I stress that last word because when individuality is lost in "party" the difference with regard to the point at issue is apt to disappear. We are then likely to realize the significance of a saying attributed—among others—to Voltaire, that the advantage offered by an autocrat over a dominating crowd is that an autocrat has only one neck.

* * *

Propaganda—Good and Bad

It must be quite obvious that I have no dislike to propaganda, as such. We all indulge in it, and the world is the better for it. Political, religious, humanitarian movements, a tradesman puffing his wares, a politician trumpeting the virtues of his party, all these are so many forms of propaganda. Nothing serious can be said against it. Every man and woman with an idea tends to become a propagandist. It is beside the point to say that propaganda is one-sided. It would cease to be propaganda were it not. To take arms against a sea of vested interests and established superstitions one must become a propagandist. Freedom, in the modern world at least, has mainly been born of propaganda.

But the value of propaganda depends upon its spontaneity in the first instance, and later upon it not being able to control sources of information. It must not be monopolistic—that is it must not have the power to control the approach to knowledge or to prevent opposite opinions being heard. Neither must it be able to prevent the dissemination of information that will help to correct judgments already made. When these conditions are ignored propaganda becomes a source of the greatest social evils. No one can, for instance, object to the Roman Church using propaganda, the objection is that it is part of the avowed aims of the Church to outlaw criticism, and to prevent the exercise of independent judgment. In the present circumstances Government propaganda promises to secure our freedom from outside attack by sharply limiting its exercise at home.

There is then no real identity between propaganda as conducted by individuals or by organizations and propaganda as conducted by a Government. Once the public becomes accustomed to open and avowed propaganda by a Government it will have gone half-way towards submitting to a growing censorship. It means

the the Government of the day will prevent, so far as it may, the circulation of information that it desires to keep to itself, and will aim at controlling or suppressing whatever counter-propaganda is on foot. One simply cannot imagine a Government with a set policy before it liberating information that might be used against that policy. When one observes the shifts and tricks that the Government of the day indulges in to conceal what is being done, or to mislead as to actions and intentions one may form some idea of what the situation will be when the Government stands confessedly aiming at the manipulation of opinion. We have seen within recent years the lengths to which the Government is ready to go in silencing opinion by the use made of the Official Secrets Act. A Government may legitimately strive to conquer opinion, but when it is its avowed task to control opinion one may rest assured that all the tricks and plans of the most unscrupulous propagandist will be in full play.

* * *

A Place for Propaganda

What I am trying to say is just this. Propaganda is one of the factors that make for progress. But not of necessity. It may just as easily make for stagnation or for retrogression. We can see both these features illustrated in the history of the Christian Church. For many centuries the propaganda of the Church was carried on, and every other form of propaganda was, so far as possible, forcibly suppressed. The result was a long-sustained set-back to civilization, and the fixation of certain false ideas of morality and social life from which the world has not yet completely recovered. The "great war," to take another and a recent illustration, was very largely a war of propaganda. There was then in being a Ministry of Propaganda, and under the control of the late Lord Northcliffe it was responsible for one of the filthiest lies of the war—that of Germans boiling down their dead to recover the fat. In its consequences that propaganda was one of the greatest evils the war inflicted upon Europe. It made a reasonable peace impossible, for when the war came to an end, propaganda had done its work so thoroughly that a reasonable peace was out of the question.

I bracket these two propagandas because both were upon the same level, inasmuch as counter-propaganda was made as nearly impossible as could be. They represent instances in which propaganda does the maximum of evil and the minimum of good. Those responsible for the propaganda controlled the field of operations. And what that means in the most extreme instances with which history provides us is today seen in the cases of Germany and Italy. In such cases propaganda does not create a healthy opinion, it strangles it.

Propaganda to be completely healthy must operate in an open field. It must rest upon information that is accessible to all, and in conditions that are equal with all. Of course these are ideal conditions and can seldom be found, if they are ever attainable. But in the case of a Government propaganda the adverse conditions exist in their most blatant form. It lacks even continuity, for Government propaganda means the propaganda of the Government in power, and that means the serving out of news, which involves the suppression of information that would injure the Government of the moment, and an electorate that has no opportunity of finding out what are the facts of the situation. What it means in practice is seen by the way in which from the first moment of the outbreak of Civil War in Spain, the Baldwin and Chamberlain Governments were able impudently to deny the possession of knowledge concerning the Italian and German armies in Spain, only to have thrown in the face of the world

the boast of both Italy and Germany that from the first moment of the conflict General Franco was wholly dependent upon their help.

* * *

The Power of Opinion

I do not deny the power of propaganda, on the contrary I assert that it is one of the most powerful of instruments. What it may accomplish is to be seen in such recent events as the forced abdication of Edward VIII. His association with Mrs. Simpson was well-known to all those in power, although it was carefully kept from the people. His general life was well-known; yet he was held up by both the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mr. Baldwin, as the idol of the people, a veritable "Prince Charming," the ideal of an English King. And then, in a matter of a few weeks, he was no longer fit to sit upon the throne, and the very members of the Government who had been loudest in his praise were foremost in drawing up his condemnation.

We have also seen the power of propaganda in the semi-deification of the Royal Family that has taken place. If ever there existed hopeless material for propaganda it was our four last monarchs. But propaganda did its work. On every possible occasion the members of the Royal Family were kept in the limelight. Even the two little girls were photographed over and over again, photographers were invited to depict the little children walking with their parents *in private grounds*, where photographers could be only by special "command," and the court news has come to contain the information that a little child is spending her week-end in this or that place. But the propaganda that can make may when necessary unmake, for the material—the people—that is subject to such propaganda is sufficiently malleable to be reshaped from time to time as skilled operators may determine.

For these and other reasons, into which I have not the space to go, I regard with the greatest dislike a Government propaganda that can control the news, that can suppress the truth and circulate lies whenever the Government of the day considers either of these courses advisable. If we are in earnest in fighting Fascism and other forms of tyranny, we should fight them whenever they are met. If the Government of the day wishes to make statements of its aims or policies, either to its own people or to the world, it has already methods of doing so. But an official department of propaganda, the business of which it is to cajole, or deceive, the general public, while it may be doing no more than put the official stamp on what is already in practice, involves a legal recognition of a practice which strikes at the root of genuine democratic Government.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Well-drilled Christians would have too much respect for the accepted mythology to add to it a love-affair between the Virgin and the Beloved Disciple. But the Indians of Atitlan are not well-drilled Christians, and as they needed a justification for doing something dramatic and interesting on the night of Good Friday and the morning of Easter Saturday they emended the gospel story in what would be, for Europeans, a most blasphemous and disgusting way. It did not seem blasphemous and disgusting to them, first, because they had not been conditioned to regard the gospel story as inviolably sacred, and, second, because they did not, and do not, think of it as having any particular moral or spiritual significance. For such simple-minded people Christian mythology is simply an excuse for *fiestas* and the theoretical justification of their faith in the magical efficacy of particular pictures and statues. As almost every story with a supernatural element can be made to supply such excuses and justifications, it follows that their choice of rites and mythology is a matter of almost complete indifference.

"Beyond the Mexique Bay," Aldous Huxley.

The Clutch of Clericalism

If you are to grow like a tree, and not be set up like a telegraph-pole, you need space. This space is freedom.
J. B. Priestley.

Politics, God knows, would be a lot cleaner for a good stiff dose of religion.—Hugh Redwood.

ONE of the commonest illusions of our time is that this country contains an educated democracy. It has never at any time possessed real popular education or true democracy. Our boasted system of national education is a delusion, and a snare. It is damned by the machinations of officials, who, whilst paying lip-service to knowledge, strangle all efforts at its popular, widespread dissemination. No less than £101,936,000 is spent annually on this costly piece of imposture, and, after years of training, the vast majority of the elementary school pupils are not even half-educated in the very rudiments of knowledge. National education is a happy hunting ground for inspectors, teachers, officials, builders, school equipment-makers, publishers, booksellers, and caretakers. But the child-scholar is relatively despised and neglected. In all the many ramifications of this educational maze the one thing that never emerges is the real training of the children of this country, physical or intellectual.

On the contrary, much is done to prevent the scholars acquiring too much knowledge. The school-classes are too large; twenty-five per cent of the time is occupied on holidays; the school-leaving age is too low; the scholars have a mere smattering of many things and a complete mastery of none. In addition, there are hundreds of purely sectarian schools included in the national scheme of education, and in these cases the standard of knowledge is miserably low, the school-buildings are antiquated and unsuitable, and the teachers underpaid and less competent.

It costs the tax-payers of this country £16 17s. yearly to educate each of the nation's children. In the best of the schools the pupils sit on handsome benches, the floors are of parqueterie, the windows of stained glass, and the equipment of the finest. Teachers, men and women alike, are sympathetic and qualified. How comes it that when the scholars finish their education they know so little? They spell badly, they write badly, their general knowledge is so utterly inadequate that they cannot even read a newspaper intelligently. Directors of commercial colleges say that pupils from elementary schools have great difficulty in mastering shorthand. Employers everywhere complain of the writing of office-boys and beginners. People engaged in electioneering work report that large numbers of people do not even understand the meaning of politics. Yet the Education Acts have been running for three generations, and in some directions we seem no better off educationally than in the early days of Victorian ignorance when a very large number of the schools in existence were in private hands, and education was directly dominated by clerical interests.

