

THE
FREETHINKER

EDITED by CHAPMAN COHEN
— Founded 1881 —

Vol. LIX.—No. 47

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 1939

PRICE THREEPENCE

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

	Page
<i>God and the War—The Editor</i> - - - - -	737
<i>Shakespeare and the People—Mimmermus</i> - - - - -	739
<i>The Hindu Caste Cult—T. F. Palmer</i> - - - - -	740
<i>The Sifting of Population—G. H. Taylor</i> - - - - -	741
<i>The Old South London Branch—Erle D. Side</i> - - - - -	742
<i>Jubilee "Freethinker" Fund</i> - - - - -	746
<i>Religion and Spiritualism—H. Cutner</i> - - - - -	746
<i>Then and Now—Chapman Cohen</i> - - - - -	747
<i>Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, Letters to the Editor, etc.</i>	

Views and Opinions

God and the War

We think it high time that someone in authority gave us a decisive statement as to what God is doing in the war. We can understand the neutrality of a number of nations; some are a long way off from the central point of the war, others assume a benevolent neutrality on one side or the other, and all who can keep out of it wish to do so because of the price they will have to pay if they come in. All this is quite understandable, and in similar circumstances, both Britain and France would have acted in the same way. Nations act in the way it pays them to act, although this is always camouflaged under some loud-sounding declaration of righteousness. But God? We are "all god's chillum," and although he may castigate us (the educational influence of flogging being still held in high estimate in heaven) yet he does it for our good. But, God ought to be doing something in this war. And there are only four possible positions. Either he is helping us, or he is helping Germany—and Russia, or he is "holding the ring" for both parties, or he is just standing aloof. There is, of course, a fifth possibility, that he has not yet heard that there is a war; but that is hardly a reasonable hypothesis—at least we have not heard from his representatives on earth that this is likely to be the case.

Against this last suggestion we have the plain fact that in this country we have had, since before Munich, a long procession of official prayers to God, all of which assured him that we were on his side, and there have been also more or less artful suggestions that we are fighting to establish his rule on earth, and that if he would give us victory, it would be a step towards the establishment of his supremacy, but that if the other side won there would be a likelihood of his rule being completely wiped out. And one cannot imagine that the clergy of this country do not wish the people to believe (whatever they may believe themselves) that if and when victory comes, it is God who has fought on our side. History shows that God is always on the side of the biggest battalions.

A Religious War

Looking over a number of newspaper cuttings we observe that a certain note of carefulness—almost artfulness—has been active on the religious front. The Bishop of Guildford, for example, says "war is never the will of God." That is in direct contradiction to the teachings of the Bible, which book, it will be remembered, the Archbishop of Canterbury has officially declared to contain the oracles of God. There are many passages in the "sacred" book (readers may refer to 1 Chronicles v. 22; Exodus xv. 3; and Rev. xix. 11, and other references which will be found in the *Bible Handbook*) that distinctly contradict the Archblimp's statement. But the Bishop of Guildford, with a cunning worthy of the Archbishop himself, has substituted "Church" for "God," thus:—

Since the Church exists to be the instrument of the loving purposes of God, we have the primary duty of the maintenance of our Church in our own land and in all the world.

If the Church is the instrument of God, and it is carrying out God's purpose in this world, then God is at work in the war, and unless the Church is acting against God we have God taking part in the war and it would be the worst form of treason not to believe that the war is God's way of re-establishing himself in the world. So that the restoration of God must take rank with our war aims of the restoration of Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

Mr. Hugh Walpole is a well known novelist, and we believe is a very religious man. In fact we think we can recall that among our old letters, we have one from him very strongly protesting against the receipt of a copy of the *Freethinker*, which had been sent him by some well meaning individual. Mr. Walpole resented this unusual agitation of whatever grey matter he possesses, and used some very unkind words concerning the quality and aims of this journal. We considered his comments as more amusing than instructive, and merely expressed to him the opinion that so far as intelligent reasoning about religion was concerned, Mr. Walpole was not very fruitful soil on which to cast the seed of Freethought.

But we see from an article by him in that highly intellectual paper, the *Daily Sketch*, that Mr. Walpole has been in receipt of many letters, and of these he says:—

I will emphasize one conclusion here among many others—that is, the interest in nearly all my correspondents about things of the spirit. . . .

They say again and again that they feel this to be a religious war.

Why is that not said everywhere more often?

Mr. Walpole therefore agrees that this is a religious war. I think that shows he has just a little dash of artfulness in his make-up. "Religious" is such a

delightfully ambiguous term. It may mean anything, and is therefore the equal of nothing. I have known many "Agnostics" who proclaimed themselves to be religious, and there is always with us the charmingly vacuous judgment that "everyone has a religion of some kind"—which would enable a declared Atheist to say that he had the only true religion on earth. But in truth, we can hardly recall a war that was not a religious one. It was a religious war the Israelites fought when God told them to slaughter the men and keep the women for themselves. It was a religious war when the Mohammedans swept over Europe and almost gained complete control. The Crusades, with all their brutality and rapacity were a series of religious wars. The seventeenth century was filled with religious wars. And coming to recent wars, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia was a religious war, with the full blessing of the Church. The Spanish rebellion was another religious war. Hitler is fighting a religious war, and believes that God destined the supremacy of Germany and selected him for the job of achieving it. And, of course, the "great war" was openly proclaimed a religious war by all but a mere handful of the clergy of this country.

There is, then, nothing new in this war being felt to be a religious war. It is, at all events, a question on which we can offer no authoritative judgment. All we can say is that all wars have involved lying and brutality, and the elevation of those who without them would have remained at least comparatively obscure. Wars have always left a country several degrees lower in the scale of civilization than it was when the war began—even when there is no reasonable alternative to war. Bearing these things in mind it may well be that there is something religious about this war. And when Mr. Walpole asks, why is not the statement that this is a religious war being made more often, we humbly suggest that this may be because it is, with the more honest and the more nimble-witted, recognized as a rather dangerous plea. It may invite comparisons, and comparisons may lead to some disturbing conclusions.

* * *

How Religion Divides

Another aspect of the influence of religion in war times has cropped up in North Wales—although we daresay the same situation will exist in other parts of the country where rival ideas exist. A number of children have been "evacuated" (Who first introduced this term with its present application?) from Liverpool and Birkenhead and sent to North Wales. As one would expect a proportion of these children came from Roman Catholic homes. A Roman Catholic schoolmistress who accompanied the children admits that they were accommodated in "hospitable Welsh families and were well cared for," but "unfortunately," says this teacher, "the hosts took upon themselves the duty of looking after the children's spiritual as well as physical welfare." That led to trouble, the nature of which is contained in the statement of an Anglican Vicar. He says, as reported in the *News-Chronicle* for November 3:—

There has been so much interference by the Catholic authorities with the welfare of evacuee children that the majority of hosts would like to see the end of the evacuation scheme. What has a typical good living Welsh family to do with its evacuees on a Sunday if it cannot take them to church or chapel? There has been no desire to convert the children from their own religion. It is simply a matter of convenience in the absence of a church of their own.

Now there is no charge here of neglect of the children. The latter were quite well off. The sole trouble

is a religious one. The Roman Catholic children were listening to Protestant preaching. That was the deadly offence; and one may remember that during the worst phases of the Spanish rebellion, when Italian and German airmen were engaged in machine-gunning women and children, and when the move was first made to bring the Spanish children to this country, the Catholic Church was unwilling for the children to be brought here for fear they should be contaminated by non-Catholic teaching. We have no doubt whatever that, if the boot had been on the other foot and Protestant children had been removed to the care of Roman Catholics, we should have had the same complaint from the other side. "Collar the kids, or we shall never get the adults," is the motto of the Christian Church everywhere.

One further example. In the *Universe* for November 3, there is a complaint that the Austrian bishops have been compelled to admit, for burial in their churchyards, the bodies of the "God-believing" of the "New heathen" religion. In North Wales the Roman Catholic complaint is that the children are being brought too closely into contact with other kinds of Christians. In Austria the "evil" is that the bodies of believers in another kind of god are being buried near the corpses of true Catholics.

* * *

The Influence of Religion

But we are still without an answer to our first question of "What does God do?" The Bishop did no more than tell us what God did not do. We have had, of course, since the war started, many examples of what officials can do in the wrong way. We have had fish controllers who stopped us having fish, tea controllers who have spoiled our tea, butter controllers who have almost prevented our having enough butter to put on our bread, and controllers of coal who tried their hardest to keep us short of coal. But they at least did something—if only to find jobs for a lot of people. But for a long time theologians have been busy explaining that God does not do any of the things it was supposed he did. He just sits aloft, and having created the world sits watching it go. If it goes wrong he blames us; if it goes right he takes all the credit. But we are still waiting for someone to tell just what does God do. Will any responsible person give us an answer—not a reply—to our question?

Next, what is it that *religion* does? That is a more general term, in a way. What is the answer? Well, it is, I think, answered in the examples I have given dealing with the children in North Wales, and the corpses of men and women in Austria. They are particular samples of a very widespread fact. The answer is that it operates by dividing men where otherwise the division does not, and would not exist. It is the one thing that sets up a division more definitely than politics at its worst and lowest aspects. In the schools where the one predominating aim should be the creation of a sense of a common citizenship leading to a humanitarianism that should embrace all national differences, religion is the one divisive thing that is encouraged. Children are reared not merely to be conscious of differences, but that these differences must never be overborne by any other consideration. The little Catholic, the little Protestant, the little Jew, each is differentiated from the other, and the boundaries of their common civic life are narrowed by their religious difference. The school becomes a breeding ground for sectarianism. Just at present we are being treated to a probably highly-coloured picture of army life. The soldiers are real brethren in their behaviour to each other, they are full of smiles, their evenings are passed in a round of enjoyment, while their sleeping accommodation must

make thousands of them contemptuous of the accommodation afforded by their homes. One can only hope that this dissatisfaction will outlive the war. It may lead us somewhere.