Where does this dead-weight obstruction in education come from? Education boards are packed with the catspaws of Priestcraft, who carry out the commands of their pastors and masters. The clergy simply do not want an educated democracy. It would never do to admit this publicly, so they resort to camouflage. Paying lip-service to education, they adopt the famous methods of the Circumlocution Office, and make a great pretence of doing nothing. This is seen more clearly in the case of the sectarian schools, where the school programme is specially designed to manufacture young Anglicans, young Catholics, or any brand of religion required by the promoters. Real education is but of secondary importance. The common aim in these institutions appears

to be to teach children to "fear God and honour the King," which translated into plain language, means respecting the clergy and social superiors, and which, translated into practice, means that the present social order is safeguarded for still another generation. The result is that the majority of pupils leave school with the fatal handicap of not being in the least aware of how carefully they have been misled.

As with education, so with politics. The wide extension of the franchise is impressive—on paper. In practice, the very strict application of the Party machines of the Government and the Official Opposition is fatal to any movement that has not gained the approval of the regular political bosses, who are far more concerned with office and its attendant emoluments than with the welfare of the people of England. Parliament is just a highly-respectable debating society, with a sham fight thrown in now and again to make the thing more realistic to the electors. If any measure of radical importance should pass the House of Commons it would face further continued resistance from the House of Lords, which is a Maginot Line for the defence of Toryism of the old school. And, who, might one ask, is the arbiter in the Upper House of Aristocrats? The balance of power is held by the Bench of Bishops. Here, as in the case of national education, the enemy is Clericalism, composed of men who believe that the world's clock struck at Jerusalem two thousand years ago, and has never moved since.

The bishops, who always pretend to be in the very van of progress, have always identified themselves with the governing classes. In Parliament they were defenders of the cave-men of politics, and used their votes in favour of absolutism, slavery, and the blood-thirsty penal code. They were the resolute opponents of every political and social reform, and they never worried over the working classes, except to oppress them. They could compose, and use, an entire service in memory of "King Charles the Martyr," and view with complaisance the darker side of our civilization, with its filthy and indecent slums where the undernourished children are too tired to play, and vice lays its hand on the young girl's breast. Lording it in Lambeth Palace with its guard-room; Fulham Palace, with its half hundred rooms; Wells, with its moat; and other episcopal palaces with their gardens and pergolas, what did these "descendants of the disciples" care for the armies of the homeless and unfed?

Real social reformers in the past have had to encounter the most terrible and prolonged opposition in Parliament. Four only of the six points of the great Chartist Movement, backed by millions of people, have reached the Statute Book, and it took sixty years to bring those necessary reforms into effect. The electoral changes in the Great Reform Act of 1832 were so niggardly that they have had to be supplemented by further Acts of Parliament in 1867, 1884, 1918, and 1928. Even to-day there is no sex equality in electoral matters, despite the enormous efforts of the women themselves. Shaftesbury and his colleagues had to devote their entire lives to the cause of the limitation of the hours of labour, and at present there are too many loopholes in the various Acts of Parliament. It took Bradlaugh thirteen years to convince the House of Commons that a Freethinker should have the same civil rights as were accorded to Parsees, Catholics, Jews, and members of the Peculiar People. The earlier agitation for repealing the civil disabilities of Nonconformists was a lengthy process. From 1800 to 1828 the Bishops in the House of Lords stood like the rock of Gibraltar against the claims of Roman Catholics; and from 1830 to 1858 they were equally vigorous in their opposition to the similar claims put forward for the Jewish people. For a hundred years Nonconformists struggled to remove from the Statute

Book laws that curtailed their rights of citizenship, and threatened their freedom. What delayed these very necessary reforms was the hostility of the prelates of the Episcopal Bench. And, who are these bishops? They are a body of men, highly placed and independent of popular favour, who oppose all measures of Progress, and guide their policy by the instincts of the Jumping Cat. What shall posterity most wonder at, the impudence and audacity of the imposture, or the blindness and impotence of the dupes and the servility of the worshippers, or the pettiness of the idol?

A Democracy which ends up in such a morass of Medievalism is not a Democracy at all. In sober truth, real Democracy has never yet been fairly tried in England. The nearest approach to the real thing is to be found in the school of local self-government, of which the London County Council may be considered a shining example. When we reflect what this fine body has done for the welfare of the people of London, abolishing slums and replacing them by garden cities; substituting health for disease; bringing order into the chaos of the largest city in the world, we have more hope for Democracy. In good time, happily, similar methods may be applied to the deeper problems of National Government. First and foremost it is most necessary to make such a Government free from the leading-strings of Medievalism in all its forms. A considerable amount of educational and political reconstruction is imperative if the new vision of a democratic country is to be realized.

MIMNERMUS

Letters to A Christian Friend

(II) GOD, MAMMON AND MAN

MY DEAR CHARLES,

After the beatitudes and the lamentations of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew has Jesus's remarks about his disciples being "the salt of the earth," which need not detain us, except possibly in Mark's parallel, "Have salt in yourselves, and have peace (or, be at peace) one with another" (ix. 49-50). Next, according to Matthew, Jesus says:—

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt v. 14-16—see also Mark iv. 21-23; Luke viii. 16-17 and xi. 33-36).

Let us now take the opening verses of Chapter 6 of Matthew, to see the curious contrast this advice makes with the precepts that Jesus gives almost immediately afterwards:—

Take heed that ye do not your alms (or "righteousness," Revised Version; or "justice," Douay Version) before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, *They have their reward.* But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are; for they love to pray standing in the

synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, *They have their reward.* But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him (see also Psalms 139, 4, "For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether"; Prov. x. 19, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin; but he that refraineth his lips is wise"; Ecclesiastes v. 2-3, "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few . . .").

Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, *They have their reward.* But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. (Matt. vi. 1-18, with the "Lord's Prayer" omitted as having already been considered).

Allowing for the difference between pleasing God and pleasing men, it is still a little difficult to see how you can "let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father" (see also 1 Peter ii. 11-12), and at the same time perform your good works in secret where men cannot see them, but where God sees them and will duly reward you for them. Besides, is a person who makes outward show of his prayers and his alms necessarily a "hypocrite"? He may simply be "letting his light shine before men," that they may glorify his particular God!

Apart from the contrary advice, and from the simplification which Jesus recommends in our relations with God, the whole point here, of course, is the difference in values between this world and the next, between the rewards of God and those of man. The spiritual is "better value for money" than the worldly. It is not to the seeking of a reward that Jesus objects; in fact, his whole emphasis is on your making sure of getting a reward for everything—but what matters is the kind of reward you go after. Those who seek the plaudits of the crowd and the prizes of the earth, have their reward in obtaining them; but, after all, of what value are these compared with the blessings of the kingdom of God and life everlasting? The Christian who avoids the plaudits of men (for himself) and keeps right with God, is the better off in the end.

In this way social approval and disapproval, which are essential factors in social life, are subordinated to the "voice of God." While a healthy contempt for the praises of men and the opinion of the world is often valuable when men are fighting for ideals that can prove themselves on utilitarian grounds, much evil may result if the same contempt be encouraged for any belief, no matter how stupid, cruel, or harmful, which a person thinks he has derived from God. As history so sadly proves, there is no crime, stupidity, or inhuman deed to which a religious person will not gladly stoop if he thinks he does it as a religious duty and a commandment of God.

Religion brings to bear, and indeed intensifies, all the forces of social disapproval against the honest disbeliever and the open critic; but weakens the influence of social approval and disapproval, and of moral re-

straint, on religious believers themselves, especially the extreme and the fanatical.

Coming back to the point of the better value of the spiritual rewards compared with the worldly, this is well illustrated in the next verses of Matthew, about laying up treasure in heaven:—

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matt. vi. 19-21).

Luke's version runs:—

Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (of God). Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags (or purses) which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Luke xii. 32-34.—Note also when we come to it that the motive in telling a rich young man to sell his possessions and give his wealth to the poor, is that he shall "have treasure in heaven.")

Matthew continues:—

The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. vi. 22-24—see also Luke xi. 34, and xvi. 13; Mark vii. 22).

All wealth is not necessarily obtained dishonestly, but that is not the point; it is not the methods that Jesus is objecting to, it is the riches themselves. Worldly riches are evil, blinding men's eyes and clogging their minds to the more important spiritual things. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." "Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger." You should discard these worldly treasures and comforts, and lay up for yourself imperishable spiritual treasures in heaven. Poverty is the ideal, that men may devote themselves the more purely to the spirit—"Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God."

From this fanatical religious viewpoint, it may be true that one "cannot serve God and mammon." But, from the social viewpoint, it does not necessarily follow that he who does not serve God, serves Mammon. There are many like myself who seek to serve neither God nor mammon, but to serve Man. Surely a greater and better ideal? And some day you, too, Charles, may recognize in how many instances it is true that one "cannot serve God and Man." Even your modernized edition of a god still stands in the way of man's social progress.

Love to all at home. Affectionately,

R. H. S. STANDFAST

Argument never made the clergy abandon their devil and hell, but when the world gave these things, the merry ha ha, they ceased to be. We can endure anything but to be laughed at. The smile audible is the great solvent.—*Elbert Hubbard.*

Londoners Through the Centuries

MR. WILLIAM KENT is an incorrigible and unrepentant Londoner. His knowledge of the great city is vast and entertaining, for he does not believe in the dry-as-dust type of antiquities—as those who have read his *Encyclopedia of London* will know. The story of London with its great streets and squares is the story also of its great citizens, and London has had a great share in the number of worthies who have honoured this country.

Mr. Kent has gathered no fewer than 350 of them in his latest volume,* and though one may regret the absence of a name here and there, the reader will find the selection a very good one, embracing most men and women who have helped to make London what it is—or perhaps the author would prefer to say, who have been graced because they have lived in London. In particular, Mr. Kent must be congratulated on his courage in including a few names which certainly would not have appeared in most biographical dictionaries, and because, as a Shakespeare lover with a fine knowledge of the London of Shakespeare, he has avowed his complete heresy on the Shakespeare question—in which, by the way, the present reviewer heartily concurs.

The volume contains 420 pages, with comprehensive indexes of places and names, and the pages are packed with brightly written and detailed information. Mr. Kent has put aside formal biography, and has concentrated on what he considers the most interesting side of his subjects, almost always with an eye to typography. He will not, if he can help it, allow a single hollowed shrine in the great city to escape him, and he loves to linger on the houses inhabited by his worthies as well as on their clubs or favourite streets. And how happy he is if he can quote a passage in which his love of London is shared by one of his famous people. For example, he quotes from the autobiography of Lord Snell:—

The spell which London put upon me was immediate and decisive, and it has persisted undiminished to this day. I have known people who have yearned for the pleasures and experiences of other cities and lands, but London has always been good enough for me; and I seldom return to it, after even a short absence, without experiencing something of the excitement that was associated with my first visit to its teeming streets.

That is how most genuine Londoners feel, and how, no doubt, many of those dealt with so ably by Mr. Kent must have felt towards this dear old city. Dickens could not keep London out of his pages and dozens of writers have followed him as can be seen when turning over the pages of *London Worthies*. It is a mixed galaxy here presented to us, novelists and artists, cricketers and criminals, eccentrics and misers, politicians and philosophers, to say nothing of a hangman, a Hyde Park orator, and a robber.

There is indeed fare for the most varied of tastes. Those whose interests lie in literature will find many of their favourite writers depicted with Mr. Kent's lively pen in a refreshingly original way. So with those who look for London's famous antiquarians, or artists, or politicians. And always there will be found that fund of topographical information of which the author is such a master.

Freethought could not, of course, be omitted, and so we find excellent notices of Bradlaugh, Holyoake, Hetherington, Carlile and other lesser, perhaps I ought to say less militant, lights of our movement. It makes one wish that Mr. Kent had given us a word

* *London Worthies*, by William Kent. Heath Cranton, Ltd, 10s. 6d. net.

on G. W. Foote and Robert Taylor—Foote, in particular, being one of the fighting breed of Freethinkers whose name is, wherever possible, boycotted almost everywhere with the most flagrant injustice. I looked for but found omitted one other name—that of G. W. M. Reynolds, surely a London “worthy,” not only because he was a prominent Chartist, Republican, and Radical, but also because he had considerable powers as a London novelist, and was the founder of *Reynolds' Newspaper*. But, of course, Mr. Kent must have found it a hard task to make a selection, and he no doubt omitted many names with a heavy heart.

It could not be expected that such a big book with such detailed information should or could be exempt from minor errors. In the very excellent account of John Leech, one of *Punch's* most famous artists, he is credited with having drawn in addition to all his *Punch* work, and his large number of book illustrations, “many thousands of illustrations for the *Illustrated London News*.” I am afraid that here Mr. Kent is confusing Leech with Sir John Gilbert, who contributed more drawings to the famous weekly than any other artist during his long career. Gilbert was extraordinarily prolific, and one of the greatest illustrators born in England. *London Worthies* should find a place on the bookshelves of all who love London and the famous people who have lived there. It is a necessary supplement to the *Encyclopedia of London*, and I wish it every success.

H. CUTNER

Elegantly Attired Jumping Jacks

DURING a voyage to India in the 'nineties several men were sitting in the ship's smoking-room discussing various questions when one happened to remark that, in his opinion, women were more vain than men. With one exception we all agreed with him, some even maintaining that the question was outside the realm of dispute. The gentleman who did not agree with us announced in a decided tone, that we were all labouring under a common mistake, it was a fact which could readily be demonstrated, that the vanity of a woman was negligible when compared with that of the average man. This statement was received with an outburst of ironical laughter, but the gentleman, in no way disturbed, asked our spokesman to explain his view in detail. The latter accepted the challenge, and expatiated on woman's love of dress and jewellery in such a manner that we all thought his arguments were unanswerable. Our opponent then replied in quite a long speech, the salient points of which I will relate.

He commenced by referring to the Navy and Army, pointing out that it was nothing but unadulterated vanity which induced man to invent the gorgeous uniforms used in these two services. “There is no peacock with two tails,” he said, “so vain as a Naval or Army officer when attired in gold lace, cocked hat, epaulets, medals, swords, etc.” He then turned to diplomacy. Vanity, and nothing else was responsible, he maintained, for the resplendent uniforms worn by Ambassadors and Diplomats. To prove that their uniforms were unnecessary, he mentioned that the American Ambassadors and Diplomats did not deck themselves with such finery, yet he had no doubt that they were quite as efficient as our own. He then proceeded to deal with the law. “The wigs and gowns worn by legal luminaries,” he said, “would be discarded in warm weather owing to their discomfort, were it not that vanity insisted upon their retention.” Sportsmen then received his attention. “Why do hunting men wear top-hats and red coats? Why do cricket and football players don blazers containing

all the hues of the rainbow, and emblazoned with either a monogram or a coat of arms?” The answer was to be found, he said, in the one word “vanity.”

He then asked why male artists and poets so frequently wore their hair long, and answered his own question by saying that they were so vain that they wished the world to know that they did not belong to the common herd. Aspirants for titles were then tackled. “Why is nearly every man so anxious for a title, some even going to any length, short of committing murder, to acquire one, if only a common or garden Knighthood? Vanity again,” he said, “is answerable for this craving.” The Lord Mayor of London, Sheriffs, Common Councilmen, and Provincial Mayors were then subjected to his satire. “Why are the robes and chains not dispensed with and replaced, if any replacement is necessary, which I doubt, by something less fantastic?” he enquired. “If it were not for the innate vanity of man, these absurdities,” he said, “would have been relegated long ago to the British Museum.”

The orator then proceeded to deal with the Church of England. “It is nothing but pure vanity,” he contended, “which induces Archbishops, Bishops and the clergy to adorn themselves with their wonderful vestments.” If these were abolished and the clergy were compelled to conduct their services attired as ordinary individuals, I am sure,” he said, “there would be fewer aspirants for Holy Orders.” Our friend continued in this strain, and was in the middle of a tirade, having reference to the vain class of men, who without possessing the requisite right, sported a family crest, when realizing that our party had been discomfited, we endeavoured to put a period to his oratory by announcing that it was time to dress for dinner. This afforded him an opportunity for getting another blow in! “Why do men dress for dinner?” he enquired, but before the question could be answered, we had all filed out of the room with a feeling that our preconceived ideas of the subject had received a violent shock.

A few days after I overheard a conversation on deck between two of the audience. One said he thought the womens' champion had been too severe on the clergy. The other considered he had let them down lightly, for he had said nothing about the meaningless mummerly indulged in by the Anglo-Catholic clergy, more for their own glorification than from any idea such as improving the morals of their flocks.

PRO REASON

Esquipulas is the home of a Black Christ of such extraordinary sanctity that every January pilgrims came, and still come, from enormous distances to worship at his shrine. It seems that in the eyes of all the aboriginal American races, black is traditionally a sacred colour; so that what draws the worshippers from as far as Mexico in the north, and as Ecuador in the south, and even as Peru, is probably less the saintliness of the historic Jesus than the magical sootiness of the image. With us, black is symbolical only of grief. The black uniform of our clergy is a kind of chronic mourning that is meant, I suppose, to testify to the essential *serieux* of their official character. It has no magical significance; for on all ceremonial occasions it is discarded for a praying costume of white linen, or of cloth of gold, or of gaudily embroidered silk. But though black is not with us a sacred colour, black images of exceeding holiness are none the less fairly common in Europe. The reason, I suspect, is that such statues have a somewhat sinister appearance. (The Holy Face of Lucca is very nearly black and, with its glittering jewelled eyes, is one of the strangest and most terrifying sculptures ever made). In Otto's terminology, black idols are intrinsically more “numinous” than white. Numinosity is in inverse ratio to luminosity.

“Beyond the Mexique Bay.” Aldous Huxley

Acid Drops

There is one point concerning the visit of the King and Queen to Canada and the United States that has escaped general attention, but which the eagle eye of the Rector of St. James', Wednesbury, Staffs, has not failed to notice. It turns out that the King and Queen took no chaplain with them on their trip to Canada. We do not blame the King and Queen for this, in such matters they do as they are told, and their consent is a mere formality, but as the Rev. Mr. Soden points out:—

If anyone had died on the recent voyage to Canada they would have died without the Last Sacrament.