But there is no reason for disbelieving that during the war men will work together, move together, fight together, and even die together in the feeling that they are bound together in a common task for the realization of a common end. But, again, the one thing staring us in the face is that so far as they are religious in their convictions they will not pray or worship together. As the schools begin by turning the children into little sectarians, so the influence of the priests and clergy and preachers of all denominations perpetuates non-essential divisions among human beings. One of the greatest evils of the Nazi system is that it is profoundly religious in spirit and in action. Man is a child of the past, and the religious influence of the past and present offers the sociologist and the humanitarian one of the most powerful forces that he has to fight.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Shakespeare and the People

Others abide our question. Thou art free.
We ask and ask: Thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge—*Matthew Arnold.*

Was Shakespeare a Conservative or a Democrat? Numberless critics have attempted an answer to this interesting question, but in nearly every instance, according to their own political leanings. Bernard Shaw, in company of H. G. Wells, share the opinion that Shakespeare was a hidebound reactionary in politics, and something of a snob, and many Socialists have echoed and re-echoed the same views with the faithfulness of gramophone records.

Other men, other views. Professor Dowden had doubts whether he should label Shakespeare as "Liberal" or "Conservative," and the poet, Swinburne, found that the author of *Hamlet* was a Democrat. On the other hand, John Morley considered Shakespeare was a Feudalist, and to William Archer he was an aristocrat. Frank Harris hailed him as a gentleman, whilst the Conservative press always welcome the great dramatist as a "sound Tory." Amid this welter of voices the writings of Shakespeare provide the only key to the master's political sympathies, and the evidence contained in them should make clear what Shakespeare really thought and felt.

Shakespeare, as revealed in his works, was above party feeling, and did not find ill alone in the meanest of his fellow creatures. Shakespeare lived, it is worth recalling, at a time when a padded buffoon like James the First might claim divine right without being laughed at. He wrote in the dark days when Democracy in its modern sense was then as unknown as the aeroplane or the submarine. Shakespeare's detachment from the religious fanaticism and wrangles of the spacious days in which he played and wrote ought, in themselves, to supply a guarantee that he could suspend his judgment in matters political, no less than theological. Shakespeare has many messages for his readers, but few more valuable or more opportune than that party is a natural bane. That message is implicit, and to discerning readers, explicit, in his works. There is no need of tearing text from context in the plays, and fathoming the views of his puppets on Shakespeare himself. As well might we make Shakespeare a murderer because he was the author of *Macbeth*, or a lunatic because he created the character of "King Lear."

Sidney Lee, to whose untiring industry in Shakespearean scholarship we all owe so much, points out that the master often states both sides of a question by various utterances placed in the mouths of his characters. This is a distinguishing mark of his mind, for it is few men who can do this, and still fewer poets. It was this extraordinary power of holding the scales firmly that caused John Ruskin to say that Shakespeare was not only unknowable, but inconceivable. The angry outbursts put into the mouth of a man-hater like Timon of Athens, or the bitter utterances of Coriolanus, do not prove that Shakespeare was hostile to the people. Nor do they make Shakespeare inferior to Milton as a poet, because Milton was a fiery Republican, whilst Shakespeare introduces Kings, Queens, and Princes among his puppets.

The truth is that Shakespeare stood for no class, and is the poet of all, rich and poor alike. He cannot legitimately be made to support the people against the aristocrat, the sovereign against the citizen. All may learn of him; the monarch the necessity of good government; the people that the kingly state is not always to be envied. The statesman may learn that popular verdicts are unstable, and the agitator that order and contentment are essential to a country's prosperity. Shakespeare did think about political matters. He had opinions, but in him the artist was always stronger than the politician.

A most important thing to note is that Shakespeare was quite progressive in his treatment of women in his plays. Indeed, he was far in front of all his contemporaries in this respect, for he depicts women as being the equals of men. The brilliant and witty Beatrice is more than a match for the smart Benedict, and Emilia holds her own against the villainous Iago. In the tragedy of *Macbeth* it is the woman who has the master-mind, and her pliant husband is as clay in her hands. What happy comradeship, too, there is between Caesar and his wife, and Brutus and Portia. Recall, too, the tribute in the welcome given by Coriolanus to his wife, quite in the "high Roman way." As Ingersoll has so acutely observed: "Shakespeare has done more for women than all the other dramatists of the world."

Consider, also, Shakespeare's broad view of men. As in the case of Shylock, the Master rose superior to religious prejudices and passion, so, in the case of Othello, he ignored prejudices concerning race. He had, too, a democratic dislike of men who "having before gored the gentle bosom of peace with pillage and robbery, make wars their bulwark." "How soon mightiness turns to misery" could be taken as a motto for all Shakespeare's historical plays. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" is Shakespeare's as well as Henry the Fourth's comment. Does not Richard the Second put a mine of experience in brief space when he says:—

Whiles I am a beggar, I will rail,
And say there is no sin but to be rich,
And being rich my virtue then shall be
To say there is no vice but beggary.

What caustic criticism is in the passage:—

How quickly Nature falls into revolt
When gold becomes her object.

A similar idea is in the following:—

Gold will knit and break religions.

Note the searching reproof in the lines:—

Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks,
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it.

These words, if written in our own day, would be regarded as Democratic. Over three centuries ago,

when the people had few rights, and were held in disdain, Shakespeare held the balance steady. Indeed, he was not called "the gentle Shakespeare" for nothing. The quality of justice was as little strained in him as the quality of mercy. The profound and intimate knowledge of human nature was not unmingled with pity. He was great and good enough to say: "There is no darkness but ignorance." Shakespeare stands, not for Toryism, not even for Radicalism, but for Humanity, which existed before all party and political shibboleths, and will survive them all. No man ever did more to enable us to keep our eyes on the light of wisdom than did William Shakespeare.

And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honoured, self-secure,
Did'st tread on earth unguessed at—Better so!
All pains immortal spirit must endure,
All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

MIMNERMUS

The Hindu Caste Cult

INDIA has been designated a country of castes and creeds, and some speak of the class distinctions which survive in Hindu society as exceptional and anomalous phenomena. Yet, although the rigid caste distinctions existing among orthodox Hindus are more pronounced than those surviving elsewhere, the pride of birth and social superiority is still so marked in European and American communities that it serves to illustrate the persistence of feudal conventions.

Douglas Jerrold once said that the majority of Britons were constantly engaged either in looking up to or down upon somebody. For centuries good birth and blue blood were supposed to go together. The landowning classes were regarded as immeasurably superior to the traders and serfs. Then, in lands such as the United States and South Africa, there is the colour-bar and the negroes in the one, and the native races in the other are almost universally the objects of humiliating contempt, while in European Prussia social exclusiveness is too plain to be pleasant to other German nationals.

Still, the disabilities imposed by the caste system of orthodox Hindus prove extremely galling to the less religious members of the community. Free-thinking Hindus are apt to disregard its requirements, and would much prefer to see its rules relaxed as a preliminary to the system's abolition.

After long service in India, Sir Edward Blunt has edited and contributed to the highly informative volume, *Social Service in India* (Stationery Office, 1938, 12s. 6d.). In his invaluable essay, *The Structure of the Indian People*, he intimates that: "There are two main varieties of caste, tribal and functional. The original tribe is an aggregation of persons who are, or believe themselves to be, united by blood, political interests, and by the need for mutual defence. There are often subsidiary bonds of union—common deities, common worship, common taboos and totems. Tribal castes are sprung from those tribes which, both in prehistoric and historic times have come into close contact with Hinduism, and have been merged in the Hindu social system."

The castes that have been created by those engaged in some special occupation are considered functional. The caste members are drawn together by kindred interests, and are usually restricted to their hereditary avocations, while they are liable to punishment if they forsake their traditional calling for another industry or trade.

Moreover, a native is only permitted to wed a woman of his own particular caste, and his son must never renounce his birthright. There are caste rules restricting the choice of company at meals, the selection of one's cook or water provider. Occupational castes are frequently split into sub-divisions, but these are unusual in tribal communities. Thus Hindus are sub-divided into many exclusive groups, which as a whole exceed 2,000 in number.

Matrimony is regulated by blood relationship, and those in close consanguinity must not marry. But near kinship on the maternal side is not so prohibitive as the paternal where the rule is inviolable. Apparently, the various restrictions serve to prevent "the union of any two persons who have a common ancestor not more than six generations removed through the father or four generations through the mother."

The basis of Hindu society is the joint-family composed of the father, his sons and grandsons, with the mother, her son's wives, daughters and granddaughters until they enter into wedlock. This arrangement is the rule, but in periods of prosperity, partition is apt to occur. But while the family group remains intact it shares in food, religious ceremonial and income. Unless male members are absent from home, they invariably reside together, take their repasts from comestibles prepared on the family hearth, while the revenue of the ancestral estate, and usually the earnings of each member, are pooled, while from this fund the needs of the group are met.

Culinary customs are curious, and their disregard is keenly resented. The primitive concept of taboo survives in the dread of evil, the potentiality of which everyone is thought to possess. This danger must at all costs be avoided. It is particularly active in the mother and her offspring at the period of birth, in the dying or dead, and the newly-wedded couple. Thus, as any stranger may prove inimical, everyone must be assured of the fidelity of his companions, and therefore confines his intimate intercourse to members of his caste, whose interests are similar to his own.

Domestic taboos are numerous, and there are certain members of a caste with whom one may share one's meal; all others are forbidden. Smoking, drinking and even the utensils used in cooking and eating are all specified by caste custom. To the Western mind most of these restrictions seem childish and absurd. As Sir Edward Blunt comments: "The eating taboos are so numerous that the cynical are apt to wonder that any Hindu ever thinks it worth while to eat at all. . . . He and his fellow-diners (if any) must sit on a square marked off on the ground (*chauka*), inside which is the *chulha*, or cooking-place. Should a stranger's shadow fall upon this square, all cooked food within it is polluted and must be thrown away. There are also many other restrictions; the following are those observed by the Nagar Brahman in Gujarat. Before eating he must bathe and put on clean garments. Many accidents may occur to render him impure and compel him to desist from his meal. He must not touch an earthen vessel which has contained water. He must not touch a piece of cotton cloth which has been touched by a person who is not himself ceremonially pure, or else has not been dipped in oil or *ghi*. He must not touch leather or bone or paper unless in the last case there is Hindu writing on it. He must not touch or allow himself to be touched by a donkey, pig, dog or child old enough to eat solid food." And, in addition to all these strange restrictions, the orthodox native must not peruse printed matter while eating because printer's ink is contaminated. Even manuscript reading is prohibited unless the parchment is bound with a special paste in silk. Should he neglect these customs he is defiled, his meal must be aban-

done and before he eats again he must become purified.