To add insult to the omission on board the ship "Divine service" was taken by the purser. We sympathize with Mr. Soden. Imagine a man with his mind full of calculations about food and drink rushing away to conduct "divine service"! And if such a world calamity as the death of the King or Queen had occurred he or she might have run the risk of passing into heaven as one of the crowd of daily entrants, instead of due notice being given by one of God's representatives on earth. On the next voyage taken by the King and Queen it is to be hoped that a proper representative of heaven is on board, even if it involves leaving the Captain behind.

Apropos of what has just been said. All the newspapers noted that when the King reached the United States, the elaborate bowing and modified grovelling that is current in this country where a King is deified was displaced by a normal hearty hand-clasp and the same behaviour that obtains between normal human beings. It is even said that the King enjoyed it. So one ventures to ask why cannot the same behaviour be exhibited in this country? Why should the King be thought less of a man—and more of a God—at home than he is when he is in the United States? Perhaps someone will explain why the King may be a gentleman in the U.S.A. and something different or something extra when he is at home.

Canon Stevens, of Wimbledon, says that according to some ancient arrangement fifty-two bottles of sherry are delivered at St. Paul's Cathedral, and every Sunday morning the preacher is given a half-bottle of wine. Now if that half-pint of sherry is drunk before the delivery of the sermon it might explain much. Canon Stevens says that if some benefactor will come forward with a similar gift for Southwark it will be accepted.

After the part played by the Church in the Dreyfus case, France passed in 1901 and 1904 a number of anti-clerical laws which curtailed the power of the Roman Catholics, and were rightly hailed as a sane and proper drive against religious reaction. Since then, the Church has made desperate attempts to have these laws repealed, and as it is undoubtedly gaining a little ground, a Bill, with the support of 200 deputies, has been introduced into the French Chamber of Deputies to repeal all the laws imposed on religious orders, sponsored mostly, of course, by Catholics though with the backing of other parties. It is claimed that these laws are actually ignored in France to-day, and therefore could easily be removed from the Statute Book. Whether this is so or not, it proves that the wily old Church has never changed, that it never will, and that if given an inch, it will take a mile if possible. It was reactionary in Dreyfus's day, and it must be the same now—and always. One can only hope that the majority of French people have not forgotten the record of the Roman Church in the past.

It is pointed out in this connexion that one result of the anti-clerical laws in France was a drop in missionary vocations. In the period 1927-33 France supplied only 36 per cent of missionary personnel, while Irish missionaries increased by 200 per cent, Italian by 85 per cent, Dutch by 50 and Belgian by 35. These figures prove how necessary it is that the French anti-clerical laws should not be repealed.

Once again the inexplicable has happened. While 100 children were attending a service in the village church at Pradines, France, the steeple was struck by lightning. Twenty children were injured—one of them may lose his eyesight—the steeple was destroyed, many windows were smashed, and statues damaged. And nobody knows exactly why the Lord does not look better after his own. Perhaps he was trying to hit the local pub and missed.

The "man in the iron lung," Mr. F. Snite, sails home from Lourdes on June 21. His father declared that "it would be impossible to say that Fred didn't improve here because there has been a constant improvement for more than a year past." And so, in spite of dozens of masses, thousands of prayers, and millions of hopes to confound the sceptic no cure took place. The wholesale publicity of the case killed any possible "miracle."

In describing a "Pilgrimage to St. David's," a correspondent of the *Church Times* referred to the "bones of St. Justinian which now lie alongside those of St. David," and of arrangements made so that "each pilgrim might venerate personally the holy relics." In reply to this, the Canon of St. David's has written a long account of the history of the "relics," the substance of which is that the bones were found in 1868, and that no one ever suggested that they were the bones of "St. David or St. Justinian or anybody else in particular"—in fact the Canon does not want, or believe in, any "faked relics" in the district. We congratulate the Canon on his courage, but we need have no fear that his letter will make the slightest difference to believers. The old bones are those of St. David and St. Justinian, and no evidence to the contrary will have the least effect. The veneration of relics has been going on too long to be upset by any appeal to facts.

Some interesting figures are given in the recently published Report of the Board of Education. Compared with the figures for the year 1922, those of 1938 will come as a little shock to the English Church. For example, the average attendance in Church schools in 1922 was 1,474,617, in 1938 it is given as 1,004,117. On the other hand, in Roman Catholic Schools in 1922 the average attendance was 312,010, in 1938 it was 331,086; and while Roman Catholic schools are going up in numbers very considerably, those of the English Church are decreasing. Of course, owing to the gradual decrease in births generally, fewer children attended school in 1938—about 150,000 fewer than in 1922, though actually education is costing the country far more. The *Church Times* is disappointed at the poor show religion is making as "apparently the standard attained in this subject is not very high for out of twenty-nine subjects offered religious knowledge was twenty-fourth in order of merit." Which is very good news.

But with regard to the increase in the number of children in Roman Catholic Schools no account is taken of, first, the number of Roman Catholic children that are brought into the country, second, the order of the priest to "increase and multiply," and third, the habit, we believe Roman Catholics have of counting all children born to Roman Catholic parents as on the school roll. When all allowances are made we doubt very much whether the native Roman Catholics are, with regard to the normal increase of population, more than holding their own.

"The Catholic Truth Society" (we note the admission that *Catholic Truth* is not what is usually regarded as such) has published a "Prayer Book for Seafarers." They are urged to get right with God by praying thus:—

Jesus I thank you for having come to me. I offer you my eyes ears, mouth, hands, feet, my whole body, my thoughts, my reason, my memory, my will. I offer you my work, my amusements, my eating, drinking and sleeping.

What a grovel! But why not compress it all into one sentence such as "O Lord take the lot?" But perhaps

that would not permit a sufficiently abject grovel. And if there is one thing that the pathological pietist—the so-called mystic—loves it is a thoroughgoing grovel. Next to that comes the grovel before a king, of which we have a very pale reflection in current court life. But both derive from the same source; and both are in process of disappearance.

The Rev. F. W. Borcham has discovered that "God is much more easily pleased than we at one time supposed." Perhaps it is due to changed circumstances. There have been expelled monarchs who have eagerly grasped at small favours. God may well be easily pleased to-day to receive with thanks a small portion of the worship given him in more prosperous days.

The way in which the Bible warded off a bullet that might have killed the one who carried it in his breast pocket was at one time a common experience narrated by retired army officers. But it appears to have gone out of fashion of late, although we admit the feasibility of the event, providing the Bible was bound in sufficiently stout leather. We were reminded of this common experience—in the old days—by an account concerning the death of a well-known Chicago gangster, one Dominic de Carlo, which appeared in the *Daily Express*. Like most gangsters de Carlo was a good Christian and always carried a Bible with him. He did in fact wear it over his heart, but the bullet went right through the sacred book and settled the account of de Carlo. Now we are prepared to back a stout piece of chilled steel against any Bible that has ever been issued.

A writer of many interesting detective stories, Mr. Will Crofts, has let down his public badly in his latest yarn. *Antidote to Venom* suggests that a clever writer has become a rather silly theological back-number. The story has an original plot, excellently told, about a diabolical murder perpetrated with originality. Only at the end do we learn that the hero-villain was an Atheist, who—after his crime was brought home to him—found "he had been deceiving himself: that there was a God," and for the first time in thirty years he prayed and found "Someone" who could give him "rest." In the Condemned Cell "he now knew himself to be forgiven, cleaned from his load of guilt." An undiscerning Home Secretary apparently saw things differently from God and Mr. Crofts—the pious poisoner, like General Booth, was promoted to glory.

The Rev. Eric Shave—late of Crosby near Liverpool—has come to occupy a pulpit at Streatham. According to the local *News*, Mr. Shave was worthy the name of "a reverend Pooh-Bah":—

If no suitable play were available for Easter or Christmas, he would write one. If the chief actor fell ill just before the event, he would take the part with easy skill. If an organist failed to appear at any Merseyside function he would step readily into the breach. His pianoforte duets and piano and organ recitals were in great demand throughout the district. He appears to get younger as he gets older.

Mr. Shave's accomplishments as an actor should fit him admirably for his work in a Christian pulpit, where all the preachers seem adepts in comedy, farce and pantomime, and where the art of "Let's Pretend" has reached its "deepest heights."

A good deal of difference of opinion exists amongst Christians about Pacifism versus Militarism and everything between these extremes. One writer to the *Christian World* goes so far as to declare that the word "Christian" ought to be deleted from the name of that journal. All differences of opinion are natural enough. It is only religious people who claim that a supernatural Dictator tells them all they ought to know, and that therefore members of a church can never be wrong. Dependence on God is equally useless in the world of history, the sphere of morality, and the arena of opinion. Belief in the Bible is only maintainable because of Bible

contradictions. These contradictions serve the purpose of enabling all "believers" to prove their case by quoting texts which support or seem to support whatever view the quoter himself holds.

Mr. Howard Spring is, perhaps, the best-balanced book-critic on the so-called "national" press to-day. In his review of *Bernard's Brethren*, a book concerning Bernard Shaw's ancestors, written by Bernard's cousin, Mr. C. M. Shaw, Mr. Spring says:—

For myself, the whole subject leaves me cold. Beyond the man and woman who were beneficent enough to bestow me upon the human race, I know nothing whatever of my own ancestry. If I discovered to-morrow that my grandfather was a duke I should not let it depress me; if that he was a dustman, I should not be elated.

Being thus unmoved by the thought of my own origins, why should I care about Mr. Bernard Shaw's? I don't.

G.B.S. himself could not have delivered clearer horse-sense. He does scoff at one alleged relation by saying: "He was my cousin only in the sense that the human race are all cousins," but we think Mr. Spring has the best comment on the form of snobbery displayed by some biographers.

It is worth remembering, in view of the obvious reluctance of the Government to entering into an alliance with Russia, that in answer to a question asked by Mr. Thurtle in the House, "as to whether representation had been made by the Vatican against the conclusion of a pact with Russia," Mr. Chamberlain replied that "he was not aware of that." We strongly suspect this to be another case in which Mr. Chamberlain may confess that he meant one thing while giving the impression of something quite different to the House of Commons. The ignorance of the Government concerning the conduct of Italy and Germany has been almost miraculous when one bears in mind the recent broadcast boasting that the Spanish War was won by Italy and Germany with Franco and his army a very bad third.

The Bishop of Southwark says that Bishops are wholly responsible whether a man should or should not be admitted to the ministry. That strikes us as something approaching blasphemy. The Bishop knows that the candidate for the ministry confesses that he is moved by God to become a clergyman. The Bishop actually asks the candidate whether he believes he is so moved. And now one Bishop turns round and says it is all nonsense. It is the Bishop who is solely responsible. Of course, we cannot say which is responsible, Bishop or God, but if it is the former, then, looking round at the clergy, one must admit that the Bishop of Southwark has removed a heavy responsibility from God's shoulders.

Fifty Years Ago

SINCE December 18, 1520, when Luther burned the Pope's bull at the gates of Wittenberg, it is doubtful if the imagination of the Catholic World has felt such a shock as that produced by the inauguration of the monument to Bruno in Rome on June 9. The English papers have given it little attention, but the Continental Catholic press is horrified at this insult to the Pope under his very nose.

The *Weekly Register* (R.C.) has an article entitled "Mourning at the Vatican," in which it quotes the Pope's words "A day far more fatal is this than that of September, 1870, when Rome was taken," and deplores that after ten o'clock on this mournful Whit Sunday every church in Rome was shut, and especially that Roman women took part in the procession four abreast, and laid a wreath at the foot of the statue. All the Catholic papers regard the event as a triumph for infidelity, and their anger is intensified by the evidence that the Roman people do not want any return of the temporal power.

The Freethinker, June 23, 1889

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTÉ

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- E. J. HAMILTON (Sheffield).—There is no Branch of the National Secular Society in Sheffield at present. But there is plenty of room, and great need for one.
- G. H. PEATE.—There is no probability of a formal biography of Mr. Cohen being issued. So far as his life in connexion with the Freethought movement is concerned much of that will appear in a book he has in mind, but at present he is under medical orders to rest more—not less. But resting is as much worry as keeping at it, so the situation is rather puzzling. Thanks for complimentary remarks. Please introduce yourself when Mr. Cohen is again in Manchester.
- T. WILLIAMS.—Thanks. Shall appear as early as possible.
- D. DALE.—We do not believe we were in any fundamental antagonism, but the phrasing might easily have misled a careless or prejudiced reader. The other matter is receiving attention.
- N. A. SMITH.—Thanks for address of a likely new reader; paper being sent for four weeks.
- J. H. BOWLES.—Letter received. Shall be pleased to meet you whenever convenient.
- C. ARMSTRONG.—We note your position, but it is not wise to be over sensitive concerning other people's opinions. In the long run it is one's own judgment which one has to reckon with.
- V. C. MARSHALL.—We have announced many times that we are ready to send specimen copies of the *Freethinker* to any likely subscribers. We ask for postage along with names, only to make sure that the paper goes to probable readers. The copy received must have been sent by someone who did not know you were already a subscriber. Thanks for your own list of names.
- D. DALE.—Shall be pleased to hear how you get along with your endeavour. It is at any rate good to keep pegging away, whether a public recognition is secured or not.
- N. LEWIS AND H. WEBB.—Much obliged. Copies are being sent.
- T. WRENshaw writes thanking us for our "enlightening and helpful comments on current events," and hopes that we may find it possible to extend their application over a wider area. Sorry, but we can only deal with matters, or with aspects of affairs, that come within the scope of this paper.

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

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

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

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

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

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.

The only true conquests—those which awaken no regrets—are those obtained over ignorance. The most honourable, as the most useful pursuit of nations, is that which contributes to the extension of human intellect.

Napoleon.

Sugar Plums

We are always glad to pay compliments when they are due, and therefore give our regard to the writer of the following tribute to Paine among the leading notes of the *Evening Standard*, dated the 8th inst. :—

This day one hundred and thirty years ago Tom Paine died a lonely and forgotten outcast. Now, particularly at a time when the people of England and the United States are celebrating their common ideal of freedom, it is right that his memory should be honoured. He was the link between lovers of liberty in France, England and America. Lafayette, the Frenchman, gave him, the Englishman, the key of the Bastille to take to the rising Republic across the Atlantic as a symbol of English and French sympathy with their cause. In later years he escaped the gallows in England and the guillotine in France, only to find his work disparaged in the America which he had done so much to build by his inspiration in the trenches. Yet he was perhaps the greatest gift which England ever gave to America.

Had Paine not attacked Christianity, his greatness would have been accepted by the world of to-day without any qualification whatever. But there is no form even of religious hatred that persists with such vigour as that which is born of Christian belief.

The *Church Times* pays tribute to the impartiality shown by the court of criminal appeal in setting aside a sentence of ten years' imprisonment passed on one of the accused men in an I.R.A. bomb outrage. The grounds of the judgment was that the judge had prejudiced the jury against the prisoner. We agree with what the *Church Times* says in praise of the impartiality of the judges. But we cannot avoid pointing out that the *Church Times* upholds the Common law of blasphemy—the only operative law, in which a jury of religious men and women are called upon to say whether they approve of the way in which an Atheist has attacked *their* religion. We are not sanguine of any answer to the point.

Signs of decadence have shown themselves in Huntingdon. The children's playground has been open on Sunday, and children have taken advantage of this devil's snare, and stayed away from Sunday School. So in the interests of holiness the Hunts Association of Baptist and Congregational Churches transmitted to the Town Council a resolution that the playground should be closed "in the interests of the Sunday Schools." The Mayor ruled the motion out of order. The Mayor will be remembered—by the Churches. But why not another resolution for the Council—"That in the interests of the children Sunday Schools should be closed between the hours of 8 a.m. and 9 p.m."—and let the children vote?

The Rev. W. B. Selbie says :—

Very few of those who remain in the Sunday-school till adolescence are to be found in the ranks of church members. Their experience of religious instruction, whether in day-school or Sunday-school, does not seem to have given them any love for the Christian religion or any desire to penetrate further into its mysteries. They have a superficial acquaintance with the Bible, but are often sadly ignorant as to its real meaning and quite unconscious of its relevance for everyday living.

We have always said that the better understanding people have of religious doctrines the less belief they have in them; now Dr. Selbie says that Sunday Schools lead to the same end with regard to the conduct of Christians. It is not impossible to crush truth to earth, but it has an uncanny and, religiously, inconvenient habit of getting up again when least expected.

The Roman Catholic Church is in the saddle in the Irish Free State, and its favourite occupation of censoring, with a frequent burning of books with which it disagrees, is in force. Many books that circulate in England are banned in Eire, although up to the present there has been, so far as we know, no one imprisoned for reading forbidden books. But the other day there was a

lively discussion, or denunciation in the Leitrim County Council concerning the number of books that were left unburned. It seems that a certain book (unnamed) by an English author, had found its way into one of the Leitrim public libraries. So the Council passed a resolution ordering a stricter censorship, and that books were not to be admitted into any of the libraries until they had passed the censor. The librarian—a lady—announced that she had discovered many “bad books,” and announced the glad tidings that a certain Father Butler, of Drumshambo, had discovered and burned many books. Glory be to the same! So the Lord may of late have “smelled a sweet savour” rising from Eire, and will look down with approval on his liberty-loving followers there.

Which makes us pleased to find Protestants in the majority in this country. Because, here they, first, merely boycott booksellers who publicly display Free-thought publications, second, warn their faithful followers not to read Free-thinking literature, third, they do not burn heretical works in this country, and fourth, Protestants are not united enough to behave as do Roman Catholics.

Moses in 1939

MR. DAVID HAMSHERE is an enthusiast for the Laws of Moses. Worse still, he belongs to a Society of kindred fanatics called the True Law Party. Their object and propaganda aim at altering the British Statute Book—and the laws of other countries—abolishing all existing statutes where they conflict with those of the Pentateuch, and substituting What Moses said in B.C. so-and-so.

The *Mistakes of Moses* are by no means confined to the ridiculously unscientific theory of how Moses (and God) “made” the world. Moses was as wrong in morals as in science. To most religionists the “Ten Commandments” are all they know about the “Laws of Moses.” It is part of the innate deceitfulness of all the Churches to pretend that these trite and useless “Commandments” are a fair summary of the hundreds of other equally valid and equally “inspired” laws fit only for savages of the most primitive ages of civilization . . . if fit for anybody at all at any time.