However estimable in character a Hindu may be, and whatever his past achievements, he is nevertheless debarred from rising in the social scale. Here religion plays a conservative part, for under the law of *karma* a man's station in society is the inevitable consequence of his conduct in his former existence. So he must await promotion until he has died and been born again.

Although a member of a higher caste cannot espouse a widow, yet marriage is deemed imperative, both in his own interests, and those of his ancestors. For the ancient law proclaims that the father of a virtuous son "saves himself from hell as well as the seven preceding and the seven following generations."

From birth to the grave the Hindu's life is at the mercy of custom and ritual. To the household observances are added the religious rites and ceremonies. There is an annual offering to the family ancestors, and sixteen rules relate to the outstanding events of the devotee's life such as birth, marriage and death. All these customs repose on age-long tradition or the written law as interpreted by the Brahmans who serve as a connecting link between caste and sacred cult. Hinduism is essentially comprehensive in character as it embraces pantheism, polytheism and monotheism.

Powerful and puny divinities populate its pantheon, as well as semi-deified ancestors, spectres, lower animals and even inanimate objects. Supreme gods such as Vishnu and Siva and their respective wives are those usually favoured by the Brahman priesthood. The greater number of Hindus restrict their worship to these and other majestic divinities. Many, however, bow down before major and minor gods alike, while a dissentient minority, mostly of the lower castes, frequently worship their own pantheon selected from the 330 million gods who are said to form the vast array of Hindu divinities. Yet, paradoxically enough, we are assured that "out of all of these, the individual may worship one, a few, or many, as he pleases—or even none."

Nearly all Hindus are ancestor worshippers, but the belief in a supreme power seems almost universal. Also, apart from an insignificant number of low castes, reverence for the sacred cow is ubiquitous and, with few exceptions, the Brahmans serve as ministers whose spiritual supremacy is unquestioned.

Hindus who have not been influenced by Western science and philosophy remain intensely religious. The ethical precepts and practices of Hinduism are equal, if not superior, to those of other so-called civilized communities. There exists, however, a wide difference of outlook concerning moral sanctions which varies with Hindu concepts of the government of the Universe. As *karma* and the transmigration of souls automatically determine a Hindu's character in one life, and his fate in the next, this leaves little choice, or so it seems to the modern materialistic mind. Consequently they possess little ethical content. A worshipper of Vishnu, however, when answering the question why he acted honourably in all his dealings would probably reply "that the best means of showing devotion to God is to serve one's fellow-men."

Cultured Indians, especially those who have been educated in European colleges deprecate the trammels imposed by the caste system, and this antagonism has grown in intensity during the past fifty years. Caste restrictions they deride as antiquated and harmful, and completely alien to the conditions of contemporary life. These enlightened Hindus scorn commensal customs, and not only dine with Moslems

and Europeans, but will willingly consume any food provided except pork and beef. The baneful system of *purdah* is also breaking down, and women appear more and more freely in company and even participate in public life. Infant marriages and many other anomalies are condemned by the emancipated few, but the mass of the population cling to the past.

T. F. PALMER

The Sifting of Population

THE aim of eugenics is to amend natural selection.

As Prof. W. E. Castle,¹ of Harvard, puts it, Genetics deals with the coming into being, Eugenics with the coming into being *well*. It partakes of the nature of both a science and an art.

Given that mental defects are heritable it should be a matter of concern if the bearers are propagating at a rate disproportionate to that of the normal stock. That they should propagate at all is looked upon with disfavour by many.

Conversely, if the members of a society carrying the highest qualities of intelligence are propagating at a less rate, especially if below unity, this may also be regarded as disadvantageous to society as a whole.

For the inheritance of intelligence much evidence has been adduced, but there is less to show that a high level of it runs in particular families, in the way that feeble-mindedness can be definitely traced. Nevertheless we have our Darwins (plus Wedgwood the plotter), our Russells, our Haldanes (not forgetting Naomi Mitchison), our Huxleys (I do not know whether they are enhanced by the inclusion of the comedian, Claude Dampier), and Dean Inge also claims particular intellectual merit for his own family (modestly referring to himself as "see Who's Who.")

In his *Christian Ethics and Modern Problems* Inge tabulates statistics showing the relative fertility rate of various classes of workers, based on the 1921 census. By far the most prolific were General Labourers, followed in the order named by (a selection) Miners, Barmen, Dockers, Carmen, Postmen, Police, Doctors, C.E. Ministers, Nonconformist Ministers, Teachers. The General Labourers were nearly double the dockers, and the carmen double the Doctors. What intelligence he ascribes to ministers is not explained, but in one of those passages which have apparently led some to regard him as a snob, he continues, "The cumulative effect of such a drastic dysgenic selection as these figures indicate can only be the progressive deterioration of the British race. . . . There is really not the slightest doubt that although the inferiority of the casual labourer is partly natural and capable of being reduced by better conditions, ability of the kind which leads to success in the intellectual professions is strongly inherited, and that a deficiency of births in that class, cumulative in its effect . . . must inevitably deplete the reserve of talent in which a nation has to rely in filling posts of responsibility. No unprejudiced person can regard the disappearance of our upper class and professional families as anything else than a calamity."

This is also the conclusion of Carr-Saunders, who, after quoting not merely block figures, but a moving statistical reality with the time factor considered, opines that "there is a sifting of the population in progress. The professions are recruited from among the more intelligent members of the population, and the members of the professions are relatively sterile.

¹ *Genetics and Eugenics*.

... Differential fertility is in all probability of some considerable importance. It must have the effect of reducing the average level of innate intelligence in the population." Stockholm seems to be the only exception where the rich are the more fertile,

Meanwhile the number of mental defectives is given by Inge as 138,529 in 1924 (Carr-Saunders puts the number at over 300,000) in addition to 125,827 insane. The latter, of course, are not all imbeciles, who are congenitally defective; many will be lunatics, whose condition may not be congenital at all, and may be either permanent, temporary or recurrent.

What in the view of Carr-Saunders is especially alarming is that mental defectives appear to propagate at a faster proportional rate to that of normal people. "That mentally deficient persons should be more fertile than the rest of the population need not surprise us," he remarks, "they are by nature less susceptible to those various influences [he enumerates them] which encourage the practice of family limitation." He also quotes cases in support; for example, out of 100 normal families selected at random from London registers there were 506 children born, 23 miscarriages, and 387 survivors: on the other hand 100 families from which mentally defective children came, again chosen at random (every seventh name), showed 761 births, 101 miscarriages, and 467 children alive.

Higher than the mental defective is the "backward" child. Of these there are over 600,000 of school age in England and Wales. From this number must be taken a sub-class, "retarded" children (e.g., through absence from school) but even then more than half of the figure given are designated as backward by nature, their shortcomings being termed "apparently inborn." An official Board of Education report estimates that from this group come "50,000 recruits to our industrial army every year who are not only unprepared by mental retardation to meet effectually the demands of a full life, but who furnish society with the bulk of its inefficient adults—criminals, paupers, mendicants and unemployables."

A standardized education for all, with strict equality of training is obviously disastrous to the backward pupils as well as to the more intelligent. Equality of training merely serves to increase the initial differences. It is as though two trains set out travelling at 20 and 60 m.p.h. respectively in the same direction. Whereas after one hour they would be separated by 40 miles, two hours would find them 80 miles apart.

J. B. S. Haldane, who is not easily persuaded towards eugenic reform, nevertheless acknowledges that large families appear to be associated with inferior intellect, and that therefore, if the Intelligence Quotient is dependent on heredity, its average will diminish. He allows, too, that environmental factors such as malnutrition, accident and illness are relatively unimportant in determining the intellectual standard.

It is, by the way, quite arguable that malnutrition may in many cases be the result of ignorance, not of poverty. A glutton may yet be inadequately nourished, by exercising a poor choice of food. Malnutrition is certainly more often the result of, not the cause of, defective intellect, for it is so seldom the latter.

Hogben remarks that there is no need to magnify the problem till it assumes menacing proportions, but most investigators are satisfied of its urgency. Some of their opinions and proposals may be worth considering.

G. H. TAYLOR

The Old South London Branch

I READ with interest a recent article in the *Freethinker* by our Branch Secretary, Mr. Seibert, giving a short history of the Camberwell London Branch, I also noted the "Sugar Plum" by F. A. Davies, giving his version of the early days of the Branch. Perhaps it would be of interest to you to have an account of the events that led to the formation of the South London Branch, or Camberwell Branch as it was then known.

My father was an Atheist, Owenite, and Chartist. He came originally from Union Street, Borough, in 1848. He owned a small chandler's shop at 1 Bedford Street, Walworth. At the corner of York Street, opposite the shop was a large Hall, formerly a "Ragged School," then a "Tectotal Hall," with a Caretaker's house and an area of waste ground attached. The property was bought by my father, Mr. Side. My brother Arthur and I set to work and completely renewed the old flooring in the Hall, and in 1877 it was opened by my father as a Free-thought Hall. Lectures were given every Sunday and Tuesday, and dances were organized every Thursday, admission was 1d. The orchestra consisted of Mr. Vickery, pianist; Mr. Side, violinist; and a Harpist. We soon had a membership of over sixty, and not only did we teach them to waltz, but my father persuaded them to publicly proclaim their Atheism. Undoubtedly my father woke up the whole neighbourhood, and at a time when it was dangerous to acknowledge being a Free-thinker. Most of his customers listened with great interest to him discussing questions of the day, for he woke their whole being from a long slumbering. Mr. A. B. Moss had also been in trouble with the School Board, and was for a time prohibited lecturing on Sunday.