The views which Moses held were despotic, barbaric and vile in regard to Slavery, Witchcraft, Polygamy, War, Law, and all human rights. In 1939 when the Jews are actually being persecuted in Europe again, and all sorts of lying accusations are being made to “justify” this wickedness, it seems strange to find a book* being issued by those who praise, or appear to praise, very barbarous laws said to have emanated from the Jewish Master. If an anti-Semitic Government published such a book, one could see a motive behind it. See, they might say, this is the sort of legislation these Jews would recommend if they were in power; are we not right in excluding them from citizenship. It seems a bad time to attempt the rehabilitation of a very dead prophet. Yet even the popular writer, Louis Golding (in *The Jewish Problem*) claims that the Jews “gave the world its supreme book.” Fortunately Mr. Golding gives many other and better reasons for objecting to the extinction of his race. Mr. Hamshere gives the world only too accurate a statement of what this “supreme book” says.

The decline of all religious sects in nearly all countries shows how utterly futile is the claim to belong to “God’s Chosen People.” These “Chosen People” vainly claim to have received direct from

* *We Need Mosaic Law Now*, by David Hamshere, Werner Laurie, Ltd., London.

Jehovah a Book completely at variance with the standards of a genuine civilization and of a morality based on science and experience.

Without going into the question of the value of racial and national divergencies it must be said that over and above every other criterion, there can be no progress in civilization where toleration is absent.

The price paid for intolerance, said John Stuart Mill, “is the sacrifice of the entire moral courage of the human mind.” Freedom for ourselves is inconsistent with intolerance for a race, a sect, a sex, or for any human being.

The Text-book of the Moses “fans” is to be welcomed as a straightforward defence of Bible teaching. Assuming it to be as honest as it is frank, it contrasts strikingly with the attitude of all the Churches. Catholic and Protestant churches prevaricate and lie most abominably about the teachings of Moses. Their formal creeds profess (to quote the Church of England Articles of Religion, No. 7) “The Old Testament is not contrary to the New Testament.” Although the Article quoted naturally defends the laws of the State the Church belongs to, it concludes with the words: “No Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience to the (Old Testament) commands which are called moral.” Does not Jesus himself say:—

The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe. (Matt. xxiii. 2-3).

I am not come to destroy but to fulfil [the laws of Moses]. (Matt. v. 17).

The “True Law Party” assures us that “a joyous new meaning is given to living, by these laws.” As to the “joy” of it, we disagree, but the movement is—if honest—courageous even to foolhardiness. In the Preface to this handbook there is a brief summary of the very “joyful” proposals for which the T.L.P. stands. Its chief and constant demand is:—

Punishment should seldom if ever be imprisonment and should more often be death, and generally corporal punishment.

True to the primitive Prophet’s teaching the Judgment of Death accompanies almost every indictment. Under the heading “War” the T.L.P. book asks for restoration of the bestial “Law of Moses” which—incredible as it seems—not only instructs soldiers to act as the Dictatorship’s forces did in Spain, to “kill all the men, women, and children,” but Moses added “AND CATTLE.” There has never been in all history old and recent so disgusting a “command” as Moses gave concerning the treatment of women when these were not slaughtered. Many of the women captives (Deut. xx. 10-14) may have prayed in vain to be killed.

In the huge list of “Crimes” punishable by death we see Adultery, Witchcraft, Infidelity, Blasphemy, Sabbath-breaking, Cursing. Those “except priests who approach the Sanctuary,” and the “owner of an ox known to gore.” Lying is “forbidden,” but without any penalty being mentioned.

Even the True Lawyers are not quite free from the verbal ambiguities of their rival religionists. They do not boggle at substituting “shooting” for the Mosaic “stoning to death,” but they refuse to use the word SLAVE. Yet Moses taught slavery as unmistakably as he taught anything at all. The T.L.P. fails as the Bible fails—in its nonsensical use of the word SERVANT when with transparent obviousness it refers to the worst forms of SLAVERY.

Perhaps with an eye to interesting the clergy in the T.L.P. programme, there seems to be considerable “loot” obtainable by the “priests and levites” if these queer laws are ever “implemented.” Tithes naturally find a place in a Mosaic constitution. Priests

are also to take possession of the tit-bits of the "Peace Offerings." And the professional Levites are to get "forty-eight cities with suburbs" (in accordance with Numbers xxxv. 1-8).

Excommunication from any State which adopted the "Laws of Moses," appears to us to be rather a generous offer than an evil threat. Section IV. 12, 125 of the proposed Code, however, will enact that "anyone maimed in the pubenda, and bastards" will be "forbidden to enter the Assembly." And the words "cut off" with Moses so often used imply, of course, capital punishment (e.g., Lev. xx. 17) "in the sight of the people."

Of course a lover of Moses might well be also a lover of Hitler and Mussolini. There could scarcely be a more conspicuous example of Totalitarianism than the Moses Method of Government. Indeed the atrocities of Mosaic Law are so incredibly monstrous that the extremest enemy of the dictatorships might even prefer to suffer under Hitler than to submit to the rigidity of Moses.

We are justified in saying that Moses inculcated Intolerance in its most loathsome form. For all kinds of heresy Death is the punishment. Moses taught that a man must hand over the wife he loves—to be put to death is she disagrees with him theologically.

The T.L.P. book leaves no room for doubt as to the Freethinkers' position if and when the T.L.P. comes to power:—

Disbelief in and blasphemy of the Divinity must be rooted out because it is a crime likely to become exceedingly widespread unless death is the penalty, and unless many are made to realize that such apparently trivial things are really serious.

The nauseating nonsense about children (p. 86) is quite in keeping with the old idea of keeping children in their place but it takes a lot of "nerve" to quote with approval the command of Moses to murder a "son" (of ANY age apparently) who "will not obey our voice." If the word MURDER is objected to, on the ground that the "penalty of death" is a more proper phrase, we can only say we fail to see the difference between literal murder and the mob lynching of a poor defenceless young man. Moses said:—

And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he die. (Deut. xxi. 18-21).

Ingersoll indicted Moses in his lecture with the noble conclusion:—

Let us admit that credulity is not a virtue; that investigation is not a crime; that every mind should be free; that all religious persecution is infamous in God as well as man; that without liberty virtue is impossible; that without freedom even love cannot exist; that every man should be allowed to think and to express his thoughts; that woman is the equal of man; that children should be governed by love and reason; that the family relation is sacred; that war is a hideous crime; that all intolerance is born of ignorance and hate; that the freedom of to-day is the hope of to-morrow; that the enlightened present ought not to fall upon its knees and blindly worship the barbaric past; and that every free, brave, and enlightened man should publicly declare that all the ignorant, infamous, heartless, hideous things recorded in the "inspired" Pentateuch are not the words of God, but simply "Some Mistakes of Moses."

It is only fair to add that the ravings of a man like Mr. Hamshere—supported by the "True Law Party"—are peculiar to himself and his "Party." He is repudiated by the Jewish organizations. The Chief Rabbi refers to his "mischievous activities," which they are—to anyone who takes them seriously. It is clear that the Jews of to-day are no more committed to

Mr. Hamshere's futile anachronisms than are the Christians who still read the Books of Moses and accept Christ's endorsement of them. A propaganda of this T.L.P. type can only benefit the Anti-Semitic gang.

GEORGE BEDBOROUGH

Moral Aspects of the Gadarene Miracle

THE Synoptical Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke,¹ all record the present incident, but with differences of detail. Their common tradition is as follows:—

Once, upon crossing the Sea of Galilee, Jesus was met by a fierce demoniac, who saluted him as Son of God, and expressed his fear of being tormented. A huge herd of swine was feeding nearby, and the devils in possession of the man besought Jesus to have them enter those animals. The petition was granted. But no sooner did the devils possess the swine than the whole herd rushed down the steep into the lake and perished. Seeing the catastrophe, the keepers fled, and reported it in the city, whereupon the inhabitants came out and implored Jesus to quit the district. This locality Matthew gives as "the country of the Gadarenes"; Mark, as "the country of the Gerasenes"; and Luke, as "the country of the Gerasenes, which is over against Galilee," whilst a marginal note of the Revised Version adds: "Many ancient authorities read Gergesenes and others Gadarenes," Matthew has two demoniacs; Mark and Luke have one demoniac, and they say that Jesus bidding "the unclean spirit" to come forth, asked him his name, and was told "Legion." Mark says that the devil besought Jesus not to send him and his "out of the country," but Luke says that they requested Jesus not to send them "into the abyss." Mark and Luke also add that the citizens found the demoniac—now fully cured—sitting with Jesus, and that he desired to accompany Jesus, who, however, bade him to go home and there report what God had done on his behalf.

The Gadarene miracle, even in the condensed form of the common tradition, presents several interesting problems. Let us consider two which are of a moral nature. Did Jesus on that occasion cause other persons' property to be unjustifiably destroyed, and did he at the same time needlessly afflict dumb animals?

I. The Case of the Swine-owners. According to all the three Synoptics, Jesus was a demonologist and exorcist of the very first rank. Hence, it is vain to suggest that he did not foresee what the devils would do after they got into the swine; whilst to deny that he foresaw the swines' own conduct involves denial of the Godhood repeatedly ascribed to him in the four Gospels, and proclaimed even in the three narratives at present under notice. How then can he be excused for causing the destruction of the swine, and thus injuring their owners? Had the affair happened in a locality under Jewish rule, it might have been supposed that, Jesus got the swine destroyed, because, thinking they were being bred for food in defiance of the Mosaic Law, he deemed fit to punish the breeders by depriving them of property destined for such an illegal use. But Gadara, situated a few miles to the south east of the Sea of Galilee, was a well known city of Decapolis, whilst Gerasa, *alias* Gergesa, situated nearer to that sea, and midway on the eastern side

¹ Matthew viii. 28-34; Mark 1-20; Luke viii. 26-39.

thereof, belonged to Gaulonites;² and both Decapolis and Gaulonitis were districts mostly peopled by heathens, and not ruled by Jews. True, the Egyptians and other ancient nations besides the Jews regarded swine's flesh as unlawful food, and it may be that the Gadarenes, or Gerasenes, or whoever they were, held the same belief. But, even in this case, since they were bound by their own law, and not by that of Moses, Jesus was obviously going beyond his right in taking upon himself to administer justice in a foreign country, as he ought first to have obtained a delegated authority from the rulers of the land. Besides, it sometimes happens that a statute is allowed to pass out of observance, in consequence of a change in the circumstances originally occasioning its promulgation, but is not actually repealed because contingencies might arise necessitating its subsequent reinforcement. Now, from the great number of swine (according to Mark about two thousand) destroyed in one single herd, it would appear quite evident that the local government approved the practice of breeding pigs; and it is no less certain that the authorities concerned were more in touch with the needs and the feelings of their subjects than any stranger could have been. These conclusions are so very obvious that there is no escape from them except by eking out the story with sundry suppositions, none of which has any warrant in Holy Writ, while some are objectionable on moral grounds. Thus we cannot admit that Jesus, acting on the principle of doing the greatest good to the greatest number, destroyed the swine to prevent the indigestion and skin complaints arising from the consumption of pork; because this would make his example a dangerous precedent for sacrificing right to expediency; and besides, why should he destroy these swine only, and not exterminate the whole species? Again, we are not told that the owners of the swine were apostate Jews who had migrated to another land so as to make gain by supplying their countrymen with a prohibited article of diet; and even supposing they were, it is not easy to see what right Jesus had to interfere with merchants trafficking a foreign land, and therefore amenable only to its laws and customs. If, however, the vendors of the swine were not Jewish subjects, then, provided their traffic were legalized in the district where pursued, they had an indisputable right to sell swine's flesh to anyone who choose to buy it, so long as they did not violate international law by assisting to smuggle the article into places where its importation was legally prohibited. Moreover, the aforesaid right to vend would hold good although it should happen that Jews who lived on the other side of the Sea of Galilee were in the habit of crossing the lake for the purpose of picknicking on pork, as men in our country went beyond the three-mile limit to get a glass of beer on Sundays. But, if, which is most improbable, the law of the land where the swine were kept did forbid the keeping of these animals, then, as was before indicated, the right to punish the keepers lay with the local governors and not with a foreigner from Galilee to whom they had delegated no authority.

Again, had Jesus really desired to punish the owners of the swine for keeping them, it is perfectly astounding that none of the three accounts mentions this fact, since such conduct on his part would have been eminently fitted to win the favour of the Pharisees and

² See map 13 in *The Interlinear Bible* (A. & R. Versions) Cambridge, 1907, and the *Ency. Bib.* Vol II. Cols. 1587, 1632, and 1706. Also Raumer's *Palestina*. Leipzig, 1860, p. 248. A map in the Rev. F. Marshall's *School and College St. Matthew* agrees with the *Inter Bib.* map in attributing Gergesa to Gaulonitis, but Raumer attributes its equivalent Gerasa to Decapolis. The point has no importance as regards our inquiry.

other zealots whom it was very desirable the writers should conciliate!

Finally, it might have been expected that Jesus himself would have clearly pointed out the moral of his action as a warning against such practices, and not have left the owners of the swine in doubt as to why he had destroyed their property and allowed future ages to look upon his conduct in this matter as a piece of vindictiveness prompted by Jewish prejudices.

II. The Case of the Swine. If, from a series of the wildest and most unwarrantable suppositions, it could be concluded that Jesus did the owners of the swine no wrong, it could not on any supposition be denied that he did the swine themselves a grave injury. To shorten the life, or even to lessen the happiness, of animals unnecessarily is beneath a human being, let alone an incarnate god. Had the entry of the devils into the swine formed the necessary condition of their expulsion from the man, the conduct of Jesus would have been defensible on the principle elsewhere³ laid down by himself that a man is better than a sheep—therefore *a fortiori* better than a swine. But no such condition existed. The devils knew it was in his power to drive them out of the man, and they asked, or rather beseeched, as a favour, that he would permit them to enter the swine. This petition, according to apologists, was granted in order to punish the breeders of the swine. But, if Jesus possessed the thaumaturgic power wherewith he is accredited there was no need for him to torture dumb creatures and consign them to an untimely death in pursuance of that punitive design, for with a mere wave of his hand he could have turned the herd of swine into a flock of wild fowl at the moment of their occupation by the devils, in which case the impulse to stampede would have been changed into a desire to fly away, and they would have gone off taking the astonished fiends with them in their flight. If it be objected that this transmutation of nature would have been a fate as cruel as death to the swine, since through it they would have lost the sense of personal identity, I reply that such an objection is untenable, because an act of divine power, instigated by divine compassion, could easily have caused them to remember their previous existence, and to recognize themselves by perceiving the essential elements of their nature to have remained intact despite the amazing change experienced. In this way whilst swaying on the breeze, or fishing in the lake, they would have been able to recall the days when they found delight in rooting out tubers from the field, and in wallowing among the waste-heaps at the farmstead—a state of mind very similar to that perhaps now and then indulged in by the glorified saints!

Taking all the above details into account, it becomes quite evident that Jesus both caused the swine to be destroyed, and sought to punish their owners for keeping them by causing the destruction. What, it may be asked, was his intention towards the devils? For some reason or another, they desired to remain in the country, but apparently they could not do this unless they were permitted to occupy the bodies of living creatures. A request to enter human beings would obviously have met with refusal, so they had to fall back upon inferior animals, and straightway chose the swine, perhaps because these were the nearest. Certainly they did not intend to destroy the swine, for by destroying them they would have frustrated their desire to stay in the land. Thus, according to the story, Jesus was indeed successful on the present occasion, for he delivered the man or the men from demoniacal possession, got the swine destroyed, punished their owners with financial loss, and rid the district of the fiends. What became of the last-named upon their submersion is a complete mystery. The narra-

³ Matthew xii. 12.

tives say that the swine perished in the lake, but this could hardly have been the fate of their tormentors; for, if Jesus had wished to destroy them, he could have done it without causing them to enter the swine. Besides, there is no reason to suppose that he wished to release them from their state of perdition; and it also appears inconsistent with their spiritual nature to perish through material instrumentalities. For the rest, simple substances, such as souls, would be incapable of disintegration, but not of annihilation; they could never be destroyed by splitting up their in-existent parts, yet they might be reduced into nonentity at the will of an adequate power.

Enough has now been said to prove that the miracle under examination presents the character of Jesus in a very respectable aspect. The problem there introduced is one of comparatively recent discovery. Ancient theologians designated "Jesus of Nazareth"

Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, Begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father.⁴

Hence, as in their opinion, Christ was God, and God always does what is right, they held the correctness of Christ's conduct to be indisputable, and, therefore, thought it superfluous to defend anyone of his actions. For those who declined this view the rack, with the axe, or the stake to follow, were deemed the only befitting arguments.

Modern theologians have to proceed differently, for they are constantly pressed by the query, How do you know that Christ was God? and they realize that the only way to answer this interrogation is by showing that the conduct of Christ proves his divinity. Hence, when faced by a story which, like the present one, involves the imperfection of Christ, and thus disproves his Godhead, all they can do is to pronounce the narrative a fiction, regardless of the fact that since the spurious account exists in and forms part of the only accepted records of Christ's life and teaching, the assertion of its falsity is a tacit acknowledgement of their untrustworthiness. The dilemma is a painful one, but I think that as regards the choice between accepting the truth of the Gadarene-pig-tale, or renouncing the sinlessness of Christ, there is not, and never was, a theologian likely to hesitate a moment on his decision to retain the latter and to reject the former, even though he knew that the story is told in every one of the Synoptics, and probably belongs to the oldest of the Christian traditions, whence its rejection as false must have a most injurious effect upon the credit of the works recording it, which are supposed to contain the most reliable information about what Jesus did and taught. It is the existence of difficulties such as the foregoing that perplexes the faith of the laity in this country; whilst the conduct of our clergy with regard to those matters tends to increase the feeling of uncertainty, and to fill the mind with disgust. For they either ignore the presence of doubts which they know affect their more intelligent hearers, and attempt to evade the issue by decorating the churches, improving the music, and elaborating shows and ceremonies to distract attention from the principles at stake; or else, they pronounce *ex cathedra*, and without substantiating their assertions, that the difficulties in question have long ago been removed, and all attacks upon the Christian Faith triumphantly repelled. These statements, however, instead of receiving a blind acceptance, lead the hearers to entertain towards the integrity of the clergy the same feeling of distrust that they have towards their doctrines, and this is especially the case when the offenders are dignitaries of the Church attempting to use the advantage of their exalted position to spread untruths by the force of

authority—a trick that the increasing diffusion of knowledge amongst the masses renders ever more and more precarious.