Among the many well-known speakers who were delighted to address the audience that filled the Hall every Sunday and Tuesday were Truelove, Standring (of the *Republican*), Mr. and Mrs. Harriet Law (of the *Secular Chronicle*), Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, Foote, Watts, Rose (of the *Secularist*), Dr. Aveling, Moss, Heaford, McSweeney, Hyatt, Symes, J. M. Robertson, and Holyoake. I have an idea that "Minnermus" was one of us in those days he writes, in the *Freethinker*, of so much that I can remember in his articles. I was in charge of the bookstall, and literature sold very well.

The Society progressed so well that some of the members suggested that a set of rules be considered, but my father was against this as he was of the opinion that it would mean the end of "our very happy congregation," another suggestion was that the Society should join the N.S.S. My father maintained that this was a question for the individual. Then came the open split with C. Watts over the Knowlton Pamphlet, *The Fruits of Philosophy*, which caused many of the members to break away. They acquired two buildings in New Church Road, Camberwell, in 1882, and thus was the Camberwell Branch, now the South London Branch, fairly launched. It had my father's best wishes and help, and will have mine, I trust, until I die. The Free-thought Hall in Walworth was ultimately sold to a Mrs. Hale (who guaranteed to cure "Wounds, Boils, and Bad Legs, etc."), the Hall is still standing. A Dr. Porter-Smith occupies one of the three houses that have been built beside the Hall, and the old Hall.

There was no charge for the seats in the old Hall, a collection being taken at the door to help pay for the lecturers, my father making up the deficit as needed. As was always the case Free-thought lecturers' pay was very poor, but I am sure that they were adequately repaid by the knowledge that they were furthering the cause of Free-thought.

I have often wondered what happened to the four busts of Paine and Voltaire that were presented to the Branch by Mr. Truelove of Holborn.

ERLE D. SIDE

Physicists like Jeans and Eddington have recently been at some pains to show that God is a mathematician. They have not used the best argument of all, which is that a mathematician is usually rather absent-minded.—E. S. P. Haynes, "Leaves from a Lawyer's Notebook."

Acid Drops

Mr. H. G. Wells, in a recent letter to the *Times*, says that he has been "attacked as a Materialist, although I am no more a Materialist than I am a Spiritualist. I am a Monist." We haven't any idea of what Mr. Wells understands by "Materialism," but it appears to us that he is nursing a conception of "matter" that was in vogue several generations ago, but is now discarded by all who appreciate the philosophical significance of the term. We suggest to him a closer study of the writings of such men as Professors Dewey and Santayana, and also a little more attention to Bentham's *Theory of Fictions*. If what Mr. Wells has written in the region of science does not involve Materialism then his speculations are almost wholly without value. Just as a hint we may repeat what we have said very often, namely, Materialism is not tied to any conception of "matter" that may at any time obtain. We know of no competent writing that contradicts this. And Mr. Wells should know better than to take the meaning of such a term from religious or semi-religious writers.

We continue to receive letters from many entering the army, complaining of the manner in which recruiting officials strive to secure a profession of some religious belief. One reader writes us that when he declined to enter himself as C. of E. he was told, "Well, it doesn't mean anything." Probably it does not to one who lacks a sense of self-respect but, to the man who declines to put his signature to a false statement, it means a lot. It is all the difference between proper self-respect and its absence. It did not mean anything to many whether they took the oath in a court, or went through a religious marriage, or went to church, or kept their mouths shut where unbelief was concerned. But it has meant a lot to the growth of mental integrity. Probably the same official would reply that mental self-respect doesn't mean anything either.

The Vicar of Melton Mowbray advises his congregation that "There are sure to be Sundays when all of us may find little cause for thanksgiving, that is thanking God for what he has given. But just on such Sundays we communicants can lead the others to thank God for what he has given." It is, we presume a religious version of "Thank you for nothing." We have said many a time that Christians and camels take their burdens kneeling, but one would have more respect for Christians if when they discover that God has done nothing for them they would at least refrain from thanking him. What will happen if God has wit enough to construe their thanksgiving in such circumstances as an exhibition of sarcasm?

The Lord's Day Observance Society, of which Sir Thomas Inskip is such a hearty supporter, is working hard to prevent Cinemas on Sunday for soldiers and for everyone else. People are being circularized all over the country urging people to write or wire their members in Parliament to "save Sunday." Telegrams are also sent—probably paid for from headquarters—and a large number of agents have been appointed in the Eastern Counties to organize an agitation. If these means fail, it is darkly hinted that "the Society will take other measures." There always seems plenty of money for this kind of idiocy.

Judge Burgis, at Manchester Conscientious Objectors' Tribunal, asked a clergyman who had described a man as "a Christian Pacifist": "What makes you think he is a Christian Pacifist?" To which the clergyman replied: "Well, he lives with his mother-in-law." . . . There seems to be a "catch" somewhere in this reply. The stage parson we know; also the music hall comedian who "works" the mother-in-law joke to death; and we can't decide which of the two this parson resembles most. If he was serious, he paid no compliment to the man's character, the wife's loyalty, or her mother's natural affection by ascribing their immunity from domestic "warfare" to Christianity.

Now that the Allies have been joined by Turkey, we hope our clerics will desist from their attempts to make the war a Holy War for Christ, or for any kind of Christian aims. In the last war we were striving, amongst other things, to destroy the Moslem power in Palestine and elsewhere (including the Dardanelles). Hitler may not be all that English Churchmen desire in every detail of orthodox English Christianity, but the State Church of Nazi Germany remains Christian, with far less interference and persecution than took place when our Henry VIII. established among us his form of Christianity. Our Moslem allies will find themselves more at home in our own ranks than if they had fought for Hitler. We have a mighty force of brave men of the Moslem religion. Neither Indian English nor Algerian French soldiers have any interest whatever in a war to defend or maintain the Cross of Christ.

A correspondent sends us a very long letter attacking the clergy for urging their followers, in these days, to subscribe funds for building new Churches. He asks us what is our opinion about it. Well, so far as we are concerned, while naturally regarding it as a sheer waste of money, and also that it is like asking a man to subscribe for chains that he will wear himself, we have no right to object to its being done. Our objection comes in when the clergy forces us and those like us to subscribe to the building and maintenance of Churches and Chapels, and to their maintenance after they are built. Otherwise Christians are quite legally, even morally, justified in spending their own money on churches—if they cannot find any better way of spending it.

We know the clergy are very ready to tell their dupes that they do not receive public money. But that is only one of those Christian truths that are not easily separated from an ordinary lie. Every church and chapel, and place of religious meeting, is free from taxation, and it does not require much intelligence to realize that the millions which would be paid by religious organizations in the shape of rates and taxes are really in the nature of a forced contribution from the public purse. We may add that the power of organized religion in this country is indicated by the fact that not a single political party dare advocate the abolition of this huge annual grant for upkeep of the opinions of a section of the community.

We quite believe that more English people than Americans will be "thrilled" by the news that President Roosevelt attended service in the English Church where King George worshipped when in the United States. More, we are willing to wager that if that particular seat could be transported to Westminster Abbey, and a charge of one guinea per head made to permit five minutes sitting on it, there would be huge lines of men and women waiting to pay their guineas; and a further sum might be charged for a certificate that A. B. or C. D. had actually sat in that seat. This would be treasured in families, and counted to them for greatness. We hand this suggestion to Sir John Simon as a source of revenue he might overlook.

One American reporter notes that Roosevelt prayed, with the rest of the congregation, that King George may "vanquish and overcome all his enemies." We hardly think that anyone either in this country or in the United States will charge the President with a breach of neutrality. Nay, if that charge were brought we feel quite certain that both the American and the British clergy would be among the first to say that this made no difference whatever to the outcome of the war, and that so long as we can secure supplies of war material from America we can view quite calmly the conclusion of anyone that the prayers in this American Church will not matter. The one good thing about it is that the incident may awaken the attention of many to the essentially humbugging character of prayer.

Canterbury Cathedral offers a striking proof of the complete dependence which Christians place in the power

of prayer. Mr. Lionel Hale, writes in the *News-Chronicle* :—

The nave is filled 6ft. high with earth. Miniature railway lines, horses, carts and lorries have been brought in to haul the earth up to the Choir, where it is reinforced with steel girders to protect the Norman crypt beneath.

Here the cathedral's jewelled treasures and the old stained-glass, which has been taken out of the windows, are stored in vast earth-filled packing-cases. Outside the pigeons flutter round the boarded windows.

I found, after running into rope barriers and then into vergers, that all of the cathedral that was open was the crypt and the Martyrdom Chapel (which commemorates the murder of Becket).

The crypt, with its packing-cases and somewhat pier-like strings of light bulbs in little cheap shades, is obviously an admirable shelter, but presents (I allow) no very devotional aspect. This probably encourages a group of guides and sidemen to sit chattily discussing Hitler.

“Dr.” Frank Buchman, the leader of the Oxford Exhibitionists, has been telling the world—from the U.S.A.—that people are suffering now because they have not listened to the word of God—as given by Buchman, and for not subscribing to the Oxford Movement. It was Dr. Buchman who, only the other day was reported as having publicly thanked God for Hitler. We wonder why he is remaining silent concerning this darling of the Gods—and Buchman.

Bishop Hensley Henson writes in the *Sunday Times* on “Belief in Divine Guidance.” He asks, “Is it possible reasonably to believe in a particular Providence?” While not exactly answering—with any directness—his own conundrum, he seems to arrive at the conclusion Dean Church once expressed in the words: “It cannot be reasonably disregarded.” We will not trouble to point out the many flaws in so dubious and indefinite a conclusion, if one can neither believe nor disregard a belief. Bishop Henson, however, wobbles between these two positions, quotes the words of Christ and His Apostles, all of whom, says Dr. Henson, “taught quite plainly the doctrine of particular Providence.” What then does it matter if the “doctrine” is completely and always contradicted by the facts of life? Dr. Henson had better join the Fundamentalists and cease parading a non-existent modernism.

A Catholic reviewer of M. J. Maritain's book *Anti-Semitism*, says :—

That the Catholic Church has ever been a protector of the persecuted race (a few individuals apart) is quite true. But Catholic thought goes much further than that. As M. Maritain shows, Jewry is a *corpus mysticum* which, superseded by the Church of Christ, incurs equally with the latter the hatred of a paganized world. And after all, Judaism is the ancestor of Christianity, and, as the Canon of the Mass says, Abraham is “our Patriarch.” Catholicism can have no fellowship with anti-Semitism.

This little extract shows how “the Church of Christ” is feeling the pinch. The statement is a good example of the art of lying, in which the Catholic Church is so proficient. We cannot recall any set decree of the Pope that Jews should be persecuted, but the Inquisition was as much part of the Church as anything that existed for many centuries, and there is no question as to the persecution of the Jews by it. And in any case the persecution of the Jew was a settled feature of Roman Catholic times and of Roman Catholic rulers. Nor are we aware that this persecution was ever officially condemned by the Church.

We should like this particular reviewer to explain away the undisputed fact that outbreaks of Jew-baiting were almost always led by fervent and prominent Christian priests. We invite this exponent of Roman Catholicism to read chapters two to seventeen of Vol. IV. of the classic history of the Jews, by Graetz. Perhaps he may have read them; but that would never stop a Roman Catholic propagandist from telling a lie.

Canon Tupper Carey has come all the way from Monte Carlo, where he “officiates,” to “show the love of God to men.” It is just as well that this much-talked of “love of God” should be “shown” occasionally. Probably at Monte Carlo it is easier to demonstrate it than in Poland. The Canon is a great believer in his own profession. Quoting the text: “Thy priests shall be clothed in righteousness,” Dr. Carey assures us that “this is absolutely true.” We are afraid that some of the clergy we have met would look positively naked

If in Thy Courts my glorious dress
Shall be the garment of Thy righteousness.

The Canon advertises his “home town” thus :—

I have learnt more about the fundamentals of religion in nine years at Monte Carlo than in the whole of the rest of my ministry.

As we do not know what he has learnt anywhere we cannot calculate the value of a Monte Carlo education, but we know that many gamblers have learnt as much in jail as in Monte Carlo.

Amongst the minor humours of the war we must record the Archbishop of Canterbury's Sermon when dedicating the Chapel of St Barnabas. He alluded to the A.R.P. precautions, and produced this piece of personal experience :—

“In my own garden at Lambeth Palace,” he said, “are men who supply the balloon barrage, and one of the balloons rises and descends every day in the garden. The men are good enough to call it the ‘archblimp.’”

Although the Archbishop of Canterbury does not preach in his own big garden, it is interesting to know that sufficient “gas” is available to refill daily an “archblimp.” We hope the Archbishop's gas will prove so satisfactory that the clergy may be called upon to float thousands of barrage balloons and thus make worthier use of the gas at present wasted in silly sermons.

Twenty Five Years Ago

ONCE our animal passions are roused, our intelligence becomes their slave, and we fight on a scale of brutality beyond the reach of lower animals, and the stronger, better-equipped party invariably comes out on top. It is a fundamental error to imagine that the right always wins. It is might, skilfully applied, that generally carries the day; and might is not always at the disposal of right.

Fifty Years Ago

VARIOUS congregations have placed their churches at Talmage's service, their friendliness in this respect being not lessened by the self-evident fact that he would prove a great attraction and would materially assist the church he favoured with his extravagant sermons. A burnt-out preacher, and the most popular preacher amongst the Christian worshippers, would draw a splendid congregation. Talmage is so affected by these offers from the various sects that he declares that “A millenium has come.” He says, “The lion and the lamb lie down together, and the tiger eats straw like an ox.” This may be accepted as metaphorically true to some extent, for the sects are no longer allowed to prey upon each other as formerly; but I should like some Christian friend to explain which sect is to be regarded as the lion, and which the lamb, and still more which is the treacherous, bloodthirsty and insatiable tiger, and what is the straw which it now eats instead of its natural food, and how long the tiger will maintain its vitality on such poor and unsuitable nourishment.

The Freethinker November 17, 1889

To get a New Subscriber is to make a New Friend

THE FREETHINKER

FOUNDED BY G. W. FOOTE

61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4

Telephone No.: CENTRAL 2412.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- J. LUCAS.—Your letter—after regular reading of the *Freethinker* for ten years—is very encouraging.
- F. LAWES.—The document was returned on November 9. We hope it has reached you safely.
- F. WARBURTON.—Taking an extra copy of the *Freethinker* for use among outsiders is a very good way of making them insiders. It is a practical way of helping.
- H. MANLEY (not a regular reader, we imagine) writes us from Gloucester, enquiring if there is no future life, what justification is there for living. If Mr. Manley contracts the habit of writing us letters as lengthy as the one before us, we decline to provide any excuse for his doing so.
- S. GRIFFIN.—Thanks for sending, but regret we are unable to use.
- E. PARIENTE.—It will be published at as early a date as is possible. Travelling and other matters connected with the movement are eating into what time we can give to other writing. Thanks for what you are doing to secure subscribers, also for addresses sent.
- R. LEWIS.—Copies being sent.
- S. DAWSON.—Of course the whole of the organism is involved in every action, but one has to isolate parts in order to consider the function of that part.
- D. EVANS.—Pleased you find the *Freethinker* as interesting. We appreciate the confession of your friend that his early training in religion has left a remnant of superstition in his thinking, but the recognition of the fact is a great step. We could name plenty of men and women who are in the same position, but who are quite unaware of it.
- J. H. ELLIS.—We agree with you that the reply was rather incoherent, but one must allow for the situation, and the natural unreadiness of many people to put their thoughts, or their desires, into exact language.
- J. LILLICRAP, C. F. BUDGE, G. TAYLOR and D. EVANS.—Thanks for addresses of likely new readers; paper sent for four weeks.
- C. MCCALL.—Many thanks for good wishes.
- W. MARCHANT.—Your confidence that "the high standard of the *Freethinker* will never be lowered" is very flattering. We hope it never will.
- W. A. WILLIAMS (Birkenhead).—Very much obliged for your interest and your suggestion, but we must let the matter rest where it is for the present.

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.

Ignorance is the mother of prejudice, whether among nations or individuals.—John Bright

Sugar Plums

To-day (November 19) Mr. Cohen will visit Manchester and will speak in the Picture House, Market Street. The meeting will be held in the afternoon, commencing at 3 o'clock. The local Branch is looking forward to the usual good meeting, in spite of war conditions. We hope there will be no disappointment.

On Sunday next (November 26) Mr. Cohen will lecture in the Central Hall, Bath Street, Glasgow. It will be an afternoon meeting, commencing at 3 o'clock. Doors open at 2.30. Tickets for the meeting are available at Grant's Educational Book Shop and Collett's Bookshop, Queen Street. We advise early arrival for visitors, as the hall is not so large as the one in which Mr. Cohen usually speaks. Subject of lecture "Fifty Years of Free-thought."

The N.S.S. Annual Dinner had been fixed for January 13. Owing to the complete blackout, and the difficulties and dangers of travelling in the darkness—up to the present far more dangerous than enemy raids—the N.S.S. Executive at its last meeting decided on postponing the Dinner to a later date. The exact date will be decided by circumstances, but ample notice will be given.

Mr. H. Pollard, in the course of a letter expressing his appreciation of the *Freethinker*, strikes a note that is worth bearing in mind in existing circumstances:—

The rapidly increasing number of restrictions on personal liberty to-day should be closely watched. Already we have reached the stage where unnecessary ones are being enforced. Should it not fall to Freethinkers individually, and where possible as a body, to do all they can to have all unnecessary restrictions removed? An appeal from you on these lines would, I think, have the required effect. My own experience so far has been that the majority of people are being so well regimented and drilled that they will accept anything. Freethinkers alone have probably sufficient strength of mind to challenge such authority.

We have repeatedly pointed out that the great danger of to-day is this regimentation of life. The tendency of things is towards this from the disciplining of political groups up to the growth of governmental orders. This is developing a type of mind that accepts orders because they are orders. The war has simply intensified this general tendency. What this ultimately leads to we may see in the Germany of to-day. We must have Governments, but the only thing that will keep Governments—whatever their colour may be—in order is the existence of an alert, intelligent, and critical public.

It is beginning to look unlikely that Mr. Cohen will be able to finish his promised autobiography this side of Christmas. There are already in print about 180 pages of the work, but that represents only about three-fourths of the whole, and of late there have been many unexpected calls on his time. But it will be published as soon as possible.

The following reaches us as the experience of one who is in the Army, and who insisted (successfully) in being registered as an Atheist:—

On Sunday mornings the sergeant invites twenty-five men to "fall out" to attend church parade.

As no movement takes place he then hawls: I want twenty-five men; jump to it, and immediately the whole company volunteers for the parade, leaving the Atheist alone, who is put on fatigue, which is usually cancelled. It is then necessary for the sergeant to choose his twenty-five from the volunteers.

After breakfast these twenty-five scout around to find substitutes; these deputies can usually be found, the price is a shilling for a deputy paid by the volunteer. Asked why they charge a shilling, I am told it is recognized in the army, the deputy is usually hard up, and the extra shilling (which is cash down) enables him to obtain an extra pint at night or a packet of fags.

"Jubilee Freethinker Fund"

THERE is just eleven days before the date given for the close of this Fund, and we see no great difficulty in it reaching £500 by then. Bar accidents, against which hardly anyone can guard, we have made arrangements for an adequate supply of paper for a reasonable period. But owing to the prevailing conditions part of this supply can only be invoiced at current prices at time of delivery, which, again, cannot be stated beforehand. We hope that the top price we shall have to pay will not be more than double that of, say three months ago, but time will tell.

As we explained when inviting our friends to share the financial burden, there has been a recurring annual deficit for some years, and we were waiting for that turn of fortune to wipe that off. But with the outbreak of war we were compelled to put our pride in our pocket and act as we did. The paper must always come first. The welfare of the militant Freethought movement depends upon that, and we hope that we may be trusted to see that this is not endangered through any act of ours.

We could have no doubt of this after the many letters we have received. Some are too flattering to permit of reprinting. Some cynic said that it is in times of trouble that one discovers the value of one's friends. We have found it so, but in a better sense than was intended by the author of it. I would like to answer many of these personally, but as things are they must take my appreciation for granted.

Mr. C. L. Stanford in forwarding his contribution says he is willing to subscribe 10s. monthly "for the duration," and suggests that one hundred others may feel inclined to do likewise. We thank Mr. Stanford for his offer, but we have got over the hurdle of the first year, and, we hope, the second also, and so must let the matter rest where it is.