C. CLAYTON DOVE

⁴ The Nicene Creed.

A Mixed Grill

THE General Secretary of the Baptist Union Assembly, the Rev. M. E. Aubrey, in presenting the report of the Council, said that it hurt him almost beyond bearing to see pasted up outside Christian churches trivial sentences like, "Don't worry, it may never happen," or "The Tide turns also when it is low."

I am ashamed how earnest and hungry men must scoff at us! That is not what our churches are for. At a time like this we dare not put men off with cheap and easy optimism.

So far, sense. Then, however, he boasted that:—

At no time in the history of their own communion had more churches been founded and more building schemes been undertaken than during the past year.

Vain boast—and plainly vain expenditure, for Mr. Aubrey added that it was true that crowds had not flocked back to the churches yet, and referring to the question of union of the churches, Mr. Aubrey said that he saw little prospect of it in this country for a long time.

But disunity is different. It makes utterly unreal to vast numbers of young people any idea of a Church of the followers of Christ united in love, a common loyalty and mutual helpfulness.

H'm yes; the churches find it "hard to dissemble their love" for each other, and would gladly "kick the other downstairs." Alas! that Mr. Aubrey must continue to feel "hurt, irritated and shamed."

But Mr. Aubrey had his little romance, in asserting that in these critical times the churches had spoken with one voice and no war-monger had been found among them! However, his gloom speedily returned. Remarking that Youth (*not God!*) would have to build any new world we were to have, he moaned:—

They had never known a safe world, and had to do what they could with a world like this. They never asked to live in it. They might have to die for it.

How the prospect of BEING "FOR EVER WITH THE LORD" does appal the Christian! D.

Correspondence

THE MERCY OF GOD

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—I culled the following somewhat astonishing item from the News of the Week Summary in the week-end edition of the *Cape Argus* of the 27th instant:—

For interrupting a prayer meeting at Hermon by shouting: "God have mercy upon me, a sinner," in a sarcastic manner, Niklaas Adams was sentenced to 60 days' hard labour with spare diet and solitary confinement two days a week by the magistrate at Wellington on Monday. Johannes van der Merwe, a student, who led the prayer meeting, said that this had a disturbing effect upon the congregation and made them laugh.

I had missed the report in the Daily edition of the *Cape Argus*, and so procured a copy of the edition of Tuesday the 23rd.

It will be seen that the fuller report of that date, which I enclose, somewhat moderates the effect of the summary. At the same time it seems clear that had the threatening language used to the elder of the church been used to an ordinary person at a secular gathering little or nothing would have been heard of the occurrence, and

nothing like the maximum penalty, with its cruel spare diet and solitary confinement addition, would have been imposed.

I thought you might be interested to have these cuttings.

F. W. R. SILKE

Cape Town, S.A.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN THE ARMY

SIR,—While fully in accord with Mr. Brunel's views as to the above, I think his statement that the Government introduced Conscription "under the pretext of opposing Fascist aggression," is wide of the mark. The Government held out long against this measure, and, unfortunately, the "aggression" is sufficiently obvious. If we are unprepared we shall be made to suffer as other nations have suffered, and are suffering. There is a natural law which decrees that "the weakest goes to the wall."

EDGAR SYERS

Obituary

MR. J. M. STUART-YOUNG

OUR readers will learn with deep regret of the death of Mr. J. M. Stuart-Young, a frequent and always welcome contributor to these columns. His writings covered a wide area—novels, poetry, one or two plays, and articles on a variety of subjects. All his work had that touch of imagination, without which no writing can advance far beyond the commonplace. In all there was evident the convinced Freethinker, although he took an interest in what is called, by way of adding distinction to confusion, the "occult." But of his strong opposition to established religion there was no doubt, and his close acquaintance with native life and primitive religious beliefs gave him a real insight into the nature of religion when it was presented in a modern sophisticated form.

He left England for Nigeria for health reasons after his doctors had given him but a brief period of life. In Africa he found the health that was denied him in the homeland. To the end his interest in human problems remained keen, and probably the last articles he wrote were sent to this journal. Some of them have not yet appeared, but will be read with increased interest as coming from the pen of an intrinsically brave man, who had taught himself to smile at the vagaries of fortune, and who remained master of himself to the end. We knew him only from correspondence, but in that we probably knew the real man, and so learned to respect him. Our only regret now is that the many calls upon our time prevented our writing him as frequently as we might otherwise have done.—C.C.

MRS. C. G. QUINTON

ON Thursday, June 15 it fell to my lot to say a few words of farewell at the cremation of Mrs. C. G. Quinton, widow of one of my oldest friends in the Freethought movement. I think both were present on the occasion of my first address from a Freethought platform, and since then our friendship has remained unbroken, and without a single cloud to mar its completeness. They were well-matched in their devotion to Freethought, and for their adherence to principle. They were among the most ardent workers in connexion with a Secular Hall that was established in East London soon after I began my Freethought work, and did much to make the place the success it was for a time. Time brought no diminution of their devotion to the Cause and, until failing health prevented, C. G. Quinton was a constant attendant at Executive meetings.

It may seem a little strange to dwell so much on the husband when noting the passing of his widow, but in truth they were so much together in their mental, social and public life, that it is difficult to separate them in one's mind. Of delicate health C.G. owed much to the watchful care of his wife, and she has survived him but twenty-six months. I cannot think of them apart, and the simple ceremony at the Ilford Crematorium, while it marked the breaking of a link with the past, yet forms a

new link in a long chain of memories that become more valuable as one's own term of existence draws nearer to its close. In the death of Esther Quinton I lose one of my oldest friends, a warm-hearted upright woman, a devoted wife and mother, and worthy follower of a worthy cause. She leaves one son, and in the memory of what his mother was he will find the greatest solace in his affliction.—C.C.

CHARLES ALLEN WILLS.

IN the peaceful village churchyard of Mawnan Smith, near Falmouth, the remains of Charles Allen Wills were interred on Friday, June 16. Death took place in his 70th year from shock following an operation. Although not a member of the N.S.S. he was a regular reader of the *Freethinker*, and held convinced Freethought opinions for over forty years. Shortly before his death he wrote instructions for a Secular Service to be read at his funeral under the direction of the N.S.S. His wife faithfully carried out his wishes, and a service was read at the graveside before an assembly of relatives and friends by the General Secretary. To his wife, and surviving members of the family, we offer sincere sympathy.—R.H.R.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

LONDON

INDOOR

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, W.C.1): 11.0, Moritz J. Bonn, D.Sc.—"Space for Living (Lebensraum)."

OUTDOOR

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

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

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

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH (Brockwell Park): 7.0, Sunday, Mrs. E. Grout. Rushcroft Road, opposite Brixton Town Hall, 8.0, Tuesday, Mr. L. Ebury. Liverpool Grove, Walworth Road, 8.0, Friday—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 (Wirral) BRANCH (Haymarket): 8.0, Saturday. Well Lane Corner, 8.0, Wednesday. Mr. D. Robinson will speak at these meetings.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N.S.S. (Mound): 7.0, Mr. Frank Smithies—"Christianity the Rag-bag of Religions."

FENCEHOUSES (School Corner): 8.0, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

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

HIGHAM: 7.30, Tuesday, Mr. J. Clayton.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (Stevenson Square): 7.0, Messrs. G. H. Taylor and C. McCall, Junior.

MANCHESTER BRANCH (Heckles): 8.0, Friday. Bury, 8.0, Saturday. Ashton, 8.0, Sunday. Wigan, 8.0, Monday. Mr. W. A. Atkinson will speak at these meetings.

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

PRESTON (Town Hall Square): 3.15 and 7.0, Sunday, Mr. J. Clayton.

READ: 7.30, Friday, Mr. J. Clayton.

SUNDERLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (Gill Bridge Avenue): 7.0, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Stockton High Street): 7.0, Sunday. Middlesbrough, Davidson Street, 7.30, Monday and Tuesday. Stockton, 7.30, Wednesday. North Ormsby, 7.30, Thursday. Stockton, 7.30, Friday. Mr. G. Whitehead will speak at these meetings.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE

CHAPMAN COHEN

- | | |
|---|---|
| No. 1. Did Jesus Christ 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
7. What is Freethought? | No. 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?
13. Thou shalt not suffer a Witch to Live
14. Freethought and the Child |
|---|---|

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 1866 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.

MOTHER OF GOD

BY

G. W. FOOTE

ost Free

2½d.

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

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.

WORLD UNION OF FREETHINKERS

REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

SEPTEMBER 9 13, 1938, LONDON

Cloth, 2s. 6d. net.
 by post 2s. 9d. Paper cover 1s. net,
 by post 1s. 2d.

Issued for the Organizing Committee of the Congress
 by THE PIONEER PRESS (G. W. FOOTE & Co.,
 Ltd.), 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and
 WATTS & CO, 5 & 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street,
 London, E.C.4

Price post free 2½d.

PETER ANNET—1693-1769

By ELLA TWYNAM

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

Price post free 2½d.

FASCISM & CHRISTIANITY

Chapman Cohen

(Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.)

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

ONE PENNY. By post Threehalfpence