E. C. writes us "to whom the continuance of our brave and sane little paper means a clear and cheerful mind for the future." Mr. E. Wall subscribes as "one who owes to the paper and its editor much more than money can hope to pay, and must therefore remain over your debtor." Mr. A. H. Millward says, "Please do not measure my appreciation and admiration of the *Freethinker* and its editor by the amount of my contribution. I hope you will keep your end up for many years yet." W. C. Bishop says he has paid for a copy of the paper for his local free library for twenty-five years. Thanks, it is an excellent way of showing one's appreciation. J. E. Magness says that his father and himself have read the *Freethinker* since its first number. As a boy he remembered meeting Charles Bradlaugh, and later in life G. W. Foote. That is an excellent record. Mr. Magness should be religion proof by this time.

A final excerpt from a letter by Mr. B. Foster must conclude our extracts this week. "Christianity found man a rising animal, and with its misguided efforts has left the beast active. Freethought alone sees the first great need is that of getting the animal out of man, and it is no flattery to say that your efforts have gone very far indeed in this direction. Freethought has indeed been more than fortunate in having so great ability so ably and generously placed at its service. One's greatest wishes can only be that health and strength may be yours so that service and example will be ours until less troublesome times prevail." We should be rather less than human if such letters did not strengthen our determination to try and live up to expectations.

Previously acknowledged, £377 3s. 6d.; E. Johnson, £2; Ivor Rowlands, £1 C. Moon, 5s.; Mr. & Mrs. Fowler, 5s.; A. Brooks, 2s.; J. Hardy, 10s.; Mr. &

Mrs. W. Blaney, £1; J. Lillicrap, 5s.; G. H. Wood, £1; F. Warburton, 10s.; Edwin Hall, £1 1s.; J. Lucas, 2s. 6d.; F. P. Corrigan, £1 1s.; G. W. Maud, 2s. 6d.; E. Chidley, 10s.; H. Anslow, 10s.; A. E. Draper, 5s.; C. L. Stanford, 10s.; National Secular Society £25; Secular Society Ltd., £25; W. A. Rose, £3 3s.; G. Horowitz, 10s. 6d.; D. L. Webster, 2s. 6d.; Miss L. Webster, 2s. 6d.; F. Holday, 5s.; A. West, 2s.; W. Marchant, 10s.; Nemo, 10s.; H. Walters, 1s.; W. Turner, 1s.; W. Davies, 1s.; W. A. Williams, 1s.; Mr. & Mrs. C. McCall, 10s.; C. McCall, Jr., 5s.; Four Members of Nelson N.S.S. Branch (per Rennie Hartley), £1; Miss V. I. Mitchell, 1s. 6d. Total, £445 8s. 6d.

The above represent sums received up to and including November 13. We shall be obliged if errors either in names or amounts are pointed out.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Religion and Spiritualism

II.

It is extraordinary to find how very anxious are so many people to grasp at the shadow of religion while demolishing its substance. Desperate attempts are always being made to hold on to "something"—call it what you will—but, for heaven's sake, call it, if possible, God, or the Absolute, or the Unknowable, or even "some religion." Here is an obviously childish and absurd story of a god born of a virgin, who was executed, and who rose again, and we find many people, who really have emancipated themselves from the throes of credulity and superstition, tragically trying to prove that there must be "something in it."

We may never know the literal origin of such a religion as Christianity, but we can discover quite a deal about its roots. In essence it is much the same as a dozen pagan religions, with almost the same puerile kind of story and hero. That the pagan gods are just myths is admitted by every competent investigator; but some of these people hedge when it comes to Jesus. Even Sir James Frazer felt it incumbent to add in a volume of the *Golden Bough*, a special note on the Christian deity claiming for him a real existence, but not, of course, as a god. He did not, however, claim a real existence for the Devil even to the extent of his not being a real Devil. But why? If a man was at the back of Jesus the God, why should a man not have been at the back of the Devil? The evidence for the existence of the Devil given in the New Testament is surely as strong as that given for Jesus. In his book the *Psychic Stream*, Mr. Findlay considers the belief in the reality of the Devil, his demons, and Hell, as an error, but I am not quite clear why. If a spirit or an etheric world exists, why should not the Devil be one of those spirits who obstinately refuse to be good, and who is in consequence "earth-bound" in some way? Surely all the etheric beings are not sweet angels? If, as Mr. Findlay believes, Jesus returned after his death as a spirit, why does he not believe that the Devil is a similar apparition?

He also believes in levitation, calling several alleged levitations authentic. In that case there can be nothing absurd in the levitation of the Devil with Jesus in his arms in full view of the inhabitants of Jerusalem? Surely the cases of healing the sick by Jesus can be truly explained by his exorcising real devils from the sick people? Yet—however much time is devoted to writing books to show that there simply must have

been a Jesus—I cannot recall one from the Rationalist point of view, trying to prove that there must have been a Devil. Exactly why? If Spiritualism can explain Jesus, why cannot it explain that equally authentic being, the Devil? I hope that I am making it quite clear that in this I do not mean a “familiar spirit,” but the being who is known as the Devil—the real one, just as Jesus is known as the real or only Son of God.

For the rest we can admit that throughout the ages the “authorities” have always been very much down on what Mr. Findlay would call psychic phenomena. This was due partly to fear, and partly to the determination of priests of all religions refusing to allow anybody but those in the inner circle to poach upon their preserves. A priest is not a priest unless he has been touched in Apostolic succession by those, under God, who have the right to do so. For them psychic phenomena may be right or wrong according to its being attributed to the Lord or to the Devil. People who are converted at a revival meeting, and who writhe and scream on the floor are, of course, possessed of the Holy Ghost; if, however, they do the same performance, not at a revival meeting, but at a seance, it is attributed at once to the Devil by Church authorities, and in former times was punishable by all sorts of penalties, including burning at the stake. No one, as far as I can remember, was ever burnt at the stake for being, in the opinion of the Church possessed by the Holy Ghost. To a Materialist like myself there seems no difference whatever in the two performances, and I hope I will be pardoned if I fail to see anything in the phenomena but some mental illness. Mr. Findlay thinks that etheric beings do take possession of the body of persons who thus become mediums. I say that these persons are probably ill—though exactly what to call the illness is not my job.

That Christianity is just as much a religion of Devils as of Gods has been admitted by many writers. Take away his Satanic Majesty and you deprive the religion of almost as much as if you took away Jesus. If the Devil in the guise of a serpent had not tempted Eve and caused Adam to sin, there would have been no need of a Saviour; and how can anyone even think of Christianity Saviourless? It is indeed unthinkable.

I am therefore rather disappointed at the rather cursory treatment of the Devil in the *Psychic Stream*. I do think he ought to have had as big a share in the book as Jesus, especially as Mr. Findlay had such a splendid chance of rehabilitating him from the mean aspersions of pious Christians. Mr. Findlay has tried to save Jesus, in fact—at least in his opinion—from the non-existence theory of Robertson, Taylor, and Dupuis. He has shown how very often when his disciples wrote about his “reappearance” after death, they did not see or could not understand that this was merely an apparition. Mr. Findlay might have saved the Devil in the same way, especially as, if he really never existed, there was not much point in Jesus becoming a Saviour.

Mr. Findlay might justly urge that he does not believe that Jesus was ever a Saviour, that all he is concerned with is explaining why the writers of the Gospels are so insistent as to the reappearances of Jesus after he was crucified and put into his grave. But then how would he explain the resurrection of all the saints who had been buried up to the time of the Crucifixion, and who appeared after the Resurrection to the people of Jerusalem? Were they also just apparitions? Had they just arrived from the etheric universe? Or is the story just one added for effect?

My point is that these stories of the returned

Saviour, Gods or Saints, are just specimens of the “wishful” hopes of their disciples, and that it is no evidence whatever of the stories having a substratum of truth because they have been written up in Gospels, Sagas, or fairy tales. I see no reason to believe in the return of Jesus after his death because the Gospels say so, than in the return of the governor who was killed by Don Juan. If, as I hold, there never was a Jesus Christ as told in the Gospels, there could never have been his apparition. And it seems to me that those who hold that there was a real Jesus should prove it first.

Mr. Findlay thinks that what his disciples saw was the apparition of Jesus just as people see apparitions now; and that this etheric appearance gave way slowly to the belief that what was actually seen was his physical body. As Jesus had in the meantime become a God, it was natural to assume that he could never have been killed. Then, mistaken notions as to the apparition were written down, and so we get the details of the physical Resurrection, the Gospels being the confused recitals of actual happenings.

I do not believe a word of this. I see no more reason to believe the Gospel stories than those told of other gods, and I refuse to believe that Osiris, Horus, Adonis, and the others were real men. I have indeed the very greatest doubts that a single incident related in the Gospels ever took place, though perhaps my own explanation would be as hard to swallow as the Gospels themselves.

But if any reader really wants to see how the subject of religion and spiritualism can be treated in very full detail, I can heartily recommend the *Psychic Stream*. Mr. Findlay is no Christian though he tries hard to save something from the Christian wreck. But, throughout his book, he is moved by the spirit of toleration, and he has nothing but loathing for persecution, injustice, and inhumanity.

He finishes with “As we sow, so shall we reap.” It may be so, but I doubt it. History records the worst of tyrants dying peacefully in bed, and nothing is known of any punishment in the hereafter. For dead men never tell tales.

H. CUTNER

Then and Now

[It has been suggested that some of the articles which we published at the beginning of the war of 1914 would be applicable to-day. We have adopted the suggestion.]

No one can possibly feel a greater admiration than ourselves for the undoubted devotion, courage, and self-sacrifice exhibited by many thousands of men—and women—in all the belligerent countries since the outbreak of war. Never mind how ill-directed or mistaken one may believe that enthusiasm to be, it is there; and the courage and enthusiasm which prompts a man to offer the supreme sacrifice of himself must always remain one of the most valuable of social assets. That, combined with the pugnacity of man, and in alliance with the gregarious instinct which lies at the base of social life, is the condition of progress; and if these qualities also provide the material for physical warfare of the kind that now rages, we ought not to deny their essentially useful nature because they are expended in a destructive rather than in a constructive direction. The courage that leads thousands to face enemy shells is not different from—it is identical with—the courage that sends the miner down the wrecked pit shaft to rescue a brother-workman from a hideous death. The sense of duty which nerved men

to face the horrors of disease and death in Gallipoli is identical with the devotion which leads others to dare the ravages of disease in the hope of discovering an effective antidote. In all cases the difference is not in the nature of the qualities displayed, but in the end to which they are directed.

Bearing this in mind, and disregarding much that is said by mere politicians and hand-to-mouth statesmen, we may say that the real question facing the world is not the crushing, or subordination, or muzzling of this or that nation. That may be done, and, instead of ending war, may do no more than provide the material for future outbreaks. The great question that will face the world after the War—as is, in fact, faced the world before the War—will be, to use an expression of the late William James, to find a moral equivalent for war. We cannot, nor ought we to desire to, destroy the love of adventure, the enthusiasm of the herd; the courage, or even the pugnacity, without which war would be impossible. But we can seek to harness these qualities in such a manner that they shall be expended for the common benefit, instead of being spent in mutual and profitless destruction. "Peace," said Milton, "has her victories no less renowned than war," and it cannot remain eternally true that no better outlet for the patriotism, the courage, and devotion of a nation can be found than the destruction of some other nation. Conflict in human life there has always been. Conflict of some kind there will continue to be. It is not really a question of ending warfare; it is a question of which kind of warfare is to continue. The permanent issue is not between war and peace, but between different kinds of warfare.

The War has at least shown that all the talk of the nations of Europe being effete, decadent, etc., is what many of us knew it to be all along, so much rubbish. There is no such thing as an organically worn-out race. A nation may have its seasons of greater or lesser vigour. It may live under institutions and conditions that depress it and rob it of its vigour for a time. But modify these, and the "effete" nation grows again, as the plant dying for want of nourishment recovers its vitality under scientific culture. The "effete" Latin race astonishes the world by the enthusiasm of its warfare and the heroic vigour of its resistance. "The nation of shopkeepers" raises an army of six millions, and goes to war with a confidence and readiness hard to beat. There is plenty of courage and enthusiasm in the world; it is there waiting to be used for more worthy and permanently useful purposes. It is expended on warfare, which destroys in a month that which it has taken centuries to build. And one cause of its being so expended is that the "civilized" social life of the world has not yet learned to provide outlets for this pugnacious energy, which should bring benefits to the whole of the race.

Hundreds of thousands of men to-day dread being called "slackers" or "shirkers." The nation is at war, and they desire to "do their bit." That is so much to the good; but the pity of it! In war they are willing, eager even, to shoulder their part of the common burden. But in times of peace? How many of them are ready to sacrifice then? How keen then is the consciousness of a common duty, and the readiness to sacrifice everything in its discharge? It is a melancholy reflection that in times of peace the vast majority of these people think little and care less about the general welfare—otherwise things would surely be better than they are. There is no need to blame individuals for this. Their attitude is the outcome of the prevailing tone and ideals. It is a social fault more than an individual one. European civilization is still in the stage when the soldier is regarded as the most essential element to its preserva-

tion, it is in connexion with military effort that our most fervent praise is given, in connexion with military effort that the importance of courage and enthusiasm and organization are most clearly realized. In other words, man's courage for war is expended on militarism because the social sense has not yet developed far enough to see that a higher and better warfare is needed.

An illustration of this is to hand from a speech delivered by the Bishop of London the other day. God was using this nation, he said, and the War was being utilized by Him to call attention to our national sins before the War. Before the War we were on the verge of a conflict in Ireland, a great industrial struggle was at hand, and there was strife between men and women over the vote. All this had been stopped in consequence of a great national need. But was there any real advance here? The struggle for the vote, for better conditions and payment for labour, for a better form of government in Ireland, was at least an expenditure of energy and enthusiasm on plans of social reconstruction, and these questions will have to be dealt with when the present War is ended. But the Bishop's social consciousness is such, that while he can see good in this wholesale destruction of human life and possessions, because we are to be the victors, he can see only evil in the conflict of social ideals, *which is infinitely the higher warfare of the two*. However unavoidable, there is something essentially evil about military warfare. And however disturbing, there is something essentially healthy about a conflict of social theories and ideals, since it is along this line that progress is achieved. As I have already indicated, it is entirely a question of whether we expend the fighting qualities of man on the physical plane of military activity, which is entirely destructive; or whether it is expended on the plane of intellectual warfare, which is essentially purificatory and constructive.

This much must be granted to Bernhardt, or Kitchener, or Roosevelt, or any other militarist. When they claim that conflict is necessary to the health of a people, they are expressing a truth. But they go wrong in assuming that military conflict is the kind needed. It is not. We need, as James says, a moral equivalent for war. There is nothing essentially wrong in fighting—provided we fight the right sort of enemy, with the right sort of weapons. And the task before the world is to use the fighting spirit of the race to the right end. It should not be difficult to indicate that end. There is the whole field of adventurous discovery in the ice-fields of the North and South, and in the deserts and forests of Africa and Asia. There is the world of scientific research which calls for rare qualities of courage and perseverance. And nearer home there is the necessity for fighting disease, and vice, and demoralizing social conditions. In the thousand and one tasks of science, education, medicine, etc., there is ample scope for all the qualities expended in—not created by—military warfare. And while these remain with us, there need be no fear that the courage of man will decay or the fibre of the race grow slack.

Here, then, is that moral equivalent for war which William James was seeking. It is here crying to be used, if we will but see it. An American writer has said that this War has written across the face of European civilization the word "Failure." I do not believe it. The march of civilization is arrested for a time, but it will resume, and its upward movement will be secured when we have replaced the ideal of conquest, of subordinations, of military greatness, with others of a more worthy character. And this is almost entirely a matter of social education. Beginning with the children, we might, instead of giving

them a list of national heroes in the shape of kings and fighting men, dwell upon the discoverers, the writers, the scientists, the reformers, who have really given to the nation most of what it possesses worth having. Attention could be called, both with children and youths, to the—at present—unrecorded heroisms and sacrifices of daily life; to the patient courage of the mother who labours day after day to provide her children in food and clothing; to the more dashing courage of sailor, fireman, or miner; to the enthusiasm for duty which inspires the social reformer; to the sacrifices that good men and women have always been ready to make for their ideals. There is no need to ignore the soldier, so long as he is necessary, but there is no need for him to occupy the whole of the stage. Human nature is plastic, it seeks that which is held up to it as worthy the seeking, and a generation or two brought up in an environment which placed the emphasis on intellectual conflict rather than on physical force, could not fail to initiate a profound revolution in human history. The moral equivalent for war is here at hand; it involves no transformation of human nature, only a re-direction to its energies. Man will still remain, he has always been a fighting animal, but it will be a fight against all that makes for the harm of the race, rather than against that which makes for its advancement.

CHAPMAN COHEN

Correspondence

NATURE OR NURTURE?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER"

SIR,—As Mr. Thornewell says, he has perhaps misunderstood my purpose, for I began by saying I intended to "match them (Hogben and Haldane) with other learned investigators." He is also at a self-imposed disadvantage in commenting before the completion of the sequence, as the article on Heredity and Mind, written before the appearance of his letter, will show.

Moreover, if I wish to champion the cause of Nature and Nurture I shall not be unwilling to lend him Haldane, for the latter makes so many important concessions. It is not so much in their capacity as scientists, but as Left-wing politicians, that Haldane and Hogben advise caution re eugenic reform, which they do *not oppose altogether*. If Dr. Gray does not make these facts clear the fault is not mine.

Mr. Thornewell is cautious enough to recognize that Dr. Gray's "much more" (par. 4) need not mean "a great deal," and in the light of known facts it does not even indicate a small amount. His other authority, not particularly eminent, refers to psychological *make-up*, but we are not discussing the actual contents of the mind, the customs and culture-standards and social habits which Dr. Anastasi is speaking of. These are co-operative, not individual, products. We are able to observe more than our ancestors, not because we are taller, but because we stand on their shoulders.

G. H. TAYLOR

MORE ABOUT AGNOSTICISM

SIR,—I very much sympathize with Chapman Cohen in his attempt to reply to John Rowlands. To conceive the unconceivable requires more than the use of highly-coloured glasses. Of course you will remember the old Scotchman's definition of Metaphysics.

When the man that's listening disnae ken what the man that talking is talking aboot, and when the man that's talking disnae ken what he himself is talking aboot, that Metapheesics. On one occasion the parish priest asked me if I could conceive of this world operating without some supernatural being to con-

trol it. I replied, "It is easier for me to conceive of this UNIVERSE operating through the action and interaction of Natural Forces than to conceive of any being big enough or strong enough to pull the strings." And that's that. I remember on one occasion discussing the theory of justification of Eternal Punishment with an old Irishman. I said that perhaps the soul of the condemned person might say to the almighty that when he had sinned he didn't know. And do you know what the almighty will say to him. He'll say, Hell to your soul; you know now, you know now, you know now!

J. MCCORRISKEN, SENR.

SIR,—With all respects to your customary clarity of expression, I must confess that I am at a loss to understand what to me is a masterpiece of evasion in your reply to Mr. John Rowland's question—"Do you believe that the universe was created or set going by a personal power?"

To me the question seems perfectly simple and straightforward, and as an Atheist I have not the slightest difficulty or hesitation in answering it with a plain and decisive negative. I assure both you and Mr. Rowland that there is no personal power whatever behind the universe for the very simple and sufficient reason that the universe has no behind. This may be a case of teaching one's grandfather to suck eggs, but I can't help that. It is a simple and effective answer, and the only one that any Atheist could or would give. This may appear to savour somewhat of dogmatism, but it is in appearance only, and anyhow the position obviously calls for it!

A. HANSON

THE WAR

SIR,—Before the Simmons-Lindsay controversy develops any further, as a reader for over 25 years, I would like to make a few observations which may prevent quite a lot of ink-slinging.

In the first place the question of right and wrong in relation to the war is one with regard to which *discussion is useless*. The Governments of all three countries concerned in their wisdom have condemned all men of military age to enter the respective armies if and when called upon. Therefore one may say that the man power of these three countries is "Gunfodder at birth."

Now whatever my opinion of the struggle may be, this does not interest the Government who simply order me to do their bidding, and who would send me to any part of the world to shoot anyone with whom they were in disagreement.

I agree that the propaganda departments of the belligerent nations are working overtime to justify participation in the war to their several populations, but such "idealism" is merely to bolster up their actions.

In these circumstances my two sons and I, seeing that our lives are imperilled, can only take up one attitude, that of conscientious objection to killing people with whom we have no quarrel, and with whom in the past we have associated in an effort to make a better and brighter world. That we have failed does not affect our determination not to "pull the chestnuts out of the fire" in the interest of politicians whom we have always mistrusted. It is possible that given a fair opportunity none of the Governments at present at war would be returned to power on a democratic vote. One thing we are thankful for. We have not been favoured with a poster reiterating that hoary old lie, "A grateful country will never forget you."

T. D. SMITH

SIR,—When two brilliant intellects commence to argue about Force and Ideas, the lay mind is loth to interfere.

But it can notice how one brilliant intellect can take advantage of an understandable "slip up" on the part of the other.

When Jack Lindsay says we *cannot* fight ideas with force, undoubtedly he meant we cannot successfully fight

by physical weapons those ideas we deserve to be accepted, therefore, we ought not.

But, even I, question Bayard Simmons' rendering of the morality of the fight for ideas.

And I take leave to assert that one does not physically fight for an idea, one merely fights for the materialistic ultimate contained in the idea.

Therefore, I see Jack Lindsay as being perfectly right, and his remarks in this connexion can be amplified into, "one cannot, one should not, and one does not fight ideas with force, and if one tries to do so, one is not likely to be successful."

It would depend, seemingly, on whether one accepts physical force as the correct basis for an arrangement of what is termed human morality. If we do so accept it as a basis of settlement, we negative the idea of the force of goodness and truth in relation to human harmony.

I contend that all that which is good which is true, which is harmonious, which aims at equity, cannot and ought not to be by force imposed.

Ideas of this kind *should*, I was nearly writing *must* be accepted by the human mind without the application of physical force, otherwise they lose in merit.

It may be accepted by Mr. Simmons therefore, that in the main, our activities for good, in the way of ideas, are not expected to be of much benefit to us, and when we desire to use physical force in order to express them, we are stepping out of our function.

The main feature of good ideas is the abolition of physical force. To use force to impose them is creating an absurd paradox which defeats the object of humanists.

A. SELLS

P.S.—There still remains the condition of *defending* one's ideas by force.

Obituary

HENRY WEST

ON November 7 the remains of Henry West were cremated at the City of London Crematorium, Manor Park, London, E. In his 79th year death took place after a period of indifferent health. For the greater part of his life his interest was in the Freethought movement, and he remained a regular reader of the *Freethinker* until his death. An outstanding feature was the courage with which he faced the misfortune of ill-health without complaining, and the firmness of his Freethought principles. Before an assembly of members of the family a Secular Service was read, and after the cremation the ashes were scattered—R.H.R.

National Secular Society

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 12, 1930

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

Also present: Messrs. Clifton, Elstob, Preece, Seibert, Ebury, Horowitz, Griffiths, Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Quinton, and the Secretary.

Minutes of previous meeting read and accepted. Monthly Financial Statement presented. New members admitted to the Southend Branch, and Parent Society. Communications from Southend, Birkenhead and Burnley Branches were dealt with and instructions given. Reports of correspondence with the War Office and Air Ministry on the question of the acceptance of a man's own statement of non-religious belief on joining the forces were received, and the assurance given by the War Office that such a statement would be accepted was noted. £25 was voted as a contribution to the "Jubilee Freethinker Fund." It was decided to postpone the Annual Dinner to a later date in view of the uncertainty of details bearing upon it.

The next meeting of the Executive was fixed for Sunday, December 17, and the proceedings closed.

R. H. ROSETTI,

General Secretary

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

OUTDOOR

KINGSTON BRANCH N.S.S. (Market Place) : 6.0, A Lecture.

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

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park) : 12 noon until 6 p.m. Various Speakers.

INDOOR

NORTH LONDON BRANCH (Cricketers' Arms, Inverness Street, near Camden Town Tube Station) : 7.30, A Debate of Mr. L. Ebury—"Religion, Conscience and the War."

COUNTRY

OUTDOOR

BLYTH (Fountain) : 6.0, Monday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

CHESTER-LE-STREET (The Bridge) : 11.0, Sunday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

INDOOR

BIRKENHEAD (Wirral) BRANCH N.S.S. (Beechcroft Settlement, Whetstone Lane) : 7.0, Rabbi Klienburg—"The World in Turmoil."

EAST LANCASHIRE RATIONALIST ASSOCIATION (28 Bridge Street, Burnley) : 2.30, Mr. N. Charlton—"Why I am a Freethinker."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (McLellan Galleries, Sauchiehall Street) : 3.0, Muriel Whitefield—"The International Report."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N.S.S. (Transport Hall, Islington, entrance in Christian Street) : 7.0, Mr. G. Thompson.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N.S.S. (The Picture House, Market Street, Manchester) : 3.0, Chapman Cohen—"Fifty Years of Freethought."

NORTH SHIELDS (Lord Nelson) : 6.30, Wednesday, Mr. J. T. Brighton.

TEES-SIDE BRANCH N.S.S. (Jubilee Hall, Stockton) : 7.30, H. Dalkin—"Religious Psychology."

DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH

By

G. W. FOOTE

Before LORD COLERIDGE in the
Court of Queen's Bench

Price 6d.

Postage 1d.

DETERMINISM OR FREE-WILL?

An Exposition of the Subject in the Light of the
Doctrines of Evolution.

By CHAPMAN COHEN.

Half-Cloth, 2s. 6d.

Postage 2½d.

SECOND EDITION.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, E.C.4.

TWO GREAT PIONEER FREETHINKERS

HENRY HETHERINGTON

(1792-1849)

Ambrose G. Barker

Price 6d.

By post 7d.

PETER ANNET—1693-1769

Ella Twynam

Price post free 2½d.

It may safely be said that only a small minority of present-day Freethinkers are acquainted with the lives of those men and women, to whom they, and the English speaking peoples owe so much. Annet and Hetherington bore aloft the flag of Freethought at a time when men had to face imprisonment for daring to question the claims of the Church. But these two men did more than that. They were among the founders of modern democracy in this country, and it is one of the disgraces of our history that their work has been so generally slurred over, when it is not completely ignored. These two pamphlets will introduce, to those who need the introduction, two doughty fighters in the best of all causes.

PAMPHLETS FOR THE PEOPLE

By CHAPMAN COHEN

1. Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?
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?
8. Gods and Their Makers.
9. Giving 'em Hell.
10. The Church's Fight for the Child.
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.

Other Pamphlets in this Series to be published shortly
One Penny Each; Postage halfpenny

Prayer : An Indictment

By G. BEDBOROUGH

Price 2d.

Postage ¼d.

ODDFELLOWS' HALL

(Near West TEIGNMOUTH Church)

Saturday, November 18th

Day School convened by Members of the W.E.A., and L.N.U. 3 o p.m. to 8.30 (Tea Interval)

"What are the Basic Causes of Wars and can We as individuals do anything to eliminate them?"

SPEAKERS

Mr. M. Macpherson, M.A.	Exeter Univ.
Mr. M. Lewis, B.Sc.	W.E.A.
Dr. Vanstone	L.N.U.
Dr. Whitmore	Federal Union
Mr. J. Hammond	N.S.S.
Mr. G. Tucker	Labour

General Discussion

Admission Free

Collection

Tea 9d.

An important series of Articles

on

THE TREND OF RUSSIAN POLICY

Essential for comprehension of World events of To-day. Beginning this week

in

"NEW TIMES AND ETHIOPIA NEWS"

Weekly 2d.

from 64 Farringdon Street, E.C. 4

or

by post from the publishers 3 Charteris Road, Woodford Green, Essex. Or to order from all Newsagents

50 Copies for £1. 20 Copies 8s. Single Copies 7d.

VICE IN GERMAN MONASTERIES

BY

JOSEPH McCABE

CASH WITH ORDER

THE LITTLE BLUE BOOKS,
100 Frant Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey
OUTDOOR

THOMAS PAINE

JOHN M. ROBERTSON

An Investigation of Sir Leslie Stephen's criticism of Paine's influence on religious and political reform. An indispensable work for all who are interested in Paine and his influence

SIXPENCE

Postage 1d

MOTHER OF GODBY
G. W. FOOTE

Post Free 2½d.

Shakespeare & other Literary EssaysBY
G. W. FOOTE

Price 3s. 6d. Postage 3d

THE REVENUES OF RELIGIONBY
ALAN HANDSACRE

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d. Paper 1s. 6d. Postage 2d.

Christianity, Slavery and LabourBY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

SELECTED HERESIESBY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Cloth Gilt 3s. 6d. Postage 3d.

ROME OR REASONBY
R. G. INGERSOLL

Price 3d. Postage 1d.

Infidel Death-BedsBY
G. W. Foote and A. D. McLaren

Price 2s. Postage 3d.

BRADLAUGH AND INGERSOLLBY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Price 2s. 6d. Postage 3d.

Historical Jesus and the Mythical ChristBY
GERALD MASSEY

Price 6d. Postage 1d.

Footsteps of the PastBY
J. M. WHEELER

Price 3s. 6d. Postage 3d.

Paganism in Christian FestivalsBY
J. M. WHEELER

Price 1s Postage 1½d.

THE MIRACLES OF ST. MARTINBY
C. CLAYTON DOVE

Price post free 7d.

History of the Conflict Between Religion and ScienceBY
Prof. J. W. DRAPER

Price 2s. Postage 4½d.

Letters To a Country VicarBY
CHAPMAN COHEN

Paper 1s. Postage 2d. Cloth, gilt 2s. Postage 3d.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of JesusBY
W. A. CABELL

Cloth 2s. Postage 2d.

A Grammar of Freethought.By **CHAPMAN COHEN.**

Cloth Bound 3s. 6d Postage 3d

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.4.